

**Social work education in Aotearoa New Zealand:
Advancing an equity agenda through democratising and
decolonising policy, programmes and practice**

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ABSTRACT

Purpose

The profession of social work has a long-standing commitment to addressing issues of equity and disadvantage. Giving effect to democratising and decolonising practices in social work education has nevertheless presented challenges for the discipline. An integrated three-part qualitative study was undertaken to consider how social work education in Aotearoa New Zealand operationalises its commitment to an equity agenda particularly through democratising and decolonising practices across three influencing domains: policies, programmes and practices.

Methods

Three mixed-method, qualitative waves of research were undertaken. A document analysis of the global, Aotearoa and Australian sets of social work education standards formed the first wave. This analysis raised questions about how the equity-based agenda, conceptualised in the twin themes of democratising and decolonising practices, was being operationalised in programmes and in teaching. In the second wave of research, interviews were undertaken with social work education leaders to examine how these two themes were being operationalised across programmes of social work education in Aotearoa. In the third wave of research, focus groups and interviews were undertaken with social work educators more broadly to examine how the equity themes were being operationalised in teaching practices in tertiary institutions in Aotearoa.

Findings

The findings from the first wave of research identified a number of equity themes, in particular: service user and student participation, student representativeness, indigenous rights and political action, gender and cultural equity, and equitable access for students. The findings from the document analysis specifically relating to democratising and decolonising practices informed Waves 2 and 3 of the research.

In Wave 2, leaders identified opportunities for advancing democratising and decolonising practices across three spheres: first, by supporting students, including engaging with the student voice, maintaining systems of representation and creating a

diverse student cohort; second, by recruiting, maintaining and supporting a diverse workforce and, in particular, developing an equity-focused workforce strategy to support these aims; and third, by using leadership to advance an equity-focused social work education.

In Wave 3, social work educators highlighted the challenges in operationalising democratising and decolonising teaching and learning practices. In particular, they identified the importance of addressing issues of privilege: understanding settler and White privilege and the responsibility for addressing it in the classroom context; broader issues of privilege, including racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, ableism and ageism, and the value of an intersectional approach; the relationship between regulation and privilege; and the importance of developing decolonising frameworks for practice.

Conclusion

This thesis highlights both the challenges and the opportunities for developing democratising and decolonising programmes and practices in social work education in Aotearoa. In giving effect to positive change, the findings of the thesis reinforce the importance of values-based policies and practices, particularly when exploring the complexities of navigating a bicultural social work education. A number of frameworks for action are presented, including a leadership framework identifying key enabling elements that are important to the creation of equity-based programmes, and a framework supporting teaching practices that are decolonising and Treaty based. The importance of advancing policy, programme and practice equity through positive activism is reinforced.

DECLARATION

This is to certify that:

- i. this thesis comprises only my original work towards the degree of Doctor of Philosophy except where indicated in the Preface,
- ii. due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used;
and
- iii. this thesis is fewer than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices.

Signed

D. J. McNabb

MIHI

E ngā mana

E ngā waka

E ngā reo

E ngā hau e whā

E tau nei

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tatou katoa

This mihi (greeting) in te reo Māori (Māori language) greets the many peoples and recognises the varied places people that make up our society in Aotearoa New Zealand have come from. It also recognises the first people to come here, tangata whenua – Māori—while acknowledging that many have come after them. The Treaty of Waitangi and the Māori language version Te Tiriti o Waitangi, signed in 1840 between a majority of Māori chiefs and the British Crown, recognised Māori as the first people and also gave a place to stand in Aotearoa for the settlers who came later. As one of those whose British ancestors came after the signing of the Treaty, I acknowledge my place as a settler who has both rights and responsibilities under the Treaty.

While the Treaty was breached by the British and we are now in a context of colonisation, the Treaty still demands to be honoured. Māori have led this call and it has become a goal for many settlers and groups in Aotearoa, including myself. Honouring the Treaty is a major theme of this thesis, which aligns with it also being a key aspiration within the education sector and for the social work profession.

Beginning this thesis with a mihi is a way of laying a Treaty-based foundation for the whole work. The Treaty affirmed a partnership approach between Māori and settlers, and as a broader principle of collaborative relationships and practice. It recognised the right of Māori to be self-determining and the right to participate in all aspects of society. Finally, it guaranteed protection for Māori values and interests, and equality of citizenship.

The Treaty holds the promise of a bicultural nation in a dynamic multicultural society. This aligns with the goals of equity and social justice that are woven throughout this thesis and that anchor both the social work profession and this Pākehā (ethnic European) researcher.

PREFACE

This thesis has been undertaken with publications. Five published articles and a book chapter written during the candidature have been incorporated as part of the narrative of this thesis. All publications were peer reviewed. The publications appear in the thesis with minor editing to assist the flow of the text in the thesis. The final published format of all the publications are in the appendices.

With respect to the published chapter (McNabb, 2019b), given my PhD supervisor was co-editor of the book in which it appears, Professor Williams (RMIT) oversaw the independent peer review process leading to publication. A letter from Professor Williams on behalf of the publisher, Springer International Publishing, can be found in Appendix 1.

The publications are listed in the order in which they appear in the thesis:

McNabb, D. J., & Connolly, M. (2019). The relevance of Global Standards to social work education in Australasia. *International Social Work*, 62(1), 35–47. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020872817710547>

McNabb, D. (2017). Democratizing and decolonising social work education: Opportunities for leadership. *Advances in Social Work and Welfare Education*, 19(1), 121–126. Retrieved from <https://www.informit.com>

McNabb, D. (2020). Pursuing equity in social work education: Democratizing practices in Aotearoa New Zealand. *Australian Social Work*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0312407X.2020.1723656>

McNabb, D. (2019). Decolonising social work education in Aotearoa New Zealand. *Advances in Social Work and Welfare Education*, 21(1), 35–50. Retrieved from <https://www.informit.com>

McNabb, D. (2019). A Treaty based framework for mainstream social work education in Aotearoa New Zealand: Educators talk about their practice. *Aotearoa New Zealand Social Work*, 31(4), 4–17. <https://doi.org/10.11157/anzswj-vol31iss4id667>

McNabb, D. (2019). Democratizing social work education: A leadership framework for action. In M. Connolly, C. Williams, & D. Spence Coffey (Eds.), *Strategic leadership in social work education* (pp. 101–115). New York, NY: Springer International. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-25052-2_8

Co-author contributions

The first publication in the thesis is co-authored with my PhD supervisor, Professor Marie Connolly (McNabb & Connolly, 2019). My contribution to this article is 90%, as outlined in the co-author authorisation form, Appendix 2. I am sole author of the remaining publications that have been incorporated in the thesis.

Relevant academic activity during candidature

In addition to the thesis publications, a number of further relevant publications and other academic contributions were completed during candidature:

Hughes, C., Gremillion, H., Bridgman, G., Ashley, P., & McNabb, D. (2017). Student selection process effectiveness: Correlations between task performance and undergraduate success. *Aotearoa New Zealand Social Work*, 29(4), 32–48. <https://doi.org/10.11157/anzswj-vol29iss4id385>

Hughes, C., McNabb, D., Ashley, P., McKechnie, R., & Gremillion, H. (2016). Selection of social work students: A literature review of selection criteria and process effectiveness. *Advances in Social Work and Welfare Education*, 18(2), 94-106. Retrieved from <https://www.informit.com>

Webster, M., & McNabb, D. (2016). New public management and information communication technology: Organisational influences on frontline child protection practice. *Aotearoa New Zealand Social Work*, 28(2), 51–63. Retrieved from <https://anzswjournal.nz/anzsw/article/view/224>

Webster, M., McNabb, D., & Darroch, J. (2015). Advancing social work professionalism: Standards for management and leadership in Aotearoa New Zealand. *Aotearoa New Zealand Social Work*, 27(3), 44–56. Retrieved from <https://anzswjournal.nz/anzsw/article/view/5>

Significant thesis presentations during candidature:

McNabb, D. J. (2019, December). *Growing partnerships: Responding to issues of privilege in social work education in Aotearoa*. Paper presented at the Sociological Association of Aotearoa New Zealand, Auckland, New Zealand.

McNabb, D. J. (2018, July). *Democratising and decolonising social work education: Opportunities for leadership*. Paper presented at Joint World Conference on Social Work, Education and Social Development, Dublin, Ireland.

McNabb, D. J. (2017, September). *Globalising social work education: The relevance of global standards in Australasia*. Paper presented at the

ANZSWWER Symposium (Australia NZ Schools of Social Work and Welfare Education and Research), Auckland, New Zealand.

McNabb, D., & Webster, M. (2016, June). *Globalising social work education: The relevance of global standards in Australasia*. Paper presented at Joint World Conference on Social Work, Education and Social Development, Seoul, Korea.

McNabb, D. (2015, September). *Can we re-imagine social work education in Aotearoa NZ and beyond?* Paper presented at ANZSWWER Symposium "Building Collaborations in Education and Research: Beyond the Rhetoric", Melbourne, Australia.

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I also acknowledge, in particular, the social work academics who have participated directly in my PhD research with comments that have directly become part of my findings. I especially thank social work education colleague John Darroch, who undertook the interview and focus group research at my workplace because of my conflict of interest as an employee. Thanks to Dr Helen Mitchell and Andrew Lavery who contributed to the final editing of my thesis.

The Māori reference group was essential in providing formal consultation regarding the early stages of my research, especially the ethics application. Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou (a big thank you to everyone)—Matua Hare Paniora, Dr Josie Keelan and Kelly Panapa. I acknowledge other Māori consultants for the Treaty-based framework article: social work colleagues Shannon Pakura and Sharyn Roberts, and also from my workplace, Te Hau Hona and Chance Taylor. Recent Māori colleagues from my workplace team have been vitally influential during my candidature—Eliza Wallace and Paula Bold-Wilson, arohanui (much love).

I acknowledge Springer International Publishing for permission to use the chapter I wrote in the edited book they published that is contained in Chapter 8, and I particularly thank Professor Charlotte Williams for guiding the independent peer review of the process.

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In the context of this thesis and its equity-focused topic, it is important for me to acknowledge and situate myself as a Pākehā and White, straight, able-bodied, middle-class, middle-aged man who occupies a highly privileged status. I acknowledge that I have majorly benefited from the very system that I critique in this thesis and for my own learning and development have relied on the generosity of those with lived experience of the equity issues that are investigated herein.

I acknowledge my parents, Pearce and Winnie McNabb, who came from working-class backgrounds and left secondary school at age 15 but who developed their own interest in learning and, with lifelong vocations as Salvation Army officers, let their actions speak for them. They, along with other family and wider whānau, gave me a passion for learning and for working with people that has led me to this doctoral research but most importantly provided a foundation of aroha (love) and manaaki (support). The Elgar whānau have embraced me within their 'team' and shared aroha and manaaki over the long haul.

My wife, Pam Elgar, has had my heart for over 30 years and been a companion on the PhD journey—like a marathon it has been challenging but I wouldn't have wanted to be on the journey with anyone else.

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GLOSSARY OF MĀORI TERMS

Disclaimer: the descriptions used in this glossary include specific interpretations related to the document or context in which they were used. A fuller meaning can be found in Māori dictionaries such as <https://māoridictionary.co.nz/>, which have also been consulted in the writing of this thesis.

Āhurutanga	Warmth, comfort
Ako	Reciprocal and collaborative learning in which the teacher is also a learner and the learner can be the teacher, holistic teaching and learning
Aotearoa	Land of the long white cloud, Māori name for New Zealand
Aroha	Care, love
Arohanui	Much love
Āta	A focus on developing respectful relationships
Hapori	Community
Hapū	Extended whānau, Māori subtribes
Hui	Meetings
Iwi	Tribal grouping of many whānau and hapū with boundaries of land, marae and water
Kaitiaki	Guardian, advocate
Kaihautū	Leader
Kaitiakitanga	A guardianship or advocacy role for people and the environment
Karakia	Spiritual acknowledgements, prayer
Kaupapa	Topic, purpose
Kaupapa Māori	A Māori approach
Ko wai au?	Who am I? A question of identity
Kotahitanga	Collaboration
Kura kaupapa	Māori language medium schools
Māhaki	Respectful conduct
Mana	Prestige, justice and equity, reflected through power and authority
Mana whakahaere	Sharing of power
Mana tangata	Autonomous individual

Mana whenua	Resident hapū or iwi for a geographic area
Manaakitanga	Hospitality, care and support, cultural and social responsibility
Māori	Indigenous people of Aotearoa
Marae	Māori meeting house
Mātātoa	Moral courage
Mātauranga Māori	Māori knowledge
Matua	Father, uncle, adult male
Mauri	Life principle, life force
Mihi	Greeting, acknowledgement
Mihi whakatau	Welcome to guests
Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou	A big thank you to everyone
Ngā Mōhiotanga	Knowing
Ngā taonga i tuku iho	Cultural wisdoms
Ngā Whakaahuatanga	Being
Noa	Unrestricted, void
Ora	To be alive, wellbeing, can be paired with terms such as mauri ora, whānau ora
Pākehā	A New Zealander of European descent
Pasifika	People of Pacific Island ethnicity
Pepeha	Personal introduction linking to tribe and key relationships
Rangatiratanga	Chieftainship, right to exercise authority, self-determination
Roopu	Group, branches
Takepū	Māori principles that depict morals and values
Tangata Tiriti	All non-Māori people who have migrated to Aotearoa under the Treaty of Waitangi
Tangata whenua	Indigenous peoples of Aotearoa, people of the land
Tangata Whenua Takawaenga o Aotearoa	A group of indigenous members within ANZASW
Taha hinengaro	Mental health
Taha tinana	Physical health
Taha wairua	Spiritual health

Taha whānau	Family health
Taonga	Treasures, resources
Tauira	Student
Tauiwi	European, foreigner, non-Māori, colonist, mainstream
Te ao Māori	The world of Māori
Taukumekume	Pull one against another, argue
Te Ara Tika	The right way
Te reo Māori	The indigenous Māori language of Aotearoa
Te Tiriti o Waitangi	The Māori language version of the Treaty of Waitangi signed by most Māori with key differences to the English text
Te	Doing
Whakatinanatanga	
Tiaki	Guide, mentor, steward
Tika	Correct, true, concern for outcomes
Tikanga	Protocols and practices
Tino rangatiratanga	Self-determination, sovereignty
Tūmanako	Hope, aspirations
Waiata	Songs
Wairua	Non-physical spirit, soul, our essence
Wairuatanga	Spirituality and wellbeing
Wānanga	Māori tertiary institution
Whakakoa	To be respectful, revere
Whakamana	Empowerment
Whakapapa	Genealogical links, relationships and their quality
Whakapono	Faith
Whakataukī	A Māori proverb
Whānau	Family, including extended, may not be blood ties
Whanaungatanga	Relationships and connection
Whāngai	Fostered, adopted, where non-Māori are adopted into the life of the Māori group
Whare	House

ABBREVIATIONS

AASW	Australian Association of Social Workers
ANZASW	Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers
ASWEAS	Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards
CSWE	Council on Social Work Education
CSWEANZ	Council for Social Work Education in Aotearoa New Zealand
CUAP	Committee on University Academic Programmes
Enhance R2P	Enhancing the Readiness to Practise of Newly Qualified Social Workers in Aotearoa New Zealand
GS	Global Standards for the Training and Education of the Social Work Profession
IASSW	International Association of Schools of Social Work
ICSW	International Council on Social Welfare
IFSW	International Federation of Social Workers
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NZCETSS	New Zealand Council for Education and Training in the Social Services
NZVCC	New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee
NZASW	New Zealand Association of Social Workers
NZQA	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
PCF	Professional capabilities framework
RoVE	Reform of Vocational Education
SWRA	Social Workers Registration Act
SWRB	Social Workers Registration Board
TWOA	Te Wānanga o Aotearoa
TWSWA	Tangata Whenua Social Workers Association of Aotearoa
UK	United Kingdom
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
USA	United States of America
VC	Vice-chancellor

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Let's work together to make social work serviceable for all people on the earth. Social work was born in Europe (First Stage) and grew up in North America to be professional social work (Second Stage). It is now heading for the Third Stage, the common asset of all parts of the world. The simple dissemination of Western-rooted Professional Social Work or the simple repetition of "professionalization" is not the way we should take, even if adding a flavor of "indigenization". (Akimoto, n.d.)

Professor Tatsuru Akimoto, a Japanese social work academic strongly connected to global developments, argues that global social work has shifted from its roots in the West outwards to the East and the South. Despite this shift, a domination of Western thinking remains within the profession, and in response, there have been growing demands for a more globally balanced expression of social work (Gray, Coates, Yellow Bird, & Hetherington, 2016; Sewpaul, 2014). In support of this, Professor Akimoto calls for a new social work identity that is more equitable and inclusive of the Eastern and Southern worlds. Without this, we risk continuing problems of overrepresentation of indigenous and other minority groups in negative statistics within their society and the ongoing denial of their claim for justice.

Notions of equity, inclusion and cultural responsiveness have been fundamental to my own practice and development, both personally and professionally. Born into a Salvation Army family to parents who were Christian ministers, I was immersed in a tradition that focused on addressing poverty and working for societal reform. This was outlined by William Booth, co-founder of the Salvation Army with his wife Catherine Booth in England, in his book *In Darkest England and the Way Out* (Booth, 1890). While these notions of social reform were both reinforced and challenged by my subsequent social work education, they nevertheless provided a foundation from which my professional views have been shaped and developed.

My journey as a social worker included both statutory child welfare and community work practice in Aotearoa New Zealand (hereafter Aotearoa, the indigenous Māori name for NZ) at a time of radical change within the profession, particularly with respect to cultural responsiveness. A strong rebuke of institutional racism was

advanced within the pivotal report *Puao-te-Ata-tu (day break)* led by the Māori leader and social worker John Rangihau (Ministerial Advisory Committee, 1986). While this fundamentally influenced the way in which Māori and non-Māori children and families in Aotearoa were viewed, influencing a generation of social work practice, it also coincided with a wave of neoliberal reform in the 1990s creating a path of increasing inequality and a reductionist approach to government investment. Social work became marginalised within what Jane Kelsey (1997) termed the 'New Zealand experiment', one national example of what emerged as a global neoliberal movement. Hence, parallel forces influenced social work practitioners in Aotearoa within a context of competing demands for greater responsiveness to Māori and neoliberal practices that negatively affected Māori and families in need.

The social work professional body, now known as the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW), grappled with the challenging themes of neoliberalism and, particularly, indigenous rights (Nash & Miller, 2013). With strong leadership from Māori members, ANZASW formalised its commitment to honouring the Treaty of Waitangi in 1992 (Nash, 2001b) and to a bicultural model of practice that attempted to capture a partnership approach between Māori- and Western-based systems of knowledge and practice. It also structured its own organisation to represent shared governance and structures. In 1996 I assumed the national role of president of ANZASW and had the formative experience of being in partnership with Nora Merle Davis, the senior Māori leader (McNabb, 2014). Reflecting this partnership, we jointly represented Aotearoa at the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) events and at regional gatherings of the Asia Pacific Association of Social Workers. This gave me a unique experience of the global reach of social work, particularly in the context of bicultural responses and with respect to the strong participation of Asian countries, which signalled a challenge to the dominance of the West in social work and social work practice.

In 2010 I took up an academic position as head of the Department of Social Practice at Unitec, Auckland. I became involved with the national social work educators' network, the Council for Social Work Education in Aotearoa New Zealand (CSWEANZ), and had a term as president. This also led the way to my becoming the Aotearoa representative

on the Board of the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), which is an ongoing role and has influenced the development of my research in important ways. Interestingly, the *Global Standards for the Training and Education of the Social Work Profession* (Global Standards [GS]), which are studied in Chapter 2 and form a foundation for this thesis, are currently under review by the IASSW Board of which I am now a part (IASSW & IFSW, 2019).

My personal and professional experiences across national and international contexts have influenced my practice in social work and have also generated a passion to explore the ways in which social work education is giving effect to an equity agenda, including its focus on indigenous rights. More particularly, these experiences have fuelled an interest in social work education values and standards, and how we demonstrate our collective commitment to equity within our practice as leaders and educators. Concomitantly, this has influenced my approach to my research, providing both stimulus and critique.

Social work education in Aotearoa

This thesis has been undertaken with publications. Each publication includes an examination of the literature relating to policies, programmes and practices, particularly with respect to equity and inclusion in social work education, or as this thesis will argue, through the notions of democratising and decolonising social work education. The publications also explore the ways in which social work education in Aotearoa has been influenced by both global and country-specific discourses, including neoliberalism, the domination of Western thinking in social work education and some of the important critical responses in theory and practice. While the publications include individual contributions to the twin themes of democratising and decolonising social work education within the thesis, each with an exploration of aspects of supporting literature and theoretical critique, influences on social work in Aotearoa are broad and complex. An understanding of the Treaty of Waitangi, the impact of colonisation and the rise of Māori self-determination, alongside the influence of a strengthening critical approach to knowledge and practice, provides an essential foundation to the understanding of equity responses in Aotearoa. This is now discussed in the context of these historical, cultural and theoretical influences.

Social work education in Aotearoa: Historical influences

Social work is an historically Western profession that arrived relatively recently in Aotearoa. Given that it arrived predominantly from Britain, some writers suggest it has been part of its colonial project (P. A. Ruwhiu, 2019b). Indigenous Māori welfare and wellbeing traditions nevertheless were well established before European contact. Indeed, until the 1850s Māori were the dominant population and held significant influence across all areas of social and cultural life (Tennant, O'Brien, & Sanders, 2008). Following first contact, there was a period of mutual learning when Māori took on some of the early welfare initiatives of settlers alongside traditional Māori welfare models based on kinship and a strong collective life. Māori society was, therefore, dynamic and changed with the new context (Tennant et al., 2008).

From the 1850s onwards, the greed for settler land acquisition proved devastating for Māori and set Aotearoa on a path of increasing British colonial domination (Orange, 2015). Given the context of colonisation, and despite having a treaty that promised a partnership between Māori and the British, welfare beginnings were Western based, and included various charitable and religious groups' activities that engaged specifically in public welfare. The nascent government also began to make provision for the welfare of the population as a whole. Thus, the precursor to formal social work appeared in a form very much resembling the model used in Britain, where it first began, with strong influences from the United States of America (USA) (Nash, 2001a). This is consistent with the experiences of other colonised countries that share a similar history, for example, Canada, the USA and Australia (Connolly & Ward, 2008).

The early push for social work education included the first superintendent of Child Welfare, from the Education Department, John Beck, visiting the USA and Canada in 1925 and recommending the establishment of formal social work programmes based on what he saw (Nash, 2001a). This represented a clear influence from the North American social work tradition.

Before formal education was available in the 1950s, people entered social work through a variety of pathways, such as teaching and nursing, and even through the military for the early probation service after World War II. Other non-governmental

organisations (NGOs), such as the Young Women's Christian Association, and churches, such as the Salvation Army, had their own training routes into social work (Nash, 2001a). There were also interesting crossovers; for example, a Salvation Army minister might become a voluntary child welfare worker under supervision of a social worker from the Child Welfare Division (McNabb, 2014).

A significant push for formal social work education came in 1943 from a major education conference focused on training for social work (Nash, 2001a). In 1949 the recommendation to establish a social work programme led to a government funding allocation for a new school of social science. The first cohort began in 1950 at the Victoria University College Wellington, under British leadership. Thus, the two-year Diploma in Social Science had a British influence with a focus on social administration and casework (Nash, 2001a). Further social work programmes were established in 1966 with a two-year Diploma in Youth and Community Work run by the Young Men's Christian Association. From 1975 to 1980 a two-year master's programme was offered through the University of Auckland, and in 1975 a two-year master's programme began at the University of Canterbury. The first four-year bachelor's programme was offered at Massey University in 1976, and a two-year diploma programme started in 1982 at the Auckland College of Education (Nash, 2001a). This mix of university- and non-university-based programmes has continued into the contemporary context, reflecting divergent views about the foundation on which tertiary-context social work education should be based (Nash, 2001a). Nash (1994) saw the increase in polytechnic-based programmes in the early 1990s as positive because they invited "innovation, immediacy, and flexibility ... [and] the cross-fertilisation of ideas and approaches will liven up the social work education scene" (p. 54). On the other hand, the unit standard competency approach for two-year diploma level programmes brought in by Te Kaiawhina Ahumahi as part of a set of national industry training organisations in 1998, was resisted by the universities (Beddoe, 2018). There is also a sense in which the university and non-university approaches have been perceived differently, reflected in the programmes being monitored by different entities. Universities are legally controlled by the Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP) for

Aotearoa universities whereas non-university providers come within the purview of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA).

The social work professional body in Aotearoa was formally established in 1964 as the New Zealand Association of Social Workers (NZASW) with the twin goals of establishing branches across the country and improving education and training for members. The inaugural president was Merv Hancock, who would become one of the most influential people for social work in Aotearoa. At his death in 2016, having received an honorary doctorate from Massey University two years earlier for his services to social work and social work education, he was remembered as the father of social work in Aotearoa (Massey University, 2016).

The first act of the new NZASW was to form an education and training committee, as a lack of training was regarded as the biggest issue for the profession at that time (Nash, 2007). In the same year it affiliated to IFSW (Nash & Miller, 2013) and thus began a long-standing commitment to internationalisation. In 1965 NZASW began a quarterly social work publication, which, though with different names, has continued and is now an open access online peer-reviewed journal (Nash, 2007). This would become an important base for subsequent social work education and training, providing a necessary outlet for the exploration of developing indigenised practices.

Significantly, in 1999 the name of the professional body formally changed from NZASW to ANZASW to reflect a bicultural identity and commitment (ANZASW, n.d.).

In 2002 ANZASW established its own, voluntary, programme approval system with a course approval board that developed a set of programme standards and an assessment process that mirrored the 10 competency standards for individual practice that had been established at the end of the 1980s. The make-up of the board attempted a half and half split between Māori and non-Māori, which reflected the bicultural commitment of ANZASW (McNabb, 2014). Three programmes undertook the ANZASW approval, the University of Otago (2002), Unitec (2004) and the University of Auckland (2004), before the Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB) programme recognition system came into force (McNabb, 2014).

Membership of ANZASW was not mandatory and was inclusive of those with and without social work training and education, thus spanning a range of agencies. This allowed for the inclusion of Māori practitioners and space for at least some of the cultural traditions and expertise they brought.

A further reinforcement of the professional body's commitment to biculturalism was its recently revised code of ethics, which has grounded the code in a set of Māori-aligned core values expressed in te reo Māori (Māori language): rangatiratanga (self-determination), manaakitanga (care and support), whanaungatanga (relationships and connectedness), aroha (care and love), kotahitanga (collaboration), mātātoa (moral courage) and wairuatanga (spirituality and wellbeing) (ANZASW, 2019). The code continues a commitment to honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Māori language version of the Treaty of Waitangi), which was made in the original 1993 code, as it does with aligning Aotearoa to the newer global declaration of social work ethical principles (IASSW, 2018) and the international definition of social work and its Asia-Pacific amplification (IFSW & IASSW, 2014). Each of the core values is explained and aligned with detailed ethical principles; two of the newer values are mātātoa and wairuatanga. This suggests an indigenising of the code of ethics and an even stronger affirmation of the commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, which has an immediate impact on social work education.

While the professional body has been important in shaping the way in which social work has developed in Aotearoa, the registration of the profession has been an ongoing, and contested, theme for the social work profession. In 1976 an edition of the journal was dedicated to the advantages and disadvantages of registration (Nash, 2007), and the notion of external professional accountability became one of the defining features of the 1980s for the social work profession (Beddoe & Randall, 1994). Hunt (2016) noted that gender factors contributed to the debate on registration, because social work was part of religious and voluntary activity mainly undertaken by women, and contributed to ambivalence about professionalisation.

The wider tumult of the 1970s and 1980s reflected the ongoing debate about external accountability and registration. One of the arguments for not having a qualification

base for membership of NZASW, which would have helped any argument for registration, was the question of the dominance of Western knowledge in social work qualifications, which did not reflect the bicultural and multicultural realities of Aotearoa (E. Beddoe & Randall, 1994). In 1980 the NZASW conference formally debated having a professional qualification base for membership though the motion was lost by a large majority (Nash, 2001b).

Regulation has therefore been a contentious topic from the early days of the discipline and aligned with the concerns about elitism, monoculturalism, conservatism and government control (Nash & Miller, 2013). But the attractions of registration were also well considered over a long period. For example, the idea of statutory registration was promoted to Australian and Aotearoa social work educators (McNabb, 1997). Writers suggested that the instituting of registration was also part of a political discourse relating to the need to regulate the quality of social work practice (Hunt, Staniforth, & Beddoe, 2019). Finally, in 2003 the Social Workers Registration Act (SWRA) was passed and with it came the mandate to regulate social work programmes. Interestingly, however, the SWRA never proposed mandatory registration. Rather, the profession experienced a somewhat ambivalent voluntary system of registration whereby social workers could opt into registration, with no consequences for those who did not.

The SWRB is now the government-appointed body that oversees the legislation, setting the standards for social work education and programme accreditation (SWRB, 2018). These align with the general set of competencies for practice (SWRB, 2016b) and a related code of conduct (SWRB, 2016a).

Some of the key equity issues that have been raised by social work educators with respect to the professionalisation of social work in Aotearoa relate to the exclusionary nature of 'fit and proper' requirements for students, including criminal convictions, which disproportionately target Māori (Apaitia-Vague, Pitt, & Younger, 2011). Also, the master's level qualification requirement for social work academic staff, which was exacerbating any already short supply of Māori staff, was unsuccessfully challenged by CSWEANZ (personal communication, August 5, 2017). Broader based concerns expressed by educators about regulation include government control and neoliberal

influence, curriculum prescription and the weakening of academic independence, and a perceived lack of a Treaty-based and social justice focus (Hunt et al., 2019; O'Brien, 2013; Orme & Rennie, 2006; Van Heugten, 2011).

At the time of writing this thesis, voluntary registration remains in place. However, amendments to the legislation in 2019 now dictate that from 2021 all social workers will be required to be registered. Hunt et al. (2019) places these changes to registration within a dynamic global environment, particularly noting the many changes within the United Kingdom (UK) and the ongoing debate about the self-regulatory system by the professional body in Australia.

Social work education is currently under a review led by the government minister Tracey Martin and conducted by NZQA (Ako Aotearoa, 2019). A range of questions were publicly raised by politicians, among others, about the quality of graduates for social work practice, a practice that has a long tradition in the political arena (Ballantyne, Beddoe, Hay, Maidment, Walker, Ngan, et al., 2019). However, the review was suspended while the major social work project Enhancing the Readiness to Practise of Newly Qualified Social Workers in Aotearoa New Zealand (Enhance R2P) was undertaken. Funded by Ako Aotearoa (the Aotearoa centre for tertiary teaching excellence), the project took three years, and involved three phases that engaged the majority of social work programmes in Aotearoa. The first phase analysed the social work curriculum, the second phase analysed the readiness of newly qualified social workers to practice and the final phase constructed a professional capabilities framework (PCF).

The Enhance R2P nationally funded project recently reported its findings, which included strengthening curriculum areas such as mental health and the law; better quality fieldwork opportunities; and the adoption of the PCF to guide programmes, potentially being integrated with the SWRB competence standards, to underpin ongoing professional development for practitioners. Support for new graduates, ideally with a development programme in their first year of employment in partnership between employers and educators would be provided (Ballantyne,

Beddoe, Hay, Maidment, Walker, & Merriman, 2019; Ballantyne, Beddoe, Hay, Maidment, Walker, Ngan, et al., 2019).

Also underway is a major ministerial review called Reform of Vocational Education (RoVE) that was announced in 2019 and is directly affecting the non-university sector, including many social work programmes, where a new national institution is under development with the working title of the New Zealand Institute of Skills & Technology. Education unions have expressed cautious optimism and agreement that the financially and structurally broken system needed reform and that some progress is being made towards a model of education that will be Treaty based, learner focused, public good oriented, supportive of staff, supporting academic freedom and research, advancing equity goals, and inclusive of the wide range of learning and settings required (Tertiary Education Union, n.d.). A promising aspect of the review is the appointment of Māori leaders to the newly created Te Taumata Aronui to reflect “the Government’s commitment to Māori–Crown partnerships [as] a key priority of RoVE is to better recognise the needs of Māori communities and acknowledge that Māori are significant employers with social and economic goals” (NZQA, n.d.).

Social work education in Aotearoa: Cultural influences and resistance

While there has been progress towards the achievement of bicultural practices since the establishment of professionalised social work in Aotearoa, when considered in the context of historical challenges to Western hegemony by Māori, it could be argued that progress has been slow. Signed in 1840, the Treaty has been interpreted quite differently at times. The Aotearoa Government has had a history of negligence in its responsibilities to protect Māori interests, attested to in the formal Crown apology within each Treaty settlement (Waitangi Tribunal, 2019b). While progress has been slow, the New Zealand Government is increasingly recognising its responsibility towards Māori that is often expressed as a partnership approach and at times as a bicultural approach. In contemporary society, the Treaty is now recognised as the first social policy document for post-contact society. As such, writers have argued that a fundamental relationship exists between culturally responsive social work practice and the spirit of the Treaty (L. Ruwhiu, 2013, p. 128). The importance of the Treaty and its

influence on the development of contemporary social work education in Aotearoa therefore cannot be underestimated.

Nash (1998) identifies Treaty-based concerns and the call for tino rangatiratanga (self-determination) and Māori sovereignty as critically important in the third developmental period of social work education in Aotearoa. As noted earlier, the first social work programme at Victoria University College began in 1950 and was based on the British focus on casework and social administration. Despite the expectations of the Treaty, it paid little attention to Māori and the unique aspects of the Aotearoa context, which was to continue largely unchanged for 25 years. Consistently over time, however, there has been evidence of strong resistance and calls for greater responsiveness to Māori in the context of social work and social work education (P. A. Ruwhiu, 2019a). Significantly influencing practices to come and formatively changing the ways in which social work was perceived and practised, a small number of Māori graduates assumed important roles in social work: John Rangihau, Ephra Garrett (Nash, 1998, p. 425) and John Tapiata, among others.

The first undergraduate social work programme that began at Massey University in 1976 provided an opportunity for the expression of a commitment to biculturalism. Once qualified, Ephra Garrett, a Māori graduate of the Victoria programme, became a member of staff. Garrett made a long-term contribution to bicultural leadership of the Massey programme and in representing the interests of Māori and teaching about the Māori world. She died in 2008 and was acknowledged as the “mother of social work in Aotearoa” (ANZASW, n.d.). A history of the Massey social work programme pays homage to the bicultural leadership of Ephra Garrett and Merv Hancock in developing the programme and its focus on Māori interests (Dale, Mooney, & O’Donoghue, 2017).

In the early 1980s, concerns were being raised about the cultural responsiveness of the Department of Social Welfare, emerging from the report *Institutional Racism in the Department of Social Welfare Tamaki-Makau-Rau* (Berridge et al., 1985). The report highlighted deeply embedded racism and the lack of Māori staff in the service. *The Maori Advisory Unit Report* of 1985 also highlighted the Pākehā view of family being used in the service (Nash, 1994).

In response to these concerns and to the disproportionately high number of Māori children and young people in the welfare system, the government initiated the Ministerial Advisory Committee on a Māori Perspective for the Department of Social Welfare chaired by John Rangihau, also a graduate of the Victoria programme and a respected Tūhoe tribal leader. The committee consulted a wide range of groups, especially Māori, and then delivered their groundbreaking report, *Puao-te-Ata-Tu (day break)*, in 1986. The report declared the Department of Social Welfare was guilty of institutional, cultural and personal racism. The findings of the committee included Recommendation 10 on training and the need to ensure Māori interests were better represented, that the needs of Māori communities were focused on and that cultural support was provided for Māori in training (Ministerial Advisory Committee, 1986).

Puao-te-Ata-Tu signalled a major Māori challenge to the Western welfare model of the time and was pivotal in its effect on social work more broadly, including on the New Zealand Council for Education and Training in the Social Services (NZCETSS). John Rangihau's influence upon child welfare law and policy was critical. The Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act of 1989 was strongly influenced by *Puao-te-Ata-Tu* and included the culturally responsive family group conference system for addressing child protection and youth offending concerns. The Act recognised the status of whānau, hapū and iwi (traditional Māori groupings of family and tribe) and their right to be involved in decision-making in matters relating to their families. While the practice of family group conferencing has often been compromised by institutionally risk-averse imperatives, there is no denying the empowering intent of the legislation for Māori, and other children and families who engaged with the child welfare system.

John Tapiata, yet another graduate of the Victoria social work programme, became the chair of the Māori caucus of NZCETSS and had a significant influence on the indigenising of standards and bicultural practice of the organisation (Nash, 1998). The focus on a Treaty-based approach was evident in the NZCETSS publication *Kahukura: The Possible Dream* (Benton, Benton, Croft, & Waaka, 1991). This publication addressed the programme expectations of the Treaty of Waitangi requiring the centrality of Māori knowledge, language, process and participation throughout the

programme. The report also referenced the transformative education process of Paulo Freire as being well aligned to Māori processes. The council stated their own commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi and that a partnership approach between Māori and Pākehā was fundamental to their operation (Benton et al., 1991). *Kahukura* was also supportive of Māori workforce development, the importance of Māori-focused learning and having Māori students who would go on to improve services for Māori people.

The Royal Commission on Social Policy in 1988 asserted that the Treaty of Waitangi was for all New Zealanders and that the Treaty principles of partnership, protection and participation should be integrated into social policy (E. Beddoe & Randall, 1994).

NZASW and challenges to monoculturalism

The 1980s were primarily defined as a decade when the profession grappled with the formation of a Māori perspective and the subsequent organisational implications for NZASW, the professional body (E. Beddoe & Randall, 1994). At its 1984 conference the Standing Committee on Racism challenged the organisation to honour the Treaty and to develop a bicultural code of practice. However, the 1986 conference at Tūrangawaewae led to NZASW splitting into Māori and Tauīwi (non-Māori) caucuses with shared decision-making, the Māori members forming the Tangata Whenua Takawaenga o Aotearoa caucus. While NZASW formally remained a single organisation, the two caucuses became a strong structural element in NZASW until the Māori caucus returned to NZASW in 1989 (Beddoe & Randall, 1994).

NZASW made a constitutional change to honour the Treaty of Waitangi in 1992, so that in the following year they were able to incorporate the new Code of Bicultural Practice within the Code of Ethics of 1993. This concretised the bicultural commitment of NZASW and the partnership between Māori and Tauīwi (Beddoe & Randall, 1994). Similarly, the bicultural partnership was expressed in the development of the competency programme in developing policy, its governance and ensuring Māori participation in practitioner assessments. The 10 standards of practice for the competency programme were established in 1990 and subsequently strengthened with the Code of Bicultural Practice in 1993 (E. Beddoe & Randall, 1994). The Niho

Taniwha programme for Māori was developed in 2001 (ANZASW, n.d.) to privilege a kaupapa Māori approach to competency assessment that sat alongside the mainstream programme (Hunt, 2016).

By the mid-1990s membership of NZASW had grown, largely as a consequence of the demands of the competency programme, also increasing the numbers of Māori members. The governance of NZASW had a Māori and Tauīwi leadership model with a national council of equal representation from Māori roopu (branches for Māori) and general branches (for everyone else) (McNabb, 2014).

NZASW operationalised its commitment to honouring Te Tiriti in various ways, including by using a shared governance model between Māori and non-Māori beginning in the 1990s (McNabb, 2014). In the spirit of bicultural practice and acknowledging the importance of Māori leadership in social work, NZASW introduced *Te Kōmako* in 1995, a Māori edition of the social work journal, and later the first edition of *Tu Mau* in 2001, the Pasifika (people of Pacific Island ethnicity) edition, which would help recognise the scholarship of Pacific social workers and the importance of practice with Pacific peoples (ANZASW, n.d.). As a consequence of this and other cultural initiatives, Māori and Pasifika contributions to social work scholarship and to education in Aotearoa have been immeasurable. The need for knowledge of Pacific Island cultures alongside other cultures has had long-standing recognition within social work education (Nash, 1994).

ANZASW, changed from the name NZASW in 1999, included further expressions of tino rangatiratanga by Māori, which led to the establishment of a separate Māori social workers organisation in 2009: Tangata Whenua Social Workers Association of Aotearoa (TWSWA) (ANZASW, n.d.). This led to ANZASW and TWSWA becoming joint parties to Aotearoa representation at IFSW in 2014, structurally affirming a bicultural partnership and both highlighting and leading indigenous representation at IFSW (Nash, 2014).

Bicultural practices in social work education

Commitment to honouring the Treaty of Waitangi in both word and action, has strongly influenced the development of social work education in Aotearoa. It has influenced what is taught, and how, and importantly has influenced the development

of Māori-based institutions. In social work education, this has included the introduction of social work in the first modern wānanga (Māori tertiary institution).

Te Wānanga o Raukawa, founded in 1981, was the first contemporary wānanga, and was followed by Te Wānanga o Aotearoa (TWOA), founded in 1984 (Pollock, n.d.). This action by Māori to legitimate traditional knowledge and learning environments was an important structural bulwark against Western hegemony. Interestingly, however, wānanga were not formally recognised as tertiary institutions until the passing of the Education Amendment Act in 1990.

Te Wānanga o Raukawa and TWOA at a national level began social work programmes within wānanga for the first time in 2005 with a degree programme at TWOA (Akhter & Leonard, 2014). Key kaupapa Māori social work scholarship emerged from the TWOA programme, especially by Pohatu (2003), who was also writing before joining TWOA, and more recently from non-Māori faculty at TWOA (Akhter, 2015).

The Kaitiakitanga Framework was developed by the Tangata Whenua Voices of Social Work group for the SWRB to assist it in supporting the development of the primary social work competency of working with Māori. This framework includes three of Pohatu's (2010) takepū (applied principles)—rangatiratanga, manaakitanga and whanaungatanga—now woven into the current competency definition, and added the overarching takepū of kaitiakitanga. Each takepū has features to describe its application in practice (SWRB, 2016c).

When the SWRA was passed into law in 2003 and the first SWRB was established with its mandate to recognise social work programmes, there was a further push to centre Māori knowledge and competence to work with Māori. In the SWRB set of 10 competencies for social work practice, the first competency is that of competence to practise social work with Māori. This has been expanded over the years to now include the use of the Māori takepū outlined above:

The social worker demonstrates this competence by: demonstrating knowledge of the Treaty of Waitangi, te reo Māori and tikanga Māori; articulating how the wider context of Aotearoa New Zealand both historically and currently can impact on practice; Te Rangatiratanga: maintaining relationships that are mana enhancing, self-determining, respectful, mindful of cultural uniqueness, and

acknowledge cultural identity. Te Manaakitanga: utilising practice behaviours that ensure mauri ora with a safe space, being mana enhancing and respectful, acknowledging boundaries and meeting obligations. Te Whanaungatanga: engaging in practice that is culturally sustaining, strengthens relationships, is mutually contributing and connecting, and encourages warmth. (SWRB, 2016b).

Throughout its history, social work in Aotearoa has strived to be more responsive to the needs of Māori and to address equity issues in policy and practice. The journey has not been straightforward; nor has it been uncontested. Nevertheless, it does provide one of the most important contexts within which social work has developed and continues to develop in contemporary practice. For example, the ratifying of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous people in 2008 (United Nations, 2008) was an important milestone for indigenous people everywhere, including in Aotearoa (L. T. Smith, 2012). Equally, the inclusion of indigenous knowledge within the revised international definition of social work in 2014 (IFSW & IASSW, 2014), which had leadership from Aotearoa and was an important global recognition of indigenous rights and knowledge, has been identified as critically important to practice in Aotearoa (Munford & O'Donoghue, 2019b). The link from a social justice and rights approach to affirming indigenous rights and a focus on Māori knowledge and culture is also made (Munford & O'Donoghue, 2019a).

Social work education in Aotearoa: The influence of theory and frameworks

Despite the overarching influence of the Treaty and the demands of cultural resistance over time, Western theories have nevertheless been strongly influential in social work education in Aotearoa. This has provided a deeply embedded monocultural perspective within mainstream education, which struggles to respond to indigenous and broader cultural concerns. The result is an unbalanced curriculum that perpetuates Western dominance in contravention of the profession's stated equity agenda. In common with international experience, professionalised social work education in Aotearoa has been affected by movements of ideas and waves of global and local theoretical influence. For example, in what Harms and Connolly (2019) describe as onion-peeling theories, the early programmes taught humanistic ideals encapsulated in writings from the psychodynamic tradition, with Freud, then Erikson

and Bowlby being the more influential. There were also person-centred approaches, which included the key work of Carl Rogers. These remain influential, to varying degrees, in contemporary practices with their emphasis on supporting insight and self-understanding for service users and social workers alike to bring personal change and practice effectiveness, including through an emphasis on quality relationships.

Challenging these ideas, particularly in the historical context, social work education was influenced by what Harms and Connolly (2019) call faulty-machine theories, such as behaviourism, cognitive behavioural and mindfulness approaches. These theoretical constructs, which emerged largely from psychology, and in particular American psychology, reinforced the importance of measuring change. These theories were regarded as being more receptive to evaluation, and therefore more easily subjected to tests of practice efficacy. Cognitive behavioural therapy is especially prevalent in the interdisciplinary fields of mental health and addictions in Aotearoa, where social workers also use this approach (Staniforth, 2010). However, mindfulness is now part of a wider public health strategy for wellness in Aotearoa that began with the 2009 national mental health wellness campaign using the Five Ways to Wellbeing model, in which one of the ways to wellbeing is practising mindfulness (Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand, 2013).

Both the onion-peeling and faulty-machine theories emerged from the Global North and were increasingly regarded as being both culturally at odds with bicultural practices in Aotearoa and in tension with social justice and the macro social work concerns of the social work profession more broadly. Arguably, this tension existed at the very beginning of Western social work with the Charity Organisation Societies in Britain and the USA linked to Octavia Hill and Mary Richmond respectively, and to the Settlement Movement with Britain's Samuel Barnett of Toynbee Hall and the USA's Jane Addams of Hull House (Nash & Miller, 2013). It was certainly a tension Nash (1998) grappled with as she researched the history of social work education in Aotearoa and sought answers to questions subsequently posed by the challenges of neoliberalism.

Arguably, one of the most influential texts that spearheaded community development in Aotearoa was Ian Shirley's (1982) edited book *Development Tracks*. Creating a counter to the micro practice theories noted above, it offered explicit approaches or paradigms for practice based on a conflict perspective that were useful across community work and social work as alternatives to the perspectives that privileged order over conflict. Included are socialism, anarchism, Marxism, feminism and even a version of Christianity that resonated with liberation theology and related structural approaches (Elliott, 1982). Significantly, it included a seminal chapter by Ranginui Walker (1982), which gave a broad account of Māori suffering under colonisation and the fight for sovereignty, and highlighted the importance of a Māori voice, leading ultimately to the prospect of a partnership approach between Māori and tangata Tiriti (all non-Māori people who have migrated to Aotearoa under the Treaty of Waitangi). Perhaps more than any other chapter, this situated the issues central to practice in Aotearoa and the importance of the challenges to Western hegemony.

Also, at this time, the 1982 national conference of the social work profession had the theme of social justice and adopted the IFSW international definition of social work, which included the goal of bringing about social change in society. At that conference, Māori academic Ranginui Walker warned participants about the growing power of the state that should be countered by a community-based response (Nash, 2001b). This warning was prescient given the major neoliberal structural reforms that were about to be unleashed on Aotearoa in the mid-1980s.

Concurrently, Nash (1998) observed from her research and practice experience the ascendancy of a radical approach to social work in 1986 along with the strengthening of Māori approaches, but also noting a radical–conservative tension that continued over time. This reflected important strands in history, with “community workers, Māori, Christians, humanists, anarchists and the social work profession itself” all having conflicting perspectives that were nevertheless collectively influential (Nash, 1998, p. iv).

The educationalist Paulo Freire, educator, philosopher and advocate of critical pedagogy, also featured strongly: “Freire has had considerable influence on social

work educators and there would be few qualified social workers in Aotearoa/New Zealand who have not heard of his views on social work and social action” (Nash, 1998, p. 15). Nash (1998) noted that Freire’s message of a learning process aligned to the needs of the oppressed and with the goal of personal and societal transformation as key, and anchored her own thesis in his tradition for a liberating form of social work education. In contemporary times, Freire has been strongly embraced by Māori social work educators (Eketone & Walker, 2015).

Over time and often as a critique of earlier theoretical development, further theories have been developed. ‘Story-telling’ theories (Harms & Connolly, 2019) include the strengths-based, narrative and solution-focused approaches, which have gained strong currency in Aotearoa. The strengths approach has been developed by Saleebey and Rapp from the USA, particularly in the field of mental health, where people are engaged in their own change process, working on what is achievable and, based on a participatory action process, working at individual and communal levels. Story-telling theories have been most strongly developed in the narrative approach to therapy and community work as developed by White in Australia and Epston in Aotearoa. They have paid attention to anthropological, feminist, indigenous, postmodern, poststructural and social constructionist ideas. People are supported to explore their identity as a story, to externalise problems, to challenge dominant stories and reauthor stories for their lives, thus resisting oppressive power relations (Harms & Connolly, 2019). Story-telling theories may have elements of both order and conflict perspectives.

Critical social work theory

Critical social work theory and practice has been particularly influential in Aotearoa in both the historical and the contemporary contexts. It has provided a useful platform for challenging a Western conservative hegemony and supporting democratising and decolonising developments in social work education. It has also shown breadth beyond the narrower radical approach of the 1970s and 1980s, to be specifically inclusive of feminist, indigenous and, more broadly, anti-oppressive approaches (Harms & Connolly, 2019). It has built on a range of ideas from these progressive approaches and has included the possibilities of working at multiple levels, from the individual to the

societal, making the link between the personal and the political, all the while keeping a focus on participatory approaches with the goal of social justice. It has had an important influence on social work practice internationally (Adams, Dominelli, & Payne, 2002; Pease, Goldingay, Hosken, & Nipperess, 2016), and in Aotearoa in more recent times (Ife, 2019). Critical theory has also strongly influenced the shaping of the ideas in this thesis, something that will be discussed later in the chapter.

Critical theory, also called critical social theory, had its origins in the 1930s but came to prominence in the social upheavals of the 1970s in the West and is aligned with the conflict perspective. Social structures are regarded as the prime cause of social problems and tend to favour more powerful dominant groups that follow the such dimensions as race, class and gender. From this perspective, the goal of intervention is to transform society to a more equitable set of relations between the dominant and subordinate groups. Critical theory brings together, and arguably integrates, approaches that seek to address social and structural inequalities, including feminist, Marxist, political economy, anti-racist, structural, post-colonialist and anti-oppressive practices. Theorists critique dominant societal relations and seek to provide more equitable alternatives with the goal of liberation for oppressed groups. A clear link is made between social analysis and political practice. Karl Marx is considered a beginning point for critical social theory, subsequently developed by Gramsci, the Frankfurt School and Habermas (Mullaly & West, 2018).

Over time critical theorists have developed across broader fields, such as gender, sexuality, disability, indigenous and culture. Other theoretical groupings fit this tradition, including liberation theology, Freire's theory, structural social work and post-colonial theory (Mullaly & West, 2018). It is interesting to note that there has been a growth in the number of social workers holding a critical approach that aligns with the profession's social justice goals (Mullaly & West, 2018), including within Aotearoa (Ife, 2019) and highlighted within critically reflective practice (Munford & O'Donoghue, 2019a).

Critical theory and social work education

As noted above, critical social work theory provides an integrative frame that embraces the broad equity issues that have emerged throughout this thesis. This has covered a range of structural inequities, such as colonialism, racism, sexism, poverty, heterosexism, ableism and ageism. Critical theory, or at least a critical approach in practice, has been frequently referred to directly or indirectly by social work leaders and educators discussed in this study and is explored in depth within the findings chapters. This is perhaps not surprising given the long-standing influence of critical theory and critical thinking in social work more generally. It is also captured in the GS and is referred to throughout the document, for example, when referencing programme curricula: “3.6 Ensuring that the curricula help social work students to develop skills of critical thinking and scholarly attitudes of reasoning, openness to new experiences and paradigms, and commitment to life-long learning” (IASSW & IFSW, 2004, p. 5). The GS also note the importance of social workers being a “critically self-reflective practitioner”, and therefore notions of critical thinking are deeply embedded in the lexicon of social work. The thrust of the GS is to achieve the social justice and human rights goals of social work, which aligns well with the conflict perspective of critical theory.

An integrative critical social work theory has therefore been used to frame and explore ideas within the thesis, as it engages with notions of structural inequity, such as colonialism, racism, sexism, poverty, heterosexism, ableism and ageism. Given the strength of development of the critical approach over time within Aotearoa social work education, it was perhaps not surprising that research participants chose to reflect upon this approach in their responses. These ideas have been explored in a number of the publications presented within the thesis. Interestingly, the related theme of privilege in the classroom arose relatively late in the research, in Wave 3, when participants talked specifically about privilege and anti-privilege practices within social work education.

The issue of privilege has an emerging body of literature of its own (Pease, 2010), and one that is explored specifically in Chapter 6. The notion of privilege relates to those who personally gain advantage from the inequitable systems in society. It is the

opposite experience of those who suffer because of the oppressive effects of inequity (Pease, 2016). Mullaly and West (2018) have explored the relationship between oppression and privilege, and the reasons why it is important to understand the dynamic between the two:

The major reason why social work ought to be concerned with privilege is that a singular focus on oppression ignores or overlooks the fact that oppression and privilege go hand in hand. You cannot have one without the other. Together they form a symbiotic relationship. (p. 35)

According to these writers, the emphasis on anti-privilege is one of recentring equity relationships, recognising the realities of multiple identities and positions across the equity spectrum. Accordingly, participants in this study explored the complexities of this symbiotic relationship, acknowledging their own privileged status, while at the same time appreciating that they may also experience inequity.

It is interesting to reflect on the updated global social work education instruments, such as the revised global social work definition, which helpfully brings together oppression and privilege as two parts of the problem, in its commentary notes: “The development of critical consciousness through reflecting on structural sources of oppression and/or privilege ... and developing action strategies towards addressing structural and personal barriers are central to emancipatory practice” (IFSW & IASSW, 2014).

The tradition of anti-oppressive social work (Dominelli, 2002), which has been inclusive of decolonising social work, has been redeveloped into a model of anti-oppressive and anti-privilege social work education and practice (Mullaly & West, 2018). Critical theory has helped us explore broad issues of equity, which is a prime concern of social work education, and has provided an integrative frame on which educators can base their practice. Postmodernism has influenced social work since the 1990s to broaden understanding of concepts of identity, power and change processes (Healy, 2014). Postmodern approaches use a discourses framework to analyse the social construction of problems for people that arise from the influence of discourses. Healy notes that postmodern ideas remain contested within social work, with some critical social workers accusing postmodernism of inadequately acknowledging the structural basis

of oppression. In contrast, others see value in the ability of postmodernism to interrupt professional power and to prioritise service users, and in making sense of complex identities and problematic contexts with the purpose of opening up possibilities for agency and activism. Emerging from the Global North, the complex language of postmodernism can be off-putting for students and practitioners. As an influencing framework, postmodernism has nevertheless had a significant impact on generations of social workers and social work educators in Aotearoa. Interestingly, Pease and Nipperess (2016) also argue that postmodernist concepts can be useful in the context of critical social work, and particularly in addressing Western hegemony and its Whiteness, and the need to centre indigenous knowledges.

Arguably, one of the most significant influences upon Aotearoa society (and consequently social work education) has been neoliberalism. Neoliberalism, with its promotion of economic liberalism and market capitalism, was seized wholeheartedly by Aotearoa in the 1980s, ironically by a Labour government, and then strengthened further by the subsequent conservative National government in the 1990s (Kelsey, 1997). Despite its detrimental impact on the nature and fabric of New Zealand society, it has stubbornly remained in place ever since (Kelsey, 2015). The global influence of neoliberalism across social work education has been well discussed (Noble, Strauss, & Littlechild, 2014). Aotearoa social work academics have also responded to the challenges of neoliberalism and shown leadership with progressive counter discourse initiatives such as the Reimagining Social Work blog started in 2015 (Reimagining Social Work, n.d.). This has included the use of critical theory as a tool for analysing the conservative roots of neoliberalism and supporting alternative approaches that focus on more equitable goals, including through indigenous approaches that affirm self-determination for Māori.

Indigenous theories

In the same way that Western-based theory underpinned the initial phase of influence on social work education in Aotearoa, indigenous Māori- and Pacific-based theories have increasingly influenced contemporary practice in more recent times. These have developed and strengthened in parallel with bicultural efforts to change structures and processes, some of which have been described earlier. Māori scholars have been

active in developing theory based on Māori cultural values and practices, and applying these to many areas of human and societal development. Consistent with the commitment to biculturalism demanded by the Treaty, and to advance the interests of Māori, social work education has strongly engaged with Māori theoretical development.

Indigenous scholarship in Aotearoa is inextricably linked to notions of sovereignty, and therefore is explored through the honouring of Māori writers, both from an historical and contemporary perspective. A number of Māori writers have been critically important in the development of social work education in Aotearoa. Kaupapa Māori theory was developed by Graham Hingangaroa Smith, an educationalist, arising from his doctoral thesis *The Development of Kaupapa Māori: Theory and Praxis* (G. H. Smith, 1997). In his thesis he notes the theory's cultural roots and theoretical influence of other Māori writers. The kaupapa Māori approach can be defined as "a Māori way of thinking and doing things which feels culturally appropriate and which takes seriously our [Māori] aspirations" (G. H. Smith, 2015, p. 19). Interestingly, Smith also references critical theory and theorists such as Gramsci and Habermas as influencers of his work, particularly regarding the emancipatory project of critical theory (G. H. Smith, 2015).

Smith describes his work as both a theory and a transformative practice, and he particularly examines education within Aotearoa and the way Māori have resisted Western hegemony and thus the influence of colonisation. Critical has been the establishment of Māori language-based education at preschool, primary, secondary and tertiary levels beginning in the 1980s. The kaupapa Māori approach has become a major influence within Māoridom and is increasingly used by non-Māori as integral to culturally responsive practice, including within social work (Hollis-English, 2015). Using the term a 'critical Kaupapa Māori approach' has been advanced by Māori social work academics Eketone and Walker (2016) and noted as important for social work education.

The work of Emeritus Professor Sir Mason Durie, psychiatrist and senior academic, has also been fundamental in the development of social work education in Aotearoa. Working at the transformational forefront of Māori health, he developed Te Whare

Tapa Whā wellness framework (1998), which has been seminal in holistically supporting Māori health and mental health. Based on the metaphor of a whare (house) and its parts, it incorporates four dimensions: taha tinana (physical health), taha hinengaro (mental health), taha wairua (spiritual health) and taha whānau (family health) (Durie, 1998). This framework is used throughout the health system in Aotearoa, and is a key framework taught in social work education to support practice (Hollis-English, 2015).

Linda Tuhiwai-Smith is well known for her publication *Decolonising Methodologies* (L. T. Smith, 2012). This work combines a treatise on the struggle for and the process of decolonisation for Māori, and on a Māori research methodology that has significance for research generally across Aotearoa and internationally, but even more so for local social work educators (L. T. Smith, 2012).

A number of Māori social work theorists have been critically important to the development of indigenised practices. Tania Pohatu developed the Ngā Takepū framework based on Māori values and practices, which reinforce the importance of: takepū āhurutanga (creating a quality or safe space), tino rangatiratanga (recognising integrity), mauri ora (promoting wellbeing), te whakakoha rangatiratanga (respectful relationships), kaitiakitanga (guardianship) and taukumekume (recognising positive and negative tensions) (Pohatu, 2010). Āta, a key component of Ngā Takepū, is a transformative approach for the social services based on the principle of developing respectful relationships (Pohatu, 2004).

Leland Ruwhiu, another leading Māori social worker and academic, is well known for his work in developing mana-enhancing practice (upholding value) with attention to the spiritual, human and natural worlds (L. Ruwhiu, 2017). The three recognition or foundational points for Ruwhiu's approach are "the significance of history, including Te Tiriti o Waitangi; narratives as promoters of identity; and Māori concepts of wellbeing" (L. Ruwhiu, 2017). The mana-enhancing approach developed by L. Ruwhiu is widely used by Māori and by many who work with Māori service users (P. A. Ruwhiu, 2019b).

In Aotearoa, Pacific people represented 7.4% of the population in 2013 (Ministry for Pacific Peoples, n.d.), and responsiveness to Pacific people in practice has been

identified as important in social work. It is not surprising, therefore, that Pacific theories are another distinctive expression of indigenous theory found in Aotearoa scholarship. Pacific theories speak to the knowledge of indigenous peoples of the Pacific Ocean, who share genealogical roots with Māori, who originally sailed to Aotearoa from Eastern Polynesia in the 13th century (Howe, 2005). The major Pacific framework used in the Aotearoa health sector is based on the Fonofale model of health (Pulotu-Endemann, 2001). Similar to Durie's Te Whare Tapa Whā model, it is based on the metaphor of a house, this time a Samoan *fale*, its foundation representing family and its roof representing culture. Like Durie's model, its approach is holistic, responding to all dimensions of human health. It is a high-level Pacific theory that has strongly influenced social work (Mafile'o, Mitaera, & Mila, 2019), particularly in work with Pacific peoples.

Democratising practices and decolonising practices

Because of its applied nature, this thesis has drawn upon a range of ideas from both theory and practice, and it is invariably influenced by the historical, cultural and theoretical influences discussed earlier. However, two key constructs are central to this thesis: democratising practices and decolonising practices.

Democratising practices

While notions of democratising practices might be subsumed into critical theory, they emerged as key ideas within the thesis and, as such, have been explored specifically, particularly in the context of Wave 1 of the research. The document analysis of social work education standards, reported in article form in Chapter 2, highlighted the social justice and equity goals of the standards and the ways in which those goals were to be operationalised within social work programmes. This imperative of translating equity goals into practice led to the exploration of Shapiro's writings that focus on fighting injustice and pursuing equity through the democratisation of practices. His key text *The Real World of Democratic Theory* (Shapiro, 2011) takes a very applied approach and aligns nicely with social work as an applied profession. Points of alignment include a human rights focus, and the principles of self-determination and participation. The global context is also highlighted as an important canvas on which to explore a range

of expressions of these principles and the linkages between them, which correlates well with international social work as an interconnected global network.

The recently revised global definition of social work states “Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work” (IFSW & IASSW, 2014), which aligns with the other key global social work instruments, such as the *Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles* (IASSW, 2018) and the GS (IASSW & IFSW, 2004). The global social work agenda that began in 2010 is a further example of a concerted effort by the profession to be responsible global and local citizens. These higher-order principles attest to a strengthening of a rights-based approach to thinking and practice in global social work, which also aligns with the human rights principles inherent within democratic theory.

Any discussion of human rights begins with the United Nations’ (1948) *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and writers have emphasised the moral obligations that societies have to better enable citizens in everyday circumstances to live respected and meaningful lives (Connolly & Ward, 2008). They advocate the importance of embedding rights-based ideas within law and policy to provide the proper infrastructure for the implementation of those rights. Thus, a human rights approach to practice can operate like an ethical scaffold as practitioners navigate their way through systems while seeking to provide effective service (Connolly & Ward, 2008). This aligns well with Shapiro’s (2011) democratic theory and its goal to “promote the democratisation of power relations as they are reproduced into the future” (p. 273).

The notion of democratising practices can be used as a way to describe how a commitment to the high values of social justice and human rights can be put into practice at the policy, programmatic and practice levels of social work education. This points to the importance of operationalising values and commitments across all three dimensions of influence in social work education rather than running the risk of only focusing on just one or two dimensions.

The restraints of neoliberalism and managerialism have been raised by social work educators discussed in this research as major inhibitors to the democratisation of higher education (Amsler, 2014). Shapiro (2011) recognised the prioritisation by many

countries of the economic power of globalisation and how it has, in recent times, overtaken a focus on democracy, particularly through the global financial crisis of 2007–2008.

The Treaty and decolonising practices

The theme of colonisation and ideas relating to decolonisation have permeated this thesis. As noted earlier in the chapter, notions of cultural resistance and increased responsiveness to Māori have been key features in the development of indigenised practices in Aotearoa. It is therefore not surprising that the Treaty and commitment to the Treaty have loomed large in the thesis. The Treaty functions as an organising framework for social work education, and therefore, social work educators dedicate a significant amount of time wrestling with implementation issues and working out ways in which practices can be best influenced by Treaty imperatives. Given the omnipresent nature of the Treaty and its influence on social work education, it would be surprising if participants had not identified the Treaty as a key organising framework in their appreciation and framing of policy and programme development, as well as practice within the classroom. Thus, the Treaty operates as a national project. The notion of partnership between Māori and the Crown is now extended to tangata Tiriti. Thus, the Treaty operates as a national project. While the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) adopted in 2008 (United Nations, 2008) has provided a global indigenous rights framework in more recent times, in Aotearoa Te Tiriti o Waitangi has provided the mandate for contemporary decolonisation (L. T. Smith, 2012).

My own position as an insider in this study of social work education has required that I also wrestle with the imperatives of Treaty implementation. It has influenced the ways in which the thesis has developed, both in terms of undertaking research within a bicultural frame and working through the Treaty expectations of scholarship within the context of Aotearoa. These imperatives are discussed particularly in Chapter 3.

Overview of the Thesis

The research presented in this thesis is an exploratory analysis of equity agendas in social work education in the context of policy, programmes and practice domains (3-P domains).

Research aim and questions

The aim of the research was to investigate the extent to which the equity-related themes identified in the first wave of research were operationalised in the programmes and practices of social work education in Aotearoa.

The first wave of research focused on the research question, What are the key themes of influence across the GS and the country-specific standards of Australia and Aotearoa, and how well do they align?

The second wave of research addressed the research question, How are democratising and decolonising themes addressed in social work education programmes in Aotearoa?

The third wave of research explored the research question, How are democratising and decolonising themes addressed in social work education practices in Aotearoa?

Methodological frame

These 3-P domains present a frame for the thesis that was used to inform particular stages of the research, first, with an analysis of standards that influence social work education, and then an exploration of equity agendas within programme development and the ways in which equity issues play out within the classroom:

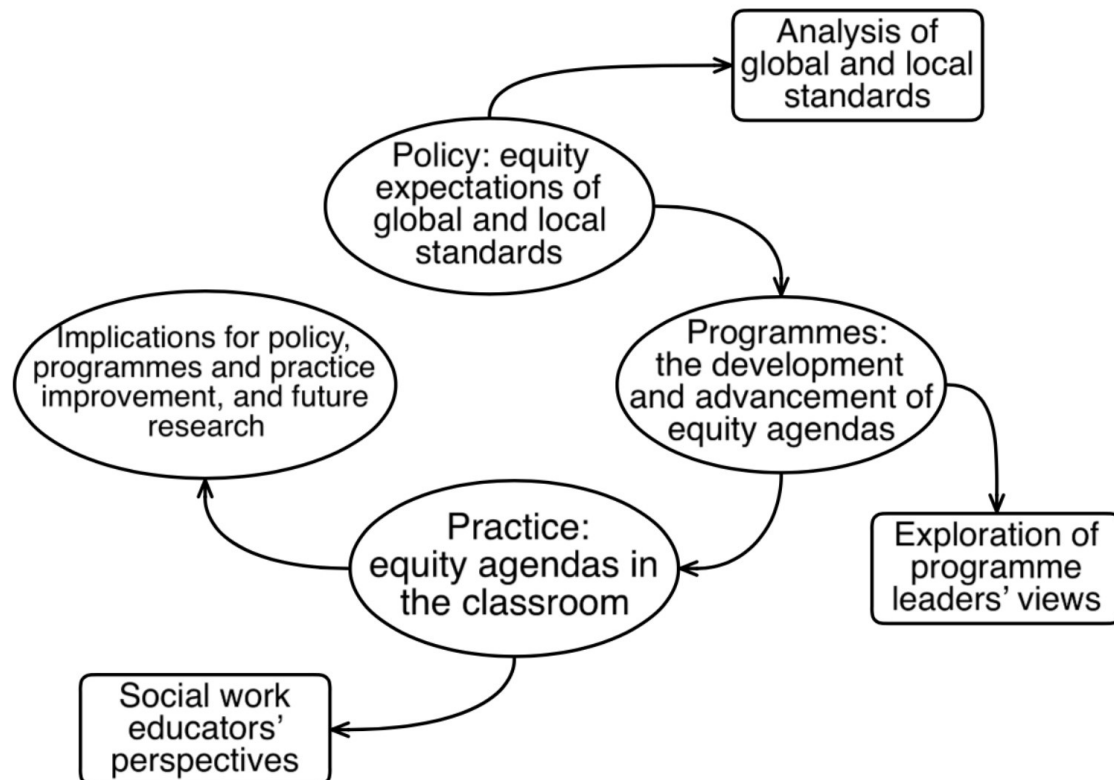


Figure 1.1. The 3-P domains as an organising framework

Although this may appear to have been a predetermined linear process, it was strongly iterative as one stage of the research influenced another, creating the 3-P frame that developed over time. For example, the democratising and decolonising themes identified in the first wave of the research (the policy analysis in Chapter 2) critically informed the research questions and the methodological approach undertaken in Waves 2 and 3 of the research (the programme domain in Chapters 4 and 5, and the practice domains in Chapters 6 and 7 discussed below).

This thesis is also applied in nature, which is not necessarily uncommon within an applied discipline such as social work. This has enabled a practice-issues-framing approach (Herold, 2017), and therefore, theory and frameworks were both used and created to support the strengthening of policy, programmes and practice development.

Finally, it is important to note that the thesis was undertaken with publications. Accordingly, each publication presented was integrated into the narrative of the thesis

across the 3-P domains of policy, programmes and practice. Presenting the thesis with publication nevertheless created some challenges in telling the story of the research since articles necessarily share some content, albeit from a different perspective. The majority of publications have a method section with shared content across the waves of research. Because this was important to the integrity of the article, these have been retained in the relevant chapters even though it creates some repetition.

Outline of thesis chapters

Chapter 1 Introduction

This current chapter has provided a brief exploration of the personal and professional context within which the thesis developed. Literature relating to the historical, cultural and theoretical dimensions that have influenced and shaped social work education in Aotearoa was reviewed, along with three key constructs that strongly influenced the development of the thesis: critical theory, and democratising and decolonising practices.

Chapter 2 The disciplinary policy context of social work education

This chapter provides an analysis of the global and local standards of Australia and Aotearoa, representing the policy domain within the 3-P frame. It constitutes the first wave of the research, and includes an analysis of the literature relating to regulatory frameworks. Two publications are incorporated into this chapter:

McNabb, D. J., & Connolly, M. (2019). The relevance of Global Standards to social work education in Australasia. *International Social Work*, 62(1), 35–47. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020872817710547>

McNabb, D. (2017). Democratising and decolonising social work education: Opportunities for leadership [online]. *Advances in Social Work and Welfare Education*, 19(1), 121–126. Retrieved from <https://www.informit.com>

These articles establish the central identified themes of democratising and decolonising practices as important influences within social work education. These two themes then form the basis of Waves 2 and 3 of the research with respect to their application in programme and practice delivery in Aotearoa.

Chapter 3 Methodology

This chapter explores the rationale for the research undertaken and the qualitative research methodology employed. Epistemological themes and critiques of qualitative research are considered. The first wave of research is the document analysis noted above. It explores the research question, What are the key themes of influence across the GS and the country-specific standards of Australia and Aotearoa, and how well do they align? This content policy analysis provided the basis for a core set of questions that were used in Waves 2 and 3 of the research.

The second wave of research focused on democratising and decolonising themes relating to policies and programmes. It involved semi-structured interviews with social work education programme leaders in Aotearoa. The research question addressed was, How are democratising and decolonising themes addressed in social work education programmes in Aotearoa? This led to an exploration of the ways in which democratising and decolonising practices were given effect to in programme development and delivery.

The third wave of research focused on democratising and decolonising themes relating to practices in the classroom. It involved a mix of focus groups and interviews using semi-structured questions with social work educators in programmes in Aotearoa. This wave explored the research question, How are democratising and decolonising themes addressed in social work education practices in Aotearoa? Responses explored the two themes particularly within the context of classroom practice. The implications of researching within a Treaty-based cultural context are discussed.

Chapter 4 Democratising programmes in Aotearoa: From the perspective of social work education leaders

This chapter reports on the findings of Wave 2 of the research and examines the views of social work education leaders with respect to the theme of democratising practices across the programme domain. The following article is embedded in this chapter:

McNabb, D. (2020). Pursuing equity in social work education: Democratising practices in Aotearoa New Zealand. *Australian Social Work*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0312407X.2020.1723656>

The chapter considers the role of leaders in advancing democratisation through the influence of an equity focus in the regulatory process; managing the effects of neoliberalism and the institutional environment; supporting the student voice, representation and diversity; developing an equity-based curriculum and pedagogy; supporting staff activism; and recruiting and sustaining a diverse workforce.

Chapter 5 Decolonising programmes in Aotearoa: From the perspective of social work education leaders

This chapter reports on the findings related to the decolonising theme explored in Wave 2 of the research within the domain of programmes. The following article forms the basis of the chapter:

McNabb, D. (2019). Decolonising social work education in Aotearoa New Zealand. *Advances in Social Work and Welfare Education*, 21(1), 35–50.
Retrieved from <https://www.informit.com>

The chapter explores the challenges faced by leaders in operationalising a commitment to a decolonising approach that was favoured by all programme leaders participating in the research. Having Māori staff was identified as critical, but invariably there were too few, often because of the regulatory qualification requirement. Leaders noted that Māori knowledge and practices needed to be better integrated within the curriculum. Non-Māori were identified as having an important role in confronting the harmful effects of colonisation and practising respectful partnership with Māori. However, the enablers of decolonising practices were founded on the authorising environment of Te Tiriti of Waitangi.

Chapter 6 Democratising practices in Aotearoa: From the perspective of social work educators

This chapter reports on Wave 3 of the research and examines the theme of democratisation. This sits within the domain of practice and relates specifically to democratising practices within the classroom.

In addressing democratising practices, it foregrounds the theme of privilege. This includes the way privilege is supported in institutional systems through the impact of neoliberalism and colonisation. Four key themes are identified: White privilege and the

institutional context, responsibility for addressing White privilege in the classroom, broader issues of privilege and the relationship between regulation and privilege.

Chapter 7 Decolonising practices in Aotearoa: From the perspective of social work educators

This chapter reports on the findings of the decolonising theme explored in Wave 3 with social work educators relating specifically to the domain of practice. The following article is embedded in the narrative of this chapter:

McNabb, D. (2019). A Treaty based framework for mainstream social work education in Aotearoa New Zealand: Educators talk about their practice. *Aotearoa New Zealand Social Work*, 31(4), 4–17.
<https://doi.org/10.11157/anzswj-vol31iss4id667>

Based on the decolonising findings of Wave 3, the chapter proposes a Treaty-based framework for advancing decolonising practices in the classroom. The indigenous conceptualisation of knowing, being and doing was interpreted for the Aotearoa context (Martin & Mirraboopa, 2003): Ngā Mōhiotanga—knowing, understanding Te Tiriti and a kaupapa (topic or purpose) Māori approach; Ngā Whakaahuatanga—being, integrating a Tiriti-based programme identity including the responsibility of non-Māori for White privilege and contributing to the partnership; and Te Whakatinanatanga—doing, operationalising kaupapa Māori practices and being responsive to Māori.

Chapter 8 Leadership

This chapter discusses the implications of the research from a policy, programme and practice perspective. The major twin themes of this thesis are addressed: the democratising and decolonising practices that promote an equity agenda. The discussion is grouped under the domain headings: implications for policy, implications for programmes and implications for practice.

In addition, the chapter identifies leadership as an important element in the development of an equity agenda and includes the following publication:

McNabb, D. (2019). Democratizing social work education: A leadership framework for action. In M. Connolly, C. Williams, & D. Spence Coffey (Eds.), *Strategic leadership in social work education* (pp. 101–115). New York, NY: Springer International. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-25052-2_8

Informed by the three waves of research, the leadership framework for action supports democratising and decolonising practices, and in particular, the importance of creating the mindset within the organisational culture; building the authorising environment where processes are legitimised throughout the system; supporting the workforce because they are key to achieving democratisation; advancing inclusive pedagogies and cultural responsiveness, which requires unified staff; and understanding impact and improvement, which is important for sustaining change over time.

Decolonising practices are expressed through their role in ako (reciprocal and collaborative learning), along with pedagogical practice, which has been developed into a framework. It is argued that the implementation of this framework in practice is critical for the achievement of decolonisation within social work education. The importance of intersectionality and reflexive practice and pedagogy is discussed.

Chapter 9 Discussion

This final chapter discusses some of the challenges and opportunities that an equity-focused agenda presents for social work education, particularly in research. Informed by the findings in the thesis, and using the domains of policy, programmes and practice, examples of democratising and decolonising research areas are suggested for future research. The implications of undertaking bicultural research are discussed, particularly in the context of practice in Aotearoa. A local and global research agenda for social work education is proposed as a key strategy for influencing the core domains of policy, programmes and practice.

Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the field of social work education in Aotearoa, the focus on equity themes within the policy context and the question of how well equity-based policy is demonstrated within programmes and educators' practice. Three waves of research began with a literature and policy analysis that covered the historical, cultural and theoretical dimensions that have influenced and shaped social work education in Aotearoa. This analysis produced the twin themes of democratising and decolonising practice. These themes were developed within Wave 2 of the research through their

application to programmes, then applied in Wave 3 to educators' practice. The literature and policy analysis are explored in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER 2

THE POLICY CONTEXT OF SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

As noted in Chapter 1, in 2004 IASSW and IFSW developed the GS as an expression of their joint commitment to strengthen critical social work education and to support its development around the globe (IASSW & IFSW, 2004). Resulting from the global social work, social work education and social development bodies' joint programme of action, the subsequent launch of the Global Agenda in 2010 was the collective call for a more equitable world (IASSW, ICSW, & IFSW, 2012). As members of the global social work community, Australia and Aotearoa are committed to supporting the GS, while at the same time they have country-specific social work education standards and a process for approving social work programmes. It is not clear, however, how well these documented standards align with each other or what the potential breadth of influence is that they represent. The potential to align local, regional and global sets of standards and leverage the discipline's equity agenda is considered in Chapter 9 of the thesis.

This chapter presents the findings from the document analysis of the GS and the country-specific standards of Australia and Aotearoa to investigate their alignment with respect to their themes of influence. The research question for this first wave of research was, What are the key themes of influence across the GS and the country-specific standards of Australia and Aotearoa, and how well do they align?

The relevance of Global Standards to social work education in Australasia

Embedded below is the first of two articles incorporated in this chapter. This article reports on the findings of the document analysis:

McNabb, D. J., & Connolly, M. (2019). The relevance of Global Standards to social work education in Australasia. *International Social Work*, 62(1), 35–47. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020872817710547>

Introduction

The GS was published in 2004 with the purpose of promoting quality social work education along with benchmark opportunities for national- or local-level social work

education providers. The establishment of the GS (IASSW & IFSW, 2004) was the outcome of the Global Minimum Qualifying Standards Committee jointly formed by IASSW and IFSW in 2000. Its purpose was to elucidate what social work represented at a global level (Sewpaul & Jones, 2005). It occurred at a time when the global profession had begun holding joint international conferences (1996 in Hong Kong, 2000 in Montreal and 2004 in Adelaide) and when the revised global social work definition was agreed to by IASSW and IFSW in 2001 (Sewpaul & Jones, 2005). In 2004 both bodies also approved the *Statement of Principles: Ethics in Social Work* policy (IASSW & IFSW, 2004). This evidenced a convergence of ideas about global social work and laid the foundation for subsequent initiatives such as the Global Agenda in 2012, which was also co-authored by the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) (IASSW et al., 2012).

How the GS influence social work education at both the international and the local level is an important area for research. Indeed, various countries and regions have been subjected to analysis using the GS, for example, Japan and South Africa (Sakaguchi & Sewpaul, 2011); the Asia-Pacific region (Noble, 2004); the North America and Caribbean region (Healy, 2004); and South Africa, England and Canada (Spolander, Pullen-Sansfacon, Brown, & Engelbrecht, 2011). Themes emerged such as the tension between the importance of local and indigenous development of social work education standards and the value of global standards. There is an argument that regions of the world, such as North America and the Caribbean, that are still in the process of developing local and regional expressions of social work education are at risk of being stifled by the GS (Healy, 2004). The socio-political context was highlighted as an important backdrop for social work education standards with the effect of a neoliberal discourse in England and Canada “that individualizes and pathologizes social issues” (Spolander et al., 2011, p. 819). Research into the GS and multiculturalism has also been explored (Akintayo, Hämäläinen, & Rissanen, 2016).

Further developing the knowledge base, in 2000 IASSW established a census committee to work on the development of social work programmes globally. Research was undertaken in that year to capture data on schools that were members of IASSW. Subsequent to the GS being published in 2004, further research was undertaken to

track developments in schools since the 2000 research and to incorporate aspects of the GS. Building on this earlier research, a survey was undertaken in 2010. It found a major growth in social work education programmes between 2000 and 2010, although the census was not a representative sample of all schools or even of the subset of IASSW members. Gaps in meeting the GS included that only half of the respondents reported required course content in social work history, values or ethics and 20% of the required courses were taught by non-social work educators. It was noted, however, that the expansion of social work programmes was indicative of social work's potential for the global promotion of social justice and development (Barretta-Herman, Leung, Littlechild, Parada, & Wairire, 2014).

As yet, there has been no analysis of the influence of the GS in the Australasian context. In response to this gap, this research reports on the findings of a qualitative, comparative document analysis to explore the alignment between the GS and local standards in Australia and Aotearoa. It then considers the implications of this for Australasian systems of social work education. By way of context, prior to reporting on the study, the article briefly discusses the development of the GS, including the situation in Australia and Aotearoa prior to their introduction, is briefly discussed and provides a brief description of the GS and of local standards.

Developing inclusive standards

Developing the GS proved to be no easy task. The purpose of the standards is to positively influence practices within social work education, while being inclusive of local needs and interests. The committee took care to address the range of opinions relating to social work education standards and emphasised a process that was as inclusive as possible. They noted in particular the importance of context, which can be highly influential but potentially in tension with the notion of a single global framework. The GS attempted to avoid reductionist language and a simplistic competencies approach so as not to further fragment and deprofessionalise social work. The notion of minimum standards was contentious because of its limiting potential, and in particular, its potential to negatively affect poorer programmes. Although some argued that more detailed prescription was needed, the GS were generally considered prescriptive enough. The authors argued that their intent was to

be aspirational (Sewpaul & Jones, 2005), an intent that fits well with the notion of standards also influencing the democratisation of practices over time.

While the authors attempted to mitigate the influence of Western hegemony on the development of the GS, there was nevertheless subsequent criticism of this influence in relation to China (Yip, 2004) and more generally about the impact of internationalising trends within social work (Gray & Fook, 2004).

Social work education pre-Global Standards

Social work education in Australasia during the 20th century was influenced by the Western hegemony mentioned in the GS. Therefore, social work education in Australian and New Zealand was strongly influenced by countries such as the UK and the USA and social work education within those countries. While there have been similarities in development, there have also been significant differences as each country has responded to cultural contexts and political developments.

In Australia social work has always been taught at the university level. The Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) undertakes the approval of social work programmes and has done so by mutual agreement since the 1960s, with policies that are also regularly updated (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2012). The situation in Aotearoa is far more complex. For many years there has been a mix of university, polytechnic, wānanga and private training establishment-based social work programmes. A range of professional programme approval systems have also operated over time. Universities have always been approved by the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (NZVCC), whereas non-university programmes have been approved by NZQA. In 2003 statutory registration was introduced in New Zealand and now all social work programmes are subject to the recognition process of the SWRB. There is no registration of social workers in Australia, although the AASW is currently campaigning for its introduction.

Schools of social work in both Aotearoa and Australia have high membership of IASSW, which provides another way in which they are influenced by the GS.

The 2004 Global Standards

The GS consist of nine sets of standards: the school's core purpose or mission statement; programme objectives and outcomes; programme curricula, including fieldwork; core curricula; professional staff; social work students; structure, administration, governance and resources; cultural diversity; and social work values and ethics. They are based on the international social work definition and on the 13 core purposes of the social work profession that have been developed. It is likely that the *Statement of Principles: Ethics in Social Work* (IFSW & IASSW, 2004) was consulted in the deliberations of the committee because it was published around the time the GS were established.

The GS were developed to express the purposes of the social work profession in social work education. Their overall goal is to promote quality social work education; one of their purposes is to “benchmark national standards against international standards” (Sewpaul & Jones, 2005, p. 224). The key question in this article is how the GS relate to the social work education standards in Aotearoa and Australia.

The 2015 Aotearoa standards

The SWRB has established a policy that incorporates social work education standards—*The Process for Recognition/Re-recognition of Social Work Qualifications in New Zealand* (SWRB, 2015b). Policy related to programme recognition by the SWRB includes a set of social worker competencies at a beginning practitioner level, which all students should meet on completion of their degree. There is a graduate profile that programme providers are required to incorporate into specific learning outcomes in their programme. Finally, there is a set of programme standards that programmes must meet to be recognised by the SWRB. The programme standards include six areas: governance, curriculum and fieldwork, student centredness, professional and stakeholder collaboration, resources, and quality assurance. Other policy from the SWRB that applies to registered social workers and broadly across the profession includes the *Code of Conduct* for social workers (SWRB, 2016a).

The 2012 Australian standards

The key document is the *Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards* (ASWEAS) (AASW, 2012), which has associated guidelines on the following areas: programme delivery, essential core curriculum content, field education programmes, and organisational arrangements and governance of social work programmes. The *AASW Code of Ethics* (AASW, 2010) and *Practice Standards* (AASW, 2013) are also referenced. Reviews of the standards are regularly undertaken with widespread consultation. Programme accreditation is required on a five-yearly basis.

Methodology

The research seeks to understand the key themes of influence across the GS and the country-specific standards of Australia and Aotearoa, and their degree of alignment. To explore this, the study undertook a qualitative, content analysis of three sets of social work education standards: the GS, the Aotearoa SWRB standards and the Australian AASW standards. This document analysis fits within the broad approach of using secondary data as a well-established approach to research, particularly within social research (E. Smith, 2008). The analysis of documents forms a field of research in its own right and contributes to the development of knowledge. It is noted, however, that documents must be situated in their context and regarded as socially constructed entities (Prior, 2003). Spolander et al. (2011) used a qualitative content analysis methodology in their comparative document analysis of national sets of social work education standards and the GS. They noted that this methodology was well suited to examining documents in the public domain and that it allowed for some latitude in going beyond the words within documents to the exploration of meaning, provided there was clarity about the inclusion and exclusion of criteria used. Utilising a similar approach to Spolander et al. (2011), this study undertook a content analysis, drawing out common themes and exploring areas of similarity and difference, as well as exploring meaning within the documents.

The documents compared in the research are currently used by social work professional bodies and are thus already in the public domain. The first-level analysis of the documents involved careful reading, word by word, of the text to compare the use of language across the documents and the degree of emphasis within them. The

level of match in their policy was assessed as being high, high/medium, medium, medium/low or low/non-existent. There are nine standards within the GS and a preamble that incorporates both the international definition and the 13 core purposes of social work. These became 11 sections against which each country's set of standards were assessed for their level of alignment. Each section included several subcategories. Where all the subcategories aligned with the GS, a high grading was given. Where only one or two of these subcategories did not align with the GS, a medium/high grading was given. A medium grade was given where a more significant gap in alignment was assessed. There were no grades assessed below medium (see Table 2.1).

The second-level analysis involved an examination of the text in context for the meaning it conveyed. This was a reductive process whereby themes were identified within the data. An important part of this interpretative phase was the confirmation of the themes by returning to the data and further interrogating the links to ensure that the themes were well grounded in the data.

Findings

In the findings from the comparison of the Australasian standards with the GS, we noted that overall there was a strong alignment. Each section had a focus on the points where the level of alignment was weaker. Sections have been noted for ready identification in the GS and with the SWRB and the AASW standards. Table 2.1 summarises the grades for each country in each of the 11 sections of the GS. The SWRB gained six high grades, three medium/high grades, and two medium grades. The AASW gained seven high grades and four medium/high grades.

Table 2.1. Comparison of Australasian standards with the Global Standards.

Global Standards	SWRB	AASW
International definition of social work	Medium	High
Core purposes of social work	High	High
1. Standards regarding the school's core purpose or mission statement: standard clearly articulated, reflects values and ethics, equity aspiration, service user rights	Medium	Medium/high
2. Standards regarding programme objectives and outcomes	High	High
3. Standards with regard to programme curricula, including field education	High	High
4. Standards with regard to core curricula	High	High
5. Standards with regard to professional staff	Medium/high	Medium/high
6. Standards with regard to social work students	Medium/high	Medium/high
7. Standards with regard to structure, administration, governance and resources	Medium/high	Medium/high
8. Standards with regard to cultural and ethnic diversity and gender inclusiveness	High	High
9. Standards with regard to values and ethical codes of conduct of the social work profession	High	High

Social work definition and core purposes

The international definition of social work is outlined at the beginning of the GS, and the SWRB scored medium and the AASW scored high in their alignment to the definition. The definition was directly quoted by AASW in its standards but was only obliquely referred to by the SWRB in its code of conduct.

The 13 core purposes of social work are also outlined at the beginning of the GS as a further foundation piece for the standards that follow, and both countries scored high in their alignment. The core purposes were well covered by the AASW because of their clear articulation of core social work principles at the beginning of their standards, which are directly linked to the global social work professional body, IFSW. The SWRB was generally aligned to the core purposes through the programme recognition policy

and its code of conduct, although comment is made below about the level of clear alignment with the 10th core purpose of engagement in social and political action.

Standard 1: Purposes or mission statement

Equity, rights and the participation of service users was fundamental to the GS and its expectation of the purpose or mission statement of schools; the SWRB scored medium and the AASW scored medium/high in their alignment with the GS. The GS were strong on the expectation that programmes as a whole reflect social work principles—equity in particular (GS 1.3). The SWRB was limited in its expectations of programmes in this regard and it minimally discussed equity within its standards. The SWRB only mentioned service users as a broad-level stakeholder in programme review (SWRB 4.1). The AASW was stronger in its articulation of broad social work principles that advocate equity, and although it was not spelt out well in its standards, it was stronger in its articulation of broad service user participation.

Standard 2: Programme objectives

Both bodies scored high for their objectives. The only component of this standard that was not well evidenced by the SWRB relates to the coherence of the instructional methods with the cognitive and affective development of social work students (GS 2.3). However, instructional methods were usually covered by the programme accreditation process carried out by the tertiary education governance bodies, either NZQA or NZVCC, which was applied to any type of degree programme at a tertiary institution in Aotearoa. This was also covered by the AASW.

Standard 3: Curricula (fieldwork)

Both bodies scored high for fieldwork curricula. The GS were generally well evidenced by each country. The only area that was weaker for the SWRB again related to the coherence of the methods of instruction with “the school’s programme objectives, its expected outcomes and its mission statement” (GS 3.1).

Standard 4: Core curricula

Both bodies scored high for core curricula. The GS were well evidenced by each country. The AASW has a more prescriptive curriculum than the SWRB, which may influence the coverage of the GS. The GS themselves, however, focused on broad

areas of knowledge and learning, which echoed the more broadly descriptive nature of the SWRB policy (Beddoe, 2014, p. 22).

Standard 5: Professional staff

Both bodies scored medium/high in relation to professional staff. The GS expected an adequate provision of professional staff in number and range of expertise, with appropriate qualifications (GS 5.1). The SWRB required an institutional workload policy and “sufficient staff resources to generate and support a research active social work staff group” (SWRB 5.10 and 5.11). In contrast, the AASW in its resources and staffing standard (5.3) stated that its programmes “must be adequately resourced if the required educational outcomes are to be achieved”. It then went on to specify that a minimum staffing group of five full-time equivalent social work staff was required. It also noted that a quality field education programme required adequate resources (AASW, 2012, p. 22).

The GS, however, required a statement of equity-based policies for staffing with considerations of gender, ethnicity, race and other forms of diversity (GS 5.4). Neither country had an explicit policy on this, although there could be an argument for a broader alignment. The SWRB required the mission of the social work unit to reflect the values and ethical principles of social work (SWRB 1.4). The AASW required that “both content and delivery in social work education will demonstrate the profession’s core values” (AASW 2) and that these core values “must be practised in social work education” (AASW 3) (AASW, 2012, pp. 9–10). It would be helpful to know if these expectations are ever assessed by either regulator, with a focus on equity policies. It is possible that the institutions in which the programmes sit may have staffing equity policies that align with this standard.

Standard 6: Students

Both bodies scored medium/high in relation to students. The one gap in the evidencing of this standard related to the student cohort being representative of the community within which the programme operates, with due recognition to minority groups (GS6.2). As with Standard 5, this is partly covered for both countries by general adherence to social work values and ethics, but we suggest it is unlikely to be assessed

unless it is an explicit requirement. It is also possible that the institutions in which the programmes sit may have student equity policies that align with this standard.

Standard 7: Structure, administration, governance and resources

Both bodies scored medium/high for structure, administration, governance and resources. The general theme of resourcing was raised here. Both countries were clear about having a social work academic leading the school (GS7.1). Adequate budgetary allocation (GS7.5) was covered by both countries. Having adequate administrative staff (GS7.8) was not directly addressed by the SWRB, although it could be subsumed under their general budgetary allocation standard. Gender equity and representation of the community in relation to staffing were a repeated focus (GS7.11–12), and as noted previously, this was not specifically addressed by either the SWRB or the AASW, although they both referred to working in accordance with core social work values and ethics.

Standard 8: Cultural and ethnic diversity and gender inclusiveness

The GS was well evidenced by both countries in relation to inclusiveness.

Standard 9: Values and ethical conduct

The GS was well evidenced by both countries in terms of values and ethical conduct.

Discussion

It is clear from the analysis of the GS that they emphasise adherence to core social work values and reinforce the importance of equity in all aspects of service delivery. Rights and the participation of service users is a fundamental thrust; the document analysis also identified a number of areas where the democratisation of equity-related issues could add value to both the development and the implementation of the GS and of local standards. These areas include service user and student participation, student representativeness, indigenous rights and political action, gender and cultural equity, access and equity, and quality social work education and broader issues of equity.

The research suggests that promoting quality social work education through the development of standards presents important opportunities to influence the democratisation of social work education. Acting in these democracy-sustaining ways

(Shapiro, 2011) is very consistent with the broader values of social work, captured in the global definition of social work and its emphasis on empowerment, liberation and the promotion of social change. As policies and standards are developed and redesigned, we have the ability to “promote the democratisation of power relations as they are reproduced into the future” (Shapiro, 2011, p. 273). Thus, democratising power dimensions through the GS creates the potential to shift attitudes within social work education over time, raising issues and influencing norms.

Service user and student participation

Service user participation is reinforced in the GS and is expected in all facets of the programme (GS1.4), and across the range of service user linkages with the school (GS7.15). Attention to service user participation extends to the school’s involvement with the regulatory social work bodies (GS9.6) and is often extended to carer participation. As we see from the analysis, the AASW is more specific about service user participation than the SWRB, although neither articulate the focus on service users particularly well. Student involvement in the programme is limited in both the AASW and the SWRB standards. It is notable that students are not specifically included in governance of the programme as ‘consumers’, whereas service users or public consumers are specifically included. This is a discrepancy with the Aotearoa and Australian standards both specifying student participation in programme governance.

Internationally, the push for service user participation is strong. For example, the UK has a long tradition of service user participation in their social work sector, and it features in one of their recent social work education policies, which even includes separate funding to support service user and carer participation in programmes (College of Social Work, 2012). Following the UK lead, we suggest that both Australia and Aotearoa might benefit from a greater focus on service user and student participation in local standards, across all aspects of the social work programme, which would reinforce democratic practices within schools. Of course, it may be that there is already a greater emphasis on these issues within programmes than is necessarily observable in the standards. However, this would require further research to determine.

As the GS are reviewed, the need for a clearer role for students as primary consumers of social work programmes, alongside the participation expected of public service users and carers, may also have a democratising effect.

Student representativeness

The GS expect the student cohort to represent the locality of the institution and the community where graduates will practise (GS6.2). This particular example of the equity principle goes beyond just applying a non-discrimination approach and begins to address likely structural inequality due to higher proportions of students from privileged backgrounds accessing social work education that does not reflect the demographic of public service users. This expectation is not clear within either the SWRB or the AASW policies. It is the type of policy that we might expect social work education to pursue because it is based on its own principle of equity.

To address inequity requires targeted resources and a broad-based workforce plan. This is because the nature of inequity usually means the target groups have limited independent resources to access education and support career development. In some programmes, the student demographic is well matched to its locality. Perhaps inevitably, this results in student cohorts who need higher academic, financial and pastoral support than students from more advantaged backgrounds. Wider tertiary education policy has focused on ways of improving outcomes for traditionally disadvantaged groups and the inclusion of a specific student equity policy by the SWRB and AASW would focus further attention on developing a more appropriately diverse social work workforce, and be a concrete demonstration of equity, a core social work value.

Indigenous rights and political action

The SWRB and AASW feature indigenous rights and interests as a central feature of their policies. Conversely, there is limited coverage of indigenous rights and interests in the GS. The importance of an indigenous focus at the local level has been reinforced in earlier research (Spolander et al., 2011). Global social work indigenous policy has been expanded in the recently revised global social work definition (IFSW & IASSW, 2014), which included indigenous knowledge as foundational, something that was

previously absent in the definition. The commentary on the definition devotes a whole section to the indigenous dimension and its importance globally. This includes noting UNDRIP (United Nations, 2008) and the subsequent social justice imperative for social work. Based on the analysis of the sets of standards, this is one area of greater leadership at the local level. Social work from an international perspective supports indigenous self-determination, and recognises this in the development of knowledge: “social work knowledges will be co-created and informed by Indigenous peoples” (IFSW & IASSW, 2014). It is notable that IFSW has also instituted a membership policy to facilitate Aotearoa having joint representation from both ANZASW and TWSWA, the indigenous representative body.

In Aotearoa the social work profession has grappled with indigenous rights and colonisation since the early 1980s, including having a standing committee on racism. In 1992 the ANZASW constitution was revised to include a commitment to undertake social work in accordance with the Treaty of Waitangi (Nash, 2001b, p. 41), the founding document of Aotearoa. In this document Māori were recognised as first people with subsequent rights. The notion of partnership was expressed within ANZASW by sharing governance between Māori and non-Māori (McNabb, 2014, p. 65). In 1986 NZCETSS was established. It had a structure of half Māori and half non-Māori membership with a strong commitment to social justice.

Building on this foundation, the SWRB established a consultation process to further develop its policy concerning the standard of competence to practise social work with Māori, which also relates to the graduate attribute of being able to work in a bicultural context and acknowledge the centrality of the Treaty. The draft policy named Kaitiakitanga was developed for this consultation process that prioritised engagement with Māori (SWRB, 2015a). This led to the recent launch of the revised standard on competence to work with Māori (SWRB, 2016b). Given this history, it is perhaps not surprising that Aotearoa has a strong emphasis on indigenous rights and political action.

In Australia the ASWEAS standards of 2012 include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing as one of four essential core curriculum

content areas. This was developed further in a recent report that is supported by groups within the social work profession, the *Getting It Right Teaching and Learning Framework*, which “is an evidence-informed road map for the development and delivery of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing in Australian social work curricula” (Zubrzycki et al., 2014, p. 5). The emphasis on indigenous self-determination is also strong, therefore, in the Australian social work standards, although again how this emerges in practice in Aotearoa and Australia would benefit from further research.

As the GS are reviewed, a number of areas are revealed where they could extend their democratising influence specifically in the context of indigenous rights, and indeed draw upon these strengths in the Australasian local standards. This would avoid the risk identified in earlier research that regional expressions may be stifled by stronger alignment with the GS (Healy, 2004). Other emerging areas that are important to consider feature in the global social work definition and commentary, including environmental justice and sustainability and the place of religion (IFSW & IASSW, 2014).

The 10th core purpose of the GS is to “engage in social and political action” (Sewpaul & Jones, 2005, p. 219). This aligns with AASW policy through its broader range of social work profession policies, which emphasise the ethical base of the profession that underpins such action. While the SWRB’s graduate profile addresses the imperative to engage in social change, it does not extend to the more direct activism within the notion of ‘social and political action’. This feature has been addressed by some commentators who are concerned that social work activism has been dampened by the effects of regulation and by the direction of professional associations generally (O’Brien, 2013). Better alignment of the GS to social action would require that both the SWRB and the AASW be more explicit about programmes evidencing engagement in social and political action within the curriculum and in wider practice.

Gender and cultural equity

The GS have strong expectations of seeing the principle of equity demonstrated through each social work programme and school (GS1.3). Gender and cultural equity

are expected in both the cohort of students and the faculty. Neither Australia nor Aotearoa has an explicit policy on this, although they both talk about broad ways of demonstrating social work values and principles, which could arguably include equity.

A gender equity policy is expected—this is implicit within Australasia and is a significant aspiration given the predominance of women social workers and service users. The issue, however, is more likely to be the low proportion of women in governance and the wider equity issues, such as pay parity for women-dominated professions such as social work, nursing and teaching (A. Ross, 2014). Pay parity has, in fact, become a political campaign in Aotearoa and Australia. The staffing and governance personnel should reflect the diversities of the population it serves—a timely challenge for programmes in Australasia, where women and indigenous peoples are disproportionately represented as service users but are not proportionately represented in the student cohort, nor in the governance or staffing of programmes (Zubrzycki et al., 2014). To reflect the GS, the SWRB and AASW, in collaboration with other social work bodies, would need to develop specific policies on equity in relation to students, staff and the governance of programmes.

Access and equity

“Instructional methods” or teaching practice feature in the GS, which expect instructional methods to match student learning needs (GS2.3) and the school’s programme objectives (GS3.1). The methods are also expected to match indigenous or locally specific social work education and practice from the traditions and cultures of different ethnic groups and societies (GS3.4). The AASW standards comment on their social work education philosophy and principles (A4.3) and how education and a commitment to social work principles should align (A3). This is a helpful section that is not replicated by the SWRB and could usefully be considered for future review. The GS state the expectation of “ensuring that the quality of the educational programme is consistent with whatever the mode of delivery, including distance, mixed-mode, decentralised and/or internet-based teaching” (GS6.4). This suggests that the technology and other pedagogical dimensions of the programme should promote quality education through greater access. Further consideration of issues relating to

equitable access is important because the wider tertiary education sector is influenced by a dynamic period of technological and pedagogical change.

Quality social work education and broader issues of equity

In supporting quality social work education, the GS require that programmes be adequately resourced, in terms of staffing, budget and other infrastructure resources to run the programme. While the requirement of the GS is covered by both countries, adequate resourcing of programmes is a major issue that affects a range of educational institutions in this post-global financial crisis context. In Aotearoa and Australia, social work education is funded by the government at a lower level than it funds equivalent professional programmes, such as nursing and teaching. This leaves social work structurally under-resourced and constitutes a type of public neglect of the profession that spills over into poor workforce planning and limited social work research (Beddoe, 2014).

The GS also require an adequate administrative staff (GS7.8), which is pertinent where funding cuts have been made to administrative staffing because this tends to put pressure on academic staff. This requirement is not directly addressed by the SWRB, although it could be subsumed under the general budgetary allocation standard. It is nevertheless an important component of quality social work education and is worth highlighting, particularly in an environment of shrinking resources. The SWRB and AASW could be clearer about their policy regarding the importance of having adequate administrative staffing, alongside general resourcing requirements, for sustainable social work programmes.

Both Australia and Aotearoa align with the GS' expectation of a minimum master's level qualification for teaching at the undergraduate level. Within university settings, a PhD is the expected qualification for an academic position, and this is a tension when schools in Australasia are keen to employ indigenous staff (Beddoe, 2014). Staff most at risk of this in Aotearoa are Māori and Pasifika peoples because of their general lower uptake of advanced qualifications. However, these are the very staff most sought after to teach core Māori and Pasifika knowledge and practice. Similar tensions exist in Australia, where there is a significant demand for Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander recruitment within teaching institutions (Zubrzycki et al., 2014). Achieving an adequate number and quality of academic staff requires a workforce policy that regulators could support as a cross-sector imperative for the health of the academy and of the wider social work profession.

The SWRB and AASW could better incorporate the requirement of the GS to reflect social work values in the workplace of the programme, including through demonstrating participatory decision-making, a cooperative work environment and accountability for management of the unit. In any review of the GS, it would be useful to incorporate recent global social work policy, such as *Effective and Ethical Working Environments for Social Work* (Agius & Jones, 2012), to support workplace practices being consistent with social work values.

In Summary

The GS play an important role, alongside other international social work instruments, in promoting quality social work education at the local level. The analysis clearly indicates that the GS are strong on issues of equity, participation and rights, and that these areas represent a key focus of influence. In drawing upon elements of Shapiro's (2011) democratic theory, the research suggests that the GS have an important role in democratising social work education through the reinforcement of equity issues. The strong focus on service user participation is a key area that local standards in Australasia could better reinforce, and in so doing, more strongly influence practice at the local level. Acting in democracy-sustaining ways does not only work in one direction. The leadership illustrated in local standards, particularly in the area of indigenous rights, is an important area for development in the GS. This represents an area of rich potential as local and global standards engage with these ideas and reinforce each other, thus shifting attitudes and responses over time. The comparative document analysis reported in this article raises a number of issues that will be important to the ongoing development and review of global and local standards. In the end, however, it is the application of standards in practice that will influence the experience of social work education and its development across international settings.

The findings from the document analysis reported above suggest that standards informing social work education have the potential to reinforce the importance of inclusive practices and the promotion of human rights. Informed by these findings, a second article is embedded in the narrative of the thesis. This considers the ways in which social work values of equity and self-determination might be operationalised in academic social work programmes:

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Democratising and decolonising social work education

Issues of equity and the development of inclusive processes rest at the heart of social work. Regulatory frameworks across the world reinforce the commitment of social work to education that is based on social work values and principles, including giving effect to self-determination and promoting equity. The document analysis discussed above showed the GS to be strong on issues of equity, participation and rights, and that these areas represent a key focus of global influence and leadership. In drawing upon elements of Shapiro's (2011) democratic theory, the document analysis found that the GS have an important role in democratising social work education through the reinforcement of equity issues. The strong focus on service user participation within the GS was found to be a key area that local standards in Australasia could better reinforce and, in so doing, more strongly influence practice at the local level.

Interestingly, by comparison, the study found that the local standards demonstrated leadership in the furtherance of indigenous rights and concerns, something that the GS might note and better incorporate in a future review. This does perhaps illustrate the locally specific nature of expressions of self-determination and the imperatives this presents at the country level. It suggests that a mix of global and local leadership in the reinforcement of democratising and decolonising ideas would more fully align with and reflect the social work profession's fundamental principles and values.

While standards undoubtedly aspire to reinforce the values of social work, there has been limited research globally on how the commitment to democratisation, decolonisation and addressing equity issues has been implemented within social work

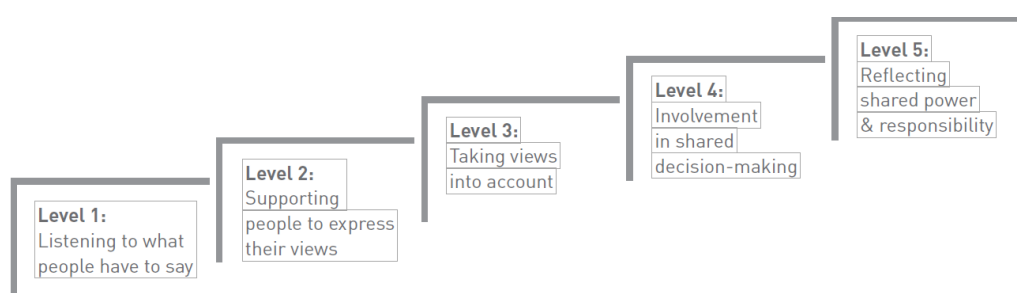
education, including whether, and how, it might influence future practice. This raises questions for social work educators in operationalising this commitment with respect to programmatic delivery. In this short article, I argue that leaders in social work education are bound by an ethical commitment, as all social workers are, to find a way to operationalise social work values in the delivery of their academic programmes (Webster, McNabb, & Darroch, 2015).

Democratising practices in social work education

Service user participation is an integral part of the GS and should be evidenced in all dimensions of the programme and across the points where service users may engage with a school. Service users are those people who are consumers of public social work services. Their participation should also be evidenced in the school's involvement with the regulatory social work bodies and may also include carer participation.

According to Shapiro (2011), principles of participation are an important part of an effective civil society. Participation involves the maximisation of stakeholder engagement in collective life and matters that concern them, thus guarding against the domination of single interests. Drawing upon these ideas from a programme-delivery perspective invites opportunities for greater service user participation in social work education programmes. Involving service users in the classroom is not a new idea, of course, and when they share their experiences in this way it can be powerful for student learning. Students' experience of being public service users can also be privileged in the classroom. This type of service user involvement, however, does not necessarily engage them in higher levels of participation, for example, co-designing social work education from a service user perspective or having a real say in what is taught and how it is taught.

Figure 2.1. Levels of citizen participation (adapted from Shier, 2001)



Shier (2001) has developed a useful five-level model of participation, and although it was created to enhance children's involvement in decision-making, it can also be usefully adapted to other areas of citizen participation. Adapting this to service user involvement in social work education, at the basic level of participation, service users should be listened to (see Figure 2.2). This is followed by service users being supported to express their views—the sharing of experience in the classroom could be regarded as an example of this level of participation. The third level of participation is where service users' views are taken into account; for example, educators might decide to incorporate service user perspectives into course content. Levels four and five arguably reflect more meaningful participation where service users have a real say in decision-making and involvement in power-sharing. In Aotearoa the SWRB standards and their expectation of “collaboration in programme development and review” (SWRB, 2016d, 5.1, p. 7) suggests a level of active participation at levels four and five. How to engage service user representation in these higher levels of involvement in decision-making and power-sharing is something that academic programmes need to grapple with if they wish to move beyond simpler levels of service user involvement. In the local standards (in Aotearoa), service users are specifically mentioned as an essential party as collaborators “in programme development and review” (SWRB, 2016d, 5.1, p. 7), and as important to the programme's stakeholder management plan and important attenders of regular meetings with stakeholders “to ensure that stakeholders' views are sought and considered” (SWRB, 2016d, 5.2, p. 7). This specificity about service user involvement does not limit further engagement, but positions regulatory expectations at a minimal level, arguably located at the lower levels of participation in Shier's model.

The UK approach, which has a tradition of user participation in social work, reinforces the importance of expecting higher-level service user involvement, and importantly providing the funding required to support it. This is noted in social work education policy, whereby separate funding is required to support service user and carer participation in programmes (College of Social Work, 2012). Leadership in the democratisation of social work academic programmes would see similar reinforcers of service user participation rights.

In addition to issues of democratisation, decolonising practices have also been an important feature of social work, particularly in countries such as Aotearoa and Australia.

Decolonising practices in social work education

The global movement for decolonisation has found its formal expression in the United Nations decolonisation programme and UNDRIP (United Nations, 2008).

Decolonisation is the process of a colonised people releasing themselves from collective oppression and asserting their right to self-determination. Although the GS do not have a specific focus on indigenous rights and interests, broader global social work indigenous policy has been expanded in the recently revised global social work definition (IFSW & IASSW, 2014), which includes indigenous knowledge as foundational, something that was previously absent in the definition. Social work from an international perspective supports indigenous self-determination, and recognises this in the development of knowledge: “social work knowledges will be co-created and informed by Indigenous peoples” (IFSW & IASSW, 2014). It is pleasing to note that IFSW has supported indigenous representation through a membership policy whereby Aotearoa has joint representation from ANZASW and TWSWA.

Colonised people have long fought colonisation and tokenistic participation and thinking. In Aotearoa the social work profession has grappled with indigenous rights and colonisation, including having a standing committee on racism in the 1980s. The ANZASW constitution was revised in 1992 to include a commitment to undertake social work in accordance with the Treaty of Waitangi, the founding document of Aotearoa (Nash, 2001b). In this document, Māori were recognised as first peoples, with subsequent rights. The notion of partnership was expressed within ANZASW by sharing governance between Māori and non-Māori beginning in the 1990s (McNabb, 2014). In 1986 NZCETSS was established to govern social work education programmes. It had a structure of half Māori and half non-Māori membership with a strong commitment to social justice (Nash, 2001a).

It is clear that in Aotearoa and Australia, the importance of decolonising practices in social work has been reinforced in the social work education standards. The SWRB

established a consultation process to further develop its policy concerning the standard of competence to practise social work with Māori, which also relates to the graduate attribute to be able to work in a bicultural context and acknowledge the centrality of the Treaty. A draft policy named Kaitiakitanga was developed for this consultation process, which prioritised engagement with Māori (SWRB, 2015a) and led to a revised set of competency standards (SWRB, 2016b). In Australia, the social work education standards include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing as one of four essential core curriculum content areas (AASW, 2012). This was further developed with the publication of the teaching and learning framework *Getting It Right: Creating Partnerships for Change*, which “is an evidence-informed road map for the development and delivery of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing in Australian social work curricula” (Zubrzycki et al., 2014, p. 5).

However, introducing decolonising expectations in social work standards is not quite the same as operationalising them in practice. Internationally, efforts have been made to operationalise a decolonising agenda in social work education by introducing formal policies that have affirmed the link between the goal of indigenisation and fundamental social work values and principles (Morelli, Mataira, & Kaulukukui, 2016). This decolonising agenda integrated indigenous cultural values in all aspects of academic activities within and beyond teaching within an academic programme. It saw, for example, the hosting of a global indigenous-focused conference and the launch of an indigenous-themed journal. Always privileging indigenous voices, the social work programme at the University of Hawai’i targeted the recruitment and retention of indigenous students and faculty, they taught indigenous history and colonisation, and indigenous cultural competence, and they ensured a place for all students and staff to share their cultural stories. These activities, embraced within an integrated decolonising agenda and enduring over several years, provide an important illustration of leadership in the decolonising of social work education (Morelli et al., 2016).

The extent to which decolonising practices are operationalised across the range of programmes in Aotearoa social work education is an important area of research. There

are, however, two social work programmes based in wānanga that demonstrate the strongest commitment to programme indigenisation. These are exciting developments that could also provide insight into the ways in which mainstream programmes might more strongly indigenise academic programmes.

This article has focused attention on the drivers for change in democratising and decolonising practices in social work education. Both are well grounded in social work values and principles and are reflected, in various degrees, across global and local social work education standards. While standards of social work education clearly do incorporate democratising and decolonising expectations, it could be argued that the regulatory bodies could nevertheless be more directive, providing a stronger driver for change.

Leaders in social work education are in a key position to advance democratising and decolonising agendas within academic programmes and at a collective level. It has been argued here that processes of meaningful service user participation are an important part of a democratising agenda. Applying Shier's model (see Figure 2.2) could be a useful means of testing the nature and extent of student and other service user participation within social work programmes.

With respect to decolonising practices, indigenous social work educators have taken leadership in indigenising programmes but require strong support from non-indigenous colleagues. There is, therefore, an important role for both indigenous and non-indigenous educators to support purposeful decolonising agendas. The Hawaiian experience described earlier (Morelli et al., 2016), is a good example of an attempt to develop an integrated set of activities that privilege indigenous voices and experiences.

In many respects, leadership in social work education requires that we move beyond expectations of practice that are found in regulatory frameworks, which are, by necessity, minimal in nature, towards a full integration of decolonising and democratising practices. It is these practices that have the greatest potential to change the nature of social work education in ways that support self-determination and the promotion of equity.

Conclusion

Chapter 2 has introduced the first wave of research, a document analysis of the GS and the country-specific standards of Aotearoa and Australia. This analysis produced a range of equity-related issues: service user and student participation, student representativeness, indigenous rights and political action, gender and cultural equity, access and equity, and quality social work education. Collectively, these issues were expressed in the twin equity-related themes of democratising and decolonising practices.

While standards undoubtedly aspire to reinforce the values of social work, there has been limited research on how the commitment to democratisation, decolonisation and addressing equity issues has been implemented within social work education, including whether, and how, it might influence future practice. Ultimately, this identified gap justified Waves 2 and 3 of this research, which investigated the ways in which equity agendas are operationalised in social work education programmes and practices in Aotearoa.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter outlines the research approach used in this thesis. The chapter begins with a discussion of the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of the research, followed by the research design for the study based on a qualitative exploratory approach, which highlights the value of using mixed methods. Lastly, there is discussion of the issues that arose in undertaking the research, including ethical and decolonising considerations.

Briefly, the qualitative study was undertaken in three waves. In Wave 1, to understand the key regulatory influences upon social work education in Aotearoa, a comparison of the global social work education standards and local standards of Aotearoa and Australia was undertaken. This wave also contributed importantly to the exploration of the literature relating to the key influences on social work education globally and in the context of Aotearoa. Drawing upon the findings of this first wave, qualitative interviews with social work academic leaders in Aotearoa were undertaken in Wave 2 of the research. This wave examined the ways in which democratising and decolonising practices were addressed across programmes. Finally, in Wave 3 of the research, focus groups and interviews took place with social work academics more broadly, from a number of programmes across Aotearoa. The purpose of this wave was to explore how democratising and decolonising themes were applied in social work education practices. Waves 2 and 3 were not connected methodologically, rather it was the different focus that distinguished them. Wave 2 focused on policy and programme developments, Wave 3 focused on practice and what happens in the classroom.

In writing this PhD with publications, by necessity, research methods were discussed in the publications incorporated in the thesis, and therefore, the publications reported on each wave of the research. This chapter brings these discussions together, while adding more detail with respect to epistemological scope and logic.

Methodology

Research is about the development of knowledge, and applied research focuses on achieving a particular outcome for the development of knowledge, which has been especially important in the context of this research. However, research occurs within a social context and is influenced by a range of philosophical approaches that are part of different human traditions. At a fundamental level, there can be different ontological views about the nature of reality and what can be known. Further philosophical questions can be raised about the epistemological nature of the relationship between the researcher and what it is possible to discover. Together these become the building blocks for research methodology, which translates into the way in which researchers go about investigating what they believe can be discovered. The field of methods becomes the final step when a researcher is developing a research approach (Tolich & Davidson, 2018b).

Paradigmatically, this research sits within an interpretivist tradition, which holds the view that reality is shaped by history so that human values are clarified over time and dynamics bring a strong element of subjectivity. Dialogue is created between the researcher and the participants in which understandings, beliefs and actions have an effect on the way the research is perceived and undertaken. The interpretivist paradigm sees reality as socially constructed and thus changeable, but also views collective experience as important. This paradigm highly values an approach that is open to flexibility of method with the potential for change (Tolich & Davidson, 2018b), undertaken in ways that can establish stronger validity in the findings. This flexibility was used in this study using a qualitative mixed-method design. Using a mixed-methods approach in qualitative research enables a triangulated comparison of the data that helps to counter weaknesses that may be apparent within a single method design. The mix of methods within this research was based on pragmatism in that the research questions critically influenced the methodological choices (Tolich & Davidson, 2018b). Indeed, Silverman (2006) argues that we should start with the research question and work backwards, as it were, to find the best means of gathering data that will respond directly to the research question. Hence, the use of mixed research

methods is one way of broadening the range of data that are gathered and of addressing risks or weaknesses within specific research approaches.

A mixed-methods approach to research can have a number of benefits. As noted, it allows the triangulation of research findings through the use of more than one research approach. In addition, it provides a facilitative approach, through which one wave of research can inform another; and complementarity, through which different approaches can best answer different questions or parts of a question (Hammersley & Campbell, 2012). In social work research, the goal of addressing complex social problems means mixed methods will often be considered a way to enhance research, and indeed, writers have suggested that it can be expected to become the norm (Briar-Lawson, Munford, & Sanders, 2009). In social sciences research more broadly, it has also become more common to use mixed methods in answering research questions (Tolich & Davidson, 2018b). Therefore, influenced by the benefits of a mixed-method design, the research in this thesis adopted a qualitative mixed-method approach using document analysis, interviews and focus groups.

Qualitative research

Qualitative research has been described as:

a form of social enquiry that tends to adopt a flexible approach and data driven research design, to use relatively unstructured data, to emphasise the essential role of subjectivity in the research process, to study a small number of naturally occurring cases in detail, and to use verbal rather than statistical forms of analysis. (Hammersley & Campbell, 2012, p. 15)

Constructivism has emerged as significant within the qualitative paradigm, asserting that phenomena are affected by all the social actors involved (Tolich & Davidson, 2018b). If the nature of the social world is socially constructed, then knowledge is gained through interpretation. Interpretivism and constructivism (Tolich & Davidson, 2018b) have both influenced the approach to this research, as the views of social work educators were explored to better understand the ways in which they respond to and make sense of the expectations of contemporary social work and social work academic environments.

Different ways of outlining the various types of qualitative methodology have been noted by a range of authors. However, of particular note to social work researchers is the development of transformative practices within research (Edwards & Brannelly, 2017). This links to a critical epistemology and the use of critical theory. The goal of this perspective is the empowerment of traditionally disadvantaged groups and social change towards a more just society, well aligned to the social justice goal of the social work profession. As might be expected of the mixed-method approach, the research undertaken in this thesis was iterative in nature, with one wave informing the next. Interestingly, the document analysis undertaken in Wave 1 originally focused on the nature of the influence that social work standards were having on social work education—in other words, what were the key drivers and messages within the GS and country-specific standards? As Wave 1 progressed, however, it became clear that two key themes were shaping the dialogue: the importance of democratising and decolonising practices, and the ways in which democratising theory and critical theory helps to understand them. Ultimately, these two themes became important drivers of the subsequent waves of research, increasingly influenced by critical epistemologies within an applied research context.

Democratising methodologies

Democratisation therefore emerged as a major theme arising directly from Wave 1 of the research. It also found expression within qualitative research and aligns with a critical perspective. A special issue of the *Qualitative Research* journal notes in its editorial titled “Approaches to Democratising Qualitative Research Methods” (Edwards & Brannelly, 2017) that a growing number of voices are calling for research to be disconnected from the traditional hegemony that includes imperialism, and to privilege voices such as those of indigenous peoples that engage in a transformative process pursuing the democratic ideal of social justice. The authors specifically note the preferred methodologies: inclusive, co-production, decolonising/indigenous and feminist ethics of care (Edwards & Brannelly, 2017).

The interest in democratising research is part of a wider movement, also described as inclusive or emancipatory research, that challenges the traditional domination of a Western traditional scientific paradigm (Edwards & Brannelly, 2017). It valorises the

engagement of participants, alternative paradigms and the interests of disadvantaged groups, challenging the traditional privilege of the researcher, with the goal of societal transformation as part of the whole operation of research. Edwards and Brannelly (2017) reference Crow (2012) in asserting that “the democratisation of research has been identified as one of the key methodological challenges of the 21st century” (p. 271).

The democratising research approach promotes within it a strong emphasis on decolonising methodologies. Arguably, cross-cultural research is a further aspect of inclusive research and is an important type of research for the Aotearoa context with its high level of cultural diversity. This also positions Aotearoa as a bicultural nation within a multicultural society. In Aotearoa, as noted in Chapters 5 and 7, the Treaty of Waitangi establishes the relationship between Māori and non-Māori in Aotearoa, and determines the ways in which the rights of Māori will be protected. This inevitably influences the way research is undertaken. In addition, there are significant population groupings, including Pasifika, Asian, migrant and refugee background communities, in which issues of cultural paradigm and safety, language and accessibility are important features for researchers (Butcher, 2018).

The Western research tradition has been criticised for its often conservative processes and agenda that have served to maintain inequities within society. Criticism has emerged from both feminist and a range of minority groups. Indigenous researchers have criticised the effect of colonisation on indigenous people and on the research approaches that have been used to study them (L. T. Smith, 2012). Decolonisation stands in contrast to any notion that research can be neutral in its stance and on its effect on people, particularly structurally disadvantaged groups such as indigenous people. The goal of decolonisation is well aligned to the broad research goal of promoting social good, and it is also aligned with the social work profession’s goal of promoting social justice (IFSW & IASSW, 2014).

Decolonising methodologies illustrate a constructivist and interpretivist approach to research, which calls for an explicit value position that privileges the voice of indigenous people and their cultural knowledge (L. T. Smith, 2012). However, although

such a position is related to the critical epistemological and theoretical approach and supports its emancipatory goal, L. T. Smith (2012) notes that there is an argument that their development of a separate indigenous ontology, epistemology and methodology outside of critical and other research approaches puts them into a position of resistance. The critical project has been criticised for not always privileging indigenous peoples and their interests (L. T. Smith, 2012).

The 'insider' and 'outsider' positioning of researchers is an important consideration for research with indigenous and other minority groups because there has been a tradition of researchers from dominant groups pursuing their own agenda and certainly not attending to the injustice that constructs the minority nature of groups. While outsider researchers are not excluded from research with indigenous people, they should generally research in partnership with indigenous people and be committed to their emancipatory goals (L. T. Smith, 2012). G. H. Smith (1992) promotes four models for non-Māori researching Māori people. First, *tiaki*—in which senior Māori are mentors; second, *whāngai*—in which non-Māori are adopted into the life of the Māori group; third, *power-sharing*—in which there is a meaningful partnership with Māori; and fourth, *empowering outcomes*—where the questions of Māori are addressed and the outcome is beneficial for them. While the thesis research was not a study of Māori per se, Māori social work educators did participate in the research along with educators of other ethnicities. The study was particularly influenced by *tiaki*, and through this process explored issues of power-sharing and the achievement of empowering outcomes.

In recent decades, there has been a surge of activity and publishing globally concerning indigenous and decolonising research (Chilisa, 2020; Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008), including within Aotearoa, where the seminal work remains *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (L. T. Smith, 2012). Decolonising social work research as part of decolonising the profession and social work education more generally has also developed globally (Coates, Yellow Bird, & Gray, 2008; Gray et al., 2016; Rowe, Baldry, & Earles, 2015; van Breda & Sekudu, 2019; Yadav, 2019) and locally in Aotearoa (Eketone & Walker, 2016; P. A. Ruwhiu, 2019a; Tsuruda & Shepherd, 2016). A range of ethical issues have emerged from the decolonising of

social work research, and these are explored later in the chapter under ethical considerations.

The benefits and limitations of qualitative research

In qualitative research, the positioning of the researcher and the researcher's influence on the research are important considerations and invite attention to issues of subjectivity. Qualitative research methods typically used include interviews, focus groups and document analysis, all of which have the potential to create bias and a lack of subjectivity. Rigour, quality and wider potential have been posited as goals for qualitative research (Mackieson, Shlonsky, & Connolly, 2019) building also on quantitative research ideas of validity, reliability and replicability (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982).

Researchers attend to the challenges of subjectivity and the need for integrity in research, through employing reflexivity in their practice. Reflexivity is a practice found within feminist research and is familiar to social work, but has broad application, particularly across critically informed research: "being reflexive means that you are self-critical, that you consider the implications of your research and that you are socially responsible" (Leask, 2018, p. 86). Researchers can be reflexive at the level of the personal, methodological or contextual dimensions of their work.

However, both insider and outsider researcher positions have their strengths and risks. The insider may have greater access to and understanding of the context but may struggle to analyse data. In contrast, the outsider may have a more objective approach to analysis but not understand or appreciate the complexity and richness of data in a particular context. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007), speaking from the context of ethnography, promote a role of marginality for the researcher in an attempt to achieve the best of both distance and familiarity for the research project.

Connectedly, interpretivism has also been criticised for its limitations. There are many layers of interpretation, including the researcher interpreting the experience of the participant and then interpreting how data may relate to a wider theory or set of ideas. A further criticism arises from the inability of the researcher to compare outcomes from one context to another because of the uniqueness of each situation.

This means that it is challenging to develop general theories. Another criticism arises from the frame of reference held by the researcher being different from that of the participants to a greater or lesser extent, thus affecting the data gathered. Finally, the interpretation may not take into account institutional and other contexts of power (Blaikie, 2004). These limitations also have ethical considerations that are explored later in the chapter.

Research design

The notion of mixing different qualitative forms of research has led to views about how this should best be done, including views about sequential or concurrent approaches and many variations of these. Sequential approaches allow the first phase of research to inform the second phase and so on (Onwuegbuzie & Combs, 2010). This occurred in this research: Wave 1 formed and influenced Waves 2 and 3 of the research, as illustrated in Figure 3.1.

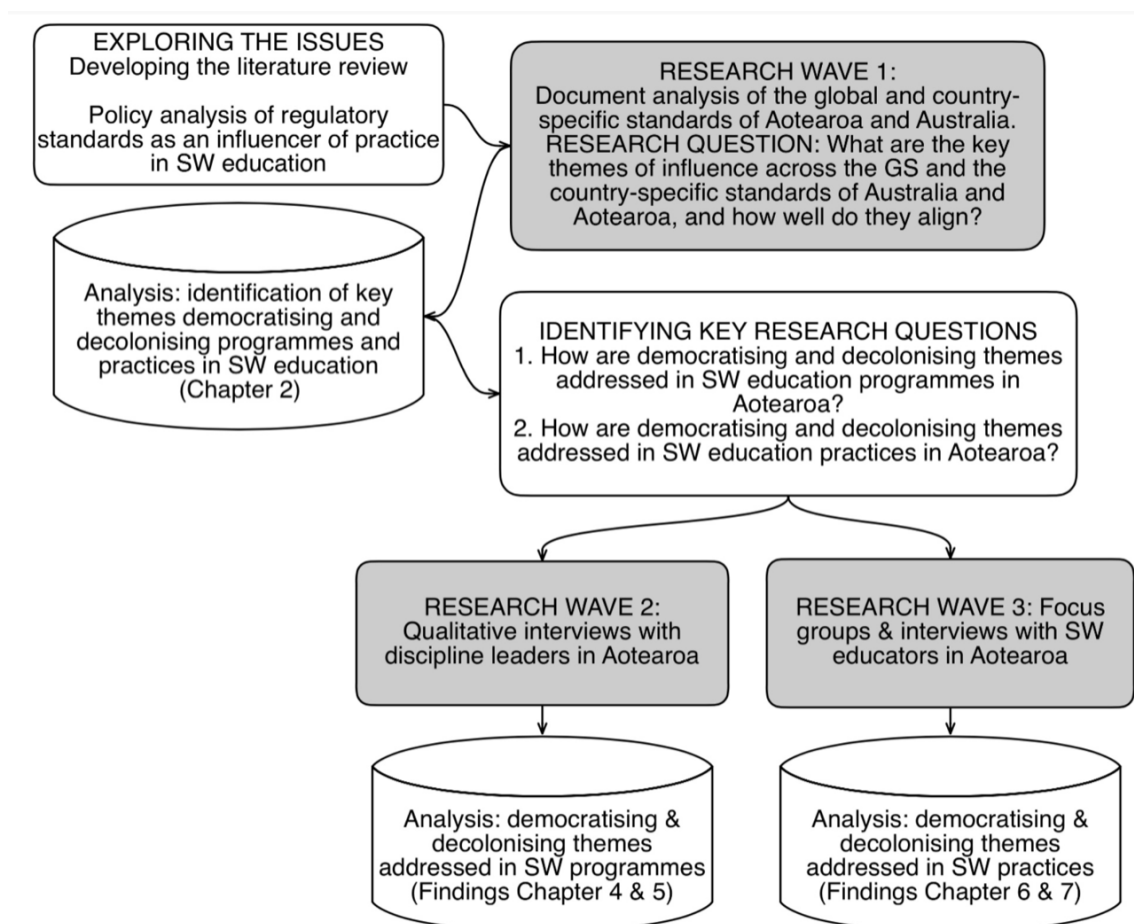


Figure 3.1. Research design

Research Wave 1: Document analysis

The first wave of research involved the document analysis, which was reported in Chapter 2. It explored the research question, What are the key themes of influence across the GS and the country-specific standards of Australia and Aotearoa, and how well do they align?

Two key interpretivist approaches are relevant to this approach—hermeneutics and phenomenology. Hermeneutics comes from the field of theology and the study of biblical literature. The hermeneutical approach aims to interpret the behaviour of people by studying them within their social context. The use of hermeneutics is particularly appropriate for the study of documents because of its roots in the study of biblical literature and the search for meaning from the written word. Critical hermeneutics is also concerned with an analysis of power relations as they apply to a study of the text asking who benefits from the document (Phillips, 2004). This aligned well with the documentary analysis undertaken in Wave 1, which led to questions about how effectively social work education standards were contributing to the goal of equity, and in particular, the democratisation and decolonisation of social work education. The approach of critical hermeneutics goes on to support a critically reflexive approach to the interpretation and understanding of knowledge that, in turn, is applied in practice (Kögler, 2008).

Document analysis is a type of secondary analysis in which pre-existing data are used in research. It is an often overlooked research methodology because the focus of most research is on creating original data. However, documents offer a range of potential benefits for research, particularly in contemporary times with the availability of digital data and efficient access to it. It is important, though, to ensure that the data are appropriate for the research question being addressed. Documents should always be situated within their context and viewed as socially constructed phenomena (Prior, 2003). It is also recommended as one of a set of mixed methods that can be employed in a research project (Tight, 2019), as occurred within this thesis. Secondary research usually includes a literature review, which is typically standard practice for the early stages of most research (Curtis & Curtis, 2011). Thus, the document analysis served as

both a literature review and a wave of research in itself that influenced other waves within the research design.

Qualitative document analysis includes the following five main approaches: qualitative content analysis, thematic analysis, discourse analysis, narrative analysis and conversation analysis (Tight, 2019). The document analysis engaged in for the first wave of research for this thesis incorporated a qualitative content analysis. This involved moving beyond careful reading of the sets of social work education standards to more rigorous analysis of the two national sets of standards as they compared with the GS. Inferences were then made based on the level of similarity assessed. In a similar study, Spolander et al. (2011) provide an illustration of a social work researcher who also undertook qualitative content analysis using the GS, which involved raising common themes, reviewing similarities and differences, and searching out meaning from the documents.

Recently, a social sciences researcher experienced in document analysis and engagement in the use of secondary sources in Aotearoa developed a methodology she called “the ‘4 Ds’—discover, decode, demystify and democratise” (Kelsey, 2018, p. 223). Kelsey (2018) pursued the goal of promoting participation in the debate regarding the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement so that the concerns of citizens could have impact in the public sphere, where governments were otherwise protecting select interests. Interestingly, the methodological phase of democratising also connected with the theme of this thesis and the pursuit of an equity focus.

Research Wave 2: Qualitative interviews

Informed by the findings of Wave 1, qualitative interviews were undertaken with leaders of social work programmes across Aotearoa to explore the research question, How are democratising and decolonising themes addressed in social work education programmes in Aotearoa?

Qualitative interviewing has become one of the main ways of undertaking research within the human and social sciences field (Lichtman, 2014). Conversations are a typical human activity and allow for ideas and opinions to be elicited from one or more participants. Different forms of qualitative interviewing will vary according to the

structure of the interview (structured, semi-structured or unstructured), the number of persons involved, the media used and the style of the interviewer. One of the more common forms is the semi-structured, face-to-face interview of individuals. This type of interview allows the interviewer to be a more active participant in the research and for the interviewer to have already prioritised certain themes. The purpose of the semi-structured interview is to gain descriptions from the interviewees, to elicit their interpretation and thus find their meaning within the data at hand (Brinkmann, 2013).

The emphasis for interviews should be on the quality of responses rather than necessarily rigidly following a set of questions. Those answering the questions can be termed informants because they are informing the person asking the questions about their experience. The guide for the interview can include warm-up questions before targeting the key topic of the interview, especially when the informant is not known to the researcher. Open-ended questions are preferred because they invite answers that bring a depth of response to the topic. The research guide can also include themes, keywords or sentences that capture the core data being sought, along with prompts that open space for rich narrative (Tolich & Davidson, 2018a).

Once the equity-related themes arising from the document analysis were clarified, they were integrated into a set of seven exploratory areas: the extent to which the themes present were within their programme, any progress they were making, any challenges they faced and ideas for the future—as outlined in the set of questions for research participants (Appendix 6).

Recruitment

Presenting the research project at a meeting of CSWEANZ involving leaders of programmes across the country was key to the recruitment of participants for the study. This was followed up with an individual email approach to leaders following the meeting.

Sample

Leaders from 14 of the 19 social work programme providers responded positively to the invitation, providing a good coverage of institutional diversity from across the country. Around two-thirds of the cohort were Pākehā, and leaders of Māori, Pacific

and Indian ethnicity were also represented. Around two-thirds of the respondents were women. Within the range of programmes represented, various features were present: bachelor's and master's level programmes; small and large programmes; campus-based and distance mediums; Māori, Pacific and mixed cultural settings; polytechnic, universities and wānanga institutions; and metropolitan and regional geographies.

A majority of the interviews were conducted in person, and if that was not possible, online synchronous digital technology was used through the Blackboard Collaborate platform or through Skype. The participants had been sent a copy of the interview questions along with the Plain Language Statement and the consent form, which was signed before interviews commenced. A copy of the first article reporting on Wave 1 of the research was also provided to inform the interviews and to encourage collegial dialogue and interest. Interviews lasted an hour and a half on average.

The diversity of disciplinary leadership and management roles of the participants was notable. Some were restricted to disciplinary leadership without managerial or other budget responsibilities, whereas others had full programme management, budgetary and disciplinary leadership responsibilities. The participants were roughly shared between these two groupings.

Research Wave 3: Focus groups

Also informed by the findings of Wave 1, focus groups and qualitative interviews were undertaken with social work educators within social work programmes in Wave 3 of the research. These explored the research question, How are democratising and decolonising themes addressed in social work education practices in Aotearoa?

Focus groups are a well-established approach within qualitative research (Barbour & Morgan, 2017). They present different dynamics than interviews with individuals because of the nature of group interaction and the facilitation role of the interviewer. The number of participants in the focus group is usually between five and 10, but this can vary. In general, they are economical because it is possible to access a number of perspectives across a breadth of responses. It is also possible that fewer questions or

prompts will be required, depending on the level of dynamic interaction between group members (Tolich & Davidson, 2018b).

However, given that using focus groups is such a well-established approach, there is a call for further innovation in design and practice concerning their use within qualitative research. This could involve the following: inviting more innovative interaction among focus group members; reconvening focus groups over time; having different sized focus groups including as few as two people—provided the goal of having a richness of data can still be maintained, which is possible with two articulate people; having heterogeneous groups, in which a vein of commonality among participants supports active discussion; and finally, inviting emergent focus group design during data collection that could include phases that build over the course of research to achieve a richer set of data (Morgan, 2017). However, the quality of what is being shared by even a small focus group remains their most important feature (Liamputtong, 2011).

Recruitment

Recruitment of focus group participants was also primarily through the CSWEANZ meeting, and subsequently facilitated by programme leaders.

Following the recommendation of Morgan (2017), the focus groups used for Wave 3 of the thesis research varied in size and were as small as two participants. There appeared to be no lack of rich narrative, however, perhaps in part due to participants being social work academics who had a particular interest in the topic of the research. As with the leaders in Wave 2, focus group participants were provided with the Plain Language Statement and the consent form (signed before interviews commenced) (see Appendices 4 and 5) and a copy of the article reporting on Wave 1 of the research to inform the discussion. Given that the focus groups were made up of social work educator teams, this level of heterogeneity appeared to support active discussion among groups with breadth and depth to the discussion as reported in the findings. The use of the same set of questions for the interviews of leaders as those used in the interviews and focus groups with educators is perhaps another example of innovation that arguably supported the enriching of the twin thesis themes of democratising and decolonising practices in social work education.

Sample

Research involved participants from nine of the 19 institutions, who were invited via programme leaders. This representation covered large and small programmes; bachelor's and master's level programmes; some strong representation of Māori, Pacific and mixed cultural settings; campus-based and distance mediums; metropolitan and regional geographies; and polytechnic and university institutions. The sample included around three-quarters women and one-quarter men. Participants were of varying ages and had a range of experience in both education and practice contexts. The ethnic make-up of participants included around two-thirds Pākehā, around a quarter Māori and Pacific, and finally, a small number of Asian and African people.

Focus group participant numbers varied; most had a minimum of three participants, and one had only two. Seven focus groups were conducted. Interviews were conducted with three people from different programmes because of insufficient numbers being available to make up a focus group or in one instance as a supplement to a focus group. Sessions lasted one to two hours. Most focus groups and interviews were conducted using online synchronous digital technology through the Blackboard Collaborate platform or through Skype; only three focus groups were conducted in person.

Online synchronous interviewing

Both the qualitative interviews and the focus groups for this research included the use of online synchronous interviewing. The use of this electronic mechanism has increased as technology has improved and is now becoming a valued tool in qualitative interviews and focus group research. Perhaps inevitably, the ubiquity of the online world begs the attention of researchers. The use of the telephone for interviewing was the first key use of technology to support the interview process. After decades of use, it has become established as a legitimate means of conducting interviews. This subsequently led to the use of the computer for online data gathering and interviewing. With the enhancement of online technology, the use of real-time or synchronous interviewing has become possible, particularly so with the advent of audio-visual technology. This has found its fullest expression in web conference

technology and the common use of Skype software, among others (Janghorban, Roudsari, & Taghipour, 2014).

The Blackboard Collaborate online platform allowed the simple sharing of a link with participants, who then clicked on the link that directly entered the Blackboard Collaborate environment. The minimum requirement was a desktop or laptop computer with a camera. Blackboard Collaborate allowed the recording of sessions and retrieval of data online. The interviews were recorded digitally, then transcribed by a third party who had signed a confidentiality agreement. The transcript was shared with the participant or group it related to for any changes required for accuracy. They used a confidential online drop box programme for the delivery of data, which worked well.

The use of online video interviews nevertheless had its challenges at times, including variable bandwidth resulting in disrupted visual and sound quality, and issues with capturing focus group participant contributions adequately. The majority of the group members' contributions could be captured, even if it was only by the audio recording at times. However, a small minority of the recordings were degraded and some sections were unusable. One of the backup measures used for each session, which was helpful for filling out the data capture, was my note taking of participant contributions. This also gave me a sense of the range of responses being made to each question as well as a sense of progress as the sessions progressed. Along with this note taking, a PhD blog was undertaken. This practice of journaling was useful to refer back to different steps in my research journey, and to confirm timing of key events and reflections on them, and is a recommended practice (Arendt & Nuru, 2017).

There are obvious efficiencies in being able to use an online interview, although there has been a reluctance to replace the in-person, one-on-one interview, and many interviewers would still prefer the traditional approach. However, for participants there may be benefits in using online techniques, particularly when some participants may actually value the efficiency of an online interview. The use of online synchronous technology for qualitative research with focus groups has been specifically addressed because it is a challenge to include several people either in one space or spatially

separated. Web conference technology has been successfully used for spatially separated members of a focus group (Tuttas, 2014). The obvious advantage of such technology is that focus group members do not have to be physically present in a single room, which opens the possibility for members to be anywhere in the world. This is a significant efficiency because members do not have to travel and it opens the door to potential research with participants who might otherwise never be able to be together as a focus group. It also makes geographical distance less challenging for the interviewer.

Technical issues can nevertheless become a barrier to some people participating and may thwart the actual interview itself or at least affect its quality. However, the technology can allow for effective recording and different levels of visual, audio and written communication. Ethical issues can arise with participants who do not fully appreciate the effect of any recording that occurs and how informed consent operates online, though these matters can be mitigated with careful work by the interviewer. In similar ways to that of face-to-face interviews, rapport building requires some experience by interviewers. These points were developed by PhD researchers who used Skype to conduct online interviews and also undertook in-person interviews and found no difference in outcome (Deakin & Wakefield, 2013).

Insider issues regarding the interviews and focus groups

The majority of interviews and focus groups were undertaken by me as sole researcher. I am, however, a member of the Unitec staff group, and therefore had a role conflict, which I chose to manage by arranging the involvement of a co-researcher who worked in a different institution to undertake all interviews, both individual and focus group, with participants from Unitec. To support consistency of approach, the co-interviewer observed one of my initial interviews, and we also practised a trial interview to test out the questions and the technology. The data did not appear to be substantially different from the other sets of data that were captured using the same question sheet and methods of interviews or focus groups.

Data analysis

Thematic analysis was used across the three waves of research that constitute the overall research project. The process of analysing qualitative data that has been sourced from more than one type of media “is primarily inductive and comparative” (Tisdell & Merriam, 2015, p. 42). This constant comparative method of data analysis resulted in a continuous approach to the analysis, to its interpretation and to making meaning of the research. Thematic analysis required a high degree of interpretation in capturing “the complexities of meaning” (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012, p. 11).

The initial document analysis also provided the twin themes for the overall research of democratising and decolonising practices in social work education. The process included a first-level analysis of the three sets of standards: the GS, and the country-specific standards of Australia and Aotearoa. These were carefully read and then the content and language were compared across the three documents. The level of match across the documents was assessed as high, high/medium, medium, medium/low or low/non-existent. This process is described fully in Chapter 2. Many comparisons were at the high level and none were below the medium level. The second level of analysis involved an examination of the meaning conveyed in the text, which in turn led to a clarification of the equity-related themes: service user and student participation, student representativeness, indigenous rights and political action, gender and cultural equity, access and equity, quality social work education and broader issues of equity, and SWRB standards. The first and second publications found in Chapter 2 developed these themes further, ultimately informing the structure and development of the thesis.

With respect to Waves 2 and 3, the qualitative interviews and the focus groups involved semi-structured interviews. Accordingly, participants responded specifically to the prepared questions arising from the initial document analysis. As a consequence, very little organising of responses was required, although findings in the study also illustrate the exploratory nature of the interviews whereby participants moved beyond the structured questioning towards areas that were of more significance to them. Data from the interviews and the focus groups were transferred into the NVivo qualitative data analysis software to assist with analysis. Each wave of

research had its own separate data analysis using separate sections of NVivo and was reported in separate publications. The NVivo data analysis incorporated the seven headings aligned with the question areas noted above as the equity themes, which became the preconstructed codes for questions. The coded data were analysed thematically and reported in separate sets of findings. However, emergent codes were also included, such as “recruiting and maintaining a diverse workforce”, along with the theme of “leading an equity-focused social work programme” and leadership more broadly.

The interview data were anonymised but there was still a need for consideration of any identification of programme-related information in the interviews and with educators who worked in those programmes. This led to the occasional exclusion of identifying information and examples. Quotes from individuals and groups of participants were reported using a number for identification.

Ethical considerations

Ethics approval was granted for Waves 2 and 3 of the research, which was considered minimal risk. There was limited data of a sensitive or of a personal nature within the research. Approval was gained from the University of Melbourne School of Health Sciences Human Advisory Group Ethics Committee on 2 June 2017, number 1748887 (see Appendix 3). As required, data were stored in password-protected devices and will be kept for five years. Wave 1 of the research did not require ethics approval because it analysed public documents that were available at the time and therefore did not pose an ethical risk.

Institutional review boards are an important aspect of ensuring ethical research practice, but should not be relied on as the only, or most important, step in considering responsible research. It is helpful to continually pose research questions and to consult on the process before, during and after the data are gathered. However, it remains a professional ethical responsibility for social workers to submit an ethics application where appropriate (ANZASW, 2008).

Ethical considerations for research include five focal points. Informed consent versus passive deception was the first consideration. Further considerations relate to privacy,

the goal of doing no harm, avoiding exploitation and considering fully the consequences of one's research for future research (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Researchers can potentially be oblivious to the coercive effect of their practice and unaware of someone's vulnerability. An analysis of the power relations at work between researchers and their participants highlights an imbalance and therefore the importance of putting protections in place. Engaging with communities of interest related to any proposed research is both a responsible step and one that could yield helpful ideas for making the research more effective. Participation information (or plain language) sheets are usually the main way to responsibly recruit participants covering the goal of the research, the nature of participants wanted, what participants would have to do and the ethical rights of participants (MacDonald, 2018). These issues are comprehensively addressed in the University of Melbourne's requirements of ethical research practice.

In this study, attention was also paid to the Aotearoa context, particularly relating to Māori and a commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi, because this would not normally be specifically addressed within an Australian research context. This meant following a Treaty-based approach for my research and reporting, and incorporating key Māori principles and practices as discussed below and in Chapter 9.

Guidelines for research involving Māori

The national guidelines for research involving Māori advocate for a strong engagement with Māori expertise when this is not held by the researcher. This required the engagement of a Māori reference group early in my research process (Health Research Council of New Zealand, 2010), something that is consistent with the tiaki model, in which senior Māori are mentors and advisors to the research (G. Smith, 1992), and also whakapapa (genealogical links, relationships and their quality), an important consultative principle of tikanga (Māori protocols and practices) (Hudson, Milne, Reynolds, Russell, & Smith, 2010).

A Māori reference group was engaged early in the research process, made up of three senior Māori leaders with a variety of research and cultural knowledge at Unitec. A process was established for consultation, and meetings took place at key times during

the research, with an initial focus on my ethics application. In addition, senior Māori colleagues were consulted on the basis of their particular social work expertise to formally review drafts of the two publications, which focused on social work education decolonisation. This practice of establishing a reference group has become more common; one example is Te Kāhui Kaihautū, the Māori reference group for the research organisation the New Zealand Institute of Language, Brain and Behaviour (2016).

Other tikanga principles include tika (correct, true, concern for outcomes), manaakitanga (hospitality, care and support, cultural and social responsibility) and mana (prestige, justice and equity, reflected through power and authority) (Hudson et al., 2010). All were responded to in the research to some degree, but the individualised nature of PhD research presented some challenges to the achievement of a fully kaupapa Māori framework, which would require Māori leadership, partnership and collaboration throughout all aspects of the research (Hudson et al., 2010).

Nonetheless, tika begins with the minimum standard for mainstream research (which may or may not directly involve Māori), in which the rights and interests of Māori must be advanced and protected. This was responded to through the important consultation process offered by the Māori reference group, and advice from other Māori elders. The principle of manaakitanga relates to the need for cultural sensitivity and the basic protection of privacy. Cultural safety is evidence of good practice and the inclusion of Māori values and protocols. This was offered to and negotiated with participants, including mihi whakatau (welcome to guests) and pepeha (personal introduction linking to tribe and key relationships), karakia (spiritual acknowledgements) and waiata (Māori language songs,) as is relatively common within social work education settings. Finally, the principle of mana relates to the right to be informed of risks. This was responded to as part of the basic research ethical agreement. Mana whenua is further evidence of good practice in this context, and typically involves engagement with local hapū and iwi. While this did not occur, the Māori reference group were senior members and elders within the Māori community, and as such offered an education sector-based oversight. Similarly, the senior Māori

social work colleagues reviewing key publications gave a measure of profession-based oversight to the research.

Study limitations

While the study engaged a large proportion of social work educators and leaders from across Aotearoa, it did not include everyone. The study therefore cannot be generalised to the practice of all educators and leaders. Of particular note was the absence of social work educators from either of the wananga based programmes. This study did not engage other potential stakeholders such as students, graduates, public service users, employers, profession representatives, hapū or iwi and Māori representatives or others that may have an interest in social work education. The engagement of these groups suggests future research opportunities that have been beyond the scope of this study.

One of the major themes of this study was decolonisation and how it has been pursued in social work education in Aotearoa. The voice of Māori is particularly important in that debate because of a commitment to equity in participation based on Te Tiriti of Waitangi. The sample of participants was from the general grouping of social work educators and so there were only a small number of Māori participants. And from that number, just one participant represented wānanga where the nature of those institutions prioritises decolonisation, which deserves further in-depth research. It is clear, therefore, that the research findings reported in this thesis do not represent the views of Māori; nor can the research make claim to a bicultural approach.

Other equity-related themes in this research that are part of democratising practices including but not exclusive of gender, culture, class, sexuality, age and ability also demand the establishment of meaningful partnerships in research in order to achieve a stronger research integrity, ultimately paralleling the guideline for research with Māori outlined above.

Conclusion

This chapter began with an overview of the philosophical and theoretical foundation of the research undertaken for this thesis. The research design was described based on a qualitative exploratory approach that used mixed methods. This included outlining the

three waves of research, which began with a documentary analysis that produced the twin equity themes of democratising and decolonising practices. These twin themes were applied to interviews with social work education leaders, and also applied to interviews and focus groups with social work educators about how the twin themes were operationalised.

Undertaking research into democratising and decolonising practices presents a number of professional, ethical and practical challenges. Therefore, it was a step along the journey that methodologically explores the nature of bicultural practices, and the way it can advance future research, something that is further explored in Chapter 9.

CHAPTER 4

DEMOCRATISING PROGRAMMES IN AOTEAROA: FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION LEADERS

This chapter reports on Wave 2 of the integrated three-part study that investigates democratising and decolonising practices in social work education programmes in Aotearoa. The first wave of the study involved a document analysis, which was reported in Chapter 2. This revealed that democratising and decolonising themes are evident within social work education (McNabb & Connolly, 2019). The study confirmed that the GS are strong on issues of equity, participation and rights, and that they have a key role in reinforcing these elements in social work education. However, while standards clearly provide direction in this regard, ultimately, it is the role of programmes to reinforce these in practice. This was explored in the second wave of the study, in which interviews were undertaken with leaders of programmes to explore how democratising and decolonising practices were given effect within programmes. This chapter focuses particularly on the democratising theme identified in Wave 1 of the research.

The following article is embedded in this chapter:

McNabb, D. (2020). Pursuing equity in social work education: Democratising practices in Aotearoa New Zealand. *Australian Social Work*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0312407X.2020.1723656>

Introduction

In educating for the profession, social work programmes have an important role to play in advancing goals of equity, social justice and human rights. These goals are now enshrined in the global definition of social work (IFSW & IASSW, 2014), and thus represent the bedrock of social work education standards. Democratising principles are inherent within this equity focus of social work. Shapiro (2011) emphasises that democracy is the just basis for human relations and that the practices we engage in should “promote the democratisation of power relations as they are reproduced into the future” (Shapiro, 2011, p. 273). Democratising practices within social work

education are those practices that demonstrate the profession's commitment to equity and social justice and their advancement.

Colonisation is a specific type of injustice of particular concern to Aotearoa, as it is in Australia and other colonised nations. The independence of Māori was established in 1835 through *He Whakaputanga—the Declaration of Independence*, which had been signed by a number of Northern chiefs and was recognised by Britain at the time (Orange, 2015). In Aotearoa, Māori signed the Treaty of Waitangi with the British in 1840, which aspired to an equitable partnership. This nevertheless soon became a state of oppression as Māori were dispossessed of their land and the destructive elements of colonisation devastated indigenous livelihood and wellbeing (L. T. Smith, 2012). Since the signing of the Treaty, there have been many claims by Māori for redress (Waitangi Tribunal, 2019b). A commitment to honour the Treaty and its principles has become an important aspect of the New Zealand Government's response to Treaty claims (Waitangi Tribunal, 2019a). This commitment to decolonisation and the principles that underpin the government's approach has also critically influenced the social work profession's equity agenda in Aotearoa. In this way, decolonisation is a major component of the wider democratisation agenda of Aotearoa, which has critically influenced the direction of social work education (Eketone & Walker, 2015).

To assist understanding, and before reporting on the findings, a brief discussion of the context of social work education in Aotearoa is provided. Social work in Aotearoa developed predominantly out of the British model, unsurprisingly, given the British colonial history. In 1947 the first social work programme was established (Nash, 2001a). While globally social work education is generally provided at the university level, an important factor influencing social work education in Aotearoa is that programmes operate across the tertiary educational sector, in polytechnics, wānanga, private training establishments and in universities. While monitored by different entities, universities are controlled by CUAP, whereas non-university providers come within the purview of NZQA; all are nevertheless expected to meet the standards and review processes established through the statutory registration of social work, which was introduced into law in 2003.

The SWRB is the government-appointed body that oversees the legislation. It has instituted standards for social work education and a five-yearly review process whereby social work programmes gain formal recognition, which allows graduates to meet the qualification requirement for registration. One of the key requirements of the standards is for programmes to demonstrate a commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and for graduates to be competent to work with Māori. This is referenced in Programme Recognition Standard 2.4: “The curriculum will include relevant Indigenous practice models and be cognisant of the articles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in social service provision” (SWRB, 2018, p. 4). The professionalisation of social work in Aotearoa, including its expression within education, has been a contested development. The range of influences has included the historic Western roots and subsequent indigenisation; a strong neoliberal and conservative political context, including government ministerial critique; and the profession’s own commitment to human rights and social justice (Beddoe, 2018).

Equity-related issues in social work education

A number of themes emerge from the literature relating to advancing equity issues in social work education. In particular, these span four main areas of equity in relation to students, curriculum, the academic workforce and the broader regulatory environment.

It could be argued that concerns relating to equity begin at the point of selection of students. Writers have noted that in Aotearoa the quest to meet fit and proper professional standards of the SWRB creates a risk that people from diverse backgrounds may be excluded from entering programmes, especially given the higher incidence of criminal convictions among minority populations, including Māori (Apaitia-Vague et al., 2011; Hughes, McNabb, Ashley, McKechnie, & Gremillion, 2016). This is echoed in Australia (P. Young, Tilbury, & Hemy, 2019), and in the UK (Sin & Fong, 2009). Once selected, students have reported discrimination within the programmes, including racism (Woodley, 2013), homophobia and heterosexism (Chinell, 2011), sexism (Yates & Rai, 2019) and ableism (Charles, Holley, & Kondrat, 2017).

In Aotearoa, teaching the Treaty and bicultural practice is a fundamental component of the curriculum (Eketone & Walker, 2015), including the use of Māori approaches to teaching (Tsuruda & Shepherd, 2016), but there has been mixed success in translating bicultural theory into practice in the field (S. Walker, 2012). A major research project in Australia focused on the indigenisation of social work education resulted in the Getting It Right Framework (Zubrzycki et al., 2014). This significantly influenced the development of an indigenous-themed framework for Aotearoa (McNabb, 2019c). Similar indigenisation projects have been undertaken internationally (Gray et al., 2016).

The theme of equity within the social work academic workforce has been highlighted with an indigenous-themed curriculum requiring staff who have appropriate knowledge and pedagogical competence (McNabb, 2019c; Zubrzycki et al., 2014) and can more broadly demonstrate democratising and decolonising practices. Relatedly, Beddoe (2018) noted a growth in the number of Māori and Pacific academics in Aotearoa, but also that the higher demand for their knowledge and its associated partnership expectations means the need remains unmet.

Finally, the pursuit of equity within social work education has been found to have a mixed influence on programmes by the broader regulatory environment (McNabb & Connolly, 2019), and while there is some hope of progress for academic staffing and other improvements, experience suggests this is fragile (Beddoe, 2018). Indeed, Hunt et al. (2019) warn that social work regulation is at risk of thwarting the social justice commitment of the profession. Leaders of social work education in Aotearoa support this, suggesting that the regulatory system can undermine the ability to create and maintain a diverse workforce; however, it can also be supportive and serve as an ally when challenging their institutions (McNabb, 2019b). The debate in Australia relating to statutory regulation for social work has been underway for some time and remains contested within the profession (McCurdy, Sreekumar, & Mendes, 2018).

Methodology

This study drew upon the key democratising theme identified in the document analysis that formed the first wave of the study. The resulting equity-related themes informed

the structure of the interviews and the seven question areas addressed: service user and student participation, student representativeness, indigenous rights and political action, gender and cultural equity, access and equity, quality social work education and broader issues of equity, and SWRB standards. The terms democratisation and decolonisation were integrated into some of the questions (McNabb & Connolly, 2019). Each question area had subquestions relating to the following: the extent to which the theme was present within their programme, any progress they were making, any challenges they faced and ideas for the future. The interviews were recorded and transcribed.

The aim of the research was to investigate the extent to which the equity-related themes were operationalised. A summary of the findings from the document analysis was provided to interviewees, further supporting the semi-structured methodology (Brinkmann, 2013). This qualitative approach was particularly useful in the study because it allowed a more nuanced and richer conversation with leaders about the challenges and issues arising from advancing equity issues, and the expectations of regulatory standards.

Leaders of all 19 social work programmes were invited to participate in the study, ranging across university, polytechnic, wānanga and private institutional contexts. By engaging with a range of providers, features of this diversity across the country were captured. These contexts included metropolitan and regional geographies; polytechnic, private training establishments, universities and Wānanga institutions; Māori, Pacific and mixed cultural settings; campus-based and distance mediums; small and large programmes; bachelor's and master's level programmes; and a special character faith-based institution.

Fourteen of the 19 programme leaders participated, providing a strong representation of programmes across Aotearoa. Around two-thirds of the respondents were women, and around two-thirds were non-Māori, typically of British European descent. Leaders of Māori, Pacific and Indian ethnicities were also represented. An email invitation was sent to all programme leaders. Most interviews were conducted in person, and when this was impracticable, online synchronous digital technology was used through the

Blackboard Collaborate platform or through Skype. The interviews lasted an hour and a half on average. A semi-structured schedule of questions was used that included themes from Wave 1, specifically relating to “service user and student participation, student representativeness, Indigenous rights and political action, gender and cultural equity, access and equity, and quality social work education and broader issues of equity” (McNabb & Connolly, 2019, p. 42).

The role of leaders in social work programmes in Aotearoa is made more complex by the range and diversity of management and disciplinary leadership roles in the sector. Some have full programme management, budgetary and disciplinary leadership responsibilities, while others are restricted to disciplinary leadership without managerial or other budget responsibilities. The respondents were roughly split in half between these two.

The NVivo data analysis software tool was used to assist in analysing the data. The seven headings aligned with the question areas noted above became the preconstructed codes for questions. The coded data were analysed thematically and reported below. However, emergent codes also included “recruiting and maintaining a diverse workforce”, along with the theme of leadership. Given the leadership roles of the participants, it was not surprising that they talked a good deal about their role in leading social work programmes, and the theme “leading an equity-focused social work programme” featured strongly in the conversations.

Ethics approval was gained from the Human Ethics Advisory Group of the University of Melbourne and the study was rated as a minimal risk project, Ethics ID 1748887. All participants in the study gave informed consent. The community of social work educators across Aotearoa is relatively small, and participants were known to me through the national peer network of social work programmes, CSWEANZ. Although known through this network, I had no other role or responsibility in relation to these participants. The potential participants who did not engage in the research gave no reason for their non-participation. While the research achieved strong representation of social work programmes across Aotearoa, a limitation of this research is that it only involved interviews with social work programme leaders in Aotearoa, and therefore

did not include the views of other social work academics, students or people who represent the wider social work sector, including service users, iwi and Māori organisations, community organisations and other stakeholders such as government.

Findings

Overall, leaders identified opportunities for advancing democratising practices across three spheres: students, including the importance of engaging with the student voice, maintaining systems of representation and having a diverse student cohort; recruiting and maintaining a diverse workforce, including the strengths and challenges of a diverse staff group, developing a workforce strategy, and growing and supporting a diverse staff group; and the issue of leading an equity-focused programme, including advancing equity themes in both the curriculum and the wider programme, and leading institutional and sector-wide development. These three spheres included a reasonably even spread and intensity of responses as each participant answered questions across the preconstructed codes.

Supporting the student voice, representation and diversity

Leaders raised the importance of student representation and the structures that supported this, including meetings with staff, leaders and the stakeholder advisory group. They noted that students reflected a diverse range of experience from within the local community, bringing service user experience and valuable knowledge into the programme. They reinforced the importance of supporting institutionally established student representation, notwithstanding occasionally disrespectful student contributions, and the need to ensure that the student voice was heard and taken into account in programme delivery. A majority of respondents provided evidence of the way in which this was approached in programmes:

So, each year of the programme has two student reps, and we meet each term. They meet with me, as a programme manager, and generally our head of department comes along, and they fund lunch for them, which is a real incentive, and we also have two ... student reps on our advisory committee ... and I have a reasonably open-door access. (14)

The leader from a regional institution suggested that this kind of student participation benefited the students because they gained knowledge of both the institution and

their local community. Smaller sized programmes tended to give students easier access to staff.

Supporting a diverse student body was considered important to the democratising of the programme. This particularly related to Māori, Pasifika and other ethnically diverse students, distance students and men as a minority. Senior students could mentor junior students, which also aligned with the use of diverse cultural support approaches. Ways of supporting equity for students therefore involved targeting groups, and yet this could be contested when targeted groups were also identified as being vulnerable:

Pasifika and Māori students coming together say they hate being called a group of students that need support: “You’re in need because you’re Māori.” So, there’s been a number of conversations [about] Māori students [being] the successful ones. (6)

The value of having students from a migrant and refugee background was noted along with the contribution of their valuable cultural knowledge. This aligns with the GS and its preference for the student cohort within social work programmes to reflect the ethnic diversity of the community context. Some programmes wanted to attract more Asian and other students from migrant and refugee backgrounds, but a varied proportion of these students remained across programmes. Others explored culturally responsive ways of facilitating student learning, particularly tutorial models based on cultural practices that resonated with Māori and Pasifika students. These also provided learning opportunities for staff: “The tutorial model works really well. I think the Māori and Pasifika kind of hui group (including cultural group processes) that we have, offers something ... in terms of participation” (14).

Engaging more men in the programme was also regarded as a priority for many programmes where the number of male students was typically very small, and therefore not representative of the community. Some participants commented on why men were less attracted to social work as a career, including the nature of the work along with relatively poor pay and conditions, though this has recently improved in the government child welfare agency (ANZASW, 2018).

The theme of disability was also raised in the interviews because making a programme accessible is a goal often held by institutions. Strongly challenging barriers, forming partnerships along the disability continuum and more directly addressing ableism were regarded as aligning with the deeper equity goal of social work. A distance programme also suited some students with disabilities:

We have several students with disability and are ... grappling with those issues about how we best support them. But, in fact, for some students with disability a programme like ours is a good choice because it's flexible, it's [by] distance ... and it makes sense. (10)

Gender and sexuality themes were highlighted as important in the curriculum along with the need to address patriarchy and heterosexism more generally among staff and in the programme. Some institutions have shown strength in their LGBTQ+ related support services, such as a comprehensive Ally training programme and network whereby gay, straight, cis and diverse gendered students as well as staff work to build an inclusive environment (Unitec Institute of Technology, 2019). A strong set of team values supported democratising team practices and could lead to a role for social work to address broader institutional inequity. On the other hand, a number of leaders queried how well they supported LGBTQ+ students in their programme and noted that there was a need to improve on this.

Recruiting and maintaining a diverse workforce

Participants talked about three key areas relating to the social work education workforce: the strengths and challenges, developing a workforce strategy, and growing and supporting a diverse staff group. Having at least a minimal number of Māori staff was considered essential by all programme leaders, and it was acknowledged that they needed to be well supported. Māori staff were regarded as essential to enable the expression of a partnership commitment within social work education alongside non-Māori and to operationalise the partnership of the Treaty, also called biculturalism: “When you want to advance tangata whenua and biculturalism within a university setting, the key thing that you need is building Māori staff and capability” (2).

The engagement of Pasifika staff was also highlighted as a way to appropriately reflect the presence of a significant proportion of Pasifika students across many programmes,

and to support the learning required for all students to be able to work well with Pasifika populations. For many leaders, the difficulties of maintaining a diverse workforce were exacerbated when staff changes undermined the consistency of the staffing group. For Pasifika staff, it was also challenging to meet qualification, teaching, research and regulatory requirements in recruiting targeted staff. For leaders in this study, supporting a diverse staff group included dimensions of culture, disability, age, gender and sexuality, all of which needed to be thought through and developed as part of a strategic workforce plan. An inclusive approach was perceived as modelling diversity for staff and students, generating a sense of belonging for them and “making them feel part of the family” (6). Programmes might also grow their own academic staff through supporting suitable graduates into academic positions.

Advancing an equity-focused curriculum and social work programme

Participants talked about two key areas in leading an equity-focused programme: activism and advancing equity themes in both the curriculum and the wider programme, and leading institutional and sector-wide development. Social work staff activism was regarded as important by a number of programmes, evidenced through their engagement with unions, ANZASW, student placements with political parties, politicians and the national election process. There was an argument in favour of being strategic and organised: “What do we as educators see as the main challenges for the next five years, and how do we want to influence this government over the next three years?” (6).

While some programmes were clearly active in their advocacy efforts, others wanted to do better but faced constraints in their activities. Whereas staff have ‘academic freedom’ to speak out and act on issues as activist social work academics, they also risk negative consequences, as do the students who follow their example:

They [academics] were free to do it in the past; now if they do it they get hit ... but I’m aware of the fact that we’re teaching students to [do] all this stuff, and then we send them out and they’re facing [the] exact same pressures. (11)

Perhaps surprisingly, given the emphasis the profession has on service user engagement, mobilising equity issues and advocacy within the curriculum were regarded as challenging areas for programmes. Service user engagement is an SWRB

requirement in Aotearoa, also requiring service user involvement in the programme's stakeholder engagement plan. However, a majority of programmes either struggled to secure and maintain appropriate formal representation, at times because of financial constraints, or they explored other options, which included recognising the service user experience of students.

Interestingly, leaders noted the link between a curriculum that included critical theory and advancing the goals of decolonisation and democratisation. This suggests potential for the social work profession to assume a leadership role in both areas of curriculum development, resulting in "more papers that emphasise the theoretical underpinnings of democratisation and decolonisation, i.e., structural, critical social work" (4). Many leaders also saw potential for advocacy leadership across the institutional and wider sector. Indeed, one of the smaller programmes noted that they had the student union engage them in advocacy efforts because of their reputation across the institution: "The student union here is trying to build stronger links between the social work programme and the student union on the assumption that our profession is the one that deals with advocacy" (4). Some had a vision for stronger collaboration between social work programmes in Aotearoa, which arguably has potential benefit for students who transfer between institutions as well as demonstrating the principle of collaboration and resisting institutional competition.

The potential for regulatory processes to influence the pursuit of equity at the programme level was also noted by respondents. Curiously, the leaders had very little knowledge of the GS, suggesting a potential vacuum of influence in this regard. It was difficult to know what influence the GS had on the development of the SWRB programme standards because it only began to reference a range of core social work policy, including the GS in 2016, some years after the first set of standards was published (SWRB, 2016d). Because of the regular audit process, leaders were nevertheless quite familiar with the SWRB programme standards. They noted in particular the value of self-reflection, the leverage offered by the SWRB panel in advocating for resources or considerations in their institution, external validation and benchmarking, and use of the panel report to vindicate strengths and create a critical context.

While the regular SWRB audit processes were generally experienced positively, most leaders also noted equity-related concerns, in particular the time and resources it took to prepare for the visit; the lack of a Māori focus by SWRB, which had the effect of under-emphasising the Treaty partnership; that it was ‘hit and miss’ in understanding and addressing significant issues in their specific programme; that it was compliance driven rather than based on strategy and values so that fundamental equity-related issues could be raised. This created a perception that the visits could do much more: “So, I think sometimes these standards are quite socially controlling, but are they socially changing?” (9).

Discussion

The pursuit of equity within social work education has been framed within a critical approach (Macfarlane, 2016). The focus on social change and the opportunity for programmes to engage in social action was a strong thread running through the conversations with leaders. Students as key consumers of education programmes perhaps present the biggest test in demonstrating staff commitment to equity-focused participatory practice. It is clear that in Aotearoa successful programmes build on institutional systems of course evaluation and student representation to create stronger partnerships between staff and students that also anchor Treaty, cultural and professional values. Although a focus on student voice and representation, and the importance of moving beyond the basics has been found to be central to the pursuit of equity-focused practice, leaders are also called upon to demonstrate social work values and advocacy in their leadership roles. Expressing Treaty-based partnership, developing a diverse workforce and retaining talent, managing the institutional inhibitors of staff wellbeing, and working collaboratively to advance equity aims have been identified as important leadership tasks.

Providing strong operational and strategic leadership on the ground is nevertheless one of a number of elements that influence the development of equity-focused practices. Other influencing elements identified in the research included global and local standards, the regulatory frameworks that both monitor and facilitate practices in social work programmes, and the expectations of quality improvement over time. The minimal knowledge leaders had about the GS, however, and the fact that they are

not necessarily using them to inform or reinforce operational policies and practices, potentially limits the impact that the GS might have in Aotearoa. Further research is required to establish whether this is unique to Aotearoa or whether it extends to schools of social work internationally. Since the GS policy is now under review (IASSW & IFSW, 2019), an opportunity presents itself for an accompanying review of their strategic influence and the opportunity to complement local standards and provide the global scaffolding for democratising initiatives.

Regulatory bodies also have an important role to play in advancing equity-focused practices in social work education. As with regulatory bodies internationally, the SWRB standards and audit process have a major impact on programmes in Aotearoa. While regulatory frameworks have been found to offer benefits for programmes, the compliance-driven nature of the recognition process was nevertheless regarded as misaligned to the profession's broader commitment to the Treaty and its decolonising expectations.

This raises questions about the prescriptive nature of regulatory standards and their potential to compromise important equity aims. As noted in Chapter 1, increasingly over time the effects of neoliberalism have influenced most aspects of public life, including education. Higher education has been subject to conservative economic and political drivers that have restrained the progressive mission of education (Amsler, 2014). Within this pervasive neoliberal environment, social work education is at risk of being captured by influences of commodification, commercialisation, neocolonial impacts, a reductionist use of technology and the increased engagement of modernist ideas of progress through standard setting. The added feature of managerialism can lead to regulatory processes that render social work education as a narrow prescription for training social workers at odds with its core base of relational, reflexive and ethical practice (Sewpaul, 2014). This aligns with the wider educational risk of quality improvement processes becoming a tick box audit approach alongside a preoccupation with minimum standards. As programmes review their curriculum, workforce plans and broader strategic plan, reflexive attention to the GS equity expectations will help to align their strategic efforts with the profession's wider commitment to social justice. Healy (2014) is optimistic that the global social work

profession, inclusive of social work education, will continue to build on its track record of globalising initiatives such as standards setting as well as privileging local diversity. However, this requires an ongoing analysis of and resistance to imperialism (Sewpaul, 2014).

Leaders of social work programmes are in a strategic position with respect to setting direction for programmes and leading the careful work required to avoid pitfalls arising from the neoliberal influence. This includes both an inward-facing leadership for staff and students, but equally an outward-facing leadership to the institutional context and beyond.

Regulatory bodies also have a critical role to play, and it is incumbent upon them to ensure that their monitoring of standard setting activities is fully aligned with the profession's equity and democratising goals. In Aotearoa it is clear that there are fundamental tensions in meeting equity and democratising expectations while also complying with minimum qualification standards. The SWRB's requirement of a master's level degree for social work educators (SWRB, 2018) is regarded as working against the development of a diverse workforce when staff who have a vital cultural contribution are denied a more flexible pathway to achieving the required qualification. This flexibility was unsuccessfully sought by the Council for Social Work Education Aotearoa NZ (personal communication, August 5, 2017). Striving for a better alignment of equity ideals and minimum standards could avoid the undermining of democratising practices in programmes of social work education.

In summary, education is under attack globally from the conservative influence of neoliberalism. Social work values and the profession's pursuit of equity goals can provide a foundation for social work education to disrupt this influence and in turn realise its progressive agenda. Leaders in social work education are in a unique position to influence the development of programmes and to advance democratising practices nationally and internationally. This kind of transformative leadership has the potential to create democratising partnerships that will strengthen the pursuit of equity goals in social work education.

Conclusion

The findings of this chapter illustrate that leaders have a key role to play in democratising social work education. A firm foundation of social work values provides the base on which an equity agenda can be pursued. One of the key roles for leaders is recruiting and supporting a diverse faculty because they have one of the most important impacts on the development of students and their learning. The tertiary education context offers the beneficial notion of academic freedom and of being the 'critic and conscience' of society within Aotearoa. Leaders and faculty together can leverage this and find an expression in activism for the achievement of their profession's mission of social justice.

The next chapter builds on the research with social work education leaders concerning democratisation in programmes with a focus on decolonisation.

CHAPTER 5

DECOLONISING PROGRAMMES IN AOTEAROA: FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION LEADERS

This chapter examines the second theme of Wave 2, which specifically relates to the decolonising of programmes in social work education. The article that is presented outlines the decolonising theory of L. T. Smith (2012), which is used along with the work of other theorists to support the exploration of decolonising programmes in social work education in Aotearoa. After the primacy of indigenous rights is established, the themes of White privilege and ally roles are explored, as outlined in the framework for decolonising Australian social work education (Zubrzycki et al., 2014). A further focus for leadership is the concept of an “authorising environment” for organisational change (Andrews, Pritchett, & Woolcock, 2016, p. 2), which is applied to the Aotearoa social work education context, where Te Tiriti is the foundation for authorising decolonising practices.

The following article forms the basis of the chapter:

McNabb, D. (2019). Decolonising social work education in Aotearoa New Zealand. *Advances in Social Work and Welfare Education*, 21(1), 35–50. Retrieved from <https://informit.com>

Introduction

The social work education sector has a vital role to play in advancing the rights and interests of indigenous peoples. Global and national standards reinforce this requirement, and regulatory frameworks identify decolonising practices as important in the delivery of social work education. While there is undoubtedly a disciplinary commitment to furthering indigenous rights, it is clear that progress has nevertheless been slow.

Indigenous rights and decolonisation

Indigenous peoples have been fighting for their traditional rights ever since colonisers took their lands, wealth, labour, culture and language. The rights and expectations of indigenous peoples have found their contemporary expression in UNDRIP (United Nations, 2008). Globally, colonised peoples have mobilised in protest and have been at

the forefront of the fight for change. Whereas people of colour have often been the colonised group, European or White people are usually part of the dominant population. In general, dominant group forces have been slower to support decolonising developments, but they can become important allies in creating societal change (Huygens, 2016).

From the context of Aotearoa, L. T. Smith (2012) notes that decolonisation was once only defined as the formal handing back of the governance of a country by the colonial authority but “is now recognised as a long term process involving bureaucratic, cultural, linguistic, and psychological divesting of colonial power” (L. T. Smith, 2012, p. 175). Some have used the extended term ‘decoloniality’ to emphasise the depth to which colonisation negatively affects the colonised group and the challenge facing the colonising group in addressing the knowledge of this harm. This highlights the work needing to be done with the colonising group for a more equitable society to emerge—including within the context of social work education (Hendrick & Young, 2018).

A critical analysis of colonisation and of race has challenged privileged status to confront the advantages that have been accrued by the dominant group and to take a stand against injustice and racism. Indigenous people challenge non-indigenous people to take responsibility for addressing White privilege as a prerequisite to becoming allies in the work of decolonisation (Bennett, 2015). The concept of ‘ally’ was developed by Bishop (2003) and has been used by many groups working for change.

The term ‘White privilege’ initially arose out of the critical White studies movement, which spread to other parts of the world in response to challenges from Black voices in the USA. S. Young and Zubrzycki (2011) note the seminal work of Peggy McIntosh, whose essay “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” in 1989 was important in identifying the often unseen and unacknowledged benefits of being White (p. 162). The field of critical White studies, which incorporates the notion of White privilege, interrogates the ways in which this privilege “is raced and invisible; [providing] a method of unsettling this privilege; and it offers guidance for more inclusive and respectful human relationships” (S. Young & Zubrzycki, 2011, p. 165). The

wider theme of privilege has been explored by Pease (2016), including a focus on understanding the benefits of privilege by those in the dominant group and their complicity in others' oppression.

In Aotearoa, Māori have led the resistance to colonisation and its effects. In 1835, *He Whakaputanga—the Declaration of Independence* was signed by Northern chiefs in Aotearoa and recognised by Britain (Orange, 2015). Te Tiriti o Waitangi was signed by a number of Māori tribal leaders and the British Crown in 1840.

Whereas Te Tiriti held the hope of a mutually beneficial arrangement for Māori who signed along with the British Crown, including the notion of “bi-polity” whereby two sovereign nations could equitably govern (L. Ruwhiu, Te Hira, Eruera, & Elkington, 2016, p. 80), the dominance of Britain was asserted and Māori experienced colonisation of their land and, indeed, their whole world. Māori resisted colonisation and fought in land battles while, at the same time, they adapted to Western ideas and technology.

In contemporary times, Māori have protested for their rights, and now, through the Treaty of Waitangi Tribunal, a number of iwi have settled historic disputes with the government (Waitangi Tribunal, 2019b). This has typically included an apology from the government for the land taken and harm caused, and financial and other components of redress. At one level, decolonisation has been formally underway, with a growing number of tribes engaging in the settlement process, since the Treaty of Waitangi Tribunal was established by an Act of Parliament in 1975, although it is acknowledged there is a long way to go (Huygens, 2016). However, it can be argued that any decolonisation process is limited because of the significant ongoing colonial legacy of major structural deprivation faced by Māori (L. T. Smith, 2012). Alongside the negative structural impact of colonisation, Te Tiriti continues to offer the potential of partnership between Māori and non-Māori.

Within the Aotearoa education context, mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) has been recognised as one of the guarantees of Te Tiriti and was embedded within the education legislation of 1990. One example of the development of mātauranga Māori

within a public education institution is the creation of a tool, Poutama, to assist all its programmes to honour Te Tiriti (Unitec Institute of Technology, 2011).

In the context of Māori self-determination, we note the advent of wānanga as a key site for decolonisation and indigenising practices also expressed in the context of social work education (Akhter, 2015). Other global manifestations of indigenous tertiary institutions include the indigenous university based in Canada, established in 2004 (S. Young et al., 2013).

Decolonising global social work education

Decolonising social work education is a global aim that unites countries with colonial histories. Some of the relevant literature is contained in edited texts on the theme of indigenous or decolonising social work education and research (Fejo-King & Mataira, 2015; Gray et al., 2016; Zubrzycki et al., 2014) and many texts focusing on social work education with broader indigenous themes—in Aotearoa (Crawford, 2018), in Asia-Pacific (Nikku & Hatta, 2014; Noble, Henrickson, & Han, 2013) and globally (Noble et al., 2014).

Countries in which decolonising and indigenising social work education is being advanced include Aotearoa (Anglem, 2009; Eketone & Walker, 2016); Australia (Fejo-King, 2013; Muller, 2014); Canada (Johnson, 2010; Waterfall, 2008); the Pacific, including Tonga (Mafile‘o, 2004), Samoa (Faleolo, 2013) and the Pacific more generally (Mafile‘o & Vakalahi, 2018); the USA (Yellow Bird, 2016), including Hawai‘i (Morelli et al., 2016); China (Yuen-Tsang & Ku, 2008); South Africa (Harms Smith & Nathane, 2018), and Africa more broadly (Kreitzer, 2008); the Sami in the Nordic region (Merja, Sanna, Merja, & Sanna, 2016); the Americas more broadly (Tamburro, 2013); and Europe (S. Young et al., 2013). Broader spiritual and religious themes can be aligned with the indigenisation project, such as a text on Buddhist social work that roots practice in Asia (Gohori, 2017) and an exploration of the links between Islamic spirituality and indigenous social work education (Akhter, 2013).

The AASW Code of Ethics, Reconciliation Action Plan, and Education Standards (AASW, 2012) privilege Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing within the curriculum and the broader practice of recognised social work programmes.

A key document for Australian social work education, the Getting It Right Framework (Zubrzycki et al., 2014), provides a teaching and learning framework to advance decolonising efforts in social work education in Australia. The four key features of the framework are indigenous “epistemological equality, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-centered social work, cultural responsiveness, and Indigenous pedagogy” (S. Young et al., 2013, p. 1).

However, because social work is a profession that originated in the West and continues to sit within a stream of colonisation, it has a problematic relationship with indigenous peoples. This is why the Getting It Right Framework (Zubrzycki et al., 2014) argues that the social work profession must critically reflect on how it contributes to ongoing colonising practices and that White privilege must be addressed within social work education. Addressing non-indigenous privilege in the educational context can be informed by the broader notion of a pedagogy of privilege, in which recognising one’s own privilege and the benefits it brings is vital along with continually challenging the systems that support it.

Literature exists more broadly about race and racism, and how this can be addressed within the educational sector. Anti-racism practices include using agreements for “courageous conversations about race” at the classroom level, requiring leadership at the institutional and policy levels (Singleton, 2015, p. 15). Racism covers a broad area of oppression whereby one cultural group discriminates against another based on biology and cultural difference, usually White against people of colour, with both structural and personal dimensions of oppression. Colonisation involves “the process by which European imperial powers gained military control of and subjugated the peoples of ‘colonies’ in Africa and Asia” (Gray et al., 2016, p. 333) and, of course, in the Pacific. Both racism and colonisation are identified components that should be addressed in decolonising social work education (Zubrzycki et al., 2014).

Indigenous knowledge must be recognised as equivalent to Western knowledge, creating “epistemological equality” (Zubrzycki et al., 2014, p. 17). In the Aotearoa context, this recognition has been incorporated into the promotion of mātauranga

Māori, a feature that aligns well with the commitment of the Aotearoa social work profession to honour Te Tiriti (ANZASW, 2013).

From a global and local perspective, regulatory frameworks provide opportunities to shape the ways in which social work education is developed to support democratising and decolonising practices (McNabb & Connolly, 2019). Standards provide a foundational platform on which best practice can be developed, and in this regard, it has been argued that the role of leaders is to move social work education beyond baseline standards towards aspirational goals such as decolonisation (McNabb, 2017). Recent research has identified democratising and decolonising practices as key themes that have been reinforced in the GS, and in the local standards of Australia and Aotearoa (McNabb & Connolly, 2019). Further research has examined the ways in which democratising practices are given effect within programmes of social work education across Aotearoa (McNabb, 2019b). This adds to a growing body of literature that explores the influence of regulatory frameworks on social work education (McNabb & Connolly, 2019).

This article explores the ways in which leaders of social work education in Aotearoa support decolonising practices within their programmes alongside their thoughts on the challenges and opportunities of demonstrating an enduring commitment to Te Tiriti and to advancing the partnership between Māori and non-Māori.

Methodology

The study undertook qualitative interviews with social work education programme leaders to investigate questions relating to decolonising of practices in Aotearoa. One of the more common forms of qualitative research is the semi-structured, face-to-face interview of individuals (Brinkmann, 2013). This approach was particularly useful in this study because it allowed a deeper conversation with leaders about the challenges and issues arising from advancing decolonising practices in social work programmes.

Leaders of all 19 social work programme providers, ranging across university, polytechnic, wānanga and private institutional contexts, were invited to participate in the study. Unlike some countries where social work education is confined to universities, Aotearoa has a diversity of tertiary education institutional contexts. By

engaging with a range of providers, features of this diversity across the country were captured. These features include metropolitan and regional geographies; polytechnic, private training establishments, universities and wānanga institutions; Māori, Pacific and mixed cultural settings; campus-based and distance mediums; small and large programmes; bachelor's and master's level programmes; and a special character faith-based institution.

Fourteen of the 19 programme leaders participated, providing a very strong representation of programmes across Aotearoa. Two-thirds of the respondents were women, and two-thirds were Pākehā. Leaders with Māori, Pacific or Indian ethnicity were also represented. The role of leaders in social work programmes in Aotearoa is made more complex by the range and diversity of management and disciplinary leadership roles in the sector. These roles range from full management and leadership of the programme and its staff to disciplinary academic leadership without management responsibilities. The respondents were roughly split in half between each of these categories.

Most interviews were conducted in person, and when this was impracticable, online synchronous digital technology was used through the Blackboard Collaborate platform or through Skype. A semi-structured interview schedule was used that had been developed from the themes identified in the earlier document analysis, specifically relating to “service user and student participation, student representativeness, Indigenous rights and political action, gender and cultural equity, access and equity, and quality social work education and broader issues of equity” (McNabb & Connolly, 2019, p. 42). The NVivo data analysis software tool was used to assist in analysing the data thematically.

Ethics approval was gained from the Human Ethics Advisory Group of the University of Melbourne and the study was regarded as a minimal risk project; Ethics ID 1748887. All participants in the study gave informed consent.

In addition to the well-documented limitations of using a qualitative research methodology, there are limitations particular to this research that relate to the sample. Only interviews with social work programme leaders in Aotearoa were

undertaken, and therefore, the research does not include the views of other social work academic leaders, academic staff, students or people who represent the wider social work sector, including service users, iwi and Māori organisations, community organisations and other stakeholders such as government. Research with these groups may well offer some different views about the nature of decolonising practices.

Findings

The leaders were asked to share their perspectives with respect to decolonising practices, and the ways in which these practices were given effect in their social work programme. Whereas the leaders were not given a definition of decolonisation and its respective practices, within the context of Aotearoa, any action to promote Māori knowledge and culture, a deeper expression of commitment to Te Tiriti and partnership between Māori and Tauīwi or biculturalism would fit within a broad definition of decolonisation. These features of decolonisation are supported within the social work profession and within tertiary education policy.

Three key themes were identified: the commitment to decolonising practices operationalising decolonising practices and the enablers of decolonising practices. Each participant was assigned a non-identifying number, which is noted beside each quote.

Commitment to decolonising practices

The importance of engaging with kaupapa Māori values was regarded as a critical foundation supporting a programme's commitment to biculturalism in practice:

Fuse those values that you know about, the Treaty values, and also other mātauranga Māori knowledge values ... and then we're moving from that towards decolonisation [of the whole programme]. (11)

Māori staff were regarded as having a key role in this, a role that required institutional support:

One of the key parts of our ... bicultural [journey] from a kaupapa Māori [perspective] ... supporting the Māori staff to start self-determining and owning key aspects of the programme and their place. (2)

In the context of decolonising practices, the leaders reinforced the deep commitment that social work education has to advancing Te Tiriti, and operationalising the elements of Te Tiriti in practice. Establishing a firm foundation of responsiveness was regarded as critical to advancing practice. This involved establishing a strong kaupapa Māori foundation in each programme with a particular expectation of responsibility as a leader:

As a manager or a leader, that's where I see I have quite a high level of responsibility for the profession to ensure that we are being genuine in our commitment (to the Treaty), and I see my role as the enabler of that. (3)

One leader noted that UNDRIP is complementary to Te Tiriti-based practice and made a link between the global and local decolonising efforts:

The UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People, I think offers us a very unique opportunity to unpack what our Treaty relationship might look like. (13)

One leader of a programme with a deep and enduring commitment to Te Tiriti noted a dilemma in having strong kaupapa Māori based values in that predominantly Māori students tended to work in iwi services but might struggle to work in "mainstream" agencies because of the challenge of balancing Māori and non-Māori bodies of knowledge. In this instance, the importance of committing to a blended knowledge base was suggested:

I think our programme ... needs to be a lot stronger at that interface between Māori and non-Māori bodies of knowledge, because what we've found historically is that our taura [students] have gone into statutory organisations and within a really short period of time they've felt quite isolated in terms of tracking their body of knowledge, which has primarily been from a Māori perspective. (13)

A number of leaders spoke about being committed to a bicultural journey but of also being restrained by resourcing or policy settings within their institution:

The social work programme particularly is totally committed to the bicultural Code of Ethics and teaching in a bicultural manner ... But, our institute has not supported us well with that and it's been a continuing challenge ... (7)

On the other hand, when there was a clear, higher-level institutional commitment to advancing bicultural practices, there was a trickle-down effect that provided support for change throughout the organisation:

It came from the top, in terms of our commitment to biculturalism and in the context of colonisation. So, we've had conversations as a faculty about that ... I think it's flown through to our school and conversations at staff meetings, and it's gone through to our programme level and it's showing up in class. (6)

Social work education nevertheless exists within a context of colonised practices, and some leaders noted tensions in operationalising decolonising practices in the context of competing expectations of evidenced-based practice.

This is something we now turn to in the next major theme.

Operationalising decolonising practices

Leaders articulated the challenges in meaningfully and purposefully shaping bicultural social work programmes and the ways in which it might be monitored and sustained, without being formulaic:

How many tertiary institutions will simply see this as a tick box exercise rather than necessarily a fundamental look at themselves? (13)

Some leaders also noted that the physical environment for learning mātauranga Māori is important, including using marae (Māori meeting houses) as a way of deepening a student's knowledge through experience:

I think it's also the mode of delivery. And this is what our taura say to us. The moment we walk through the door we felt at home ... It's a thriving [place] ... And the students overwhelmingly have said to us that the penny dropped when they went onto a marae. (13)

What we ask students to do is to select an issue that is relevant to Māori ... and then they complete presentations on the marae about the issue and solutions ... So, they have the opportunity to apply Māori concepts, particularly tikanga [customary practices] and then to receive feedback. (8)

A number of leaders spoke about the challenge of maintaining momentum for a Tiriti-based programme. There were a number of facets to manage, and any one or more could slow progress. Ongoing development of teaching practices that supported mātauranga Māori in the programme was regarded as critical. Where there was strong

support from the institution, programmes moved from talking about decolonising practices, to operationalising them:

I think we've moved beyond caucusing to another era and so, looking at what is Māori knowledge, how is Māori knowledge taught, who does the teaching of Māori knowledge, and then how is bicultural engagement included and what are the steps that we can make; how is te reo acknowledged? (2)

Leaders noted various ways in which the commitment towards biculturalism was operationalised, for example, aligning the curriculum in ways that reflect Te Tiriti and integrating Te Tiriti within assessment processes in practical ways:

The Treaty and biculturalism form some of the backbones of our programme—the structural backbones. We declare ourselves to be a bicultural programme ... In terms of delivering the programme, all our course outlines have to demonstrate how they meet the focus on biculturalism. (4)

Almost every assessment requires an examination of firstly the Treaty and then the community that you serve. (5)

Similarly, leaders explored the ways in which biculturalism can be strengthened through its integration into the whole curriculum, for example, by integrating Te Tiriti material in specific papers and also throughout the degree. The value of having had a quality assurance process during the construction of the curriculum that included a review by both a Māori and a Pasifika appraiser was also noted:

And all of it is reviewed by a bicultural appraiser and Pasifika appraiser; so, you have Māori and Pasifika perspectives reviewing our content, the whole course, before it's ever public. So, that builds it into the brickwork if you like. (10)

While the importance of advancing decolonising practices was uniformly supported, leaders also commented on some of the barriers to supporting biculturalism. A number of leaders noted the heavy load carried by Māori staff, which included teaching mātauranga Māori, supporting Māori students, managing external relationships with Māori and partnering with non-Māori staff: This requires targeted support by non-Māori and by leaders of programmes:

This is the issue too for Māori staff members having to wear all the curriculum that's Māori, and a pastoral care that's Māori, and do we support those Māori staff members in the way that they should be and need to be, and ought to be cared for? (12)

Most leaders noted the challenge of finding and developing Māori staff, and for some it was their biggest impediment to running a Tiriti-based programme.

Some leaders were in a position to grow their own Māori workforce, which might include scholarship and assistance programmes along with innovative funding support. When an institution had its own master's qualification, it tended to be easier to support Māori staff to achieve that qualification, and then become employed as academics.

Given the importance of recruiting and retaining Māori staff, it was particularly heartbreaking for programmes to have to let expert Māori staff and other specialists go because they could not meet all the SWRB academic staff requirements that were introduced relatively recently:

The sad thing for us is that we lost them [expert Māori staff] in the last couple of years. And we lost them actually primarily around the SWRB requirements, which I think has been quite sad for us as a programme. (13)

Losing staff in this way created significant challenges for programmes because it also affected the sustainability of the movement towards bicultural practice. There was always the risk that one or more key staff members would leave and affect the momentum of the whole programme.

Enablers of decolonising practice

Working on a shared-values base was considered an important first step in creating the environment within which decolonising practices could flourish. It was notable that linking team values to mātauranga Māori has helped departments in their Tiriti-based journey by providing a solid foundation for development:

That shifted staff thinking, and what they did was exactly what I asked them to do, which was linking between (the) Treaty and where people were at with that; but also, mātauranga Māori, and also the values we've adopted as a team. (11)

A number of leaders were optimistic about what was already going well in their programmes and saw the potential for them to become enablers of decolonising practices more broadly across their own institutions and the wider social service sector in Aotearoa. Indeed, this was an imperative:

I think Aotearoa is looked at, and looked upon, as being quite progressive in this area. So, in our profession we need to be driving this and leading this, or else, people from other broader social service professions will drive and lead it for us. (13)

Leadership, and in particular Māori leadership, was regarded as a critical enabler of decolonising practice in social work education. Viewing this as part of a sector-wide development of Tiriti-based social work education was considered important to the overall sustaining of decolonising practices. Non-Māori support was also considered important to the advancement of Māori interests and leadership.

Having a close relationship with local iwi and having iwi members involved in the programme were also regarded as enablers of decolonising practice. One of the sector-wide initiatives involving Māori leadership was the development of the draft Kaitiakitanga Framework. This would potentially create a more detailed set of standards concerning Tiriti-based practices in programmes, a significant gap for the SWRB regulator currently.

Further questions arose for a kaupapa Māori based programme in considering how it might partner with a mainstream programme on something like co-publishing but still have an honourable relationship with mutual benefit. Other leaders noted the value of doctoral research and publications such as *Te Kōmako* that targeted Tiriti-based social work practice and education.

Discussion

The findings have established the importance of Te Tiriti for social work educators and the fundamental place and value it brings to the profession. It is viewed as critical in advancing decolonising practices in Aotearoa. Indeed, the way in which Te Tiriti influences Aotearoa law, policies and practice across the whole of government, its institutions and various public sector type groups reinforces a strong commitment to honouring Te Tiriti and partnering with Māori more broadly. Notwithstanding the long struggle that Māori have led and continue to lead so that Te Tiriti is honoured, Te Tiriti provides an overarching influence upon Aotearoa, arguably creating what Andrews et al. (2016) call an “authorising environment” (p. 2).

Originally derived from the work of Moore (2013), the notion of an authorising environment was developed by Andrews et al. (2016) as a way of critically influencing organisational behaviour, and providing legitimacy and accountability for action. This idea has recently been further developed to include human services work (for example, see Connolly, Healey, & Humphreys, 2017). Andrews et al. (2016) notes, however, that creating an authorising environment is not always easy, particularly when systems “are commonly fragmented, and difficult to navigate” (p. 5). Given the nature of entrenched White privilege underpinning structures, policies and programmes, there is an institutional bias towards the dominant colonial discourse. Therefore, both establishing appropriate authority and undertaking the agreed change can be difficult to secure, even more so when the problems being addressed are often wicked in nature because of their size and complexity. This further highlights the importance of a strong base of authority and inherent influence from which to operate.

In the context of Aotearoa, the concept of Te Tiriti as creating a foundational and ubiquitous authorising environment is particularly useful because it illustrates how influence can permeate aspects of government, social and economic policy, and law. The pursuit of Tiriti-based partnership and decolonisation is a major initiative that involves both government and non-government agencies in Aotearoa working together for its achievement, albeit with varying levels of commitment. If we apply the notion of an authorising environment to Te Tiriti and its implementation within tertiary social work education, then we can conceptualise the way in which it influences and legitimises Tiriti-based partnership and decolonising practices (see Figure 5.1).

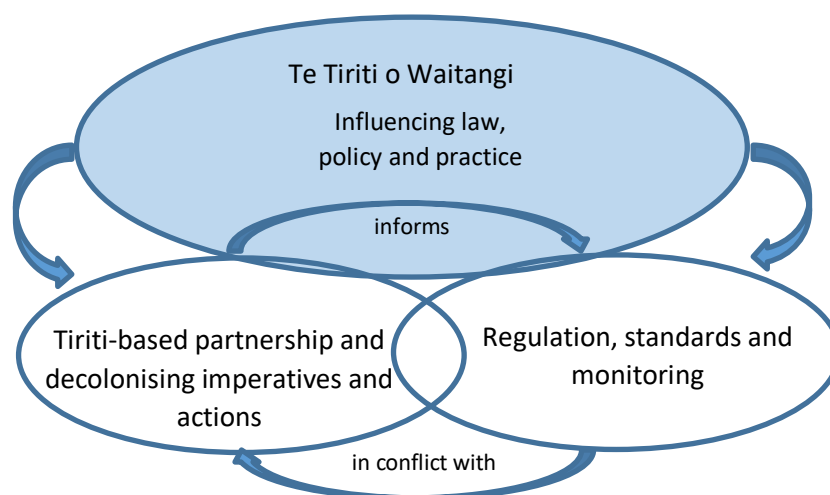


Figure 5.1. Te Tiriti o Waitangi creating an authorising environment for social work education.

From the findings of this research, it is clear that a strong, authorising environment creates the scaffolding necessary for the sharing of high-level goals and their implementation in service delivery. At the same time, the research also illustrates the tensions that can exist when government imperatives give effect to conflicting expectations. The area of regulation and standards that are contained in the remit of the regulatory body in Aotearoa, the SWRB, provides a good example of this (see Figure 5.1). Recent requirements that social work educators have a master’s or doctoral degree (SWRB, 2017) has meant some Māori staff have been lost to programmes. This directly weakens the Māori workforce in contradicting the decolonising aims of Te Tiriti that specifically privilege Māori interests. Indeed, it also critically weakens the SWRB’s own goal of producing graduates who are competent to practise social work with Māori (SWRB, 2016c).

Although the social work profession is well represented on the SWRB, the entity nevertheless intersects with government because the SWRA (2003) requires the board to report directly to a government minister who is ultimately responsible for the standards it establishes and monitors. This regulatory responsibility creates a fundamental tension with the Crown’s imperative to advance and operationalise Te Tiriti. Ultimately, conflicting expectations have operational consequence for social work education programmes.

Although a heavy responsibility for creating safe practice systems rests with the SWRB, particularly in the context of child protection and risk-focused practice (Connolly, 2017), unless the regulatory body also pays attention to and incorporates the decolonising expectations of Te Tiriti, social work education programmes will continue to be constrained in advancing Tiriti-based imperatives.

It is clear that leadership activism by Māori and non-Māori allies is needed to work through these complexities, and to move forward in ways that are consistent with the clear requirements of Te Tiriti and the partnership expectations it presents. A ray of light within the regulatory environment of social work education is found in the Kaitiakitanga Framework, which fleshes out the implications of honouring Te Tiriti and of further clarifying priorities in terms of “competence to practise social work with Māori” (SWRB, 2016c, p. 3). While early in its development, this strategic partnership between the SWRB and Māori social work educators and practitioners has the potential to break through what has become something of an impasse that places real constraints on the development of social work education and practice based on Te Tiriti.

In summary, Te Tiriti is a major feature of the Aotearoa landscape that provides a strong, authorising environment for the advancement of decolonising practices in social work education. This has created a public discourse concerning Te Tiriti that has supported its growing influence. This authorising environment has nevertheless been critical for Tiriti-based social work practice to develop in Aotearoa, where both government and non-government bodies are inextricably involved.

Other countries like Aotearoa with colonial histories either have treaties with their indigenous peoples or are exploring these possibilities. For example, Australia is in the process of considering a treaty between the state of Victoria and Aboriginal peoples (“Victoria Passes Historic Law”, 2018), something that this research suggests could ultimately scaffold the development of a partnership to integrate indigenous and non-indigenous knowledges. In this context, the implementation of the recently developed Getting It Right Framework (Zubrzycki et al., 2014), a major policy document for

decolonising social work education in Australia, could be enabled by a stronger authorising environment over time.

Notwithstanding the strength of the authorising environment, however, it is clear that regulatory frameworks can also present challenges to the attainment of decolonising practices. This research reinforces the importance of resolving regulatory misalignments with Te Tiriti imperatives in Aotearoa. As efforts towards the compulsory registration of social workers in Australia intensify, ensuring regulatory alignment with decolonising ideals will also be important to the development of partnerships that integrate indigenous and non-indigenous knowledges in social work education and practice.

Conclusion

This article built on Wave 1 of the research, with the findings confirming an equity agenda for social work education, and Wave 2 of the research, which began with the previous chapter's exploration of democratisation in programmes, and focused on the challenges faced by leaders in operationalising a commitment to a decolonising approach. This approach was favoured by all programme leaders participating in the research. Having Māori staff was identified as critical but invariably there were too few, often because of the regulatory qualification requirement. Leaders noted that Māori knowledge and practices needed to be better integrated within the curriculum. Non-Māori were identified as having an important role in confronting the harmful effects of colonisation and practising respectful partnership with Māori. However, the enablers of decolonising practices were founded on the authorising environment of Te Tiriti of Waitangi.

The next chapter also builds on Wave 1 of the research agenda and its equity-themed findings and as Wave 3 of the research engages with social work educators in exploring the operationalising of a commitment to democratisation.

CHAPTER 6

DEMOCRATISING PRACTICES IN AOTEAROA: FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SOCIAL WORK EDUCATORS

Introduction

In Chapters 4, 5, 7 and 8 the decolonising and democratising themes from Waves 2 and 3 of the research are presented in the form of publications. This chapter departs from this and reports findings from the focus groups and interviews with social work educators, who focused more particularly on issues relating to teaching and learning.

The theme of privilege and the responsibility for addressing privilege was a strong theme within the data. This chapter reports specifically on this theme, within which the following four areas of discussion are identified:

1. White privilege and the institutional context
2. responsibility for addressing White privilege in the classroom
3. broader issues of privilege
4. the relationship between regulation and privilege

As noted in Chapter 3, a minority of the focus group participants were people of Māori and Pacific ethnicity, and no wānanga staff participated in this wave of the research. All respondents worked in mainstream programmes. Their comments therefore reflect their particular experience of working in these largely monocultural public institutions. This has influenced the findings in particular ways, something that will be discussed later in the chapter.

Findings

A common theme emerged from the discussions with social work educators relating to their experiences of settler and monocultural institutions, and to discourses of privilege found within them. The term 'White privilege' was used by some participants and is inclusive of the notion of settler privilege, which specifically relates to non-indigenous people who benefit from colonisation.

1. White privilege and the institutional context

Social work educators raised issues relating to the challenges of working within monocultural institutions, where discourses of privilege were deeply embedded. For Māori staff, experiences of institutional racism were both personal and professional:

I've got to be honest; I have experienced institutional racism as a tangata whenua and Māori practitioner and lecturer. So, those challenges we feel very deeply and I think there's a lot of work to be done there still. (7)

For Māori staff, decolonisation presented important opportunities for advocacy by Māori and non-Māori from a lived experience:

We're actually living and breathing that every single day of our lives, to decolonise. So, to find actual space where we talk about what that actually looks like can be quite difficult. (7)

Programme staff also needed to become more insightful about the colonising dynamics inherent in monocultural institutions, and Pākehā staff spoke of their own position of privilege within them:

I can stand up in front of my students and talk about White privilege ... but I'm working for an organisation that's 90% White. I am allowed to work here because I've had the privilege of being able to get an education and get a master's degree ... because I'm White. (10)

Non-Māori also talked about the invisibility of Māori within a resource-focused monocultural institution:

I think challenges for us are ... the invisibility of tangata whenua, and our constant desire to honour being a Treaty partner. I think that's a tension, and it's a resource tension, it's a te reo tension, it's a cultural capital contention. (8)

Some noted the essential 'White' nature of institutions:

We're in a Pākehā institution ... all our lessons are in English ... You graduate as a single person and you have to do individual assignments ... Nothing about these institutions are Māori ... Whereas the Māori students ... want to challenge that at some point (10)

Because I think most of our discourse is still dominated by how you're talking about decolonising by colonisers. (9)

Growing the Māori workforce was regarded as an important way of addressing this, reflecting also the programme's commitment to the Treaty.

It was important that equity was addressed more broadly at a policy level as well as at a programme level:

We're not doing that much, in terms of access and equity at a policy level, (and) as a programme. (3)

There is a risk that social work programmes will become more White and middle class and less representative through excluding poorer students. This could create a dominance of students who are more influenced by neoliberal ideals, presenting challenges in the classroom, and in the context of practice more broadly:

I know certainly with some other younger classes ... who have grown up ... strongly focused on neoliberalism [and] consumerism, the ability to think and engage with others is a challenge. But, that's not just a challenge in terms of working with Māori, that's a challenge across the board. (4)

The heavy cost of practicum that students have to bear can also be a disincentive for students who struggle financially:

[We are] in danger of becoming middle class, because of the cost of education; and I think it's harder for Māori, Pacific and migrant students, to get the whole way through four years ... They're less resilient after their third year, because of being on placement. (3)

One programme noted that most of their students were from low socioeconomic backgrounds and that the move to a four-year degree in the non-university sector and the high costs of study made it very difficult for students. Some participants noted that this could result in a return to White domination in the classroom:

All the poverty ... are we going to go back to having predominantly White middle-class students? And what does that mean? [It] impacts [on] diversity and voice. (10)

Related to this, the national issue of social work not being funded as an applied programme was raised by a number of participants, along with concerns that the institutions increasingly expect staff to compensate by undertaking hours of extra unpaid work. The negative impact of staff restructuring, which many regarded as "managerialism ... alive and well in the university", also worked against the provision

of a more equity-focused and nurturing classroom environment where diverse students need extra support:

To work smarter and more efficiently ... there was a suggestion of less teaching time ... [which would] adversely impact on our kinds of students who really benefit from ... the face-to-face learning; and also, the connection with their peers, and the tutors. (1)

... we do need to mentor the students a lot more. (2)

Dedicating time to student mentoring nevertheless came at a cost, particularly in universities that prioritised research outputs:

they interviewed our VC [vice-chancellor], who said that there was a lot of dead wood around the university and if you wanted to focus on teaching you could go to polytechs. (4)

The expectations of achieving in areas of both research and teaching had a particularly negative impact on new staff:

Since I've been here my teaching hours have virtually increased every year ... I'm expected to do research ... and get articles published ... keep up with ... the field ... Training ... [or] proper induction is not provided ... all these [technology] changes ... that creates stress. (10)

Some were prepared to bear the costs:

If the student needed assistance it didn't matter that it was five o'clock and they couldn't basically make it here till seven o'clock at night or in the weekends ... for us it's payback when we see those students walking across the stage graduating. (9)

On the positive side, academics made suggestions about how programmes and institutions could change to better serve diverse student populations. For example, they suggested the use of Mason Durie's (1998) continuum to guide programmes towards more bicultural and multicultural practices, which ultimately have the potential to embrace tino rangatiratanga:

I'm just very mindful of, you know, Mason Durie's organisational continuum of ... bicultural[ism] ... I think we're sort of two points along from the left, as opposed to way out on the right of a truly sort of tino rangatiratanga. (8)

In the end, the consequences of failing to embrace a bicultural focus were not lost on Māori staff. Indeed, Māori noted that change was required if monocultural institutions wanted to attract them as staff and to be more responsive to Māori:

If we're going to attract tangata whenua educators into what essentially is a monocultural institution, we have to find ways to do that well ... Our values, our sense of cultural identity is different"

Social work educators found their institutions to be monocultural, influenced by neoliberalism and often hostile to Māori and diverse staff, and to a democratising agenda. This reinforced White privilege and placed additional stress on staff, and in particular Māori, in their efforts to resist such privilege and pursue a bicultural focus.

2. Responsibility for addressing White privilege in the classroom

Not surprisingly, the participants in the focus groups talked a good deal about the dynamics of privilege both inside and outside of the classroom context. Whose responsibility it was to teach anti-privilege practice was debated by many. Unilaterally, the social work academics saw the responsibility for teaching anti-privilege rested with Pākehā:

As Pākehā we need to be able to speak into that space about Pākehā responsibility. (5)

As a Pākehā ... from that privileged position ... it's that process of critical reflection that we do as practitioners as well as educators. (4)

Non-Māori staff commented on the tension between their partnership role under the Treaty to support Māori staff and taking fuller responsibility for teaching White privilege:

Part of our role is to stand alongside Māori while Māori do their thing and be seen to support Māori. But, then you also hear the Māori staff saying, "Why the hell do I always have to do it? You guys need to know how to do this stuff." (10)

On the other hand, Māori staff recognised the knowledge and skills necessary to teach White privilege:

[I] support Pākehā to be understanding of these things ... Do you actually understand intergenerational trauma? Do you understand colonisation? Do you understand White privilege? White privilege ... I don't think we do that in the classroom well." (10)

Māori staff noted the challenges for non-Māori in responding to the demands of biculturalism:

I noticed that one little staff thing ... something simple like we had to stand up and do our pepeha ... and they've worked in education for 20 years, and they just couldn't do it. (6)

Training was regarded as a valuable first step, but only a first step:

We've done the Treaty training as a team and that was quite powerful, but it ended on that day ... I think that often there's this discourse that it's for Māori to decolonise; but it's not ... And then you have the conversation about how do you make it real. (7)

Making decolonising practices 'real' demands that Pākehā learn Māori practices, become truly familiar with mātauranga Māori, engage in personal decolonising, avoid a deficit approach to Māori and maintain currency with a post-Treaty settlement context. This recognises the dynamic nature of culture:

just linking the work politically in terms of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and continuing to do that; especially as we're going into post-settlement. The environment in terms of Te Tiriti is changing. (7)

Rather than slipping into a deficit focus, making the bicultural shift has the potential to be inspiring for both Māori and non-Māori:

... if you look at Māori political action, actually that's quite inspiring ... That is why [our Treaty course] is so important, because it challenges all of those discourses and it brings it back to the core of who we [Māori] are. (7)

The challenges non-Māori staff experienced in addressing White privilege were also experienced by students. Some questioned why they should learn about privilege and biculturalism:

There's a lot [of] conflict with the students once you bring that up [White privilege]. It has created so much huge division. (10)

Students who were unhappy with this challenging course content gave poor evaluations—an issue that is explored more fully in Chapter 7.

Identity, particularly in the context of understanding Treaty relationships, is an important component in understanding the nature of privilege and the dynamics it

creates. While in many respects the Treaty provided an anchor for Māori staff and a clear relationship of partnership that was understood by both Māori and Pākehā, Pasifika and migrant students faced different challenges in not always being sure where they fitted in in the context of the Treaty. In the context of the clear bicultural principles, Pacific peoples, and other migrants, may question whether they are a partner to the Treaty in the same way that Pākehā are a recognised Treaty partner. This uncertainty affects identity, the concept of privilege, and the role Pacific and migrant students have in addressing privilege:

... if it's a bicultural thing and we're living in a multicultural society, then how am I part of the document so to speak? (9)

One of the ethnic students [noted] ... we're doing quite a lot on Māori Pākehā Treaty-based practice, bicultural practice, and ... "I'm not sure where I fit" ... and that whole really awful thing of 'other'—Māori group, Pākehā and 'other'. (10)

3. The broader issues of privilege

In the same way that participants talked about White privilege and its effects on teaching and programmes, they also raised a number of related privilege themes.

Gender and sexuality themes were mentioned by a number of participants as both sites of challenge and possibilities for pursuing the goal of equity within social work education. The structural issues of patriarchy and heteronormativity needed analysis and addressing along with the promotion of feminism and knowledge of diverse sexualities and gender identities. Male, heterosexual and cisgender privilege is the 'flip side' of patriarchy and heteronormativity, which needed to be addressed:

We teach about power and all of that kind of stuff, but what's our critical reflection on how we do that? Or, are we perpetuating that kind of structure? It's around gender privilege. (7)

Some social work educators suggested that issues of sexuality and gender are important and are the subject of classroom conversations. Others suggested that the issue of addressing privilege was unevenly taught:

We explore viewings around gender; we explore viewings around sexuality. How these impact on us, as social work practitioners, the clients that we work

with, and we can try and challenge those of that thinking, but it's definitely an area to build on. (1)

We probably address sexuality more than gender. (8)

At a personal level, some female participants noted the patriarchal context of the tertiary environment and the career challenges this raised for women, which raises the question of how a diverse workforce can be supported to achieve equity-based goals:

I think gender equity across the university is an issue ... it's very much still a male environment and if you want to advance your career you have to take the male approach to career. So, that's kind of the tension I suppose between social work and the university. (4)

I've heard senior women talking about glass ceilings, and that's across the university and of course faculties ... It's still an issue, but you know, it's kinda like one of those invisible things; you don't actually know if it's there or not at times. (8)

Men were under-represented in the student population, although this probably reflected gender representation in the social work workforce. However, men were perceived to have an important role in addressing male privilege, particularly as expressed through violence against women:

the under-representation of men is an issue and it's a particular issue for certain fields of practice, where I think men need access to other men to deal with issues like violence, for example. (5)

Addressing male privilege in the classroom, particularly in the context of low male student numbers, can also be challenging:

I can remember, sometimes, the sole male student will say, "I'm sick of talking about this", feeling like they're over talking about male privilege, or having to provide a male view on a situation. (3)

Female participants talked about the benefit of having a male staff member within the teaching team and the way in which it seemed to help male students grapple with the concept of male privilege:

I think of our teaching staff—we are predominantly female—we've had my ... colleague that's joined me ... who's male; and that has been amazing for our male students. There's not many of them, but for them it was like a breath of fresh air. (6)

Some of what our male staff bring in terms of a male analysis ... I don't know that's anything that we explicitly focus on, but it's there. (4)

In addition to expressions of White, male and cultural privilege, social work educators talked about notions of privilege in the context of disability. In general, institutions cater for the majority of students who require little, if any, support. Outside this dominant cohort, students experiencing disability can face significant barriers that have the potential to compromise their academic success. Some staff noted minimal support for students with a disability in their institution, from staffing support to infrastructure:

That lift's broken today, so nobody in a wheelchair would be able to get up ... the café bench ... it's too high for people ... We had a disability coordinator for [the institution]. He's amazing ... [but] you've got [thousands of] students ... and we've got [one coordinator]. (10)

While there was only an occasional comment made about an institution's support provided to students with disability, most programmes seemed to have experienced challenges in their responsiveness. In the context of institutional cuts to resources, staff positions to assist minority groups have become increasingly rare.

Finally, social work educators talked about, and were aware of, the privilege that they experienced and held as educators within large institutions. They were insightful about their role in responding to privilege reflexively, and were conscious of the potential to perpetuate privilege or facilitate change:

For me it's probably one of the key lessons for social workers to learn is that the role can abuse the authority of the state ... If they're not sensitive to their own uses of power they're bloody dangerous. So, I'm banging on that drum from ... selection day. (7)

4. The relationship between regulation and privilege

The relationship between regulation and privilege within institutional contexts was an interesting theme raised by social work educators. Regulatory systems and requirements influenced the experience of both staff and students.

With respect to staff, participants noted that the qualification requirement was a barrier for Māori coming into the workforce, working against the programmes' commitment to bringing more diversity into teaching teams. In this there was a strong

accord with the concerns expressed by social work leaders, discussed extensively in Chapter 5. In a constant refrain in this research, leaders and educators agreed that there is a desperate lack of Māori staff, which inevitably has an impact on developing anti-privilege practices.

SWRB regulations were regarded as part of the problem for recruiting Māori staff, who then have to be well looked after:

I don't know why Māori are not applying [for staff positions], but it's also restricted by the SWRB requirements and I think that's the biggest [reason]. (2)

It's very hard to find Māori academic staff who are social workers. I would like to see a stronger Māori staff presence on our programme, but there's big issues around recruitment, and also around us taking care of our Māori staff members, so that they don't burn out. (3)

The pressure on Māori staff members to quickly complete a master's degree to meet SWRB standards was unhelpful in the midst of their other work. Social work educators also agreed with the leaders that the SWRB standards could be more helpful for programmes within their institutional context, and thus help to advance anti-privilege practices. Indeed, CSWEANZ took action against the SWRB to adjust the educational standards for staff because of the exclusionary effect they had on Māori in particular:

When I think about CSWEANZ and all that stuff that went down with the board ... that felt like people were trying to ... take a stand and saying SWRB is not meeting our needs, there's lots of institutional racism ... The SWRB has gone really quiet. (10)

In the end, a lack of a reflexive and timely institutional response makes it unlikely that qualified Māori staff will be attracted to large Tauwiwi tertiary institutions:

If there are scarce resources such as not many Māori with PhDs, then most would probably choose to work in a kaupapa framework rather than having to always be at the forefront of pushing for change in a Tauwiwi institution. (8)

Given the challenges in creating a diverse workforce that is experienced and able to support anti-privilege practice, educators expressed disappointment that the systems of social work regulation presented barriers rather than enablers to the recruitment of Māori staff.

With respect to students, the fit and proper requirements of the SWRB were often regarded as a barrier to achieving diversity in the student cohort, thereby reinforcing privilege through recruitment hegemony. Participants talked about the way the SWRB standards on fit and proper requirements for students reinforced White and middle-class privilege, along with the academic staff standards that prejudiced Māori and Pasifika staff in particular. A perceived lack of focus by the SWRB standards and processes on the Treaty and biculturalism were regarded as supporting settler and White privilege. These standards and processes were also perceived as privileging a conservative neoliberal agenda.

In particular, barriers for Māori recruitment into social work include criminal convictions, restrictions that were regarded as prejudicial:

Some of our people do have criminal records ... It's the bloody irony of study after study after study has shown that it's actually deeply racist; the justice system disproportionately convicts Māori and Pasifika for things that Pākehā don't get convicted for. (7)

Potential students from non-privileged backgrounds could be dissuaded from even attempting to apply for entry because of the way fit and proper requirements are publicly articulated:

All the schools have fairly strong statements now in their internet websites about being fit and proper to be a social worker ... which could put off people who have the odd conviction ... people self-screen out ... [so] we've got an access problem. Treat each case on its merits ... is a code for privilege. (7)

Increasingly, institutions are becoming more risk averse, seeking to avoid any potential difficulty. Ultimately, this tends to privilege students from mainstream backgrounds:

If you've lived a bit of life and made some mistakes along the way, our political environment is not very forgiving of that ... and conflicts with [the] need to be risk averse in our current environment, which is pushed not only by the Registration Board. (4)

Another aspect of the SWRB Western-based standards is the academic literacy and English levels, which have a place but can be barriers to a non-Western workforce needed in the sector:

[The] emphasis on Westernised academic work ... means that [there are] people who are gonna make brilliant social workers but can't reference to save themselves, hence you get excluded ... we don't have that ability to work sometimes with people with English as a second language. (2)

Regulations can also conflict with legal rights, which can be perceived as challenging privilege; for example, the SWRB and its fit and proper criteria placed it in tension with the Education Act, which promises accessible education:

The broader tension between fit and proper, as outlined by the Registration Board, and the tension that that has legally with the Education Act. (1)

Creating a privileged, elitist profession becomes a real possibility when programmes are not inclusive:

I mean it's the whole debate around mandatory registration, isn't it?—that you risk ... creating an elitist profession. (4)

Participants suggested that the SWRB could better support a broader anti-privilege and equity-focused approach than what was regarded as an atomising compliance approach. A decolonising, anti-privilege agenda was perceived as missing along with the tangata whenua voice:

I always say with all of these things that they are very Western focused and very White and that's not okay. The tangata whenua voice is very much missing. (10)

The SWRB received criticism for failing to address what were considered to be substantive issues, while pursuing a focus on individual social worker compliance, including prosecution for those who let their Annual Practising Certificate lapse.

At the same time, the SWRB's lack of attention to the bicultural strength of a programme was considered a missed opportunity:

I would like the Registration Board to be looking at how bicultural our programme is. (6)

Disappointment was expressed that the SWRB did not take more of an advocacy approach in support of the profession, which was viewed as a neoliberal, conservative reaction from a body that was too close to government. The SWRB's relationship with

government as a Crown agency was regarded therefore as a barrier to the board being progressive:

Social work had a voice and the Association spoke out about these social issues ... it does concern me that ... the Social Work Registration Board [don't speak publicly] ... I don't know where they would stand on political action, because it's sponsored by the government. (10)

Of concern, the increasingly restrictive regulatory environment was regarded as a threat to the discipline's ability to give effect to its foundational commitment to principles of social justice:

In terms of the social justice values and principals of the profession, is it being diluted, are we losing our agency for social change and becoming more about social control? Is that because we're becoming more and more controlled by the state ... through regulation? (3)

Conclusion

The context of the majority of programmes in Aotearoa is within mainstream organisations. These are acknowledged by staff as structurally inequitable institutions that support a range of privileges. As a progressive profession, social work is duty bound to resist this and to work towards anti-privilege goals. Participants were engaged in this challenge even though it required continual vigilance and effort to avoid being complicit in further reproducing the systems of inequality. There was a high risk that Māori staff in particular were at risk of burnout because they were invariably a small group attempting to lead decolonisation in their programme. However, non-Māori staff had the important role of confronting White and settler privileges and collaborating with Māori to develop a Treaty-based programme.

The findings in this chapter relate specifically to the issues linked to the theme of privilege. Issues linked to privilege are complex, and the findings from the focus group and interviews with social work educators suggest that as a group they can themselves be positioned within groups who are oppressed and subjected to disadvantage within monocultural institutions, or within groups who are advantaged in the same systems in which inequality affects others. An intersectional analysis and reflexive practice is important for staff in addressing this complexity of privilege and oppression.

The importance of the wānanga programmes lies in the strength they have developed outside of the mainstream environment in operating Treaty-based programmes. While they have their own challenges, this development must be supported by mainstream colleagues so that it can be shared and interpreted for the majority of programmes located in mainstream institutions. There is also much to be learned from other professions that are on a similar bicultural journey along with broader developments in education that pursue the goal of Māori success.

Other forms of privilege and oppression were the subject of staff comment, and in similar fashion to the themes of settler and White privilege and the pursuit of Treaty-based solutions, different staff and programmes had strengths in addressing these that deserve further support and collaboration across the sector. The SWRB also has a role to play in finding flexibility with its policies, which while often well intentioned and supported in the sector, need adjusting to also meet equity goals.

In Chapter 7 the theme of privilege is further developed in the context of anti-privilege practice, anti-oppressive practice and Treaty-based practice.

CHAPTER 7

DECOLONISING PRACTICES IN AOTEAROA: FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SOCIAL WORK EDUCATORS

This chapter builds on the findings presented in Chapter 6, addressing in greater depth the theme of decolonising practices from the discussions with social work educators. This continues to explore the 3-P domains of practice.

By way of context, globally, indigenous social work educators have pursued decolonisation and the development of decolonising practices as part of the indigenous peoples' rights movement and based on social work principles of self-determination and social justice. Māori have advanced decolonisation based on the original partnership that was envisaged in the Treaty of Waitangi signed between Māori and the British Crown in 1840. Aotearoa social work education has a stated commitment to a Treaty-based partnership approach.

Decolonising theory (L. T. Smith, 2012) is further used in this chapter to interrogate a Treaty-based commitment for social work education in Aotearoa. The tradition of anti-oppressive social work (Dominelli, 2002), with its development of being inclusive of decolonising social work, is recombined into a model of anti-oppressive and anti-privilege social work education and practice (Mullaly & West, 2018).

The indigenous theory of Martin and Mirraoopa (2003), which uses the concepts of knowing, being and doing, supports the Australian framework for decolonising social work education (Zubrzycki et al., 2014). This has also been used in the development of a Treaty-based framework for social work ako.

The following article is embedded in the chapter:

McNabb, D. (2019). A Treaty based framework for mainstream social work education in Aotearoa New Zealand: Educators talk about their practice. *Aotearoa New Zealand Social Work*, 31(4), 4–17.
<https://doi.org/10.11157/anzswj-vol31iss4id667>

The article begins with the following Māori proverb:

He waka eke noa.

This whakataukī (Māori proverb) has several meanings, one of which is “a canoe we are all in together”.

Introduction

Social work and social work education trace their roots to Western cultures and paradigms. Born primarily in the context of industrialised countries, including Britain and the USA, the expansion of formalised social work was largely influenced by British and American imperialism. Indeed, the forerunner to IASSW was started by seven European countries in 1928–1929, and only spread beyond the West after World War II (Healy, 2008). Accordingly, it has developed a range of expressions of culturally responsive practice, over time following global anti-oppressive social work traditions (Dominelli, 2002). These have included a range of responses, such as radical social work, anti-racism social work, feminist social work, critical social work, green social work, decolonising social work and community development more generally. All embrace the core values and principles of social work, which include respect, self-determination, social justice and human rights. Despite the profession’s deep commitment to advancing these important principles, social work has nevertheless had a complex history with respect to indigenous peoples, often finding itself at odds with indigenous communities, particularly in the context of disadvantaged populations, for whom social work has represented state welfare interests and expectations to their detriment (Connolly & Ward, 2008).

Indigenous people have long fought for their rights and championed the establishment of UNDRIP (United Nations, 2008). This has formed part of the challenge to the profession of social work as a Western construct and its global alignment with Western hegemony and globalisation. The profession has been slow to respond; it was only in the 2014 revision of the global definition of social work that indigenous knowledge was included and recognised as legitimate knowledge within the profession (IFSW & IASSW, 2014). Writers have argued that the experience of many indigenous social workers reflects a continuation of colonisation and its oppressive effect by the

dominant West (Gray et al., 2016). Other countries and groupings of people from the global South and East have also resisted assimilation with the West (Sewpaul, 2014).

Frameworks supporting decolonising practice in social work education have been established globally, such as in Australia with the Getting It Right Framework (Zubrzycki et al., 2014), though they may not necessarily sit within regulatory systems. The Australian framework, while built on an explicit conceptualisation of knowing, being and doing linked to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (Martin & Mirraboopa, 2003), was also informed by other indigenous models and broader social work approaches, including community development and human-rights-based perspectives. Other human service professions have also addressed colonisation, such as a global indigenous-led network of medical professionals that have called for the decolonisation of medical education (Jones et al., 2019).

In Aotearoa, Māori have pursued their indigenous rights and resisted colonisation with *He Whakaputanga—the Declaration of Independence*, signed by Northern chiefs and recognised by the British in 1835 (Orange, 2015). Māori have asserted the primacy of the Treaty of Waitangi signed in 1840, particularly Te Tiriti o Waitangi—the version in the Māori language that most Māori leaders signed, which more clearly affirmed the sovereignty of Māori as an equal partner to the British (Orange, 2015). Te Tiriti held the vision of a mutually beneficial partnership and even of “bi-polity”, through which equitable governance could have been developed (L. Ruwhiu et al., 2016, p. 80). Part of the movement for addressing breaches of Te Tiriti are tribal settlements with the government through the Waitangi Tribunal hearing process, through which a number of settlements have now been completed (Waitangi Tribunal, 2019b).

ANZASW made a formal commitment to honouring Te Tiriti in 1992 (Nash, 2001b) and has operationalised that commitment in various ways, including by a shared governance model between Māori and non-Māori beginning in the 1990s (McNabb, 2014). The *ANZASW Practice Standards* also incorporate this commitment (ANZASW, 2014). More recently, ANZASW has changed the *ANZASW Commitment to Biculturalism* to the *ANZASW Commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi* within its ethical code to further emphasise the foundation provided by Te Tiriti (ANZASW, 2019). The

Aotearoa tertiary education sector also has a broad commitment to aligning with the principles of Te Tiriti and boosting the achievement of Māori (Ministry of Education & Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment, 2014). Examples of Māori academic success include achieving the goal of 500 Māori PhD graduates in 2006 (Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga, 2019).

Honouring Te Tiriti requires a partnership approach in which indigenous partners are recognised for their insider knowledge of the colonisation problem, alongside non-indigenous allies, who are often the dominant majority and a key partner in creating change within conservative systems (L. Ruwhiu et al., 2016). Such an approach has become an imperative in Aotearoa because of the deprivation experienced by Māori and their call for self-determination in finding solutions. It also invites major work by the non-indigenous partner to engage in decolonisation (Huygens, 2016).

One of the arguments made for adopting a Tiriti-based approach to education, which brings a Māori approach alongside a Western approach, is that a holistic Māori approach is likely to benefit all learners as well as accelerating learning for groups such as Māori that may have traditionally done poorly within education. In research within a secondary education context, it was found that the holistic Māori approach of Kia Eke Panuku: Building on Success led to improved outcomes for Māori and non-Māori alike (Berryman & Eley, 2017).

There are a number of accounts of decolonising practice in social work education internationally, including the Hawai'i example in which a whole social work department in a major university undertook the process of change (Morelli et al., 2016). Other accounts include more personal stories of the journey by non-indigenous practitioners confronting the reality of racism, White privilege and general ignorance of indigenous histories and knowledge, in Australia (Gair, 2007) and in Aotearoa (Crawford, 2016). Research examining global and local social work education standards has found a general affirmation of decolonising and democratising practices in both Australia and Aotearoa (McNabb & Connolly, 2019). However, the research noted that more could be done to advance the goals of equity and social justice by regulatory authorities and the wider profession in advancing decolonisation and democratisation

(McNabb, 2017). Further research in Aotearoa has clearly illustrated the importance of leadership in advancing democratising and decolonising practices (McNabb, 2017).

Building on these earlier studies, this research explores how a stated commitment to a Tiriti-based approach is being operationalised by social work educators in their practice. From this, and insights from international research, a Tiriti-based framework for practice is presented.

Methods

The study included qualitative focus groups and individual interviews with social work educators to investigate questions relating to decolonising practices in Aotearoa. Focus groups are a well-established approach within qualitative research (Barbour & Morgan, 2017), as are individual interviews (Lichtman, 2014). These approaches allowed a more flexible and deeper conversation with educators exploring their daily experiences of promoting decolonising practices in social work programmes.

Social work educators from all 19 social work programme providers in Aotearoa, ranging across university, polytechnic, wānanga and private institutional contexts, were invited to participate in the study. Unlike many other countries, Aotearoa allows for a range of tertiary education institutional contexts for social work education. A range of providers were engaged, which gave a spread of representation from across the sector. Participants from nine of the 19 institutions were involved. This representation covered wānanga, polytechnic and university institutions; metropolitan and regional geographies; campus-based and distance mediums; Māori, Pacific and mixed cultural settings; bachelor's and master's level programmes; and small and large programmes. They represented a range of women and men of varying ages and experience in both practice and education, and a range of Pākehā, Māori, Pacific, African and other European ethnicities.

Numbers of participants in the focus groups varied; most had a minimum of three participants and one had only two. Seven focus groups were conducted. Much of the literature talks about four being a minimum number for a focus group, but others discuss the quality of what is shared as being more important (Liamputtong, 2011).

Interviews were conducted with three people from different programmes because insufficient numbers were available to make up a focus group.

Most focus groups and interviews were conducted using online synchronous digital technology through the Blackboard Collaborate platform or through Skype; a minority of interviews were conducted in person. A semi-structured schedule of questions was used that included themes from the previous document analysis, specifically relating to “service user and student participation, student representativeness, indigenous rights and political action, gender and cultural equity, access and equity, and quality social work education and broader issues of equity” (McNabb & Connolly, 2019, p. 8). Participants were asked to what extent and in what way the themes were evident in their programme. The data were analysed thematically using the NVivo data analysis software tool. Quotes reference whether a focus group or an individual participant was involved and use numbering to account for all contributors.

Ethics approval was gained, and the study was regarded as a minimal risk project by the Human Ethics Advisory Group of the University of Melbourne, approval number 1748887. All participants in the study gave informed consent. A Māori reference group included three senior Māori leaders, and was engaged for consultation at key points of the research, including for ethics approval and for the initial research-based publications. Consultation was also sought regarding key publications with experienced Māori social workers. Indigenous researchers have criticised the effect of colonisation on indigenous people and on the research approaches that have been used to study them (L. T. Smith, 2012). As noted, I identify as Pākehā and have been working with Māori participants in this research as well as exploring themes of colonisation in the knowledge that I am linked to the dominant Pākehā group. Engaging with the Māori reference group supported me in working more effectively with decolonising methodologies and directly with Māori participants. An example of this practice is Te Kāhui Kaihautū, the Māori reference group for the research organisation the New Zealand Institute of Language, Brain and Behaviour (2016).

There are a number of limitations relating to this research. The research explores the views of participant social work educators and cannot be generalised more broadly

across the whole group of social work educators in Aotearoa. Nor does the research include the voices of students or people who represent the wider social work sector, including service users, iwi and Māori organisations, community organisations and other stakeholders such as government. Also of note is that the research is a doctoral study and though a Māori reference group was engaged for consultation, I have undertaken this research as a sole researcher, and have not engaged with a Māori partner as might otherwise be indicated given the theme of Tiriti-based partnerships. The findings, and the framework developed later in the article, are therefore limited in this regard. The framework is presented in order to encourage further debate and action on ways in which non-Māori social work educators might advance a Tiriti-based approach. Future research and practice development would indicate that a partnership approach was essential.

Findings

Social work educator participants are at the frontline of teaching and learning, interacting with students on a daily basis. They highlighted the overall challenge of operationalising a commitment to Te Tiriti in practice.

The findings have been gathered under the headings of Ngā Mōhiotanga—Knowing, Ngā Whakaahuatanga—Being and Te Whakatinanatanga—Doing. The frame of knowing, being and doing resonates with conceptualisations of indigenous research and practice within the Australian context (Martin & Mirraboopa, 2003), and in particular with the findings of the study, because participants spoke about “doing, understanding, knowing and being Māori” (Focus Group 5).

Ngā Mōhiotanga—Knowing: Understanding Te Tiriti and kaupapa Māori

All programmes expressed a commitment to honouring Te Tiriti and its expectations with respect to partnership and self-determination for Māori. It is a broad-based commitment that can be expressed in many ways. It links to many other expressions of inequity, such as poverty and its disproportionate rate among Māori, and it relates to having a deep knowledge of and commitment to decolonising practices. Educators noted that developing a depth of understanding of Te Tiriti and kaupapa Māori involves people in an ongoing process of learning:

How we're committing to Treaty principles? It's a work in progress. (Focus group 1)

Educators also appreciated the dynamic nature of culture—it is not static and unchanging. Rather, it adapts and responds to contemporary contexts, requiring continual engagement and development of new understandings. Some Māori staff in particular made a plea for staff and students to be aware of this dynamic context of Te Tiriti settlement and support for ongoing political change:

Just linking the work politically in terms of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and continuing to do that; especially as we're going into post-settlement ... Things are changing very quickly in terms of tangata whenua and it's getting people to move forward with us and not keep us back in the past. (Focus Group 7)

Hence, Te Tiriti has contemporary expression in the settlement process and the way in which many hapū and iwi are undergoing development in this post-settlement phase. Along with understanding issues for Māori historically and in terms of contemporary issues arising from this, an understanding of the extra demands that Māori face from their whānau and hāpori (community) was considered to be important for both Māori students and staff. Understanding the cultural demands for students and how they affect dynamics in the classroom was noted:

You see with the Māori students, the extra demands that are placed upon them, in terms of family whānau commitments. (Participant 3)

Understanding cultural dynamics operating in the classroom was also regarded as critical. For example, educators spoke of Māori staff and students experiencing racism and discrimination and the need for cultural safety practices across the programme:

You know, I've got to be honest; I have experienced institutional racism as a tangata whenua and Māori practitioner and lecturer ... from a staff point of view, but also a student point of view ... I mean, that's a reality for them—not just within this institute but externally as well. (Focus Group 7)

The employment of Māori staff brought an essential and critical contribution to the programme:

I think we are quite lucky here in that for 20 years we've had at least two or three Māori staff and we've had amongst the rest of the staff cohort a commitment to doing, understanding, knowing and being Māori. (Focus Group 5)

Educators also noted, however, the importance of having non-Māori staff both knowledgeable about and committed to a Tiriti partnership approach. While they viewed Māori staff as having the primary engagement with respect to teaching Te Tiriti and Māori knowledge, they viewed non-Māori staff as having a role as allies and partners in the building of a Te Tiriti-based approach. At the same time, non-Māori recognised the limitations of their competence and questioned the appropriateness of teaching and assessing the competence of students to practise social work with Māori:

Is it ... appropriate for me, as a Tauwiwi educator, to then be teaching Māori knowledge? ... we don't want to overly rely on our Māori colleagues. (Focus Group 1)

Nonetheless, non-Māori staff were perceived as having a role in both understanding and advancing Māori knowledge in the programme, and in particular having a responsibility to teach about White privilege and racism among other structural themes, and to ensure students demonstrated this knowledge in their learning and practice:

Then there are things like teaching about White privilege, which they [Māori staff] don't see as their responsibility; it is our [non-Māori staff] responsibility to teach that. (Participant 4)

Ngā Whakaahuatanga—Being: Integrating a Tiriti-based programme identity

Participants suggested that becoming knowledgeable about Te Tiriti and kaupapa Māori and understanding its impact in contemporary contexts represents the beginning of a process of developing a Tiriti-based programme identity. Internalising the knowledge base does not always come easy. Indeed, some programmes noted a minority of students who were taking time to be open to the message about Te Tiriti and to cultural responsiveness with Māori.

One of the principles of Te Tiriti is sharing power between Māori and non-Māori based on rights that Māori have. Appreciating the difference between knowing about kaupapa Māori and actually integrating this knowledge as a fundamental aspect of programme identity was noted:

One of the critical things about this for us is, just because people are well-educated in regards to the Treaty and they have understandings of things like

human rights and social justice, it does not ensure they share power with Māori. (Focus Group 5)

Students can learn this, and how it can inspire political action. Educators regarded this as important learning within programmes, as well as being publicly activated by staff. This was viewed as requiring appropriate knowledge by staff about Te Tiriti and the skill to support this type of student learning and action.

Strengthening Pākehā responsibility for teaching Te Tiriti and a partnership approach requires in-depth integrated knowledge, and some programmes highlighted the efforts non-Māori staff had gone to in strengthening their identification with cultural change. At the same time, Māori staff have to make choices about how their identity is expressed in mainstream social work programmes. This was acknowledged as complex when they attempt to engage in a kaupapa Māori way:

They ask, “Are you a Māori social worker or are you a social worker who’s Māori?” That is the question, because one would attribute to mainstream thinking and the other would attribute to pedagogy Māori ... thinking. (Focus Group 9)

Students from the Pacific or other migrant ethnic groups who do not identify as Māori or Pākehā often struggle with their relationship to Te Tiriti and indigenous rights. Staff were nevertheless regarded as important contributors to complex cultural identity discussions. At the same time, it was considered important that students and staff with migrant experience be supported to claim a safe migrant space “where we can talk about settling in and finding resources” (Focus Group 10).

The strength of a programme’s integrated Tiriti identity varied across programmes, something that Māori students sought advice from Māori staff about, particularly when considering which programme to apply for. Appreciating that not all programmes provide the depth of kaupapa Māori teaching that may be sought, a student could be guided towards a programme offering a better cultural fit:

In terms of the student make-up there are some students that come to us with particular requests ... [we may] send them somewhere else, because they particularly, or strongly want to work with hapū; ... they want their starting point for learning and interpreting to be Māori. (Focus Group 5)

The wānanga is arguably most likely to have the strongest Tiriti identity, providing a more solid base for teaching Māori knowledge and practice than mainstream institutions. This raised questions for some educators about the degree to which mainstream programmes can fully integrate a kaupapa Māori identity:

And so, if you think about the wānanga, the likes of Raukawa and Aotearoa, their starting [point] for understanding is te ao Māori [the Māori world]. (Focus Group 5)

This is not necessarily the case for mainstream programmes, in which the degree to which they are able to integrate a Tiriti identity also depends upon their ability to employ sufficient Māori staff.

In practical terms participants spoke about the struggle to recruit and retain Māori social work academics. Though external Māori experts could be contracted in, non-Māori staff saw the importance of partnership relationships for effective teaching. Non-Māori have a role in supporting Māori workforce development and in sharing Te Tiriti-based partnership responsibility in the programme. Some were critical of the standards set by the SWRB, especially the requirement for a master's level qualification, which excluded many Māori staff, ultimately affecting their ability to advance an integrated Tiriti identity:

I don't know why Māori are not applying, but it's also restricted by the SWRB requirements and I think that's the biggest [reason] ... we've [also] lost staff because of that. (Focus Group 2)

Te Whakatinanatanga—Doing: Operationalising Te Tiriti and kaupapa Māori in practice

Giving effect to bicultural practice in the classroom was regarded as complex by many participants, particularly in mainstream programmes. Educators expressed some of the challenges:

Our bi-culturalism course ... there's always sort of a fear from teachers around teaching this course. It's one of the hard ones ... students feel uncomfortable, and they give poor evaluations. (Participant 6)

Within this dynamic teaching environment, teaching staff need to have a deep understanding of and confidence in engaging with the ideas, and be skilled facilitators who are able to manage 'hard conversations in the classroom'. Te Tiriti provides a base

for addressing indigenous justice, which can then be applied across a range of equity issues:

I think, irrespective of the issue with gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic ... once you've applied the framework with the students once ... it's far easier for them to see it in other areas. (Focus Group 9)

Te Tiriti itself is a major topic for study, along with the context of colonisation and its negative effect on Māori. Moving beyond the basics, developing an advanced course on Te Tiriti was regarded as a sign of leadership and solidarity by staff. In addition, having a specific focus on Te Tiriti, and embedding Māori culture across the programme, was viewed as a way of integrating Māori culture and knowledge more thoroughly and also for gaining feedback for programme improvement:

I think in addition to that specific cultural context stream ... we also try and embed te reo Māori in all the other subjects, as much as we can. So, every single day we have karakia and waiata, and finish [with] the karakia. (Focus Group 1)

Integrating Māori approaches and Western bodies of knowledge was also considered a way to learn Māori knowledge while at the same time helping to meet the social work professional obligation of Tiriti-based practice aligned with the *ANZASW Code of Ethics* (ANZASW, 2019):

In my programme of sociology and psychology ... [what] I've been excited about is ... developing an understanding about different Māori models. (Focus Group 9)

Some staff were using theories of intersectionality, which interrogates how multiple oppressions interact and accumulate harm for those with related multiple identities, alongside the relevant dimensions of privilege (Almeida, Werkmeister Rozas, Cross-Denny, Lee, & Yamada, 2019). This was regarded as a means through which this blending of knowledges could occur:

I would say that certainly the dynamic in this country is far dominated by culture, and I think that the feminism and the class issues are embedded within [this] ... I think we've got a course at first-year level which unpacks intersectionality really well, and gets students to do the sort of 'ko wai au?' self-identification and location. (Focus Group 8)

Pacific and Māori participants wove Pacific and Māori models alongside critical Western models in their teaching:

This year for research methods, I decided to not include the Pasifika and Māori models but to focus on emancipating postmodern and feminist research; because I had a feeling that the students were thinking that the Brown models were weak links and we weren't but of course emancipating postmodernist and feminist research led us all the way back to being Māori, Pacific and Aotearoa New Zealand. (Focus Group 9)

Educators also spoke of a range of initiatives that have been shown to support Māori students. These often involve Māori staff and senior Māori students mentoring other students and using culturally rich ideas and processes. This cultural richness helps to bring holistic responses to the person and their issues within the context of family and community:

I'm part of the faculty Māori advancement group. We meet once a month, and we talk about Māori student retention, and ways of encouraging Māori mentorship, and growing Māori postgraduate students. (Participant 3)

Overall, educators considered programme leadership to be critical in driving kaupapa Māori, particularly when non-Māori show courage to act and Māori staff are respected for their position and unique contribution:

It's imperative that you have a senior right up the very top level of support for this; it's too hard otherwise. And, our senior academics behind us as well, our academic leads ... I also want to acknowledge how we have to have courage when we go into cultural space ... our colleagues are having those courageous cultural conversations with us [and] also respecting our status as tangata whenua. (Focus Group 7)

Discussion

Indigenous voices have raised major questions about how well Western-rooted social work can ever form an equitable partnership with indigenous knowledges and practices (Gray et al., 2016). The effects of colonisation are pervasive and the contemporary context of neoliberalism and globalisation only serve to strengthen Western pedagogies. Even when members of the dominant group are committed to change, a myriad of obstacles seem to get in the way of operationalising such a commitment. Indigenous social work educators nevertheless continue to pursue an

equitable partnership as a matter of self-determination and to support the principle of social justice. Non-indigenous social work educator allies also remain committed to the challenge and to the invitation by indigenous colleagues to partner in this cause.

The findings of this study highlight the challenges and rewards of developing culturally responsive practices in social work education. The key terms Ngā Mōhiotanga—Knowing, Ngā Whakaahuatanga—Being, and Te Whakatinanatanga—Doing, which relate to understanding, integrating and operationalising Te Tiriti, present an important and strongly aligned conceptualisation of the issue from the perspectives of the participants in this study. These findings have now been incorporated into a framework (see Figure 7.1) that serves to privilege a Māori ontology in ways that challenge colonialism, racism and White privilege, and respectfully builds more culturally responsive practices.

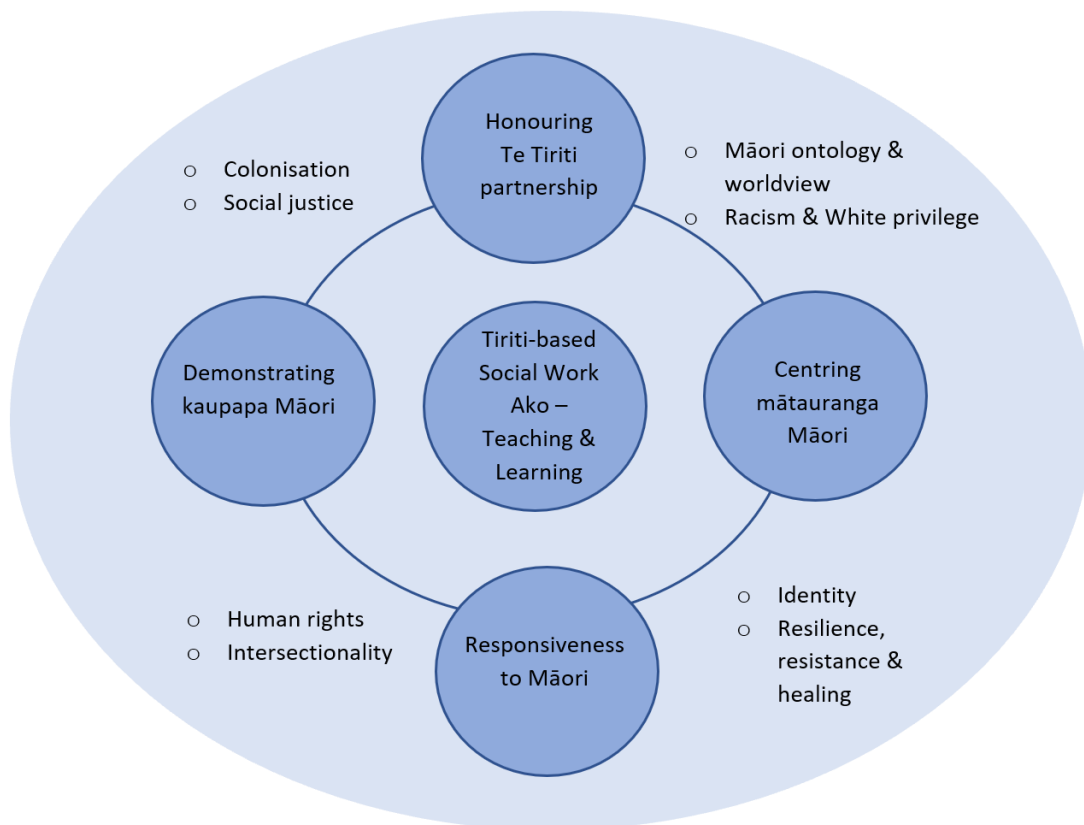


Figure 7.1. Framework for Tiriti-based social work: Ako—teaching and learning

Honouring Te Tiriti partnership

Te Tiriti is at the centre of the “authorising environment” (Andrews, Pritchett, & Woolcock, 2016, p. 2) for a culturally responsive approach to social work education in Aotearoa (McNabb, 2019a). The central place of Te Tiriti is also evidenced within institutional policies and charters (see, for example, *Te Noho Kotahitanga*, Unitec Institute of Technology, 2001). ANZASW, the social work profession, has had a constitutional commitment to upholding Te Tiriti since 1992 (Nash, 2001b), and the SWRB includes a commitment to Te Tiriti in its *Programme Recognition Standards* (SWRB, 2018). The SWRB also initiated a consultation process on the expression of Te Tiriti within its practice standards, which yielded the draft policy Kaitiakitanga Framework (SWRB, 2016b).

Having enough Māori staff remains a priority issue for many programmes, as noted in the findings, and is a critical component of a Tiriti-based programme. However, changes to the standards requiring all social work academic staff to have completed a master’s qualification for teaching in a bachelor’s level programme signalled a barrier to Māori staff in particular, because a number were either yet to start a master’s or needed more time to complete it. This led to CSWEANZ writing and asking for more flexibility on this requirement, suggesting that each programme have one position held by a staff member with key Māori, Pacific or fieldwork knowledge who was in the process of completing a master’s qualification (CSWEANZ, personal communication, August 5, 2017). However, the SWRB denied this request saying that such staff could be hired in a tutorial type role and not have full responsibility for core social work courses (SWRB, personal communication, October 6, 2017). CSWEANZ remained unsatisfied and the problem of hiring enough Māori staff continues.

This broad-ranging commitment to honouring Te Tiriti influences all dimensions of the Framework for Tiriti Based Social Work, supporting the criticality of partnership between Māori and tangata Tiriti in all aspects of practice. Honouring Te Tiriti is aligned with the social work commitment to social justice, human rights and the validity of indigenous knowledge (IFSW & IASSW, 2014). This is very much a dynamic process that will be inherently challenging given its relational context and the structural disjuncture between the colonised and the coloniser. The tension and

potential within this process has been termed the third cultural space based on Bhabha's theory of culture (1994, as cited in Zubrzycki et al., 2014). It speaks to the space where "new knowledge, insights and understandings about identity and positioning emerge" (Zubrzycki et al., 2014, p. 19).

Centring Mātauranga Māori

Centring mātauranga Māori and de-centring Western knowledge is a critical component of the framework. Participants in the research frequently spoke of their own experience of this process because the use of mātauranga Māori is ubiquitous across education in Aotearoa, though at varying levels of strength. Mātauranga Māori was embedded in education legislation in 1989 to support new kura kaupapa (Māori language medium schools) linked to government obligations under Te Tiriti (Calman, 2019). This plays out operationally in a number of particular ways. Within the tertiary education context, there is a range of government policies of relevance, including the strategy for developing Māori success *Ka Hikitia—Accelerating Success 2013–2017* (Ministry of Education, 2013). The government also funds Ako Aotearoa, an organisation that supports tertiary educator practice development to ensure students' success, with a priority of Māori student success.

The term "epistemological equality" (Zubrzycki et al., 2014, p. 17) is one of four key concepts in the Getting It Right Framework and has been used as a way to talk about how two sets of knowledges can be applied within a learning context. This sits within the notion of ontology, one of 10 key dimensions used in the Getting It Right Framework, in which it relates to what is believed to be real, whereas epistemology relates to ways of thinking about that reality (Zubrzycki et al., 2014). Holding two sets of knowledges aligns well with the partnership spirit of Te Tiriti. The fact that indigenous and Western-based knowledge come from two different paradigms nevertheless highlights the challenge in incorporating these different knowledges in an equivalent way, which is also noted in other cultural contexts such as the Pacific with its varying epistemologies. Therefore, the joining of two sets of knowledge across the whole curriculum will avoid the risk of indigenous knowledge being an add-on or treated as a minor or less important area of learning. As a way of exposing the dominance of Western knowledge, it is an important aspect of addressing colonisation

and racism. Zubrzycki et al. (2014) propose that Whiteness theorising is vital to this process of supporting non-indigenous students to recognise the privileges of being White or non-indigenous to help establish more respectful and collaborative relationships with indigenous people.

Demonstrating kaupapa Māori

This dimension examines the Māori cultural values and practices that support teaching and learning mātauranga Māori. This demonstrates rangatiratanga and the right of Māori to determine what and how Māori knowledge and culture should be taught. As with the other dimensions, kaupapa Māori principles can operate alongside good Western educational principles. The Hei Toko research report found that “good kaupapa Māori based practice needs to be learner centred, whole-of-organisation, dynamic, responsive and highly adaptive” (Apanui & Kirikiri, 2015, p. iv). The authors identified six components of a kaupapa Māori model: whakamana (empowerment), ako, Te Tiriti o Waitangi (dual governance), manaakitanga, whanaungatanga and kotahitanga.

Demonstrating kaupapa Māori practice can be a challenge, particularly for non-indigenous lecturers when it represents a weakness in their knowledge base requiring focused development, and is often part of a broader decolonisation process (Apanui & Kirikiri, 2015).

More recently, the government tertiary quality assurance body for non-university institutions launched a kaupapa Māori based framework Te Hono o Te Kahurangi Evaluative quality assurance (NZQA, 2017). This principle-based approach privileges Māori responses to tertiary quality assurance with a focus on Māori-based institutions, but also looks to mainstream institutions wanting to improve kaupapa Māori in practice.

Māori practice responsiveness

Cultural competence has been frequently used as a term to describe the way in which people practise respectfully and with relevance to people from diverse cultures. Competencies is the language used by the SWRB for social work practitioners in describing expectations of their practice with service users (SWRB, 2016a). Cultural

responsiveness is nevertheless emerging as a more helpful term that speaks both to the ability to develop collaborative relationships with people and to critically reflecting on one's own positioning and the structural context in which practice occurs (Connolly, Crichton-Hill, & Ward, 2006; Zubrzycki et al., 2014). I have used the term Māori practice responsiveness in the framework to focus specifically on this aspect of critical reflexivity and to emphasise the importance of “building culturally responsive practices that resonate with the world of Māori” (L. Ruwhiu, 2017, p. 107). As noted earlier, intersectionality is a helpful tool for critically engaging with the differences within groups as well as between groups that addresses other dimensions of oppression and privilege, such as gender, sexuality, class, ability and age, among others. The goal for social work is for it to be anti-oppressive and anti-privilege-based education and practice (Mullaly & West, 2018).

A focus on identity is important for both students and educators. Whereas Te Tiriti brought two parties together as tangata whenua and tangata Tiriti, the breaching of Te Tiriti and the effects of colonisation means both parties are located in a social and structural arrangement of ongoing oppression for Māori that has created challenges for embracing both Māori and non-Māori identities. Māori have a right to be fully Māori, and non-Māori, including White people, have a responsibility to address colonial and White privilege that comes with their identity and position. Stories of Māori resilience and resistance form important knowledge for both partners to hold and this knowledge is a prerequisite to developing a more equitable relationship with the prospect of healing for Māori and a healing of the breach of partnership that was originally promised in the signing of Te Tiriti.

In summary, Te Tiriti o Waitangi is the founding document for Aotearoa and provides an authorising environment for those wanting to build their practice on Te Tiriti (McNabb, 2019a). It has been embraced by fields of practice, including the education sector and the social work profession, as the cornerstone for their activities. The global movement for indigenous rights provides a vital backdrop for the Aotearoa context, and there are strong parallels with the global initiative to decolonise education across health and human services, including social work.

The social work education sector has committed itself to honouring Te Tiriti, but the findings of this research suggest that it is challenged in its efforts in a number of areas. The Framework for Tiriti Based Social Work: Ako—Teaching and Learning, has been presented as a way to assist social work education on its decolonising journey, through further debate and action. Offering an organising construct for social work education and its allies within Aotearoa, it supports a movement for change and contributes to the global mission of decolonisation.

It was notable that none of the participants for the research with educators was working within a wānanga, even though some participants were Māori. The wānanga context has already been acknowledged as the most likely institutional setting for a strong demonstration of decolonising practices. It raises question about whether findings from this theme would have been different regarding the principle of partnership in practice, and in demonstrating the Treaty-based framework, an issue that is explored further in Chapter 9 in the context of future research.

Conclusion

This chapter has built on the first wave of research, in which the twin equity themes of democratisation and decolonisation were first applied to programmes through interviews with leaders as a second wave of research, and in this chapter were applied to educators as a third research wave. In Chapter 6, the first theme of democratising practices was addressed, whereas in this chapter the theme of decolonising practices was discussed with social work educators.

CHAPTER 8

LEADERSHIP

Introduction

The notion of leadership emerged strongly across all waves of the research. Five enabling elements for progressing an equity agenda in social work education were identified: creating the mindset within the organisational culture; building the authorising environment, where processes are legitimised throughout the system; supporting the workforce because they are key to achieving democratisation; advancing inclusive pedagogies and cultural responsiveness, which requires unified staff; and understanding impact and improvement, which is important for sustaining change over time.

The following publication discussing these five enabling elements has been incorporated in this chapter:

McNabb, D. (2019). Democratizing social work education: A leadership framework for action. In M. Connolly, C. Williams, & D. Spence Coffey (Eds.), *Strategic leadership in social work education* (pp. 101–115). New York, NY: Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-25052-2_8

It begins with the following quote:

Although our interests as citizens vary, each one is an artery to the heart that pumps life through the body politic, and each is important to the health of democracy. (Moyers, 2007, para. 6)

Social work has long supported the democratisation of systems and processes in ways that are both fair and equitable, and that better respond to the needs of service users. This commitment to inclusive development has implications for social work education because efforts to democratise are shaped by various cultural demands and imperatives from within, and outside the academy. The chapter begins with an introduction to the core social work theme of equity and its application to social work education. This includes the way in which participatory practices can demonstrate a commitment to the goal of equity. The place of democratising practices within social work education is explored along with the role of standards and how they can

reinforce the process of democratisation. Based on research, a number of enabling elements of a democratising environment within social work education is proposed, highlighting leadership as a key dimension in operationalising democratising practices.

Democratising practices and leadership in social work education

Introducing democratising principles into social work and social work education has long been a feature of the discipline's commitment to social justice and inclusivity. Shapiro (2011) argued for a democratic basis for human relationships with practices that have the ability to "promote the democratisation of power relations as they are reproduced into the future" (p. 273). In practice, it requires that systems and processes are made accessible to people, and that the people also participate and have a say in decisions that affect them (Gathiram, 2003).

A further key focus in practice has been the participation of service users in aspects of social service delivery. Giving effect to both representation and citizenship rights, this is regarded as a particularly important focus across international contexts (Gutman, Kraiem, Criden, & Yalon-Chamovitz, 2012; Kjellberg & French, 2011). McNicoll and Yan (2009), from a perspective of Chinese social work, nicely capture this connection between democracy and citizenship: "if democracy is real, it has to fit the wants and decisions of the citizens it serves" (p. 149), as they call for a "re-creation of social work spaces around democratic principles" (p. 140).

In promoting democratising practices, standards and regulatory frameworks have been identified as having an important role to play (McNabb & Connolly, 2019). The GS and a country's local standards highlight the importance of reinforcing equity across social work programmes. This includes service user and student participation, but also a broader set of equity-related expectations: "student representativeness, indigenous rights and political action, gender and cultural equity, access and equity" (McNabb & Connolly, 2019, p. 42). Leadership at the local level is considered necessary, particularly in the context of countries sharing a colonised history, where decolonising practices can have a critical impact (McNabb, 2017). Despite the importance of the GS both reinforcing and shaping equity-focused expectations, it is interesting to note that research suggests leaders of programmes in some countries may actually have minimal

knowledge of the standards (McNabb, 2020). This potentially limits the impact that they can have.

Despite this, social work educators have often led the charge in terms of promoting democratising practices, and leaders are considered particularly important in negotiating and enabling the organisational context in which social work education is situated (McNabb, 2020). Indeed, a group of social work education leaders in Australia has noted the pressing issues in their sector and highlighted the significant demands on leaders (Connolly, Williams, & Cooper, 2017). They particularly note the importance of thinking creatively and acting with future requirements in mind, not only reacting to what is considered most urgent. In a review of the global literature relating to social work education, the social work academic workforce is highlighted as critically important to both succession planning and leadership into the future (Howard & Williams, 2017). The importance of growing the indigenous social work academic workforce in Aotearoa is also regarded as critical (McNabb, 2020), and the same can be said for other places with similar histories, such as Australia (Zubrzycki et al., 2014), Canada (Bruyere, 2008), Hawai'i in the USA (Morelli et al., 2016), and Africa in general (Kreitzer, 2012). This emphasis on pursuing diversity and indigenous development is a key element in advancing democratising and decolonising practices internationally across social work education.

Operationalising democratising practices

The challenge of leadership is one of mobilising others “to make extraordinary things happen in organisations” (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 2). For busy social work academics who find themselves in combined managerial and leadership positions, the notion of moving beyond the daily operational demands of contemporary tertiary institutions towards the creative advancement of democratising practices might seem overwhelming, or at least daunting. Inspired by Einstein’s vision of making the complex simple, an empirically based framework was developed to support leaders to better enable a broader strategic engagement with democratising practices in social work education (see Figure 8.1). The framework was informed by a number of studies that explore democratising practices, beginning with an analysis of global social work education standards and local standards within Australia and Aotearoa (McNabb &

Connolly, 2019) and its application to the field of leadership within social work education (McNabb, 2017). The equity issues that arose from this early study led to research with social work education leaders in Aotearoa using semi-structured interviews (McNabb, 2019b, 2020) and further research with social work educators in Aotearoa, also using semi-structured interviews but this time with focus groups (McNabb, 2019c). In these two waves of democratising and decolonising practices the methodologies of the research are fully explored in Chapters 4 to 7. The findings from these studies specifically informed the framework, suggesting that a number of enabling elements promote a stronger democratising environment within social work education, all equally important to the embedding of ideas over time. The framework captures these critical elements of a democratising environment that will support the development of a strategic and integrated approach to the embedding of democratising practices. While this includes service user and student participatory responsiveness, it also incorporates organisational and workforce elements that leaders say are critical to creating a democratising programme (McNabb, 2020). Shier (2001) developed a five-level model of citizen participation that progressed from listening to people, supporting people to express themselves, noting people's views in decision-making, involving people in decision-making, to finally sharing power and responsibility with people. This was also applied, in particular, to service user involvement in social work education as an example of democratising practices (McNabb, 2017). These enabling elements supporting the framework were identified as creating the mindset, building an authorising environment, supporting the workforce, advancing inclusive pedagogies and cultural responsiveness, and understanding impact and improvement (see Figure 8.1).

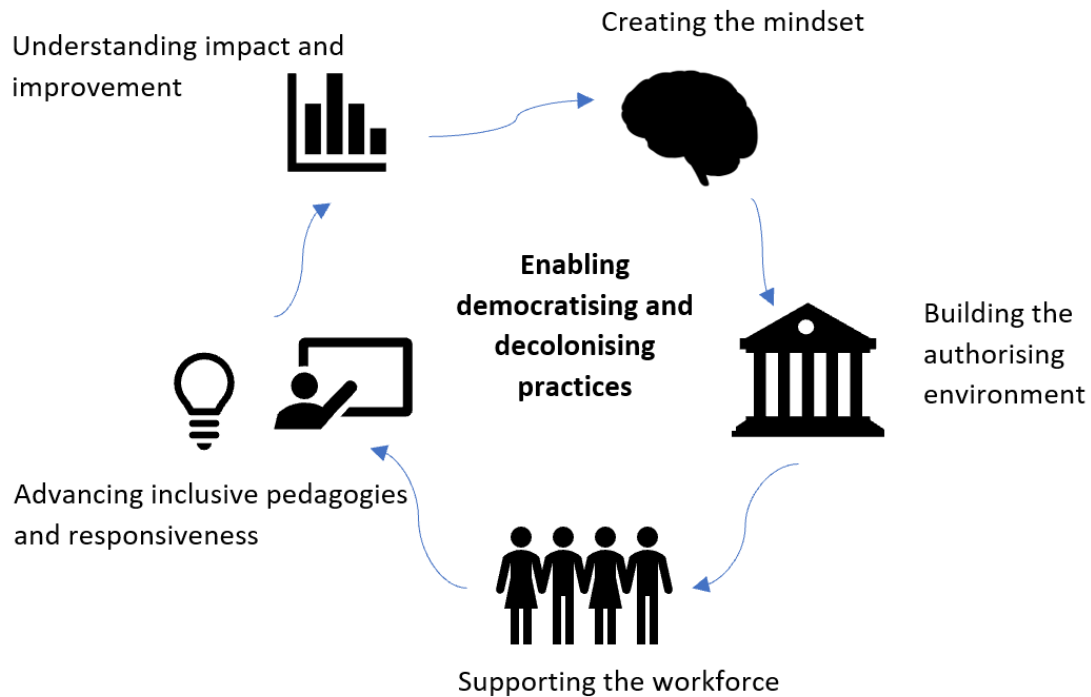


Figure 8.1. Enabling elements of a democratising environment within social work education

Creating the mindset

Creating the democratising mindset relates to aspects of organisational culture and leadership. It is about creating and embedding internalised ways of thinking that share some similarity with Bourdieu’s (2002) notion of habitus. Habitus represents a level of group cultural thinking that, when internalised, has the potential to influence individual and organisational behaviour. Groups become the way things are thought about and done. Accepting that there have been criticisms of Bourdieu’s concept of habitus (Archer, 2007), but nevertheless influenced by the spirit of its creative potential, it becomes evident that instilling a democratising habitus within the academy has the potential to help create processes of learning that engage actively with democratising ideas and thereby position democratising practices at the forefront of individual and organisational thinking. Leaders can help to make democratising practices integral to the mindset of their organisation.

This idea of creating the mindset as a purposeful process of learning offers potential for leaders to create an environment in which the democratising mindset aligns with

disciplinary, and potentially organisational, values and beliefs about what is important to uphold and advance:

Fuse those values that you know about ... and then we're moving from that toward decolonisation [of the whole programme]. (11)

And leaders saw themselves as having an important enabling role in this:

As a manager or a leader, that's where I see I have quite a high level of responsibility for the profession to ensure that we are being genuine in our commitment and I see my role as the enabler of that. (3)

This enabling role is action oriented, involving the development of strategies that identify the particular cultural change elements that require attention, and working on a plan that reinforces and targets what needs to change:

So, the view was we've started a process. So, I would say we're probably average. Well, yeah, okay; but actually, the intention is to take us beyond that, and really start to do the tough stuff. (11)

It is about vision and values—creating the vision of what is possible, and engaging with the values of staff, the profession and the broader community.

Building the authorising environment

The authorising environment provides the authority that is needed to make change happen. Originally conceptualised by Moore (1997), the authorising environment refers to the legitimising of processes across and within systems. It provides the mandate for action. Some leaders I spoke to suggested that when senior members of the organisation created an authorising environment, it had the potential to cascade down to programme level:

It came from the top, in terms of our commitment to biculturalism [indigenous and non indigenous partnership] ... So, we've had conversations as a faculty about that ... I think it's flown through to our school and conversations at staff meetings, and it's gone through to our programme level and it's showing up in class. (6)

There was also a plea by minority staff to have senior staff backing a culturally responsive and democratising approach to teaching:

It's imperative that you have a senior right up the very top level of support for this; it's too hard otherwise. And, our senior academics behind us as well, our academic leads ... I also want to acknowledge how we have to have courage when we go into cultural space. I see that that's developing more and more, and a number of our colleagues are having those courageous cultural conversations with us. So, I need to acknowledge our colleagues as well for coming into that space with us; but also respecting our status as tangata whenua as well, which I have personally appreciated—that I'm not challenged constantly because that would just drive me up the wall. (7)

Others stressed the importance of drivers for change at the local level, suggesting an interplay of influence:

But, there has to be something from below; there has to be a cultural change from below that embraces that commonality and uses it to work together ... (10)

Sometimes social work can contribute to an authorising environment for the wider institution given its strengths in equity-focused policy and practice:

We start off with [addressing] racism, and then develop from there into the decolonisation. So, hopefully what we want to be is an example to the rest of [the] institution, about how you can do some of this stuff. That's our plan. (11)

The social work profession should also claim its strengths towards an authorising environment within the interdisciplinary context and even globally:

I think Aotearoa is looked at, and looked upon, as being quite progressive in this area [decolonising practices]. So, in our profession we need to be driving this and leading this; or else, people from other broader social service professions will drive and lead it for us. (13)

Leaders of social work programmes have the opportunity to create an authorising environment through the clear articulation of the vision, communicated creatively, authentically and continually—and backed up with action. Some people will engage with the communicated vision, while others need to be a part of an active plan for change in which success is validated. Success is inspiring and motivating—key elements in helping to embed innovative practices.

Supporting the workforce

Perhaps not surprisingly, the academic workforce is key to advancing democratising practices in social work education. Building a diverse workforce that brings diverse

world views and different ways of thinking has the potential to create a rich environment where democratising values and ideas can flourish. Some of the academic leaders I interviewed indicated that being responsive to ethnically diverse communities was an important and ongoing task:

There are concerns about the number of immigrants and refugees and whether social workers are up to scratch; their abilities and cultural responsiveness to those groups, and I don't know if we've cracked that yet. (10)

Building a diverse workforce was considered challenging by many of the social work programme leaders in Aotearoa, particularly when qualification requirements presented limitations for people with non-traditional academic backgrounds:

... when you want to advance tangata whenua and biculturalism [partnership between Māori and non- Māori] within a university setting, the key thing that you need is building Māori staff and capability. (2)

A diverse workforce is also important as a way of reflecting the diversity of the student cohort and as a way to better match the service user demographic:

So, yeah, we're hoping to change that because at the moment, bearing in mind you've got one-thirds student body Pasifika, and we've only got one member of staff [Pasifika], it's pretty bad. So, we're constantly trying to change that now; it's very difficult to recruit ... particularly with all the qualifications and requirements, and everything else now as well, it's tough, and there's not an easy entry point to get people in, so that's annoying. (11)

While planning for and creating career pathways for people with non-traditional academic backgrounds is likely to help in the building of a diverse workforce, it represents only part of the picture. In colonised countries, for example, indigenous staff are often keenly recruited because of their cultural knowledge, skills and networks. Once in the academy, they frequently carry broader responsibilities internally and across their communities. Often, they are regarded as the people responsible for all things cultural. This not only results in unbalanced workloads; it also places responsibility for indigenous staff to teach non-indigenous students the history of White privilege and the ways in which these insights can inform anti-oppressive practice. While this is important for the students, it can expose indigenous staff to challenging and potentially inappropriate responses as students work through their understandings relating to curriculum content. One way to support indigenous staff,

and staff from minority populations, is to development partnership approaches to teaching.

Advancing inclusive pedagogies and cultural responsiveness

In many ways, advancing inclusive and responsive pedagogies has much to do with creating more democratic teams that unify around a set of common values:

“Okay, team values, let’s have that.” It’s a lot of work, and we got the whole team to agree to them, and they define them, which is important, and then what’s happened from there, is that we’ve ended up with a slightly more democratic team; even process ... (11)

There was also a view that critical social work theory was an important underpinning for democratising and decolonising practices:

So there’s some review of the programme going on at the moment and hopefully the end of this review will reflect in more papers that emphasise the theoretical underpinnings of democratisation and decolonisation; i.e. structural, critical social work. (4)

The use of indigenous practices was often considered a major support for learning by members of those cultural groups, along with non-members learning about those cultural practices:

I think some of the advances we have; the tutorial model works really well. I think the Māori and Pasifika kind of hui group [indigenous group processes] that we have, offers something ... in terms of participation ... I think that’s an area of development for the team. (14)

Māori staff and students (along with other people of colour) experienced racism and discrimination, so a practice of cultural safety for the programme was critical. It was particularly important for White staff and students to step up and address racism and discrimination, and to be allies in anti-oppressive and democratising practices within the programme:

You know, I’ve got to be honest; I have experienced institutional racism as a tangata whenua and Māori practitioner and lecturer ... from a staff point of view, but also a student point of view as well. I mean, that’s a reality for them; not just within this institute but externally as well. So, this has to be a safe place for them to be able to learn and be treated fairly and with respect. We cope with it because we’re used to it, but that doesn’t make it okay. (7)

Then there are things like teaching about White privilege, which they [Māori staff] don't see as their responsibility; it is our [non-Māori staff] responsibility to teach that. (4)

The operationalising of democratising practices within the curriculum is therefore critically linked to the democratising elements explored earlier: creating the mindset, building the authorising environment and supporting staff.

Understanding impact and improvement

At a general level of quality improvement, many participants were engaged in formal and informal processes. At an informal level, exploring excellence in a programme is a useful approach along with a pragmatic stance to support a sustainable process:

I think in Aotearoa ... we should all be asking ... what is excellence going to look like for us next year; and, realistically, what of that can I achieve and still stay sane? (5)

One of the key issues for most programmes was employing sufficient Māori staff. The regulatory standards required all academic staff to have completed a minimum master's level qualification, which while supported in principle, meant some Māori staff left teaching because they had not completed this qualification or could not be hired. A longer timeline was requested by programmes but denied by the regulatory authority, which displeased many academics:

We, as staff, are excited if Māori do apply here, eh; and that's cool. You know, we recognise the value of that. So, for some reason too, I don't know why Māori are not applying, but it's also restricted by the SWRB requirements and I think that's the biggest [reason]... we've [also] lost staff because of that. (2)

The sad thing for us is that we lost them [expert Māori staff] in the last couple of years. And we lost them actually primarily around the SWRB requirements, which I think has been quite sad for us as a programme. (13)

All leaders had to engage with the formal profession-based regulatory process for the accreditation and regular review of their programme, based on the programme recognition standards of the SWRB (2017). Many found the process positive and were affirmed in the progress they had made and could receive helpful advice. There was an element of benchmarking and peer review based on critical reflection on the state of their programme. Ideally, other institutional review processes could be combined so

the programme resource was applied efficiently. It could also provide leverage with the institution for particular resources and issues:

I think the SWRB was really helpful because when you have someone objective and looking at what you're doing, I think they [are] in a position to find the issues we don't really see. (9)

I think it's useful also in terms of our own thinking about curriculum, to know what's the bigger picture and to be part of that national thinking of accreditation and registration and those sort of things, so it's been useful, and I've been supportive, as head of school, to have staff be on those roles and even be on panels. (6)

What the standards give us is an ability to externalise and argue for things within our institution, in terms of requirements of our profession. (2)

However, the regulatory review had some negative aspects. It was sometimes experienced as merely a 'tick box' compliance exercise, that was also onerous, was not well targeted to the particular stage of the programme, and not necessarily addressing the question of what quality programmes should look like:

And, I think some pedantic legalism coming from the Social Workers Registration Board is actually a major road block. (7)

Although academics within social work programmes undertake evaluative research across a range of areas, understanding learning outcomes and the effectiveness of teaching often tends to be informed by student evaluations of teaching:

Like most tertiary institutions we have a system of course evaluation and teacher evaluation, so that's a great opportunity for students to have quite a powerful voice in terms of giving feedback on their education. (1)

While this feedback from students is indeed a good means through which the student voice can be engaged and heard, understanding the effectiveness of democratising efforts requires an action method to explore a broader range of enquiry (see Figure 8.2).

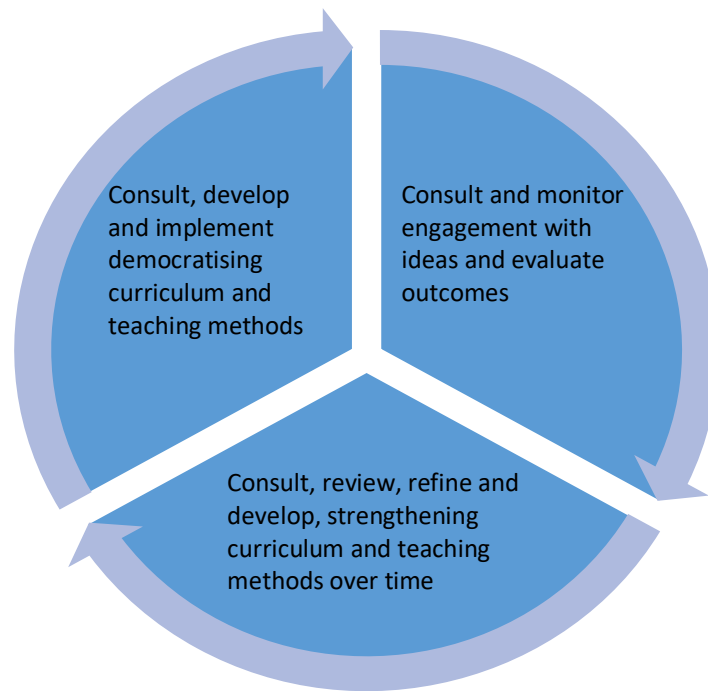


Figure 8.2. An action method to improve democratising efforts over time

A range of accounts of the decolonising and indigenising process in social work education informed this action method, for example, in Canada (Bruyere, 2008), the USA (Morelli et al., 2016), South Africa (Harms Smith & Nathane, 2018; E. Ross, 2018) and more generally within China (Yuen-Tsang & Ku, 2008). For explanatory purposes, however, the Hawai’ian experience of decolonising a social work programme over a number of years is used below as a detailed example of programme-improvement-based development that nicely illustrates the action method for improving democratising efforts over time (see Figure 8.2).

Engagement with ideas

Leaders of the Hawai’ian programme had a key role in clarifying the goal of becoming a more indigenous-based social work programme and then leading the process of consultation and development. The process began in 2002 and formed a period during which the faculty became ready to further engage with this mission. It involved several years of meetings with staff and targeted consultation with their primary stakeholder, local indigenous people, along with other community representatives. A formal expression of consultation with local indigenous people involved the formation of the Kupuna Council in 2005, which consisted of six well respected indigenous leaders who

were experienced in social welfare work and indigenous practices. This group was able to offer direct guidance on the indigenising project as well as support the school's leadership (Morelli et al., 2013).

At times, there was disagreement among staff and so the discussion was left for a period. During this period, the school was also grappling with the global issues of ecological and economic sustainability. These issues were aligned with indigenous knowledge and practice as a new way forward. They successfully hosted the global International Indigenous Voices in Social Work Conference in 2007, which refocused the indigenising agenda. Several Holomua (traditional meeting processes) were held over a two-year period, which allowed staff to safely debate their concerns. This included analysing the effects of indigenisation on curriculum and teaching practices, and how education standards could still be upheld. Staff whose knowledge base was primarily rooted in the Western paradigm faced the challenge of having to learn indigenous knowledge. Finally, a consensus was reached in 2009 to formally begin the indigenising journey for their programme (Morelli et al., 2016).

One of the challenges faced by staff was keeping up their day-to-day academic work while investing major energy into the indigenising project. It was important that an inclusive process was used to keep staff engaged and to build consensus. This also meant taking a number of years to move through the consultation phase. The team development aspect of the internal consultation phase formed an important support for sustaining the process over a lengthy period (Morelli et al., 2016).

They also consulted with staff, students, their organisation and the wider community in their process of developing an approach for their mission.

Developing curriculum and teaching methods

Development of the curriculum and teaching methods is fundamental to any social work programme. The Kupuna Council maintained a vision for recentring indigenous knowledge within the curriculum, which meant major change for the curriculum and of course for the faculty who would be teaching it. This was another reason why the indigenising process would take years and not months, because the development of new knowledge and pedagogy involved a significant change process.

The school took an ambitious step in approaching their regulatory body, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) covering the USA, to undertake a project that allowed them to further pursue their indigenising mission. This led to the submission of the project being formally agreed to by CSWE in 2007: *Indigenization and the University of Hawai'i at Manoa School of Social Work: Exploring and Developing Concepts, Processes and Applications—Alternative Reaffirmation Project*. They successfully gained full reaccreditation in 2009 (Morelli et al., 2016). Along with the courage of the school to initiate such a project, it is notable that CSWE responded positively and had the facility to address this indigenising initiative with their Alternative Reaffirmation Project policy.

One of the ways they supported the indigenising of the curriculum was the initiative of a Hawai'ian place of learning, where indigenous values and practices were privileged. This also aligned with the policy of the university. These features included teaching the following: the Hawai'ian history of colonisation and struggle, cultural competence for practice, staff and students sharing their own cultural stories, professional development for new staff to learn about Hawai'ian culture, and appreciating the learning environment as a place where holistic Hawai'ian culture is experienced. A specific course was developed that integrated Hawai'ian values and practices with social work (Morelli et al., 2016).

Democratising processes over time

The experience of undertaking a democratising process that focused on the indigenising project at Hawai'i is a salutary one and not for the faint hearted.

Our experience continues to teach us that the work of indigenising social work education is a difficult, unpredictable journey with struggle, frustration and contention at every turn. Thinking about this experience and its relevance for other contexts, there is no single, prescribed path to indigenising social work education. (Morelli et al., 2016, p. 217)

The recruitment and retention of Native Hawai'ian and Asian-Pacific students and faculty was noted as a priority for the school and the university. While this was proportionately high for the school, it exposed a low level of representation at the

university compared with the wider population. In this way, the school was able to contribute to the equity-based recruitment and retention goal of their university.

They noted four critical success factors that were integral to sustaining their indigenisation journey. These were prioritising indigenisation for the school, all faculty being open to embracing indigenisation and becoming part of the leadership of the process, a distributed leadership process whereby formal leaders and all parties had an important role, and evaluation and development being built into the life of the indigenisation project (Morelli et al., 2016). This suggests that a holistic approach is important for long-term sustainability of change and development in which internal factors of leadership and faculty consensus are aligned with external factors, including community allies, institutional leadership and policy, and regulatory policy.

This process suggests that key social work and humanistic values are at work, such as respect, trust, transparency, openness, courage and the pursuit of social justice, along with practices of engagement, consultation, partnership and leadership.

Barriers to the indigenisation journey can be perceived as a mirror image of the success factors outlined above. The barriers to indigenisation faced within Aotearoa are illustrated with examples from the Aotearoa study discussed below.

The institutional prioritisation of indigenisation may vary across regions or even within countries. The challenges presented by a lack of institutional support for indigenisation was noted by a leader in the Aotearoa study:

The social work programme particularly is totally committed to the bicultural Code of Ethics and teaching in a bicultural manner ... But, our institute has not supported us well with that and it's been a continuing challenge ... (7)

Problems will occur when all faculty, including leaders and other academics, are not embracing of the indigenisation journey. This can be related to having a poor representation of indigenous staff, along with the challenges that staff turnover may provide:

And my concern is as soon as critical staff leave it's a true indicator that people aren't necessarily committed to it [biculturalism] 'cause it goes back to the same old ... the challenge though is how you sustain it. (13)

It is particularly important for the majority of non-indigenous staff to engage in the indigenising process and not to leave the leadership to indigenous staff; otherwise, the partnership process is degraded, the teaching suffers and efforts can lack authenticity:

For me as a Māori lecturer, it's something that I get a little bit frustrated about, but I understand as well; so, I understand if I'm thinking on the level of my [non-Māori] colleagues; they're very open minded and willing, they do align with what social work in our context is cemented in; but, I think there are some that maybe don't understand enough of that, and I think our programme management too, has an impact on all of those things that float down to what happens in the classroom, but definitely in that development stage; all those intentions were there, the foundation was there, the opportunity was there. I think it has been watered down, and I don't think we're delivering enough, authentically in line with all those things that you mentioned before. (6)

If evaluation and development are not well built into the life of the programme, then momentum can suffer with the corresponding risk of a programme losing its way.

In the Aotearoa study, regulation was found to be an important barrier to the indigenisation journey. One of the significant expressions of evaluation is the SWRB five-yearly review process by which each programme is assessed against the social work education standards. While reviews were generally perceived positively, they were also considered conservatively prescriptive, lacking in strategic vision and a deeper engagement with quality improvement:

So, I think sometimes these standards are quite socially controlling, but are they socially changing? (9)

Returning to the example of the Hawai'ian school, it was left with the following challenge: "The question is whether we can sustain the necessary long term efforts to indigenise social work education successfully" (Morelli et al., 2016, p. 218). This is an important question for any democratising project undertaken by a school or a wider group within social work education—what will allow us to not only begin a change process but sustain it for a long enough period to achieve our democratising goal?

Conclusion

Social work education holds a commitment to progressive values and the pursuit of equity goals that is well supported by democratising and decolonising practices.

Leaders hold a special responsibility for operationalising that commitment within the

challenging organisational and policy contexts of contemporary social work education. A focus on democratising practices offers a way forward for social work programmes to express professional integrity, not only through the curriculum and pedagogy, but also in the wider demonstration of equity-aligned practice. Programme standards and the regulatory audit process can be incorporated into a broad-based practice of quality improvement. The challenge for undertaking democratising practices is assisted by the use of action methods and strategic approaches; however, the long-term engagement necessary for deep change requires that passionate sense of mission on which our profession is founded.

This chapter has focused on leaders and their role in advancing democratisation within social work education programmes. This included identifying the five enabling elements for progressing an equity agenda. However, this thread of leadership emerged strongly across all waves of the research. The next and final chapter of the thesis offers an integrated discussion of the twin themes of democratisation and decolonisation for the 3-P domains of policy, programme and practice development.

CHAPTER 9

DISCUSSION

Introduction

In this PhD thesis, the publications that were embedded in the narrative include a discussion of the implications of the research for policy, programme and practice development. In this final discussion, three broader implications of democratising and decolonising themes are presented: the importance of values-based policy affecting change, programmes exploring the borderlands of practice and the importance of activism and demonstrating equity in practice.

The Aotearoa context has proved to be fundamental to the analysis of implications, both nationally and internationally. Throughout the research, social work educators talked about core values and reaffirmed their importance in relation to indigenous responsiveness and the development of Treaty-based bicultural practices. It is very clear, and unsurprising, that the Treaty has had an important influence on the development of social work education in Aotearoa and its equity-focused agendas. As reported, social work educators also talked about barriers to an equity-focused approach even within the authorising environment provided by the Treaty. It is interesting to see the way in which educators have nevertheless been consistently solution focused in their responses, noting the ways in which barriers could be addressed and negotiated. This includes Treaty-focused efforts that support collaboration, especially between major parties, including social work educators who are aligned with CSWEANZ, their national body, and with the SWRB as regulator. The expectations of the Treaty also provide a framework through which the 3-P domains of policy, programmes and practice can be analysed and critiqued, to ensure they do not undermine the overall equity-focused goals of Treaty-based social work education in Aotearoa.

1. Values-based policy affecting change

The findings of this thesis indicate the importance of creating a values-aligned policy and regulatory framework. This includes the reaffirmation of core values for policy development and the relevant processes of regulation. The policy and regulatory

processes therefore need to be aligned with core values within an active national and international relationship of influence.

To achieve this, it is necessary to clarify what a values-based policy looks like. In the Aotearoa context, policy must be rooted in the commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the partnership between Māori and the Crown, which includes Western-based and other diverse sets of values. Because of the history of colonisation in Aotearoa, this requires a decentring of Western knowledge and practices and a centring of mātauranga Māori and tikanga Māori. Necessarily, this presents a challenge in how to create bicultural policies and processes that align with bicultural values and value systems. In this research, educators suggested that this can be achieved through modelling the democratising process. This supports meaningful engagement and collaboration between parties; a Treaty-led process that prioritises the articles of the Treaty, including the right to self-determination for Māori; and a responsive process that allows for difference and the progressive exceptions within programmes that support the achievement of equity.

Key examples of the way in which these Treaty-based democratising processes have been undermined in Aotearoa include the Māori social work educator qualification requirements, and the student fit and proper requirements used in student selection. Both examples illustrate the way in which policy barriers can undermine equity aims and ultimately reinforce privileged group access to social work education at both the student and the staff level. While it is considered important that social work education provide at least some safeguards for the profession, this research suggests that this might be better achieved through a modelling of risk-aware Treaty-based democratising processes, rather than the current risk-averse processes identified by many of the research participants.

At a local level, the influence of neoliberalism and managerialism on tertiary institutions presents challenges to programme leaders in particular. Social work academics are expected to continue to exercise academic freedom, and to support their professional mandate in resisting policy that might reinforce privilege and preserve the status quo. These academic and professional imperatives demand the

promotion of progressive agendas that require a supportive infrastructure for quality programmes. This places a heavy responsibility on social work educators, and particularly leaders of programmes, to manage these academic and professional expectations within a heavily influenced neoliberal environment.

Central to a values-based policy approach is the development of meaningful engagement and a true collaboration between parties involved in social work education. In Aotearoa, the SWRB remains a key player in the social work sector as the only party with a legal mandate to engage with the profession while being responsible to a minister of the government. Oranga Tamariki within the Ministry for Children is also an organisation overseen by a government minister. As a large employer of social workers with statutory powers concerning children and young people, it is also a significant player in the sector. Better collaboration within the Alliance—an informal grouping of social work’s sector bodies that includes the SWRB and Oranga Tamariki, along with CSWEANZ, ANZASW, TWSWA, the Public Service Association union, district health board social work leaders, major NGOs, iwi social service providers and Careerforce—provides the kind of cross-sector grouping that holds promise for developing equity-focused policy for social work education and for effecting change. The current membership of the Alliance is clearly sufficient to support a strong cross-sectoral collaboration. It is arguable, however, whether the Alliance currently reflects the unified commitment to democratising principles that are necessary to resolve some of these complex, risk-focused issues.

In terms of international policy frames, the first wave of research illustrated that the GS were regarded as affirming an equity base for social work education standards. While the GS were never meant to be determining of local social work education policy, they do have a purpose in complementing national-level policy imperatives. It is clear from this research that the GS could nevertheless be more influential. This could be achieved by strengthening the membership of IASSW in both its traditional home in Western countries and weaker areas of membership such as South America, while noting the relative strength of membership in the Asia-Pacific region. Improving the legitimacy of IASSW through a greater breadth of membership offers an important platform upon which it may extend its reach and increase its relevance in national

contexts. Other global social work instruments jointly owned by a mixture of IASSW, IFSW and ICSW remain authoritative policies, especially the revised global social work definition published by IFSW and IASSW (2014) that established the decolonising feature of formally recognising indigenous knowledge as legitimate social work knowledge. It also incorporated the new policy development feature of establishing a core policy definition, which then allowed further amplifications at regional and national levels to legitimate a partnership between universal and local policy development.

This development of incorporating indigenous knowledge at the global level of the social work profession has been matched with the inclusion of indigenous representation within the governance of IFSW. TWSWA formally partnered with ANZASW to become the joint representatives of Aotearoa on the IFSW governing body so that indigenous social workers can formally sit at the decision-making table. IASSW now has the opportunity to consider how it includes indigenous representation on its governing board.

2. Programmes exploring the borderlands

Having discussed the importance of equity-focused values as a base for policy and regulation, participants turned to the criticality of values in creating equity-based relationships and partnerships, which are most definitely regarded as necessary to the development of bicultural practices within the borderlands of programme delivery. These relationships and partnerships were expressed in a range of ways.

Participants expressed the importance of reaffirming equity-based relationships and partnerships, especially the Treaty-based partnership between Māori and tangata Tiriti. The health of this relationship requires a significant number of Māori staff, which unfortunately has never been achieved. Research participants talked about the desperate need for more Māori academic staff and that there was no system for ensuring an adequate Māori workforce. Clearly, the development of a values-based Māori academic workforce strategy is one of the highest priorities for social work education and, indeed, for the wider education sector. At the same time, another well-meaning strategy will only be effective if it challenges the epistemic rules of the

partnership conversation, addressing also the unequal power relations that more frequently govern these rules of engagement. In addition, resourcing would be required to give effect to such a bicultural workforce strategy, including scholarships and professional opportunities that nurture Māori along pathways towards advanced qualifications and successful academic careers.

Social work educators, and social workers more generally, practise within the borders of humanity and the practical application of systems. This is not frontier territory in the Western sense. But it is arguably the critically dynamic space where things happen in terms of navigating truly bicultural social work. According to Weier and Woons (2017), “dwelling in the border brings a particular type of consciousness” (p. 13). It is an awkward space, disputed and frequently compromised. Neither mainstream, nor decolonised, Aotearoa social work educators sit in a Treaty-authorized bicultural space, grappling with all its complexities, which are experienced by both indigenous and non-indigenous practitioners. L. Ruwhiu et al. (2016) recognise that the borderlands are both a complex and a fraught space but that with respectful engagement, possibilities for development are opened up. However, issues of power and historical patterns between the Treaty partners must be addressed for there to be any chance of a mutually positive future. Zubrzycki et al. (2014) note the idea of the third space based on the work of Bhabha and the possibilities of cross-cultural collaboration. This is the in-between space between coloniser and colonised, and by its very nature, it holds uncertainty and tension. However, within this contested space, old ways can be challenged, differences understood and new ways explored together.

According to Schulz (2017), coloniality is “perpetuated on a global scale through discursive-material processes of imperialism, appropriation, and unequal economic exchange” (p. 3). Given the contemporary debates relating to decolonising the Anthropocene, it may be timely to ask whether social work education can play its small part in decolonising social work education. After all, as Schulz provocatively suggests, “modernity and coloniality are essentially two sides of the same coin” (p. 3). Social work educators have a long and passionate history of critiquing modernity and its impact on the contemporary life (Pease et al., 2016). Yet social work programmes

within the mainstream tertiary context continually struggle to become more holistically and spiritually responsive in ways that reflect deeply embedded change.

Modernism has been critiqued for its reification of scientific knowledge and the dominance of reason as the prime determinant of true knowledge, to the exclusion of other forms of knowledge. Also critiqued is its limited attention to the operation of power in the use of that knowledge. Postmodernism has also been critiqued for disregarding aspects of the world that still operate in a modernist way. Ideologically, modernism remains powerful in the world, including at a global level, with such features as capitalist globalisation and its historic roots aligned with colonisation. Postmodernism would deny an opportunity to work across differences on structural oppressions such as gender and race, and at a global level on the very emancipatory project that social work is committed to. Mullaly and Dupré (2019) advocate a 'structural social work' approach and contend that the contributions of both modernism and postmodernism have a place when linked with critical theory, arguing that their differences and contradictions can be held in a dialectical tension. They note that it is important not to dismiss these contested relationships as false dichotomies. This informs the social work discipline, which is in the unique position of operating within the very systems of society that it critiques, attending to both the personal and the political, but with the dual goals of individual and societal transformation. Critical theoretical analysis provides a key tool for the analytical work, while critically reflective practice informs the relational approach to working in the uncertain and contested context of the borderlands. The structural social work approach forms an important framework for social work education and its equity-based mission.

Speaking about borderland engagements from a Treaty perspective and as tangata whenua, L. Ruwhiu et al. (2016) remind:

all tangata whenua when engaging with Tauwiwi at the border to enter that space with absolute sovereignty intact. In doing so Māori can co-define the rules of engagement at the border. Tauwiwi need to recognise their privileged position and continually support the co-construction of an equitable environment. Such a process, once defined, should facilitate a space where Treaty partners can engage with humility and strategic sureness, with power and authority, with reason and passion, with aspirations and a sense of social

responsibility, with innovation and creativity, with purposefulness and hope, embedded in ngā taonga i tuku iho (cultural wisdoms) (p. 90).

Operationalising equity-based relationships and partnerships at a programme level could find a national expression through incorporating the work of major projects such as the Enhance R2P research project (Ballantyne, Beddoe, Hay, Maidment, Walker, Ngan, et al., 2019). This project mapped the curriculum of a majority of Aotearoa social work programmes, explored the requirements of supporting newly qualified social workers into employment, and finally proposed a PCF to support the sector in assuring a quality social work workforce. The research involved engaging with a range of sector groups, including educators, students, employers, the regulator and more broadly the government, indicating a breadth of relationships more likely to gain the momentum for this ambitious goal. The Enhance R2P project recognised early in their work that further research would be required on a Treaty-based research of programmes, including those with a kaupapa Māori base, in particular because neither of the two wānanga-based social work programmes were involved in the Enhance R2P research. Separate research with the clear goal of exploring the nature of Treaty-based programmes is important in itself and could complement the Enhance R2P outcomes; this has, in fact, been recommended by the Enhance R2P project, who note that future research should be led by colleagues from the wānanga-based social work programmes (Ballantyne, Hay, Beddoe, Maidment, & Walker, 2019).

3. Activism and demonstrating equity in practice

Throughout this thesis, activism has been emphasised, along with frameworks and its demonstration in practice. Activism can be regarded as a way of operationalising decolonisation and democratisation in the classroom. One of the challenges of teaching activism to students is that they face conservative practice settings, both in the practicum context and after graduation. This reinforces the important point concerning the pursuit of equity goals through the use of a critical theoretical analysis alongside critically reflexive practice. In addition, a necessary kaupapa Māori approach is also informed by a range of mātauranga Māori, including tikanga principles such as those recently formulated as the basis for the revised code of ethics of ANZASW.

The key point of engagement with students is where equity-focused policy and programmes demonstrate that commitment in the teaching practice of educators. There are many opportunities within the learning environment when students can be supported in their identity development, and in respectfully engaging with difference and the diverse realities of others. In the context of Aotearoa, this again begins with a Treaty-based approach based on a partnership between Māori and tangata Tiriti. This was highlighted in Chapter 7 with the framework that incorporates the concept of ako for teaching and learning in which the Treaty partnership is honoured, mātauranga Māori is centred, kaupapa Māori processes are demonstrated and responsiveness to Māori is practised. The key concepts of Ngā Mōhiotanga—knowing, Ngā Whakaahuatanga—being and Te Whakatinanatanga—doing are integrated into practice.

This type of practice requires the key feature of creating equity-focused educators. Activism is one of the ways educators demonstrate an equity focus and alongside its demonstration within the classroom, as discussed above, this can also be expressed within the tertiary context as well as within the professional and wider public contexts.

Quality improvement and governance are areas where students need to be engaged. Though much of this work, such as student evaluation of teaching and representation on programme committees, is standard across education, it can also be given more depth. Along with targeted areas of the curriculum, institutional and public environments present opportunities for students to engage their voice and explore their own activism. The research noted ways in which students were active within student unions and education campaigns, profession-based advocacy and public elections, along with public advocacy campaigns and advocacy agencies.

Teaching students takes place within a future-focused frame; after all, the students will graduate and become the next generation of social workers, and some will also become social work educators. One of the challenges facing future practitioners is the state of communities and, more broadly, the state of world societies, which is the legacy of previous generations. Particularly after the many benefits gained by the baby boomers post-World War II, there has been a decline in the resources available to the

new generation leadership. The need to address “intergenerational theft”, powerfully termed by John Falzon (2019, p. 97), becomes an imperative that is well aligned with equity-focused social work. Intergenerational theft presents a significant challenge for future practitioners. It includes governments not investing properly for the achievement of indigenous, social, economic, and environmental wellbeing and justice, creating a legacy of problems for future generations to address. Ultimately, intergenerational theft represents an indictment on earlier generations, supporting neoliberal policies and practices that reinforce wealth disparities and indulge self-interest. The contradictions of global capitalism have made a minority increasingly wealthy but also supported the Anthropocene so that the ecological health of the planet is seriously in question and, as such, is at serious risk of deterioration into the future. Young people, such as *TIME* person of the year for 2019 Greta Thunberg, have led a movement to save the planet, expressing outrage to political leaders at the slowness of change.

Alongside the goal of saving Planet Earth, and amid the many campaigns for justice, is the challenge of engaging in activism in a way that is itself sustainable. Activism is hard work and can easily lead to the depletion of energy and burnout in the activist.

McDonald (2019) frames her concern about the profession of social work in that “as a form of heroic agency [it] promotes the triumph of agency over structure” (p. 54), which both confuses the prime location of social problems as existing in the individual and inflates the ability of social work to simplistically effect change through casework alone. This, she argues, is a recipe for disappointment and burnout. Social workers must see their role as political agents to appreciate the appropriate structural focus for change alongside more individual focused work, and to practise in a way that involves a critical approach to the structural context that requires collective action in an uncertain context.

Reinforcing sustainable activism involves educating future generations of equity-focused practitioners. This brings attention to graduate attributes and the way equity-aligned attributes can be developed by students so they demonstrate an equity focus as graduates and practitioners, with a focus on sustainable activism. Fieldwork presents a potent opportunity for students to integrate learning within the workplace

and to witness positive and negative expressions of equity-focused practice by qualified social workers. To neutralise the negative expressions, which can ultimately result in disillusionment, social work educators need to stand firm on social work values and our activist tradition, and experience the strength of collaborations both within and outside of the social work profession.

Practice rests at the heart of social work education. In educating for the profession, social work educators are uniquely positioned to influence change—each graduate of every programme has the potential to become an activist-focused practitioner who can also bring influence to the profession. In 2017, the last year for these data, 691 students were eligible to graduate from Aotearoa programmes out of a total of 3,310 students (SWRB, 2018). This workforce of future practitioners has the potential to shape the future nature of practice and, indeed, the nature of service delivery.

Affecting a broader equity focus across the curriculum will require a critical approach to key areas of knowledge with a corresponding anti-privilege approach that highlights a matching range of privileges, which, with the appropriate use of the concept of intersectionality as a tool, will support partnerships based on both anti-oppression and anti-privilege approaches. This is expressed within the structural social work approach (Mullaly & Dupré, 2019).

In the pursuit of its social justice goal, Cocker and Hafford-Letchfield (2014) argue for a rethink of the theoretical approaches used by social work, including anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive approaches. They propose a refocusing on Foucault's key theories and concepts—power, discourse, subjectivity and deconstruction—as the profession continues to grapple with how best to apply theory in practice. Personal and professional involvement in three sites of political conflict in Europe led Campbell, Ioakimidis and Maglajlic (2019) to pursue a human-rights-based approach to their engagement with a:

call for social workers to engage in a discussion that aims at articulating and theorising a “social work for critical peace”; an academic and practice-based approach which supports societies affected by conflict through challenging the intersecting social, political, historical and cultural injustices. (p. 1081)

These broad equity-focused notions from across varied areas of social work have the potential to inform theory, practice and research development, offering important opportunities for collaborations between the academy and the field.

Concluding thoughts and implications for research

As this thesis draws to a close, it is useful to reflect on some of the challenges and opportunities that an equity-focused agenda presents for social work education and, in particular, research. The contemporary challenges faced nationally and globally are clearly demanding. It is also clear that many of the concerns of social work educators in Aotearoa are shared by colleagues internationally. This has resulted in calls for leadership across the domains of research and practice in social work education (Coffey, Connolly, & Williams, 2019). Particularly relevant to this study, the profession is in a long-term process of de-Westernising itself and becoming more equity focused, arguably witnessed by the stronger social justice language of the recently revised international social work definition. Mirroring international experience, participants noted that change is made progressively, and perhaps slower than might be hoped. Challenges are experienced in the contexts of limited resources and powerful neoliberal and globalising forces that also threaten the institutions in which social work programmes operate. However, the demonstration of unity, vision and energy encapsulated in projects such as the Global Agenda of the past 10 years and its current revision for the next 10 years suggests that the global heart of social work education beats strongly.

Despite the challenges, this research suggests that social work education in Aotearoa is also advancing a progressive agenda, particularly in pursuing bicultural practices and de-Westernising policies and practices. Te Tiriti o Waitangi is an authorising frame that very clearly positions practice at the dynamic edge of bicultural change and will increasingly do so in the future. Activism is one of the themes arising from all waves of the research. It is anchored in the profession's policy and is required of practitioners. In the social work education context, it has a place within the curriculum, teaching and learning practices, and across programmes and their institutional settings.

Activism calls on a professional and personal commitment to the pursuit of equity goals, requiring sustained effort towards development and reform. According to Coffey and Beddoe (2019), leadership in times of change requires that social work educators also use research to strengthen the knowledge base and combat inequity, arguing that “critical scholarship is activism” (p. 19). It is interesting to note, however, that while social work educators participating in this study talked a good deal about equity at the programme level, they generally spoke very little about advancing equity issues through research. There may be a number of explanations for this. Writers have noted the tension between being research active and providing professional education (Williams, Connolly, & Spence Coffey, 2019) whereby teaching activities compete with research for academic time. Teaching is invariably demanding, particularly when it involves educating for a profession. In Aotearoa, the mix of university and non-university programmes with differing research expectations of staff is likely to exacerbate this. Given that the daily activities of many of the research participants were strongly focused on classroom teaching, or managing teaching programmes, it may be that their responses were more likely to focus on these areas than on research. Particularly in the context of doctoral research but applicable to all academic research effort, Kemp (2019) nevertheless argues that “capacities for collaborative, equity-oriented intellectual and research leadership can, and indeed must be nurtured” (p. 70).

We can also note the dual role of teaching and research impact; a collaborative research agenda between the academy and the field holds the promise of practice development that is broad-based and equity focused. However, this is a daunting prospect given the scale and complexity of the challenge. One approach to addressing complex social problems involving multiple agents and ensuring large-scale change is to engage in a collective impact methodology: “collective impact initiatives involve a centralised infrastructure, a dedicated staff, and a structured process that leads to a common agenda, shared measurement, continuous communication, and mutually reinforcing activities among all participants” (Kania & Kramer, 2011, p. 36). An example of collaboration between practitioners, leaders and academics is research undertaken to improve child and family practice in Victoria, Australia. Innovative practice was

developed off the back of practice-based research that was supported by academics and developed through strong leadership. Collaborators also established a Graduate Diploma in Child and Family Practice Leadership qualification targeting leaders in the field that was based on the research with the purpose of developing quality practice (Frederico, Long, & Jackson, 2018).

The relationship between equity, activism and research provides a rich field of opportunity for social work educators to strengthen the knowledge base, potentially in their own and in terms of higher-degree student research. For example, it could be possible to influence students' master's and doctoral research topics through the development of strategic research frameworks that are focused on equity and democratising practices. According to Connolly (2004), research strategies "help to identify information gaps and crystallise policy and practice issues" (p. 126). Therefore, research findings could inform research strategies that target key areas of research activity that can support activism and the equity agenda. Based on the domains of policy, programmes and practice, Figure 9.1 uses the thesis findings to suggest areas of potential future democratising and decolonising research.

Table 9.1. Examples of equity-focused social work research

Domains	Policy	Programmes	Practice
Democratising social work student issues	Understanding the nature of student exclusions from programmes: e.g. national analysis reporting on student demographics and population	Understanding the nature of student participation in programmes: e.g. national survey administered to all final-year students	Understanding the nature of the student voice and activism in programmes: e.g. programme-level student focus groups exploring experiences of activism expectations
Democratising social work staffing issues	Understanding academic staff diversity: e.g. national analysis of academic staff demographics and representation	Understanding academic equity agenda capabilities: e.g. action research with academics to explore necessary capabilities, how they can be developed and maintained	Understanding the nature of an effective activism: e.g. case study analysis of best practice

Domains	Policy	Programmes	Practice
Decolonising social work student issues	Understanding Māori student experience of colonising/decolonising practices: e.g. kaupapa Māori research with Māori students nationally	Understanding decolonising teaching practices: e.g. case study analysis of programme practice	Exploring student understanding of Treaty-based social work education: e.g. kaupapa Māori research with Māori and non-Māori students
Decolonising social work staffing issues	Understanding Treaty-based academic best practice: e.g. scoping/literature review of national and international experience	Understanding the nature of academic staff capabilities for a Treaty-based teaching and research programme: e.g. kaupapa Māori action research with Māori and non-Māori staff	Understanding the nature of Treaty-based ako—curriculum and pedagogy: e.g. kaupapa Māori research with Māori and non-Māori staff

Across the democratising policy domains, particularly in the context of social work student issues, the thesis has noted that entry criteria are excluding students from programmes for a range of reasons that are common across academic programmes. In particular, the area of exclusion that has been highlighted is the fit and proper criteria. Currently, however, little is known about the scope of the issue nationally or the degree to which this is influenced by broader population demographics. A national study investigating the nature of student exclusions would enable a check of equivalence with the wider population, one of the ways of analysing for a more equitable match as proposed in the GS. If, for example, it was clear that there was a gap in a grouping, such as Māori, then potentially measures could be put in place, such as targeted recruitment, scholarships and ongoing support programmes.

By its nature, the democratising of student issues requires that the student voice also be heard in social work education. Social work educators noted in this current research a range of ways in which students participated in programmes. This is nevertheless one step removed from the students expressing their own view about their experience. Therefore, involving students in research, for example, through questionnaire participation and other participation action research, would enable better understanding of student experience, which is essential for equity-based

programme development. These data could help to guide curriculum development and especially broader pedagogical practices and processes that are student centred.

The importance of understanding the student experience, particularly relating to activism, has also been indicated in the current research. However, social work educators bring their own particular lens to the subject of activism. Again, hearing from students about their experience of giving effect to an activism agenda outside the classroom would provide important insights into the tensions and challenges for students and new social workers of advancing an equity agenda. Focus group research with final-year students or social workers in their first year of practice, for example, could explore how well activism initiatives within programmes translate into activism in practice and what is needed to support next-generation equity-focused practitioners.

The major research project Enhance R2P (Ballantyne, Beddoe, Hay, Maidment, Walker, & Merriman, 2019) proposed a PCF using research on the nature of the curriculum across a majority of programmes in Aotearoa, exploring how prepared newly qualified social workers were for practice. This has provided a foundation for research in the area of staff capability for operating an equity-focused programme. The research within this thesis found that a range of examples and ideas on equity-focused teaching and learning but no framework by which to evaluate this and consider areas for development. While staff would likely be wary of any prescriptive framework for teaching, the advantage of a capabilities approach is its greater breadth and being principle based as opposed to being a competencies-based approach.

Similar issues emerge in relation to democratising social work staffing issues. As with the student cohort, it seems important to know the demographics of the educator workforce at a national level and to understand how this relates to broader community representation. Better use of national data could inform a social work educator workforce strategy that would enable an analysis of our current state against workforce goals and targeted workforce development initiatives.

Staff who were interviewed in the course of the research particularly noted the importance of activism for social work educators and its impact on student learning. It

is clear from this research that some programmes have important insights to share with respect to creating and supporting an equity-focused future workforce.

Undertaking case study research of innovative practice within programmes has the potential to explore what constitutes positive activism engagement and good learning outcomes.

All these ideas for research must be located within the context of Aotearoa because it is the indigenous Māori approach, which has increasingly been used in research, that was championed by Māori researchers and now informs expectations for all research. The latest set of expectations is based on Te Ara Tika (the right pathway) developed by Māori and published by the national research oversight body (Hudson et al., 2010), which sits within the broader national guidelines for health researchers where Māori are involved (Health Research Council of New Zealand, 2010). Te Ara Tika emphasises the importance of research that aspires to quality engagement with Māori. It outlines a Māori ethical framework for research using the tikanga principles of whakapapa, tika, manaakitanga and mana, which were discussed in Chapter 3 as a key influencer in this thesis research. Briefly, these are described by B. Smith (2018) as:

1. Whakapapa—the quality of the relationship between researcher and community.
2. Tika—the concern for outcomes and the design of the research proposal.
3. Manaakitanga—cultural and social responsibility and respect for persons.
4. Mana—a recognition of community, individual authority and distributive justice and risk. (p. 51)

The framework is also interwoven with other concepts, including engagement with Te Tiriti o Waitangi and its principles, often described in the health context as partnership, participation and protection. Further Māori tikanga are applied: whakapono (faith), tūmanako (aspirations) and aroha (awareness). More general principles are also applicable: risks, benefits and outcomes, along with the principles of rights, roles and responsibilities. The guideline recognises that progress is often gradual and has incorporated three levels of expectations for each of the tikanga: minimum, good—

Māori responsive, and best practice—operating within the Māori world (Hudson et al., 2010).

Under the first tikanga of whakapapa, which is also concerned with the purpose of the research, it notes the three levels of relationship: consultation, engagement and kaitiaki (guardian/advocate). The second tikanga of tika relates to the validity of the research and is linked to the context in which research is undertaken, whether mainstream, Māori centred or kaupapa Māori. This moves from protecting the rights of Māori, to engaging in greater participation, and finally to a partnership approach in which a kaupapa Māori approach is likely to be used. In the third tikanga of manaakitanga, we begin with cultural sensitivity as a minimum with aroha (care), then to cultural safety and the tikanga of tūmanako (aspiration) for Māori, then finally to māhaki (respectful conduct), in which again a relationship of partnership thrives. The fourth tikanga is mana, and it begins with mana tangata (autonomous individual), in which the basic addressing of risk occurs. Then comes mana whenua and recognition of the role and benefits for local hapū and iwi. Finally, we have mana whakahaere and the sharing of power in the research relationship (Hudson et al., 2010).

Across the domain of decolonising social work student issues, there has been a focus in the thesis on Māori experiences and the responsibilities of non-Māori in addressing colonisation and promoting a Treaty-based future. In terms of addressing policy-related research, a kaupapa Māori approach that explores the learning experiences of Māori students has the potential to inform the development of more effective decolonising practices. Comparing student experience across mainstream and wānanga programmes would be particularly helpful in exploring the potential of establishing a kaupapa Māori foundation for all programmes across Aotearoa.

Decolonising teaching practices relates to the ways in which staff undertake teaching within a range of programme settings. In this thesis, a Treaty-based teaching framework is proposed for mainstream programmes that identifies a number of key elements that support bicultural teaching. Action research exploring decolonising practices from mainstream programmes nationwide could be assessed across the framework's key elements, including the different experiences of Māori and non-Māori

staff working in programmes. This could be complemented by studies that explore the student experience of decolonising teaching practices. Case study kaupapa Māori research of decolonising practices across wānanga-based programmes would also provide a depth of knowledge and experience that would help support broader implementation of decolonising practices.

Finally, Figure 9.1 explores the potential for research to investigate decolonising practices across the domains of policy, programmes and practice. From a policy perspective, opportunities present themselves to broaden the scope of research across both national and international boundaries. The thesis has identified a growing number of programmes internationally that are exploring Treaty-based programme development and curriculum delivery. Understanding Treaty-based best practice through rigorous literature reviews and scoping reviews would capture this important area of research and thus extend the social work and cross-disciplinary knowledge base. Comparisons across related human service professions and experience could provide helpful information as countries grapple with the challenges of decolonising practice. Critical education studies also offer possibilities for social work education because they come from an equity commitment and have expertise in education theory and practice.

It is acknowledged that not all wānanga-based programmes participated in this research, although the leader that did has contributed significantly to the findings. The Enhance R2P project also acknowledged that its research had a similar gap because the two wānanga-based programmes were not included (Ballantyne, Beddoe, Hay, Maidment, Walker, Ngan, et al., 2019). It is imperative that future research include these programmes so that their critically important kaupapa Māori insights relating to the advancement of a fully Treaty-based decolonising agenda can be highlighted with respect to the development of best practices.

Overall, the findings of this thesis have revealed that social work educators across Aotearoa are committed to a decolonising agenda, even though they may be at different stages of development. There were many examples and ideas related to ako—curriculum and pedagogical practice with a Treaty focus. Nonetheless, kaupapa

Māori research with Māori and non-Māori staff could endeavour to capture current best practice and ideas for development, including content-based ideas for curriculum as well as teaching and team practices that support a Treaty agenda.

Finally, collectively these different research initiatives would benefit from a coordinated and strategic approach, particularly given the contemporary focus on research impact. In the context of decolonising and democratising practices, this would necessarily include partnerships between diverse researchers, especially Māori. The national social work academic workforce requires collective analysis, and a strategic development over time. This research adds a critical component to this potential research agenda, calling on multimodal forms of research and engagement with the public, through multifaceted relationships, to ensure research translation and promotion to a wide audience.

Conclusion

In undertaking this research, I have been in the position of an insider, someone with a long history in the social work profession and 10 years as a social work educator working in national and international roles. As such, I have a lived experience of the kind of issues that confront social work educators on a daily basis and that challenge social work education more broadly. The debates within social work education in Aotearoa reflect many of the concerns also found in other countries, for example, the impact of neoliberalism and managerialism and their effect upon the sustainability and development of the profession, and the profession's ability to assure quality social work education. The debates surrounding social work's mission and the challenges of advancing a social action agenda are shared by social work educators internationally and in Aotearoa. At the same time, the nature of the issues that confront social work education is also uniquely influenced by historical and cultural experiences that present differences in approach depending on country-specific imperatives. This has certainly been the case in Aotearoa, as social work educators in this study have expressed their views about the degree to which equity agendas operate in policy, programmes and practice.

As I write this final section of my thesis, the world is in the grip of the COVID-19 coronavirus crisis. Many vulnerable people have died, and communities are facing massive social and economic disruption and disadvantage. In Aotearoa, there is a major risk that our already high disparities of inequality will worsen. As with any crisis, there is nevertheless the possibility of forging new ways of doing things and consolidating strengths. The health crisis, for example, has already resulted in significant changes in government practices that specifically address inequality. For example, in Aotearoa and in other parts of the world, the homeless are being accommodated in hotels, something that would have been unimaginable prior to COVID-19. The New Zealand Government is dedicating \$107.6 million to addressing the long-term issues relating to homelessness; Megan Woods, the Housing Minister, stated that “it will enable people to stay housed until we can secure more long-term housing supply” (Devlin, 2020).

These and similar initiatives support a potential reimagining of social work to readdress neoliberal and bicultural concerns. Therefore, social work has much to offer the recovery and reconstruction phases within Aotearoa and, indeed, globally. Under COVID-19, things are happening that would never have happened previously. It is an opportunity to democratise while further affirming our social justice mission through an equity agenda.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Approval letter to use book chapter



David McNabb,
Senior Lecturer
Social Practice – School of Healthcare & Social Practice
UniTec Institute of Technology,
Auckland 1142

School of Global, Urban and
Social Studies

GPO Box 2476
Melbourne VIC 3001
Australia

Tel. +61 3 9925 2328
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19th September 2019

Dear David

Further to the publisher's email communication of 21 November 2018, this is to confirm that you are able to use the chapter you have written for the Springer book **Strategic Leadership in Social Work Education** with the chapter title: **Democratizing social work education: A leadership framework for action** in your PhD thesis.


Thank you for contributing the chapter. It adds an important contribution regarding leadership in equity focused social work education, and we were very pleased to have the opportunity to publish it.

Yours sincerely


A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Charlotte Williams'.

Professor Charlotte Williams OBE
Associate Dean Social Work
RMIT University
School of Global Urban and Social Studies
Building 8, Level 10. Room 40
368-374 Swanston Street
GPO Box 2476
Melbourne 3001
Australia

Appendix 2: Attribution for jointly written article

 THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
<h3>Co-author authorisation form</h3>
<p>All co-authors must complete this form. By signing below co-authors agree to the listed publication being included in the student's thesis and that the student contributed greater than 50% of the content of the publication and is the "primary author" ie. the student was responsible primarily for the planning, execution and preparation of the work for publication.</p> <p>In cases where all members of a large consortium are listed as authors of a publication, only those that actively collaborated with the student on material contained within the thesis should complete this form. This form is to be used in conjunction with the <i>Declaration for a thesis with publication form</i>.</p> <p>Students must submit this form, along with the <i>Declaration for thesis with publication form</i>, when the thesis is submitted to the Thesis Examination System: https://tes.app.unimelb.edu.au/</p> <p>Further information on this policy and the requirements is available at: gradresearch.unimelb.edu.au/preparing-my-thesis/thesis-with-publication</p>

A. PUBLICATION DETAILS (to be completed by the student)		
Full title	The relevance of Global Standards to social work education in Australasia	
Authors	McNabb, D. J., & Connolly, M.	
Student's contribution (%)	90%	
Journal or book name	International Social Work	
Volume/page numbers	62(1), 35-47	
Status	<input type="checkbox"/> Accepted and In-press <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Published <input type="checkbox"/> In progress	Date accepted/published <small>First published online: June 12, 2017; Issue published: January 1, 2019</small>

B. CO-AUTHOR'S DECLARATION (to be completed by the collaborator)		
I authorise the inclusion of this publication in the student's thesis and certify that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the declaration made by the student on the <i>Declaration for a thesis with publication form</i> correctly reflects the extent of the student's contribution to this work; the student contributed greater than 50% of the content of the publication and is the "primary author" ie. the student was responsible primarily for the planning, execution and preparation of the work for publication. 		
Co-author's name	Co-author's signature	Date (dd/mm/yy)
Marie Connolly		30/3/2020

Appendix 3: Ethics approval letter

02 June 2017

Prof M Connolly
Social Work
The University of Melbourne

Dear Prof Connolly

I am pleased to advise that the School of Health Sciences Human Ethics Advisory Group has approved the following Minimal Risk Project.

Project title: Aotearoa NZ social work education: The influence of Global Standards.
Researchers: Prof M Connolly, D McNabb
Ethics ID: 1748887

The Project has been approved for the period: **02-Jun-2017 to 31-Dec-2017**.

It is your responsibility to ensure that all people associated with the Project are made aware of what has actually been approved.

Research projects are normally approved to 31 December of the year of approval. Projects may be renewed yearly for up to a total of five years upon receipt of a satisfactory annual report. If a project is to continue beyond five years a new application will normally need to be submitted.

Please note that the following conditions apply to your approval. Failure to abide by these conditions may result in suspension or discontinuation of approval and/or disciplinary action.

- (a) Limit of Approval: Approval is limited strictly to the research as submitted in your Project application.
- (b) Amendments to Project: Any subsequent variations or modifications you might wish to make to the Project must be notified formally to the Human Ethics Advisory Group for further consideration and approval before the revised Project can commence. If the Human Ethics Advisory Group considers that the proposed amendments are significant, you may be required to submit a new application for approval of the revised Project.
- (c) Incidents or adverse effects: Researchers must report immediately to the Advisory Group and the relevant Sub-Committee anything which might affect the ethical acceptance of the protocol including adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the Project. Failure to do so may result in suspension or cancellation of approval.
- (d) Monitoring: All projects are subject to monitoring at any time by the Human Research Ethics Committee.
- (e) Annual Report: Please be aware that the Human Research Ethics Committee requires that researchers submit an annual report on each of their projects at the end of the year, or at the conclusion of a project if it continues for less than this time. Failure to submit an annual report will mean that ethics approval will lapse.
- (f) Auditing: All projects may be subject to audit by members of the Sub-Committee.

Please quote the ethics registration number and the name of the Project in any future correspondence.

On behalf of the Ethics Committee I wish you well in your research.

Yours sincerely



Associate Professor Adam Bryant
Chair, School of Health Sciences
Human Ethics Advisory Group

Melbourne School of Health Sciences
The University of Melbourne, Alan Gilbert Building, 161 Barry Street Carlton Victoria 3053 Australia
T: +61 3 8344 4171 F: +61 3 8344 4188
W: www.healthsciences.unimelb.edu.au

Appendix 4: Research information sheets (leaders and educators)

Plain Language Statement

Department of Social Work



Project:

Aotearoa NZ social work education: The influence of Global Standards.

David McNabb (PhD student), Email: d.mcnabb@student.unimelb.edu.au,

Prof. Marie Connolly (Responsible Researcher), Email:

marie.connolly@unimelb.edu.au,

Tel: +61 3 9035 4513.

Introduction

You are invited to participate in the above project, which is being conducted by David McNabb (PhD student), Email: d.mcnabb@student.unimelb.edu.au, Prof. Marie Connolly (Responsible Researcher) of the Department of Social Work at The University of Melbourne. David is also a lecturer on the social work programme at Unitec.

Purpose of the research

This project explores the role of global and local standards in social work education in Aotearoa NZ (ANZ) especially the role of standards in democratising social work education, particularly through the reinforcement of decolonisation among other equity issues. This research has been approved by the University of Melbourne, Human Research Ethics Committee.

What will I be asked to do?

Should you agree to participate, you will be asked to contribute by participating in an interview, which will be recorded by the researcher. In the interview you will be asked questions in relation to your experience as a leader of social work education in your institution. You will be provided with the questions before the interview takes place.

How long is my participation expected to take?

We estimate that the time required for the interview will be approximately 90 minutes.

How will my confidentiality be protected?

We intend to protect your anonymity and the confidentiality of your responses to the fullest possible extent, subject to any legal requirements. The recording and transcript of your interview will not be attached to any of your identifying information and if your comments are reproduced in publications or presentations they will be attributable to a pseudonym. Your name and contact details will be kept in a password-protected computer file, separate from any data that you supply. The data and taped recordings will be kept securely in the School of Social Work for 5 years from the date of publication, and may be destroyed after this time.

Do I have to take part?

Participation is completely voluntary. Should you wish to withdraw at any stage, or to withdraw any unprocessed data you have supplied, you are free to do so without prejudice.

What happens after the project is finished?

The results of the research will form a core component of the student researcher's PhD thesis. It is possible that the results will be published in journal papers and presented at academic conferences. No identifying details will be disclosed in the published findings of this research or to any other party. A brief summary of the research findings will be made available to you, at your request. Please contact the researchers if you wish to have this provided.

Where can I get further information?

If you would like more information about the project, please contact the researchers; David McNabb (PhD student), Email:

d.mcnabb@student.unimelb.edu.au,

Prof. Marie Connolly (Responsible Researcher), Email:

marie.connolly@unimelb.edu.au

Tel: +61 3 9035 4513.

What if I have any concerns about the project?

This research project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of The University of Melbourne. If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this research project, which you do not wish to discuss with the research team, you should contact the Manager, Human Research Ethics, Research Ethics and Integrity, University of Melbourne, VIC 3010. Tel: +61 3 8344 2073 or Email: humanethics-complaints@unimelb.edu.au All complaints will be treated confidentially. In any correspondence please provide the name of the research team or the name or ethics ID number of the research project.

How do I agree to participate?

If you would like to participate in this project, please indicate that you have read and understood this information when your consent to the interview is discussed with you online by the researcher.

Plain Language Statement

Department of Social Work



Project:

Aotearoa NZ social work education: The influence of Global Standards.

David McNabb (PhD student), Email: d.mcnabb@student.unimelb.edu.au,

Prof. Marie Connolly (Responsible Researcher), Email:

marie.connolly@unimelb.edu.au,

Tel: +61 3 9035 4513.

Introduction

You are invited to participate in the above project, which is being conducted by David McNabb (PhD student), Email: d.mcnabb@student.unimelb.edu.au, Prof. Marie Connolly (Responsible Researcher) of the Department of Social Work at The University of Melbourne. David is also a lecturer on the social work programme at Unitec.

Purpose of the research

This project explores the role of global and local standards in social work education in Aotearoa NZ (ANZ) especially the role of standards in democratising social work education, particularly through the reinforcement of decolonisation among other equity issues. This research has been approved by the University of Melbourne, Human Research Ethics Committee.

What will I be asked to do?

Should you agree to participate, you will be asked to contribute by participating in a Focus Group interview, which will be recorded by the researcher. The Focus Group will include social work academics from your school. In the interview you will be asked questions in relation to your experience as a social work academic in your institution. You will be provided with the questions before the interview takes place.

How long is my participation expected to take?

We estimate that the time required for the interview will be approximately 60 minutes.

How will my confidentiality be protected?

We intend to protect your anonymity and the confidentiality of your responses to the fullest possible extent, subject to any legal requirements. You will be sharing information in the company of colleagues from your school. The recording and transcript of your interview will not be attached to any of your identifying information and if your comments are reproduced in publications or presentations they will be attributable to a pseudonym. Your name and contact details will be kept in a password-protected computer file, separate from any data that you supply. The data and taped recordings will be kept securely in the School of Social Work for 5 years from the date of publication, and may be destroyed after this time.

Do I have to take part?

Participation is completely voluntary. Should you wish to withdraw at any stage, or to withdraw any unprocessed data you have supplied, you are free to do so without prejudice.

What happens after the project is finished?

The results of the research will form a core component of the student researcher's PhD thesis. It is possible that the results will be published in journal papers and presented at academic conferences. No identifying details will be disclosed in the published findings of this research or to any other party. A brief summary of the research findings will be made available to you, at your request. Please contact the researchers if you wish to have this provided.

Where can I get further information?

If you would like more information about the project, please contact the researchers; David McNabb (PhD student), Email:

d.mcnabb@student.unimelb.edu.au,

Prof. Marie Connolly (Responsible Researcher), Email:

marie.connolly@unimelb.edu.au

Tel: +61 3 9035 4513.

What if I have any concerns about the project?

This research project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of The University of Melbourne. If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this research project, which you do not wish to discuss with the research team, you should contact the Manager, Human Research Ethics, Research Ethics and Integrity, University of Melbourne, VIC 3010. Tel: +61 3 8344 2073 or Email: humanethics-complaints@unimelb.edu.au All complaints will be treated confidentially. In any correspondence please provide the name of the research team or the name or ethics ID number of the research project.

How do I agree to participate?

If you would like to participate in this project, please indicate that you have read and understood this information when your consent to the interview is discussed with you online by the researcher.

Appendix 5: Research consent forms (leaders and educators)

CONSENT FORM
(Individual Participant)

THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF 6 YEARS

Aotearoa NZ social work education: The influence of Global Standards.

David McNabb, PhD Candidate, University of Melbourne

I have read the Participant Information Sheet and I have understood the nature of the research and why I have been selected. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

- I agree to take part in this research under the conditions set out in the information sheet.
- I understand that the interview will take up to 90 minutes of my time.
- I understand that the information from this interview will be used for the purpose of completing your PhD thesis, and possibly for future conference presentations, articles in academic journals or teaching purposes.
- I understand that participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw from participating or decline to answer questions at any time. I will not be able to withdraw any information once it has been provided.
- I agree to be part of an online interview using Skype or Zoom and that this will be video recorded.
- I understand that the video recording and the transcripts from the interview will be kept securely on the researcher's password protected computer.
- I understand that a third party who has signed a confidentiality agreement will transcribe the recordings.
- I understand that data will be kept for five years.

I wish to receive the summary of findings: Yes / No

If yes, please provide contact details for summary of information:

Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Because of the use of online video recording I can also grant my consent to this interview at the beginning of the interview where it will be recorded.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE HUMAN PARTICIPANTS
ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 2 June 2017, Ethics ID 1748887

CONSENT FORM
(Focus Group Participant)

THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF 6 YEARS

Aotearoa NZ social work education: The influence of Global Standards.

David McNabb, PhD Candidate, University of Melbourne

I have read the Participant Information Sheet and I have understood the nature of the research and why I have been selected. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

- I agree to take part in this research under the conditions set out in the information sheet.
- I understand that the Focus Group interview will take up to 60 minutes of my time.
- I understand that the information from this interview will be used for the purpose of completing your PhD thesis, and possibly for future conference presentations, articles in academic journals or teaching purposes.
- I understand that participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw from participating or decline to answer questions at any time. I will not be able to withdraw any information once it has been provided.
- I agree to be part of an online interview using Skype or Zoom and that this will be video recorded.
- I understand that the video recording and the transcripts from the interview will be kept securely on the researcher's password protected computer.
- I understand that a third party who has signed a confidentiality agreement will transcribe the recordings.
- I understand that data will be kept for five years.

I wish to receive the summary of findings: Yes / No

If yes, please provide contact details for summary of information:

Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Because of the use of online video recording I can also grant my consent to this interview at the beginning of the interview where it will be recorded.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 2 June 2017, Ethics ID 1748887

Appendix 6: Research questions (leaders and educators)

Individual and Focus Group Interview questions

Interview Schedule for the individual and focus group interviews.

1. Service user and student participation

- i. The Global Standards has an emphasis on service user participation – to what extent do you see this in your programme?
- ii. The Global Standards are also strong on student participation. How well do you think students have a voice and participate in the life of your school?
- iii. What are some of the advances you have made, or challenges you face?
- iv. Ideas for the future?

2. Student representativeness

- The Global Standards emphasise the importance of the student demographic matching the community they will go to serve and even the community in which the school is located. To what extent do you see this in your programme?
- What are some of the advances you have made, or challenges you face in this regard?
- Ideas for the future?

3. Indigenous rights and political action

- In the local SWRB standards indigenous rights and interests are more evident than in the Global Standards. How well do you think your school is advancing the rights of Tangata Whenua and the profession's commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and biculturalism?
- In the Global Standards political action has a strong focus and it is expected to be evident in activities across the school. How well do you think your school is demonstrating the profession's commitment to political action?
- What are some of the advances you have made, or challenges you face?
- Ideas for the future?

4. Gender and cultural equity

a. In the Global Standards there are strong expectations of gender equity in the student and staff cohorts, and as a theme in the whole programme.

1. Are you happy with the gender mix of students and staff?

b. In the Global Standards there are strong expectations of cultural equity in the student and staff cohorts, and as a theme in the whole programme.

2. How well does the cultural mix (Maori, Pacific, migrant, Pakeha) of students and staff reflect the community in which your school is located and compare to the community of service users?
 3. How well are democratising and decolonizing issues addressed in the curriculum and in the school generally?
5. Access and equity
- The Global Standards emphasise that the programme should be accessible to students. How accessible do you consider your programmes to be?
 - How do you think standards promote or hinder the equitable accessibility of social work programmes?
6. Quality social work education and broader issues of equity
- In the Global Standards broader issues that affect equity include resourcing of the school and its infrastructure, along with protections for adequate staffing. In your experience, how does this impact the delivery of quality social work education?
 - What other broader democratizing goals does your school aspire to? (E.g. supporting disabled people and addressing ableism?)
7. SWRB standards
1. What influence does the Global Standards and the local SWRB standards have on your school in assisting the expression of core social work values and principles?
 2. Reflecting on your most recent SWRB report, were issues of equity and/or democratising/decolonizing practices raised?
 3. If so, how were they helpful? If not, how could they have been raised to assist the development of your programme?

Any other comments you would like to make?

Appendix 7: Thesis publications incorporated in their final published form



Article



The relevance of Global Standards to social work education in Australasia

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Abstract

Underpinned by the Global Standards published for the promotion of quality social work education, and as a benchmark for social work education at national levels, a qualitative content analysis is conducted to explore the alignment of national standards of the Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia regulatory bodies with the Global Standards. A number of equity issues are identified: service users and student participation, student representativeness, indigenous rights and political action, gender and cultural equity, and equitable access. The implications for social work education internationally are considered, including a possibility of the role of the Global Standards in democratizing social work education.

Keywords

Aotearoa New Zealand, Australian, democratizing, global standards, indigenous rights, regulation, social work education

Introduction

The Global Standards for the Education and Training of the Social Work Profession (GS) was published in 2004 with the purpose of promoting quality social work education along with benchmark opportunities for national- or local-level social work education providers. The establishment of the GS (International Association of Schools of Social Work [IASSW] and International Federation of Social Workers [IFSW], 2004) was the outcome of the Global Minimum Qualifying Standards Committee jointly formed by the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) in 2000. Its purpose was to elucidate what social work represented at a global level (Sewpaul and Jones, 2005: 224). It occurred at a time when the global profession had begun holding joint international conferences (1996 Hong

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Kong, 2000 Montreal, 2004 Adelaide) and when the revised global social work definition was agreed to by the IASSW and IFSW in 2001 (Sewpaul and Jones, 2005: 218). In 2004 both bodies also approved the *Statement of Principles: Ethics in Social Work* policy (IFSW and IASSW, 2004). This evidenced a convergence of ideas around global social work and laid the foundation for subsequent initiatives such as the *Global Agenda* in 2012, which was also co-authored by the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW; IASSW et al., 2012).

How the GS influence social work education at both the international and local level is an important area for research. Indeed, various countries and regions have been subjected to analysis using the GS, for example, Japan and South Africa (Sakaguchi and Sewpaul, 2011), the Asia Pacific region (Noble, 2004), the North America and Caribbean region (Healy, 2004), and South Africa, England and Canada (Spolander et al., 2011). Themes emerged such as the tension between the importance of local and indigenous development of social work education standards and the value of global standards. There is an argument that regions of the world such as North America and the Caribbean that are still in the process of developing local and regional expressions of social work education are at risk of being stifled by the GS (Healy, 2004: 594). The socio-political context was highlighted as an important backdrop for social work education standards with the effect of a neoliberal discourse in England and Canada 'that individualizes and pathologizes social issues' (Spolander et al., 2011: 819). Research into the GS and multiculturalism has also been explored (Akintayo et al., 2016).

Further developing the knowledge base, in 2000 the IASSW established a Census Committee to work on the development of social work programmes globally. Research was undertaken in that year to capture data on schools which were members of IASSW. Subsequent to the GS being published in 2004, further research was undertaken to track developments in schools since the 2000 research and to incorporate aspects of the GS. Building on this earlier research, a survey was undertaken in 2010. It found a major growth in social work education programmes between 2000 and 2010, though the census was not a representative sample of all schools nor even of the subset of IASSW members. Gaps in meeting the GS included only half of the respondents reported requiring course content in social work history, values or ethics, and 20 per cent of the required courses were taught by non-social work educators. It was noted, however, that the expansion of social work programmes was indicative of social work's potential for the global promotion of social justice and development (Barretta-Herman et al., 2014).

As yet, to our knowledge, there has been no analysis of the influence of the GS in the Australasian context. In response to this gap, this research, which is part of a broader PhD study, looks at the ways in which the GS influence local standards in Australasian social work education. It reports on the findings of a qualitative, comparative document analysis to explore the alignment between the GS and local standards in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand (ANZ). It then considers the implications of this for Australasian systems of social work education. By way of context, prior to reporting on the study the article will briefly discuss the development of the GS, including the situation in Australia and ANZ prior to their introduction, and will provide a brief description of the GS and local standards.

Developing inclusive standards

Developing the GS proved to be no easy task. The purpose of standards is to positively influence practices within social work education, while being inclusive to local needs and interests. The Census Committee took care to address the range of opinion relating to social work education standards and emphasized a process that was as inclusive as possible. They noted in particular the importance of context, which can be highly influential but potentially in tension with

the notion of a single global framework. The GS attempted to avoid reductionist language and a simplistic competencies approach so as not to further fragment and de-professionalize social work. The notion of minimum standards was contentious because of its limiting potential, and in particular its potential to impact negatively on poorer programmes. Although some argued the need for more detailed prescription, the GS were generally seen to be prescriptive enough. The authors argued that their intent was to be aspirational (Sewpaul and Jones, 2005: 229), an intent that fits well with the notion of standards also influencing the democratization of practices over time.

While the authors attempted to mitigate the influence of Western hegemony on the development of the GS, there was nevertheless subsequent criticism of this influence in relation to China (Yip, 2004) and more generally about the impact of internationalizing trends within social work (Gray and Fook, 2004: 640).

Social work education pre-GS

Social work education in Australasia during the 20th century was influenced by the Western hegemony mentioned in the GS. As such, social work education in Australia and New Zealand was strongly influenced by countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States and social work education within those countries. While there have been similarities in development, there have also been significant differences as each country has responded to cultural contexts and political developments.

In Australia, social work has always been taught at university level. The Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) undertakes the approval of social work programmes and has done so by mutual agreement since the 1960s, with policies that are also regularly updated (AASW, 2012). The situation in ANZ is far more complex. For many years, there has been a mix of university, polytechnic, Wananga¹ and private training establishment-based social work programmes. A range of professional programme approval systems have also operated over time. Universities have always been approved by the New Zealand Vice Chancellors' Committee (NZVCC), while non-university programmes have been approved by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA). In 2003, statutory registration was introduced in New Zealand and now all social work programmes are subject to the recognition process of the Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB). There is no registration of social workers in Australia, although the AASW is currently campaigning for its introduction.

Schools of social work in both ANZ and Australia have high membership of IASSW, which provides another way in which they are influenced by the GS.

The 2004 GS

The GS consist of nine sets of standards: the school's core purpose or mission statement; programme objectives and outcomes; programme curricula including fieldwork; core curricula; professional staff; social work students; structure, administration, governance and resources; cultural diversity; and social work values and ethics. They are based on the international social work definition and also on the 13 core purposes of the social work profession that have been developed. It is likely that the Statement of Principles: Ethics in Social Work (IFSW and IASSW, 2004) was consulted in the deliberations of the Committee because it was published around the time the GS were established.

The GS were developed to express the purposes of the social work profession in social work education. Their overall goal is to promote quality social work education; one of their purposes is

to 'benchmark national standards against international standards' (Sewpaul and Jones, 2005: 224). The key question in this article is how the GS relate to the social work education standards in ANZ and Australia.

The 2015 ANZ standards

The SWRB (2015b) has established a policy that incorporates social work education standards – *The Process for Recognition/Re-recognition of Social Work Qualifications in NZ*. Policy related to programme recognition by the SWRB includes a set of social worker competencies at a beginning practitioner level, which all students should meet on completion of their degree. There is a graduate profile that programme providers are required to incorporate into specific learning outcomes in their programme. Finally, there is a set of programme standards that must be met in order to be recognized by the SWRB. The programme standards include six areas: governance, curriculum and fieldwork, student centredness, professional and stakeholder collaboration, resources and quality assurance. Other policy from the SWRB that applies to registered social workers and broadly across the profession includes the Code of Conduct (Social Workers Registration Board, 2016a).

The 2012 Australian standards

The key document is the Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS) (AASW, 2012), which has associated guidelines on the following areas: programme delivery, essential core curriculum content, field education programmes, and organizational arrangements and governance of social work programmes. The AASW Code of Ethics (AASW, 2010) and Practice Standards (AASW, 2013) are also referenced. Reviews of the standards are regularly undertaken with widespread consultation. Programme accreditation is required on a 5-yearly basis.

Methodology

The research seeks to understand how local standards in ANZ and Australia align with the GS. To explore this question, the study undertook a qualitative, content analysis of three sets of social work education standards: the GS, the ANZ SWRB standards and the Australian AASW standards. This document analysis fits within the broad approach of using secondary data as a well-established approach to research, particularly within social research (Smith, 2008). The analysis of documents forms a field of research in its own right and contributes to the development of knowledge. It is noted, however, that documents must be situated in their context and seen as socially constructed entities (Prior, 2003). Spolander et al. (2011) used a qualitative content analysis methodology in their comparative document analysis of national sets of social work education standards and the GS. They noted that this methodology was well suited to examining documents in the public domain and that it allowed for some latitude in going beyond the words within documents to the exploration of meaning, provided there was clarity about the inclusion and exclusion of criteria used. Utilizing a similar approach to Spolander et al. (2011), this study undertook a content analysis, drawing out common themes and exploring areas of similarity and difference, as well as exploring meaning within the documents.

The documents compared in the research are currently used by social work professional bodies and are thus already in the public domain. The first-level analysis of the documents involved careful reading, word by word, of the text to compare the use of language across the documents and

Table 1. Comparison of Australasian standards to the Global Standards.

Global standards	SWRB	AASW
International definition of social work	Medium	High
Core purposes of social work	High	High
1. Standards regarding the school's core purpose or mission statement: standard clearly articulated, reflects values and ethics, equity aspiration, service user rights	Medium	Medium/high
2. Standards regarding programme objectives and outcomes	High	High
3. Standards with regard to programme curricula including field education	High	High
4. Standards with regard to core curricula	High	High
5. Standards with regard to professional staff	Medium/high	Medium/high
6. Standards with regard to social work students	Medium/high	Medium/high
7. Standards with regard to structure, administration, governance and resources	Medium/high	Medium/high
8. Standards with regard to cultural and ethnic diversity and gender inclusiveness	High	High
9. Standards with regard to values and ethical codes of conduct of the social work profession	High	High

SWRB: Social Workers Registration Board; AASW: Australian Association of Social Workers.

the degree of emphasis within them. The level of match in their policy was assessed as being high, high/medium, medium, medium/low or low/nonexistent. There are nine standards within the GS as well as a preamble that incorporates both the international definition and the 13 core purposes of social work. These became 11 sections against which each country's set of standards were assessed for their level of alignment. Each section included several sub-categories. Where all the sub-categories aligned with the GS, then a 'high' grading was given. Where only one or two of these sub-categories did not align with the GS, then a 'medium/high' grading was given. A 'medium' grade was given where a more significant gap in alignment was assessed. There were no grades assessed below 'medium' (see Table 1).

The second-level analysis involved an examination of the text in the context of the meaning it conveyed. This was a reductive process where themes were identified within the data. An important part of this interpretative phase was the confirmation of the themes by returning to the data and further interrogating the links to ensure that the themes were well grounded in the data.

Findings

In the findings from the comparison of the Australasian standards with the GS, we noted that overall there was a strong alignment. Each section had a focus on the points where the level of alignment was weaker. Sections have been noted for ready identification in the GS and with the SWRB and the AASW standards. Table 1 summarizes the grades for each country in each of the 11 sections of the GS. The SWRB gained six 'high' grades, three 'medium/high' grades and two 'medium' grades. The AASW gained seven 'high' grades and four 'medium/high' grades.

Social work definition and core purposes

The international definition of social work is outlined at the beginning of the GS and with the SWRB scoring 'medium' and the AASW scoring 'high'. The definition was directly quoted by

AASW in its standards but was only obliquely referred to by the SWRB (2016a) in its Code of Conduct.

The 13 core purposes of social work are also outlined at the beginning of the GS as a further foundation piece for the standards that follow and both countries scored 'high'. The core purposes were well covered by the AASW because of their clear articulation of core social work principles at the beginning of their standards, which are directly linked to the global social work professional body, the IFSW. The SWRB was generally aligned to the core purposes through the programme recognition policy and its Code of Conduct, though comment is made later about the level of clear alignment with the tenth core purpose of engagement in social and political action.

Standard 1: Purposes or mission statement

Equity, rights and the participation of service users were fundamental to the GS and its expectation of the purpose or mission statement of schools, with the SWRB scoring medium and the AASW scoring medium/high. The GS were strong on the expectation that programmes as a whole reflect social work principles, equity in particular (GS 1.3). The SWRB was limited in its expectations of programmes in this regard and it minimally discussed equity within its standards. The SWRB only mentioned service users as a broad-level stakeholder in programme review (SWRB 4.1). The AASW was stronger in its articulation of broad social work principles that advocate equity, and although it was not well spelt out in its standards, it was stronger in its articulation of broad service user participation.

Standard 2: Programme objectives

Both bodies scored 'high'. The only component of this standard that was not well evidenced by the SWRB relates to the coherence of the instructional methods with the cognitive and affective development of social work students (GS 2.3). However, instructional methods were usually covered by the programme accreditation process carried out by the tertiary education governance bodies, either NZQA or NZVCC, which was applied to any type of degree programme at a tertiary institution in ANZ. This was also covered by the AASW.

Standard 3: Curricula (fieldwork)

Both bodies scored 'high'. The GS were generally well evidenced by each country. The only area that was weaker for the SWRB again related to the coherence of the methods of instruction with 'the school's programme objectives, its expected outcomes and its mission statement' (GS 3.1).

Standard 4: Core curricula

Both bodies scored 'high'. The GS were well evidenced by each country. The AASW has a more prescriptive curriculum than the SWRB, which may influence the coverage of the GS. The GS themselves, however, focused on broad areas of knowledge and learning which echoed the more broadly descriptive nature of the SWRB policy (Beddoe, 2014: 22).

Standard 5: Professional staff

Both bodies scored 'medium/high'. The GS expected an adequate provision of professional staff in number and range of expertise, with appropriate qualifications (GS 5.1). The SWRB required an institutional workload policy and 'sufficient staff resources to generate and support a research

active social work staff group' (SWRB 5.10 and 5.11), whereas the AASW in its resources and staffing standard (5.3) stated that its programmes 'must be adequately resourced if the required educational outcomes are to be achieved'. It then went on to specify that a minimum staffing group of five full-time equivalent social work staff was required. It also noted that a quality field education programme required adequate resources (AASW, 2012: 22).

The GS, however, required a statement of equity-based policies for staffing with considerations of gender, ethnicity, race and other forms of diversity (GS 5.4). Neither country had an explicit policy on this, though there could be an argument for a broader alignment. The SWRB required the mission of the social work unit to reflect the values and ethical principles of social work (SWRB 1.4). The AASW required that 'both content and delivery in social work education will demonstrate the profession's core values' (AASW 2) and that these core values 'must be practised in social work education' (AASW 3) (AASW, 2012: 9–10). It would be helpful to know whether these expectations are ever assessed by each regulator with a focus on equity policies. It is possible that the institutions in which the programmes sit may have staffing equity policies that align with this standard.

Standard 6: Students

Both bodies scored 'medium/high'. The one gap in the evidencing of this standard related to the student cohort being representative of the community within which the programme operates, with due recognition to minority groups (GS 6.2). As with standard 5, this is partly covered for both countries by general adherence to social work values and ethics, but we suggest it is unlikely to be assessed unless it is an explicit requirement. It is also possible that the institutions in which the programmes sit may have student equity policies that align with this standard.

Standard 7: Structure, administration, governance and resources

Both bodies scored 'medium/high'. The general theme of resourcing was raised here. Both countries were clear about having a social work academic leading the school (GS 7.1). Adequate budgetary allocation (GS 7.5) was covered by both countries. Having adequate administrative staff (GS 7.8) was not directly addressed by the SWRB, though could be subsumed under their general budgetary allocation standard. Gender equity and representation of the community in relation to staffing were a repeated focus (GS 7.11–12) and, as noted previously, this was not specifically addressed by either the SWRB or the AASW, though they both referred to working in accordance with core social work values and ethics.

Standard 8: Cultural and ethnic diversity and gender inclusiveness

The GS was well evidenced by both countries.

Standard 9: Values and ethical conduct

The GS was well evidenced by both countries.

Discussion

It is clear from the analysis of the GS that they emphasize adherence to core social work values and reinforce the importance of equity in all aspects of service delivery. Rights and the participation of

service users is a fundamental thrust, and the document analysis also identified a number of areas where the democratization of equity-related issues could add value to both the development and implementation of the GS and local standards. These areas include the following: service user and student participation, student representativeness, indigenous rights and political action, gender and cultural equity, access and equity, and quality social work education and broader issues of equity.

The research suggests that promoting quality social work education through the development of standards presents important opportunities to influence the democratization of social work education. To act in these democracy-sustaining ways (Shapiro, 2011) is very consistent with the broader values of social work, captured in the global definition of social work and its emphasis on empowerment, liberation and the promotion of social change.² As policies and standards are developed and redesigned, we have the ability to 'promote the democratization of power relations as they are reproduced into the future' (Shapiro, 2011: 273). Thus democratizing power dimensions through the GS creates the potential to shift attitudes within social work education over time, raising issues and influencing norms.

Service user and student participation

Service user participation is reinforced in the GS and is expected in all facets of the programme (GS 1.4) and across the range of service user linkages with the school (GS 7.15). Attention to service user participation extends to the school's involvement with the regulatory social work bodies (GS 9.6) and is often extended to carer participation. As we see from the analysis, the AASW is more specific about service user participation than the SWRB, although neither articulate the focus on service users particularly well. Student involvement in the programme is limited in both the AASW and SWRB standards. It is notable that students are not specifically included in governance of the programme as 'consumers', whereas service users or public consumers are specifically included. This is a discrepancy with ANZ and Australian standards both specifying student participation in programme governance.

Internationally, the push for service user participation is strong. For example, the United Kingdom has a long tradition of service user participation in their social work sector and it features in one of their recent social work education policies which even includes separate funding to support service user and carer participation in programmes (The College of Social Work, 2012: 9). Following the UK lead, we suggest that both Australia and ANZ might benefit from a greater focus on service user and student participation in local standards, across all aspects of the social work programme, and in so doing reinforce democratic practices within schools. Of course, it may be that there is already a greater emphasis on these issues within programmes than is necessarily observable in the standards. This, however, would require further research to determine.

As the GS are reviewed, the need for a clearer role for students as primary consumers of social work programmes, alongside the participation expected of public service users and carers, might also have a democratizing effect.

Student representativeness

The GS expect the student cohort to represent the locality of the institution and the community where graduates will practice (GS 6.2). This particular example of the equity principle goes beyond just applying a nondiscrimination approach and begins to address likely structural inequality due to higher proportions of students from privileged backgrounds accessing social work education that does not reflect the demographic of public service users. This expectation is not clear within either the SWRB or AASW policies. It is the type of policy that we might expect social work education to pursue as it is based on its own principle of equity.

To address inequity requires targeted resources and a broad-based workforce plan. This is because the nature of inequity usually means the target groups have limited independent resources to access education and support career development. In some programmes, the student demographic is well matched to its locality. Perhaps inevitably, this results in student cohorts who need higher academic, financial and pastoral support than students from more advantaged backgrounds. Wider tertiary education policy has focused on ways of improving outcomes for traditionally disadvantaged groups, and the inclusion of a specific student equity policy by the SWRB and AASW would focus further attention on developing a more appropriately diverse social work workforce and be a concrete demonstration of equity, a core social work value.

Indigenous rights and political action

The SWRB and AASW feature indigenous rights and interests as a central feature of their policies. Conversely, there is limited coverage of indigenous rights and interests in the GS. The importance of an indigenous focus at the local level has been reinforced in earlier research (Spolander et al., 2011). Global social work indigenous policy has been expanded in the recently revised global social work definition (IFSW and IASSW, 2014), which included indigenous knowledge as foundational, something that was previously absent in the definition. The commentary on the definition devotes a whole section to the indigenous dimension and its importance globally. This includes noting the declaration of the rights of indigenous people (United Nations, 2008) and the subsequent social justice imperative for social work. Based on the analysis of the sets of standards, this is one area of greater leadership at the local level. Social work from an international perspective supports indigenous self-determination and recognizes this in the development of knowledge: 'social work knowledges will be co-created and informed by Indigenous peoples' (IFSW and IASSW, 2014). It is notable that the IFSW has also instituted a membership policy to facilitate ANZ having joint representation from both Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW) and the indigenous representative body, the Tangata Whenua Social Workers Association.³

In ANZ the social work profession has grappled with indigenous rights and colonization since the early 1980s, including having a Standing Committee on Racism. In 1992, the ANZASW constitution was revised to include a commitment to undertake social work in accordance with the Treaty of Waitangi (Nash, 2001: 41), the founding document of Aotearoa. In this document Maori were recognized as first people with subsequent rights. The notion of partnership was expressed within ANZASW by sharing governance between Maori and non-Maori (McNabb, 2014: 65). In 1986 the NZ Council for Education and Training in the Social Services (NZCETSS) was established. It had a structure of half Maori and half non-Maori membership with a strong commitment to social justice.

Building on this foundation, the SWRB established a consultation process to further develop its policy concerning the standard of competence to practice social work with Maori, which also relates to the graduate attribute of being able to work in a bicultural context and acknowledge the centrality of the Treaty. The draft policy, named Kaitiakitanga, was developed for this consultation process which prioritized engagement with Maori (SWRB, 2015a). This led to the recent launch of the revised standard on competence to work with Maori (SWRB, 2016b). Given this history, it is perhaps not surprising that ANZ places a strong emphasis on indigenous rights and political action.

In Australia, the ASWEAS standards of 2012 include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing as one of four essential core curriculum content areas. This has been developed further in a recent report that is supported by groups within the social work profession, The Getting it Right Teaching and Learning Framework, which 'is an evidence-informed road map

for the development and delivery of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing in Australian social work curricula' (Zubrzycki et al., 2014: 5). The emphasis on indigenous self-determination is therefore also strong in the Australian social work standards, although again how this emerges in practice in both ANZ and Australia would benefit from further research.

As the GS are reviewed, there are a number of areas where they could extend their democratizing influence specifically in the context of indigenous rights and indeed draw upon these strengths in the Australasian local standards. This would avoid the risk identified in earlier research that regional expressions might be stifled by stronger alignment with the GS (Healy, 2004). Other emerging areas that are important to consider feature in the global social work definition and commentary, including environmental justice and sustainability and the place of religion (IFSW and IASSW, 2014).

The GS tenth core purpose is to 'engage in social and political action' (Sewpaul and Jones, 2005: 219). This aligns with AASW policy through its broader range of social work profession policies that emphasize the ethical base of the profession that underpins such action. While the SWRB's graduate profile addresses the imperative to engage in social change, it does not extend to the more direct activism within the notion of 'social and political action'. This feature has been addressed by some commentators who are concerned that social work activism has been dampened by the effects of regulation and by the direction of professional associations generally (O'Brien, 2013). Better alignment of the GS with social action would require that both the SWRB and the AASW be more explicit about programmes evidencing engagement in social and political action within the curriculum and in wider practice.

Gender and cultural equity

The GS have strong expectations to see the principle of equity demonstrated through each social work programme and school (GS 1.3). Gender and cultural equity are expected in the cohort of both students and faculty. Neither Australia nor ANZ has an explicit policy on this, though they both talk about broad ways of demonstrating social work values and principles, which could arguably include equity.

A gender equity policy is expected – this is implicit within Australasia and is a significant aspiration given the predominance of women social workers and service users. The issue, however, is more likely to be the low proportion of women in governance and the wider equity issues such as pay parity for women dominated professions such as social work, nursing and teaching (Ross, 2014). Pay parity has, in fact, become a political campaign in ANZ and Australia. The staffing and governance personnel should reflect the diversities of the population it serves – a timely challenge for programmes in Australasia where women and indigenous peoples are disproportionately represented as service users, but are not proportionately represented in either the student cohort or the governance or staffing of programmes (Zubrzycki et al., 2014). To reflect the GS, the SWRB and AASW, in collaboration with other social work bodies, would need to develop specific policies on equity in relation to students, staff and the governance of programmes.

Access and equity

'Instructional methods' or teaching practice features in the GS where instructional methods are expected to match student learning needs (GS 2.3) and the school's programme objectives (GS 3.1). They are also expected to match indigenous or locally specific social work education and practice from the traditions and cultures of different ethnic groups and societies (GS 3.4). The AASW standards comment on their social work education philosophy and principles (A 4.3) and

on how education and a commitment to social work principles should align (A 3). This is a helpful section that is not replicated by the SWRB and could usefully be considered for future review. The GS state the expectation: 'ensuring that the quality of the educational programme is consistent with whatever the mode of delivery, including distance, mixed-mode, decentralized and/or internet-based teaching' (GS 6.4). This suggests that the technology and other pedagogical dimensions of the programme should promote quality education through greater access. Further consideration of issues relating to equitable access is important as the wider tertiary education sector is influenced by a dynamic period of technological and pedagogical change.

Quality social work education and broader issues of equity

In supporting quality social work education, the GS require that programmes are adequately resourced, in terms of staffing, budget and other infrastructure resources to run the programme. While the GS' requirement is covered by both countries, adequate resourcing of programmes is a major issue that affects a range of educational institutions in this post global financial crisis context. In ANZ and Australia, social work education is funded by the government at a lower level than equivalent professional programmes such as nursing and teaching. This leaves social work structurally under-resourced and constitutes a type of public neglect of the profession which spills over into poor workforce planning and limited social work research (Beddoe, 2014: 24–25).

The GS also require an adequate administrative staff (GS 7.8), which is pertinent where funding cuts have been made to administrative staffing as this tends to put pressure on academic staff. This requirement is not directly addressed by the SWRB, though could be subsumed under the general budgetary allocation standard. It is nevertheless an important component of quality social work education and is worth highlighting, particularly in an environment of shrinking resources. The SWRB and AASW could be clearer about their policy regarding the importance of having adequate administrative staffing, alongside general resourcing requirements, for sustainable social work programmes.

Both Australia and ANZ align with the GS' expectation of a minimum Master's level qualification for teaching at the undergraduate level. Within university settings, a PhD is the expected qualification for an academic position, a tension when schools in Australasia are keen to employ indigenous staff (Beddoe, 2014: 25). Staff most at risk of this in ANZ are Maori and Pasifika peoples due to their general lower uptake of advanced qualifications. However, these are the very staff most sought after to teach core Maori and Pasifika knowledge and practice. Similar tensions exist in Australia where there is a significant demand for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment within teaching institutions (Zubrzycki et al., 2014). To achieve an adequate number and quality of academic staff requires a workforce policy that regulators could support as a cross-sector imperative for the health of the academy and the wider social work profession.

The SWRB and AASW could better incorporate the requirement of the GS to reflect social work values in the workplace of the programme, including demonstrating participatory decision-making, a cooperative work environment and the accountability for management of the unit. In any review of the GS, it would be useful to incorporate recent global social work policy such as *Effective and Ethical Working Environments for Social Work* (Agius and Jones, 2012) to support workplace practices being consistent with social work values.

Conclusion

The GS play an important role, alongside other international social work instruments, in promoting quality social work education at the local level. The analysis clearly indicates that the GS are strong on issues of equity, participation and rights and that these areas represent a key focus of influence.

In drawing upon elements of Shapiro's (2011) democratic theory, we consider that the GS have an important role in democratizing social work education through the reinforcement of equity issues. The strong focus on service user participation is a key area that local standards in Australasia could better reinforce and in so doing more strongly influence practice at the local level. Acting in democracy-sustaining ways does not only work in one direction. The leadership illustrated in local standards, particularly in the area of indigenous rights, is an important area for development in the GS. This represents an area of rich potential as local and global standards engage with these ideas and reinforce each other, thus shifting attitudes and responses over time. The comparative document analysis reported here raises a number of issues that will be important to the ongoing development and review of global and local standards. In the end, however, it is the application of standards in practice that will influence the experience of social work education and its development across international settings.

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Notes

1. Maori tertiary education institutions.
2. See the IFSW definition of social work: <http://ifsw.org/get-involved/global-definition-of-social-work/>
3. Maori and Tangata Whenua are terms for the indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand.

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Democratising and decolonising social work education: Opportunities for leadership

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ABSTRACT

Regulatory standards informing social work education reinforce the importance of inclusive practices and the promotion of human rights. This article considers the ways in which social work values of equity and self-determination can be operationalised in academic social work programmes. It argues that democratising and decolonising practices have the greatest potential to change the nature of social work education in ways that support self-determination and the promotion of equity.

INTRODUCTION

Issues of equity and the development of inclusive processes rest at the heart of social work. Regulatory frameworks across the world reinforce the commitment of social work to education that is based on social work values and principles, including giving effect to self-determination and promoting equity. Recent research has identified the importance of democratising and decolonising practices within the discipline's standards of practice in social work education. Through an analysis of the *Global Standards for the Training and Education of the Social Work Profession* (hereafter Global Standards) (IASSW & IFSW, 2004) and local standards across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand, McNabb and Connolly (2017) found the Global Standards to be strong on issues of equity, participation and rights, and that these areas represent a key focus of global influence and leadership. In drawing upon elements of Shapiro's (2011) democratic theory, the study found that the Global Standards have an important role in democratising social work education through the reinforcement of equity issues. The strong focus on service-user participation within the Global Standards was found to be a key area that local standards in Australasia could better reinforce and, in so doing, more strongly influence practice at the local level. Interestingly, by comparison the study found that the local standards demonstrated leadership in the furtherance of Indigenous rights and concerns, something that the Global Standards might note and better incorporate in a future review. This does perhaps illustrate the locally specific nature of expressions of self-determination and the imperatives this presents at the country level. The author suggests that this mix of global and local leadership in the reinforcement of democratising and decolonising ideas would more fully align and reflect the social work profession's fundamental principles and values.

Whilst standards undoubtedly aspire to reinforce the values of social work, there has been limited research globally on how the commitment to democratisation, decolonisation and addressing equity issues has been implemented within social work education, including if, and how, it might influence future practice. This raises questions for social work educators in operationalising this commitment with respect to programmatic delivery. In this short article I argue that leaders in social work education are bound by an ethical commitment, as all social workers are, to find a way to operationalise social work values in the delivery of their academic programmes (Webster, McNabb, & Darroch, 2015, p. 45).

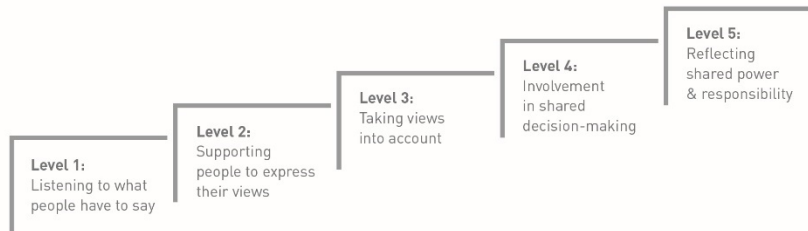
Democratising Practices in Social Work Education

Service user participation is an integral part of the Global Standards and should be evidenced in all dimensions of the programme, and across the points where service users may engage with a school. Service users are those people who are consumers of public social work services. Their participation should also be evidenced in the school's involvement with the regulatory social work bodies and may also include carer participation.

According to Shapiro (2011), principles of participation are an important part of an effective civil society. This involves the maximisation of stakeholder participation in collective life and matters that concern them, thus guarding against the domination of single interests. Drawing upon these ideas from a programme-delivery perspective invites opportunities for greater service user participation in social work education programmes. Involving service users in the classroom is, of course, not a new idea and when they share

their experiences in this way it can be powerful for student learning. Student experience of being public service users can also be privileged in the classroom. This type of service-user involvement, however, does not necessarily engage them in higher levels of participation, for example, co-designing social work education from a service user perspective, or having a real say in what is taught and how it is taught.

Figure 1: Levels of citizen participation (Shier, 2001)



Shier (2001) has developed a useful five-level model of participation, and although it was created to enhance children's involvement in decision-making, it can also be usefully adapted to other areas of citizen participation. Adapting this to service user involvement in social work education, at the very basic level of participation, service users would be listened to (see Figure 1). This is followed by service users being supported to express their views – the sharing of experience in the classroom could be seen as an example of this level of participation. The third level of participation is where service users' views are taken into account, for example, educators might decide to incorporate service user perspectives into course content. Levels four and five arguably reflect more meaningful participation where service users have a real say in decision-making, and involvement in power sharing. In Aotearoa New Zealand the Social Workers Registration Board standards and its expectation of "Collaboration in programme development and review" (Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB), 2016, 5.1, p. 7) suggests a level of active participation at levels four and five. How to engage service user representation in these higher levels of involvement in decision-making and power-sharing is something that academic programmes need to grapple with if they wish to move beyond simpler levels of service user involvement. In the local standards (in Aotearoa New Zealand) service users are specifically mentioned as an essential party as collaborators "in programme development and review" (SWRB, 2016, 5.1, p. 7), as important to the programme's stakeholder management plan and important attendees of regular meetings with stakeholders "to ensure that stakeholders' views are sought and considered" (2016, 5.2p. 7). This specificity about service user involvement does not limit further engagement, but positions regulatory expectations at a minimal level, arguably located at the lower levels of participation in Shier's model.

The UK approach, which has a tradition of user participation in social work, reinforces the importance of expecting higher-level service user involvement, and importantly providing the funding required to support it. This is noted in social work education policy where

separate funding is required to support service user and carer participation in programmes (The College of Social Work, 2012, p. 9). Leadership in the democratisation of social work academic programmes would see similar reinforcers of service user participation rights.

In addition to issues of democratisation, decolonising practices have also been an important feature of social work, particularly in countries such as Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia.

Decolonising Practices in Social Work Education

The global movement for decolonisation has found its formal expression in the United Nations (UN) decolonisation programme and in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) adopted in 2007 (Tūhiwai Smith, 2012). Decolonisation is the process of a colonised people releasing themselves from collective oppression and asserting their right to self-determination. Although the Global Standards do not have a specific focus on Indigenous rights and interests, broader global social work Indigenous policy has been expanded in the recently revised global social work definition (IFSW & IASSW, 2014) which included Indigenous knowledge as foundational, something that was previously absent in the definition. Social work from an international perspective supports Indigenous self-determination, and recognises this in the development of knowledge: “social work knowledges will be co-created and informed by Indigenous peoples” (IFSW & IASSW, 2014). It is pleasing to note that the International Federation of Social Work (IFSW) has supported Indigenous representation through a membership policy where Aotearoa New Zealand has joint representation from both the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW) and from the Tangata Whenua Social Workers Association, the Indigenous representative body.

Colonised people have long fought colonisation and tokenistic participation and thinking. In Aotearoa New Zealand the social work profession has grappled with Indigenous rights and colonisation, including having a Standing Committee on Racism in the 1980s. The ANZASW constitution was revised in 1992 to include a commitment to undertake social work in accordance with the Treaty of Waitangi, the founding document of Aotearoa New Zealand (Nash, 2001b, p. 41). In this document, Māori were recognised as first peoples, with subsequent rights. The notion of partnership was expressed within ANZASW by sharing governance between Māori and non-Māori beginning in the 1990s (McNabb, 2014, p. 65). In 1986 the NZ Council for Education and Training in the Social Services (NZCETSS) was established to govern social work education programmes. It had a structure of half Māori and half non-Māori membership with a strong commitment to social justice (Nash, 2001a).

In Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia, the importance of decolonising practices in social work has been reinforced in the social work education standards (McNabb & Connolly, in press). The SWRB in Aotearoa New Zealand established a consultation process to further develop its policy concerning the standard of competence to practise social work with Māori which also relates to the graduate attribute to be able to work in a bicultural context and acknowledge the centrality of the Treaty. The draft policy named “Kaitiakitanga” was developed for this consultation process which prioritised engagement with Māori (SWRB, 2015) and led to a revised set of competency standards (SWRB, 2016). In Australia, the

social work education standards include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing as one of four essential core curriculum content areas (Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW), 2012). This has been further developed with the publication of the teaching and learning framework *Getting it Right: Creating Partnerships for Change* which “is an evidence-informed road map for the development and delivery of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing in Australian social work curricula” (Zubrzycki et al., 2014, p. 5).

Introducing decolonising expectations in social work standards is, however, not quite the same as operationalising them in practice. Internationally, efforts have been made to operationalise a decolonising agenda in social work education introducing formal policies that have affirmed the link between the goal of indigenisation and fundamental social work values and principles (Morelli, Mataira, & Kaulukukui, 2013). This decolonising agenda integrated Indigenous cultural values in all aspects of academic activities within and beyond teaching within an academic programme. It saw, for example, the hosting of a global Indigenous-focused conference and the launch of an Indigenous-themed journal. Always privileging Indigenous voices, they targeted the recruitment and retention of Indigenous students and faculty; they taught Indigenous history and colonisation, Indigenous cultural competence, and they ensured a place for all students and staff to share their cultural stories. These activities, embraced within an integrated decolonising agenda and enduring over several years, provide an important illustration of leadership in the decolonising of social work education.

The extent to which decolonising practices are operationalised in Aotearoa New Zealand social work education is an important area of research. There are, however, two social work programmes based in Wānanga (Māori tertiary education providers) which demonstrate the strongest commitment to programme indigenisation. These are exciting developments that could also provide insight into the ways in which mainstream programmes might more strongly indigenise academic programmes.

CONCLUSION

This article has focused attention on the drivers for change in democratising and decolonising practices in social work education. Both are well grounded in social work values and principles and are reflected, in various degrees, across global and local social work education standards. While standards of social work education clearly do incorporate democratising and decolonising expectations, it could be argued that the regulatory bodies could nevertheless be more directive, providing a stronger driver for change.

Leaders in social work education are in a key position to advance democratising and decolonising agendas within academic programmes and at a collective level. It has been argued here that processes of meaningful service user participation are an important part of a democratising agenda. Although not touched on in this brief article, it has been noted in a fuller analysis, the ways in which students are essential stakeholders in social work education (McNabb & Connolly, 2017). Applying Shier’s model (see Figure 1) could be a useful means of testing the nature and extent of student and other service user participation within social work programmes.

With respect to decolonising practices, Indigenous social work educators have taken leadership in indigenising programmes but require strong support from non-Indigenous colleagues. There is, therefore, an important role for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators to support purposeful decolonising agendas. The Hawaiian experience described earlier (Morelli, Mataira, & Kaulukukui, 2013), is a good example of an attempt to develop an integrated set of activities that privilege Indigenous voices and experiences.

In many respects, leadership in social work education requires that we move beyond expectations of practice that are found in regulatory frameworks which are, by necessity, minimal in nature, toward a full integration of decolonising and democratising practices. It is these practices that have the greatest potential to change the nature of social work education in ways that support self-determination and the promotion of equity.

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Pursuing Equity in Social Work Education: Democratising Practices in Aotearoa New Zealand


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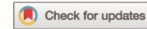
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Pursuing Equity in Social Work Education: Democratising Practices in Aotearoa New Zealand

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ABSTRACT

Issues of equity, such as service user and student participation, are reinforced in global and national standards of social work education, along with themes of Indigeneity, culture, accessibility, gender, and sexuality. Although standards influence and guide practices in social work education the range and degree to which democratising practices are operationalised at the local level depends upon the actual program delivery within higher education. Semistructured interviews were undertaken with social work education leaders in Aotearoa New Zealand to explore how democratising practices were demonstrated within their programs. Leaders of social work education have a vital role to play in the operationalising of democratising practices within social work programs. Leadership was identified as key to supporting student representation and diversity, recruiting and sustaining a diverse workforce, advancing expressions of activism, and working through internal and external challenges that are paramount to leading an equity-focused social work program.

IMPLICATIONS

- The pursuit of equity is a fundamental professional value in social work education programs that is achieved through democratising practices.
- Leaders have a key role in operationalising this equity focus, which can be reinforced through standards and regulatory frameworks.
- An equity-focused program is demonstrated through supporting student representation and diversity, developing a curriculum and a pedagogy that advances equity, and recruiting and sustaining a diverse workforce.


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In educating for the profession, social work programs have an important role to play in advancing goals of equity, social justice, and human rights. These goals are now enshrined in the global definition of social work (IFSW & IASSW, 2014), and as such, represent the bedrock of social work education standards. Democratising principles are inherent within this equity focus of social work. Shapiro (2011) has emphasised that democracy is the just basis for human relations and that the practices we engage in should “promote the democratisation of power relations as they are reproduced into the future” (Shapiro, 2011, p. 273). Democratising practices within social work education are those practices that demonstrate the profession’s commitment to equity and social justice and their advancement.

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Colonisation is a specific type of injustice of particular concern to Aotearoa New Zealand (hereafter Aotearoa), as it is in Australia and other colonised nations. The independence of Māori was established in 1835 through He Whakaputanga, the Declaration of Independence, which had been signed by a number of Northern chiefs and was recognised by Britain at the time (Orange, 2015). In Aotearoa, Māori signed the Treaty of Waitangi with the British in 1840, which aspired to an equitable partnership. This nevertheless soon became a state of oppression as Māori were dispossessed of their land and the destructive elements of colonisation devastated Indigenous livelihood and wellbeing (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012). Since the signing of the Treaty, there have been many claims by Māori for redress (Waitangi Tribunal, 2019). A commitment to honour the Treaty and its principles has become an important aspect of the New Zealand government's response to Treaty claims (Waitangi Tribunal, 2019). This commitment to decolonisation and the principles that underpin the government's approach has also critically influenced the social work profession's equity agenda in Aotearoa. In this way decolonisation is a major component of the wider democratisation agenda of Aotearoa, which has critically influenced the direction of social work education (Eketone & Walker, 2015).

To assist understanding, and before reporting on the study, a brief discussion of the context of social work education in Aotearoa is provided. Social work in Aotearoa developed predominantly out of the British model, unsurprisingly given the British colonial history. In 1949 the first social work program was established (Nash, 2001). While globally social work education is generally provided at the university level, an important factor influencing social work education in Aotearoa is that programs operate across the tertiary educational sector, in polytechnics, Wānanga (Māori tertiary education institutions), private training establishments as well as in universities. While monitored by different entities, universities are controlled by the Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP) for NZ Universities whereas non-university providers come within the purview of the NZ Qualifications Authority (NZQA), all are nevertheless expected to meet the standards and review processes established through the statutory registration of social work, which was introduced into law in 2003.

The Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB) is the government appointed body that oversees the legislation. It has instituted standards for social work education and a five yearly review process whereby social work programs gain formal recognition, which allows graduates to meet the qualification requirement for registration. One of the key requirements of the standards is for programs to demonstrate a commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Māori language version of The Treaty of Waitangi) and for graduates to be competent to work with Māori. This is referenced in Programme Recognition Standard 2.4, "The curriculum will include relevant Indigenous practice models and be cognisant of the articles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in social service provision" (Social Workers Registration Board, 2018, p. 4). The professionalisation of social work in Aotearoa, including its expression within education, has been a contested development. The range of influences has included the historic Western roots and subsequent Indigenisation, a strong neoliberal and conservative political context including government ministerial critique, alongside the profession's own commitment to human rights and social justice (Beddoe, 2018).

This article reports the third strand of an integrated three-part study that investigates democratising and decolonising practices in social work education in Aotearoa. The first

wave of the study involved a document analysis that explored the relevance of global standards (GS) (IASSW & IFSW, 2004) and local standards of social work education in Australasia. This revealed that democratising and decolonising themes were evident within social work education (McNabb & Connolly, 2019). The study confirmed that the GS are strong on issues of equity, participation, and rights, and therefore their key role in reinforcing these elements in social work education. However, while standards clearly provide direction in this regard, ultimately it is the role of programs to reinforce these in practice. This was explored in the second wave of the study in which focus groups and interviews were undertaken with social work educators to explore how democratising and decolonising practices were given effect within programs. The study identified the importance of understanding, integrating, and demonstrating the principles of the Treaty and *Kaupapa Māori* (Māori approach) in Aotearoa social work education (McNabb, 2019c).

Equity-Related Issues in Social Work Education

A number of themes emerge from the literature relating to advancing equity issues in social work education. In particular, these span four main areas of equity in relation to: students, curriculum, the academic workforce, and the broader regulatory environment.

It could be argued that concerns relating to equity begin at the point of selection of students. Writers have noted that in Aotearoa the quest to meet “fit and proper” professional standards of the SWRB creates a risk that people from diverse backgrounds may be excluded from entering programs especially given the higher incidence of criminal convictions among minority populations, including Māori (Apaitia-Vague, Pitt, & Younger, 2011; Hughes, McNabb, Ashley, McKechnie, & Gremillion, 2016). This is echoed in Australia (Young, Tilbury, & Hemy, 2019), and in the UK (Sin & Fong, 2009). Once selected students have reported discrimination within the programs, including racism (Woodley, 2013) homophobia and heterosexism (Chinell, 2011), sexism (Yates & Rai, 2019) and ableism (Charles, Holley, & Kondrat, 2017).

In Aotearoa teaching the Treaty and bicultural practice is a fundamental component of the curriculum (Eketone & Walker, 2015) including the use of Māori approaches to teaching (Tsuruda & Shepherd, 2016) but there has been mixed success in translating bicultural theory into practice in the field (Walker, 2012). A major research project in Australia focused on the Indigenisation of social work education resulted in the Getting it Right Framework (Zubrzycki et al., 2014). This significantly influenced the development of an Indigenous themed framework for Aotearoa (McNabb, 2019a). Similar Indigenisation projects have been undertaken internationally (Gray, Coates, Yellow Bird, & Hetherington, 2016).

The theme of equity within the social work academic workforce has been highlighted with an Indigenous themed curriculum requiring staff who have appropriate knowledge and pedagogical competence (McNabb, 2019b; Zubrzycki et al., 2014) and can more broadly demonstrate democratising and decolonising practices. Relatedly, Beddoe (2018) noted a growth in the number of Māori and Pacific academics in Aotearoa but also the higher demand for their knowledge and its associated partnership expectations means the need remains unmet.

Finally, the pursuit of equity within social work education has been found to have a mixed influence on programs by the broader regulatory environment (McNabb & Connolly, 2019) and while there is some hope of progress for academic staffing and other improvements, experience suggests this is fragile (Beddoe, 2018). Indeed, Hunt, Staniforth, and Beddoe (2019) warned that social work regulation is at risk of thwarting the social justice commitment of the profession. Leaders of social work education in Aotearoa support this suggesting that the regulatory system can undermine the ability to create and maintain a diverse workforce, however it can also be supportive and serve as an ally when challenging their institutions (McNabb, 2019a). The debate in Australia relating to statutory regulation for social work has been underway for some time and remains contested within the profession (McCurdy, Sreekumar, & Mendes, 2020).

Methodology

This study draws upon the key democratising and decolonising themes identified in the document analysis that formed the first wave of the author's doctoral study (McNabb & Connolly, 2019). The resulting equity-related themes informed the structure of the interviews and the seven question areas addressed: service user and student participation, student representativeness, Indigenous rights and political action, gender and cultural equity, access and equity, quality social work education and broader issues of equity, and SWRB standards. The terms democratisation and decolonisation were integrated into some of the questions (McNabb & Connolly, 2019). Each question area had subquestions: to what extent the theme was present within their program; any progress they were making; any challenges they faced; and ideas for the future. The interviews were recorded and transcribed.

The aim of the research was to investigate the extent to which the equity-related themes were operationalised. A summary of the findings from the document analysis was provided to interviewees, further supporting the semistructured methodology (Brinkmann, 2013). This qualitative approach was particularly useful in the study as it allowed a more nuanced and richer conversation with leaders about the challenges and issues arising from advancing equity issues, and the expectations of regulatory standards.

Leaders of all 19 social work programs were invited to participate in the study ranging across university, polytechnic, Wānanga, and private institutional contexts. By engaging with a range of providers, features of this diversity across the country were captured. These included: metropolitan and regional geographies; polytechnic, private training establishments, universities, and Wānanga institutions; Māori, Pacific Islander and mixed cultural settings; campus-based and distance mediums; small and large programs; bachelor and masters level programs; and a special character faith-based institution.

Fourteen of the 19 program leaders participated, providing a strong representation of programs across Aotearoa. Around two thirds of the respondents were women, and around two thirds were non-Māori typically of British European descent. Leaders of Māori, Pacific and Indian ethnicities were also represented. An email invitation was sent to all program leaders. Most interviews were conducted in person and where this was impracticable, online synchronous digital technology was used through the Blackboard Collaborate platform or through Skype. The interviews lasted an hour and a half on average. A semistructured schedule of questions was used that included themes from the wave 1, specifically relating to "service user and student participation, student

representativeness, Indigenous rights and political action, gender and cultural equity, access and equity, and quality social work education and broader issues of equity” (McNabb & Connolly, 2019, p. 42).

The role of leaders in social work programs in Aotearoa is made more complex by the range and diversity of management and disciplinary leadership roles in the sector. Some have full program management, budgetary, and disciplinary leadership responsibilities, while others are restricted to disciplinary leadership without managerial or other budget responsibilities. The respondents were roughly split in half between these two.

The NVivo data analysis software tool was used to assist in analysing the data. The seven headings aligned with the question areas noted above became the preconstructed codes for questions. The coded data were analysed thematically and is reported below. However, emergent codes also included “recruiting and maintaining a diverse workforce”, along with the theme of leadership. Given the leadership roles of the participants, it was not surprising that they talked a good deal about their role in leading social work programs, and the theme “leading an equity focused social work program” featured strongly in the conversations.

Ethics approval was gained from the Human Ethics Advisory Group of the University of Melbourne and the study was rated as a minimal risk project, Ethics ID 1748887. All participants in the study gave informed consent. The community of social work educators across Aotearoa is relatively small, and participants were known to me through the national peer network of social work programs, the Council for Social Work Education in Aotearoa NZ (CSWEANZ). Although known through this network, I had no other role or responsibility in relation to these participants. The potential participants who did not engage in the research gave no reason for their non-participation. While the research achieved strong representation of social work programs across Aotearoa, a limitation of this research is that it only involved interviews with social work program leaders in Aotearoa, and therefore did not include the views of other social work academics, students or people who represent the wider social work sector including service users, iwi (tribal) and Māori organisations, community organisations and other stakeholders such as government.

Findings

Overall, leaders identified opportunities for advancing democratising practices across three spheres: students, including the importance of engaging with the student voice, maintaining systems of representation, and having a diverse student cohort; recruiting and maintaining a diverse workforce, including the strengths and challenges, developing a workforce strategy, and growing and supporting a diverse staff group; and the issue of leading an equity-focused program, including advancing equity themes in both the curriculum and the wider program, and leading institutional and sector-wide development. These three spheres included a reasonably even spread and intensity of responses as each participant answered questions across the preconstructed codes.

Supporting the Student Voice, Representation, and Diversity

Leaders raised the importance of student representation and the structures that supported this, including meetings with staff, leaders, and the stakeholder advisory group. They

noted that students reflected a diverse range of experience from within the local community, bringing service user experience and valuable knowledge into the program. They reinforced the importance of supporting institutionally established student representation, notwithstanding occasionally disrespectful student contributions, and the need to ensure that the student voice was heard and taken into account in program delivery. A majority of respondents provided evidence of the way in which this was approached in programs:

So, each year of the program has two student reps, and we meet each term. They meet with me, as a program manager, and generally our head of department comes along, and they fund lunch for them which is a real incentive; and we also have two ... student reps on our advisory committee ... and I have a reasonably open-door access. (14)

The leader from a regional institution suggested that this kind of student participation benefitted the students as they gained both knowledge of the institution and their local community. Smaller sized programs tended to give students easier access to staff.

Supporting a diverse student body was considered important to the democratising of the program. This particularly related to Māori and Pasifika (Pacific Island ethnicity) and other ethnically diverse students, distance students, and men as a minority. Senior students could mentor junior students, which also aligned with the use of diverse cultural support approaches. Ways of supporting equity for students therefore involved targeting groups, and yet this could be contested when targeted groups were also identified as being vulnerable:

Pasifika and Māori students coming together say they hate being called a group of students that need support, “You’re in need because you’re Māori”. So, there’s been a number of conversations [about] Māori students [being] the successful ones. (6)

The value of having students from a migrant and refugee background was noted along with the contribution of their valuable cultural knowledge. This aligns with the GS and its preference for the student cohort within social work programs to reflect the ethnic diversity of the community context. Some programs wanted to attract more Asian and other students of migrant and refugee backgrounds, but there remained a varied proportion of these students across programs. Others explored culturally responsive ways of facilitating student learning, particularly tutorial models based on cultural practices that resonated with Māori and Pasifika students. These also provided learning opportunities for staff: “The tutorial model works really well. I think the Māori and Pasifika kind of hui group (including cultural group processes) that we have, offers something ... in terms of participation” (14).

Engaging more men in the program was also seen as a priority for many programs where the number of male students was typically very small, and therefore not representative of the community. Some participants commented on why men were less attracted to social work as a career, including the nature of the work along with relatively poor pay and conditions, though this has recently improved in the government child welfare agency (ANZASW, 2018).

The theme of disability was also raised in the interviews where making a program accessible is often a goal held by institutions. To strongly challenge barriers, form partnerships along the disability continuum, and more directly address ableism was seen to align with the deeper equity goal of social work. A distance program also suited some students with disabilities:

We have several students with disability and are ... grappling with those issues about how we best support them. But, in fact for some students with disability a program like ours is a good choice because it's flexible, it's [by] distance ... and it makes sense. (10)

Gender and sexuality themes were highlighted as important in the curriculum along with the need to address patriarchy and heterosexism more generally among staff and in the program. Some institutions have shown strength in their LGBTQ+ related support services such as a comprehensive Ally training program and network where gay, straight, cis and diverse gendered students and staff work to build an inclusive environment (Unitec Institute of Technology, 2019). A strong set of team values supported democratising team practices and could lead to a role for social work to address broader institutional inequity. On the other hand, a number of leaders queried how well they supported LGBTQ+ students in their program and noted that there was a need to improve on this.

Recruiting and Maintaining a Diverse Workforce

Participants talked about three key areas relating to the social work education workforce: the strengths and challenges, developing a workforce strategy, and growing and supporting a diverse staff group. The importance of having at least a minimal number of Māori staff was considered essential by all program leaders, and it was acknowledged that they needed to be well supported. Māori staff were seen as essential to enable the expression of a partnership commitment within social work education alongside non-Māori and to operationalise the partnership of the Treaty, also called biculturalism: “When you want to advance *tangata whenua* (Māori, literally ‘people of the land’) and biculturalism within a university setting, the key thing that you need is building Māori staff and capability” (2).

The engagement of Pasifika staff was also highlighted as a way to appropriately reflect the presence of a significant proportion of Pasifika students across many programs, and to support the learning required for all students to be able to work well with Pasifika populations. For many leaders, the difficulties of maintaining a diverse workforce were exacerbated when staff changes undermined the consistency of the staffing group. For Pasifika staff, it was also challenging to meet qualification, teaching, research, and regulatory requirements in recruiting targeted staff. For leaders in this study, supporting a diverse staff group included dimensions of culture, disability, age, gender, and sexuality all of which needed to be thought through and developed as part of a strategic workforce plan. An inclusive approach was seen to model diversity for staff and students, generating a sense of belonging for them, and “making them feel part of the family” (6). Programs might also grow their own academic staff through supporting suitable graduates into academic positions.

Advancing an Equity-Focused Curriculum and Social Work Program

Participants talked about two key areas in leading an equity-focused program: activism and advancing equity themes in both the curriculum and the wider program; and leading institutional and sector-wide development. Social work staff activism was seen to be important by a number of programs, evidenced through their engagement with unions; Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW); student placements with political parties; politicians; and with the national election process. There was

an argument to be strategic and organised: “What do we as educators see as the main challenges for the next five years, and how do we want to influence this government over the next three years?” (6).

While some programs were clearly active in their advocacy efforts, others wanted to do better but nevertheless faced constraints in their activities. Whereas staff have “academic freedom” to speak out and act on issues as activist social work academics, they also risk negative consequences as do the students who follow their example:

They [academics] were free to do it in the past; now if they do it they get hit ... but I'm aware of the fact that we're teaching students to [do] all this stuff, and then we send them out and they're facing [the] exact same pressures. (11)

Perhaps surprisingly given the emphasis the profession has on service user engagement, mobilising equity issues and advocacy within the curriculum were seen as challenging areas for programs. Service user engagement is a SWRB requirement in Aotearoa, also requiring service user involvement in the program's stakeholder engagement plan. However, a majority of programs either struggled to secure and maintain appropriate formal representation, at times because of financial constraints, or they explored other options, which included recognising the service user experience of students.

Interestingly, leaders noted the link between a curriculum that included critical theory and advancing the goals of decolonisation and democratisation. This suggests potential for the social work profession to assume a leadership role in both areas of curriculum development resulting in “more papers that emphasise the theoretical underpinnings of democratisation and decolonisation; i.e., structural, critical social work” (4). Many leaders also saw potential for advocacy leadership across the institutional and wider sector. Indeed, one of the smaller programs noted that they had the student union engage them in advocacy efforts because of their reputation across the institution: “The student union here is trying to build stronger links between the social work program and the student union on the assumption that our profession is the one that deals with advocacy” (4). Some had a vision for stronger collaboration between social work programs in Aotearoa, which arguably has potential benefit for students who transfer between institutions as well as demonstrating the principle of collaboration and resisting institutional competition.

The potential for regulatory processes to influence the pursuit of equity at the program level was also noted by respondents. Curiously, the leaders had very little knowledge of the GS, suggesting a potential vacuum of influence in this regard. It was difficult to know what influence the GS had on the development of the SWRB program standards as it only began to reference a range of core social work policy, including the GS in 2016, some years after the first set of standards was published (SWRB, 2016). Because of the regular audit process, leaders were nevertheless quite familiar with the SWRB program standards. They noted in particular the value of self-reflection, the leverage offered by the SWRB panel in advocating for resources or considerations in their institution, external validation and benchmarking, and use of the panel report to vindicate strengths and create a critical context.

While the regular SWRB audit processes were generally experienced positively, most leaders also noted equity-related concerns, in particular the time and resource it took to prepare for the visit; the lack of a Māori focus by SWRB which had the effect of underemphasising the Treaty partnership; that it was “hit and miss” in understanding and

addressing significant issues in their specific program; that it was compliance driven rather than being strategic and values based where fundamental equity related issues could be raised. This created a perception that the visits could do much more: “So, I think sometimes these standards are quite socially controlling, but are they socially changing?” (9).

Discussion

The pursuit of equity within social work education has been framed within a critical approach (Macfarlane, 2016). The focus on social change and the opportunity for programs to engage in social action was a strong thread running through the conversations with leaders. Students as key consumers of education programs perhaps present the biggest test in demonstrating staff commitment to equity-focused participatory practice. It is clear that in Aotearoa successful programs build on institutional systems of course evaluation and student representation to create stronger partnerships between staff and students that also anchor Treaty, cultural, and professional values. Although a focus on student voice and representation, and the importance of moving beyond the basics has been found to be central to the pursuit of equity-focused practice, leaders are also called upon to demonstrate social work values and advocacy in their leadership roles. Expressing Treaty-based partnership, developing a diverse workforce and retaining talent, managing the institutional inhibitors of staff wellbeing, and working collaboratively to advance equity aims have been identified as important leadership tasks.

Providing strong operational and strategic leadership on the ground is nevertheless one of a number of elements that influence the development of equity-focused practices. Other influencing elements identified in the research included: global and local standards; the regulatory frameworks that both monitor and facilitate practices in social work programs; and the expectations of quality improvement over time. The minimal knowledge leaders had about the GS, however, and that they are not necessarily using them to inform or reinforce operational policies and practices, potentially limits the impact that the GS might have in Aotearoa. Further research is required to establish whether this is unique to Aotearoa, or whether it extends to schools of social work internationally. As the GS policy is now under review (IASSW & IFSW, 2019) an opportunity presents itself for an accompanying review of their strategic influence and the opportunity to complement local standards and provide the global scaffolding for democratising initiatives.

Regulatory bodies also have an important role to play in advancing equity-focused practices in social work education. As with regulatory bodies internationally, the SWRB standards and audit process has a major impact on programs in Aotearoa. While regulatory frameworks have been found to offer benefits for programs, the compliance-driven nature of the recognition process was nevertheless seen as being misaligned to the profession’s broader commitment to the Treaty and its decolonising expectations.

This raises questions about the prescriptive nature of regulatory standards and their potential to compromise important equity aims. Increasingly over time the effects of neoliberalism have influenced most aspects of public life, including education. Higher education has been subject to conservative economic and political drivers that have restrained the progressive mission of education (Amsler, 2014). Within this pervasive neoliberal environment, social work education is at risk of being captured by influences of commodification, commercialisation, neocolonial impacts, a reductionist use of technology and

the increased engagement of modernist ideas of progress through standard setting. The added feature of managerialism can lead to regulatory processes that render social work education as a narrow prescription for training social workers at odds with its core base of relational, reflexive, and ethical practice (Sewpaul, 2014). This aligns with the wider educational risk of quality improvement processes becoming a tick box audit approach alongside a preoccupation with minimum standards. As programs review their curriculum, workforce plans, and their broader strategic plan, reflexive attention to the GS equity expectations will help to align their strategic efforts with the profession's wider commitment to social justice. Healy (2014) is optimistic that the global social work profession, inclusive of social work education, will continue to build on its track record of both globalising initiatives such as standards setting, as well as privileging local diversity. This, however, requires an ongoing analysis of and resistance to imperialism (Sewpaul, 2014).

Leaders of social work programs are in a strategic position with respect to setting direction for programs and leading the careful work required to avoid pitfalls arising from the neoliberal influence. This includes both an inward facing leadership for staff and students, but equally an outwardly facing leadership to the institutional context and beyond.

Regulatory bodies also have a critical role to play and it is incumbent upon them to ensure that their monitoring of standard setting activities is fully aligned with the profession's equity and democratising goals. In Aotearoa it is clear that there are fundamental tensions in meeting equity and democratising expectations while also complying with minimum qualification standards. The SWRB's requirement of a master's level degree for social work educators (SWRB, 2018) is seen to work against the development of a diverse workforce when staff who have a vital cultural contribution are denied a more flexible pathway to achieving the required qualification. This flexibility was unsuccessfully sought by CSWEANZ (Council for Social Work Education Aotearoa NZ, 2017). Striving for a better alignment of equity ideals and minimum standards could avoid the undermining of democratising practices in programs of social work education.

Conclusion

Education is under attack globally from the conservative influence of neoliberalism. Social work values and the professions' pursuit of equity goals can provide a foundation for social work education to disrupt this influence and in turn realise its progressive agenda. Leaders in social work education are in a unique position to influence the development of programs and to advance democratising practices nationally and internationally. This kind of transformative leadership has the potential to create democratising partnerships that will strengthen the pursuit of equity goals in social work education.

Acknowledgement

In the context of this topic of pursuing equity in social work education within Aotearoa, it is relevant to situate myself as a Pākehā or White, straight, able-bodied, middle-class, middle-aged man who has been challenged by and learned from a diverse range of people. I wish to thank social work education colleagues who participated in the research discussed in this article. I acknowledge the assistance of Professor Marie Connolly in the preparation of this work. However as sole author I take full responsibility for the research that was undertaken and has been reported here, and for the conclusions made.

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Decolonising social work education in Aotearoa New Zealand

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ABSTRACT

The social work education sector has a vital role to play in advancing the rights and interests of Indigenous peoples. Global and national standards reinforce this requirement and regulatory frameworks identify decolonising practices as important to the delivery of social work education. While standards influence and guide practices, the degree to which decolonising practices are operationalised at the local level depends upon programme delivery within higher education. Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with social work education leaders in Aotearoa New Zealand to explore how decolonising practices were demonstrated within their programmes. The research found that all programmes were committed to a decolonising approach but struggled in different ways to operationalise this commitment and to maintain momentum. Having Māori staff was seen as essential but there were too few, and meeting regulatory qualification requirements was problematic. Integrating Māori knowledge and practices within the curriculum was also vital for student learning and building their cultural responsiveness. Non-Māori staff had a particular responsibility to acknowledge the harmful effects of colonisation and to practise respectful partnership with Māori. The role of leaders and staff in the operationalising of decolonising practices within social work education is explored for future implications of policy and practice development.

Keywords: *Decolonisation; Indigenous; social work education; leadership; standards; regulation; Māori; Aotearoa New Zealand; Australia*

INTRODUCTION

Before discussing decolonising social work education in Aotearoa New Zealand (Aotearoa New Zealand, including both indigenous and colonial names), it is important that I situate myself as a Pākehā, or White social work educator with Scottish, Irish and English roots that go back to my forebears who arrived in Aotearoa New Zealand in 1843. I have learned from and consulted with a range of people and, in particular, Māori colleagues. I am grateful to them for their insights and for those who were willing to participate in the research. I particularly wish to acknowledge the contribution of Professor Marie Connolly in the development of this article. As sole author, I nevertheless take full responsibility for undertaking and reporting the research, and for the conclusions that are drawn.

Indigenous rights and decolonisation

Indigenous peoples have been fighting for their traditional rights ever since colonisers took their lands, wealth, labour, culture and language. The rights and expectations of Indigenous peoples have found their contemporary expression in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) (United Nations, 2008). Globally, colonised peoples have mobilised in protest and have been at the forefront of the fight for change. Whereas people of colour have often been the colonised group, European or White people are usually part of the dominant population. In general, dominant group forces have been slower to support decolonising developments but can become important allies in creating societal change (Huygens, 2016).

From the context of Aotearoa New Zealand, Tuhiwai Smith (2012) notes that decolonisation was once only defined as the formal handing back of the governance of a country by the colonial authority but “is now recognised as a long term process involving bureaucratic, cultural, linguistic, and psychological divesting of colonial power” (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012, p. 175). Some have used the extended term *decoloniality* to emphasise the depth to which colonisation negatively affects the colonised group and the challenge facing the colonising group in addressing the knowledge of this harm. This highlights the work needing to be done with the colonising group for a more equitable society to emerge – including within the context of social work education (Hendrick & Young, 2018).

A critical analysis of colonisation and of race has challenged privileged status to confront the advantages that have been accrued by the dominant group and to take a stand against injustice and racism. Indigenous people challenge non-Indigenous people to take responsibility for addressing White privilege as a prerequisite to becoming allies in the work of decolonisation (Bennett, 2015). The concept of *ally* has been developed by Bishop (2003) and has been used by many groups working for change.

The term *White privilege* initially arose out of the critical White studies movement which spread to other parts of the world in response to challenges from black voices in the USA. Young and Zubrzycki (2011, p. 162) note the seminal work of Peggy McIntosh whose essay “White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack” in 1989 was important in identifying the often unseen and unacknowledged benefits of being White. The field of critical White studies, which incorporates the notion of White privilege, interrogates the ways in which this privilege “is raced and invisible; [providing] a method of unsettling this privilege;

and it offers guidance for more inclusive and respectful human relationships” (Young & Zubrzycki, 2011, p. 165). The wider theme of privilege has been explored by Pease (2016) including a focus on understanding the benefits of privilege by those in the dominant group and their complicity in others’ oppression.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, Māori have led the resistance to colonisation and its effects. In 1835, *He Whakaputanga - the Declaration of Independence*, was signed by Northern chiefs in Aotearoa New Zealand and recognised by Britain (Orange, 2015). Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Indigenous Māori language version of The Treaty of Waitangi, hereafter Te Tiriti) was signed by a number of Māori tribal leaders and the British Crown in 1840.

Whereas Te Tiriti held the hope of a mutually beneficial arrangement for Māori who signed along with the British Crown, including the notion of “bi-polity” where two sovereign nations could equitably govern (Ruwhiu, Te Hira, Eruera, & Elkington, 2016) the dominance of Britain was asserted and Māori experienced colonisation of their land and indeed, their whole world. Māori resisted colonisation, land battles were fought while, at the same time, Māori adapted to Western ideas and technology.

In contemporary times, Māori have protested for their rights and now through the Treaty of Waitangi Tribunal a number of iwi (tribes) have settled historic disputes with the Government. This has typically included an apology from the Government for the land taken and harm caused, and financial and other components of redress. At one level, decolonisation has been formally under way with a growing number of tribes engaging in the settlement process, since the Treaty of Waitangi Tribunal was established by an Act of Parliament in 1975, although it is acknowledged there is a long way to go (Huygens, 2016). On the other hand, it can be argued that any decolonisation process is limited due to the significant ongoing colonial legacy of major structural deprivation faced by Māori (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012). Alongside the negative structural impact of colonisation, Te Tiriti continues to offer the potential of partnership between Māori and non-Māori.

Within the Aotearoa NZ education context, Mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) has been recognised as one of the guarantees of Te Tiriti and embedded within the education legislation of 1990. One example of the development of Mātauranga Māori within a public education institution involved a tool being created, *Poutama*, to assist all its programmes to honour Te Tiriti (Unitec Institute of Technology, 2011).

In the context of Māori self-determination we note the advent of Wānanga (Māori-based institutions) as a key site for decolonisation and indigenising practices also expressed in the context of social work education (Akhter, 2015). Other global manifestations of indigenous tertiary institutions include the indigenous university based in Canada, established in 2004 (Young et al., 2013).

Decolonising global social work education

Decolonising social work education is a global aim that unites countries with colonial histories. Some of the literature is contained in edited texts on the theme of indigenous or decolonising social work education and research (Gray, Coates, Yellow Bird, &

Hetherington, 2016; Fejo-King & Mataira, 2015; Zubrzycki et al., 2014) and many texts focusing on social work education with broader indigenous themes – in Aotearoa NZ (Crawford, 2018); in Asia Pacific (Noble, Henrickson, & Han, 2013; Nikku & Hatta, 2014), and globally (Noble, Strauss, & Littlechild, 2014).

Countries in which decolonising and indigenising social work education is being advanced include: Aotearoa NZ (Anglem, 2009; Eketone & Walker, 2013;); Australia (Fejo-King, 2013; Muller, 2014); Canada (Johnson, 2010; Waterfall, 2008); the Pacific including Tonga (Mafile'o, 2004); Samoa (Faleolo, 2013); and the Pacific more generally (Mafile'o & Vakalahi, 2018); the USA (Yellow Bird, 2016) including Hawai'i (Morelli, Mataira, & Kaulukukui, 2013); China (Yuen-Tsang & Ku, 2008); South Africa (Harms Smith & Nathane, 2018), and Africa more broadly (Kreitzer, 2008); the Sami in the Nordic region (Merja, Sanna, Merja, & Sanna, 2016); the Americas more broadly (Tamburro, 2013); also Central and South America, and Europe (Young et al., 2013). Broader spiritual and religious themes can be aligned with the indigenisation project such as a text on Buddhist Social Work that roots practice in Asia (Gohori, 2017) and exploring the links between Islamic spirituality and indigenous social work education (Akhter, 2013).

The Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) Code of Ethics, Reconciliation Action Plan, and Education Standards (AASW, 2012) privilege Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing within the curriculum and the broader practice of recognised social work programmes. A key document for Australian social work education, the *Getting It Right Framework* (Zubrzycki et al., 2014) provides a teaching and learning framework to advance decolonising efforts in social work education in Australia. The four key features of the framework include Indigenous “epistemological equality, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-centered social work, cultural responsiveness, and Indigenous pedagogy” (Young et al., 2013, p. 1).

However, because social work is a profession that originated in the West and continues to sit within a stream of colonisation, it has a problematic relationship with Indigenous peoples. This is why the *Getting It Right Framework* (Zubrzycki et al., 2014) argues that the social work profession must critically reflect on how it contributes to ongoing colonising practices and that White privilege must be addressed within social work education. Addressing non-indigenous privilege in the educational context can be informed by the broader notion of a pedagogy of privilege, where recognising one's own privilege and the benefits it brings is vital along with continually challenging the systems that supports it.

Literature exists more broadly about race and racism, and how this can be addressed within the educational sector. Anti-racism practices include using agreements for “courageous conversations about race” at the classroom level, with leadership required at the institutional and policy levels (Singleton, 2015, p. 15). Racism covers a broad area of oppression whereby one cultural group discriminates against another based on biology and cultural difference, usually White against people of colour, with both structural and personal dimensions of oppression. Colonisation involves “the process by which European imperial powers gained military control of and subjugated the peoples of ‘colonies’ in Africa and Asia” (Gray et al., 2016, p. 333) and, of course, in the Pacific. Both racism and colonisation

are identified components that should be addressed in decolonising social work education (Zubrzycki et al., 2014).

Indigenous knowledge must be recognised as equivalent to Western knowledge creating “epistemological equality” (Zubrzycki et al., 2014, p. 17). In the Aotearoa NZ context this has been incorporated into the promotion of Mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) a feature which aligns well with the commitment of the Aotearoa NZ social work profession to honour Te Tiriti (Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers, 2013).

From a global and local perspective, regulatory frameworks provide opportunities to shape the ways in which social work education is developed to support democratising and decolonising practices (McNabb & Connolly, 2019). Standards provide a foundational platform on which best practice can be developed, and in this regard it has been argued that the role of leaders is to move social work education beyond baseline standards toward aspirational goals such as decolonisation (McNabb, 2017). Recent research identified democratising and decolonising practices as key themes that have been reinforced in the Global Standards, and the local standards of Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand (McNabb & Connolly, 2019). Further research has examined the ways in which democratising practices are given effect within programmes of social work education across Aotearoa NZ (McNabb, 2019). This adds to a growing body of literature that explores the influence of regulatory frameworks on social work education (McNabb & Connolly, 2019).

This article explores the ways in which leaders of social work education in Aotearoa NZ support decolonising practices within their programmes alongside their thoughts on the challenges and opportunities of demonstrating an enduring commitment to Te Tiriti and to advancing the partnership between Māori and non-Māori.

METHODOLOGY

The study undertook qualitative interviews with social work education programme leaders to investigate questions relating to decolonising of practices in Aotearoa NZ. One of the more common forms of qualitative research is the semi-structured, face-to-face interview of individuals (Brinkmann, 2013). This approach was particularly useful in this study as it allowed a more nuanced and richer conversation with leaders about the challenges and issues arising from advancing decolonising practices in social work programmes.

Leaders of all 19 social work programme providers were invited to participate in the study ranging across university, polytechnic, Wānanga and private institutional contexts. Unlike some countries where social work education is confined to universities, in Aotearoa NZ there is a diversity of tertiary education institutional contexts. By engaging with a range of providers, features of this diversity across the country were captured. These features include: metropolitan and regional geographies; polytechnic, private training establishments, universities, and Wānanga institutions; Māori, Pacific and mixed cultural settings; campus-based and distance mediums; small and large programmes; bachelor and master’s level programmes; and a special character faith-based institution.

Fourteen of the 19 programme leaders participated, providing a very strong representation of programmes across Aotearoa NZ. Two thirds of the respondents were women, and two thirds were Pākehā (non-Māori usually of British European descent). Leaders with Māori, Pacific and Indian ethnicity were also represented. The role of leaders in social work programmes in Aotearoa NZ is made more complex by the range and diversity of management and disciplinary leadership roles in the sector. These roles range from full management and leadership of the programme and its staff on the one hand, and roles focusing on disciplinary academic leadership without management responsibilities on the other. The respondents were roughly split in half between each of these categories.

Most interviews were conducted in person and where this was impracticable, online synchronous digital technology was used through the Blackboard Collaborate platform or through Skype. A semi-structured interview schedule was used that had been developed from the themes identified in the earlier document analysis, specifically relating to “service user and student participation, student representativeness, Indigenous rights and political action, gender and cultural equity, access and equity, and quality social work education and broader issues of equity” (McNabb & Connolly, 2019, p. 42). The NVivo data analysis software tool was used to assist in analysing the data thematically.

Ethics approval was gained from the Human Ethics Advisory Group of the University of Melbourne and the study was regarded as a minimal risk project; Ethics ID 1748887. All participants in the study gave informed consent.

In addition to the well-documented limitations of using a qualitative research methodology, there are limitations particular to this research which relate to the sample. Only interviews with social work programme leaders in Aotearoa NZ were undertaken, and the research does therefore not include the views of other social work academic leaders, academic staff, students or people who represent the wider social work sector including service users, iwi and Māori organisations, community organisations and other stakeholders such as government. Research with these groups may well offer some different views about the nature of decolonising practices.

FINDINGS

The leaders were asked to share their perspectives with respect to decolonising practices, and the ways in which these practices were given effect in their social work programme. Whereas the leaders were not given a definition of decolonisation and its respective practices, within the context of Aotearoa NZ, any action to promote Māori knowledge and culture, a deeper expression of commitment to Te Tiriti and partnership between Māori and Tāuiwi or biculturalism, would fit within a broad definition of decolonisation. These features of decolonisation are supported within the social work profession and within tertiary education policy.

Three key themes were identified: the commitment to decolonising practices; operationalising decolonising practices; and the enablers of decolonising practices. Each participant was assigned a non-identifying number which is noted beside each quote.

Commitment to decolonising practices

The importance of engaging with Kaupapa Māori values was seen as a critical foundation supporting a programme's commitment to biculturalism in practice:

Fuse those values that you know about, the Treaty values, and also other Mātauranga Māori knowledge values... and then we're moving from that toward decolonisation [of the whole programme]. (11)

Māori staff were seen as having a key role in this, a role that required institutional support:

One of the key parts of our... bicultural [journey] from a Kaupapa Māori [perspective]... supporting the Māori staff to start self-determining and owning key aspects of the programme and their place. (2)

In the context of decolonising practices, the leaders reinforced the deep commitment that social work education has to advancing Te Tiriti, and operationalizing the elements of Te Tiriti in practice. Establishing a firm foundation of responsiveness to Te Tiriti, was seen as critical to advancing practice. This involved establishing a strong Kaupapa Māori foundation in each programme with a particular expectation of responsibility as leader:

As a manager or a leader, that's where I see I have quite a high level of responsibility for the profession to ensure that we are being genuine in our commitment (to the Treaty), and I see my role as the enabler of that. (3)

One leader noted that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) is complementary to Te Tiriti based practice and was making a link between the global and local decolonising efforts:

The UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People, I think offers us a very unique opportunity to unpack what our Treaty relationship might look like. (13)

One leader of a programme with a deep and enduring commitment to Te Tiriti noted a dilemma in having a strong Kaupapa Māori based values where predominantly Māori students tended to work in iwi (tribal) services but might struggle to work in "mainstream" agencies due to the challenge of balancing Māori and non-Māori bodies of knowledge. In this instance, the importance of committing to a blended knowledge base was suggested:

I think our programme ... needs to be a lot stronger at that interface between Māori and non-Māori bodies of knowledge, because what we've found historically is that our tauira [students] have gone into statutory organisations and within a really short period of time they've felt quite isolated in terms of tracking their body of knowledge, which has primarily been from a Māori perspective. (13)

A number of leaders spoke about being committed to a bicultural journey but of also being restrained by resourcing or policy settings within their institution:

The social work programme particularly is totally committed to the bicultural Code of Ethics and

teaching in a bicultural manner... But, our institute has not supported us well with that and it's been a continuing challenge... (7)

On the other hand, when there was a clear, higher-level institutional commitment to advancing bicultural practices, there was a trickle-down effect that provided support for change throughout the organisation:

It came from the top, in terms of our commitment to biculturalism and in the context of colonisation. So, we've had conversations as a faculty about that... I think it's flown through to our school and conversations at staff meetings, and it's gone through to our programme level and it's showing up in class. (6)

Social work education nevertheless exists within a context of colonised practices and some leaders noted tensions in operationalising decolonising practices in the context of competing expectations of evidenced-based practice.

This is something we now turn to in the next major theme.

Operationalising decolonising practices

Leaders articulated the challenges in meaningfully and purposefully shaping bicultural social work programmes and the ways in which it might be monitored and sustained, without being formulaic:

How many tertiary institutions will simply see this as a tick box exercise rather than necessarily a fundamental look at themselves? (13)

Some leaders also noted that the physical environment for learning Mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) is important, including using marae (Māori meeting houses) as a way of deepening a student's knowledge through experience:

I think it's also the mode of delivery. And this is what our taurira [students] say to us. The moment we walk through the door we felt at home... It's a thriving [place]... And the students overwhelmingly have said to us that the penny dropped when they went onto a marae. (13)

What we ask students to do is to select an issue that is relevant to Māori... and then they complete presentations on the marae about the issue and solutions... So, they have the opportunity to apply Māori concepts, particularly tikanga [customary practices] and then to receive feedback. (8)

A number of leaders spoke about the challenge of maintaining momentum for a Tiriti-based programme. There were a number of facets to manage and any one or more could slow progress. Ongoing development of teaching practices that supported Mātauranga Māori in the programme was seen as critical. Where there was strong support from the institution, programmes moved from talking about decolonising practices, to operationalising them:

I think we've moved beyond caucusing to another era and so, looking at what is Māori knowledge, how is Māori knowledge taught, who does the teaching of Māori knowledge, and

then how is bicultural engagement included and what are the steps that we can make; how is te reo [Māori language] acknowledged? (2)

Leaders noted various ways in which the commitment toward biculturalism was operationalised. For example, aligning the curriculum in ways that reflect Te Tiriti, and integrating Te Tiriti within assessment processes in practical ways:

The Treaty and biculturalism form some of the backbones of our programme – the structural backbones. We declare ourselves to be a bicultural programme... In terms of delivering the programme, all our course outlines have to demonstrate how they meet the focus on biculturalism. (4)

Almost every assessment requires an examination of firstly the Treaty and then the community that you serve. (5)

Similarly, leaders explored the ways in which biculturalism can be strengthened through its integration into the whole curriculum, for example, by integrating Te Tiriti material in specific papers and also throughout the degree. The value of having had a quality assurance process during the construction of the curriculum that included a review by both a Māori and a Pasifika (Pacific Island) appraiser was also noted:

And all of it is reviewed by a bicultural appraiser and Pasifika appraiser; so, you have Māori and Pasifika perspectives reviewing our content, the whole course, before it's ever public. So, that builds it into the brickwork if you like. (10)

While the importance of advancing decolonising practices was uniformly supported, leaders also commented on some of the barriers to supporting biculturalism. A number of leaders noted the heavy load carried by Māori staff, which included: teaching Mātauranga Māori, supporting Māori students, managing external relationships with Māori and partnering with non-Māori staff. This requires targeted support by non-Māori and by leaders of programmes:

This is the issue too for Māori staff members having to wear all the curriculum that's Māori, and a pastoral care that's Māori, and do we support those Māori staff members in the way that they should be and need to be, and ought to be cared for? (12)

Most leaders noted the challenge of finding and developing Māori staff, and for some it was their biggest impediment to running a Tiriti-based programme.

Some leaders were in a position to grow their own Māori workforce which might include scholarship and assistance programmes along with innovative funding support. Where an institution had its own master's qualification, it tended to be easier to support Māori staff to get that qualification, and then become employed as academics.

Given the importance of recruiting and retaining Māori staff, it was particularly heart-breaking for programmes to have to let expert Māori staff and other specialists go because they could not meet all the Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB) relatively recently introduced academic staff requirements:

The sad thing for us is that we lost them [expert Māori staff] in the last couple of years. And we lost them actually primarily around the SWRB requirements, which I think has been quite sad for us as a programme. (13)

Losing staff in this way created significant challenges for programmes as it also impacted on the sustainability of the movement toward bicultural practice. There was always the risk that one or more key staff would leave and affect the momentum of the whole programme.

Enablers of decolonising practice

Working on a shared values-base was considered to be an important first step in creating the environment within which decolonising practices could flourish. It was notable that linking team values to Mātauranga Māori has helped departments in their Tiriti-based journey by providing a solid foundation for development:

That shifted staff thinking, and what they did was exactly what I asked them to do, which was linking between (the) Treaty and where people were at with that; but also, Mātauranga Māori, and also the values we've adopted as a team. (11)

A number of leaders were optimistic about what was already going well in their programmes and saw the potential for them to become enablers of decolonising practices more broadly across their own institutions and the wider social service sector in Aotearoa NZ. Indeed, this was an imperative:

I think Aotearoa is looked at, and looked upon, as being quite progressive in this area. So, in our profession we need to be driving this and leading this; or else, people from other broader social service professions will drive and lead it for us. (13)

Leadership, and in particular Māori leadership, was seen as a critical enabler of decolonising practice in social work education. Seeing this as part of a sector-wide development of Tiriti-based social work education was considered important to the overall sustaining of decolonising practices. Non-Māori support was also considered important to the advancement of Māori interests and leadership.

Having a close relationship with local iwi (tribes) and having iwi members involved in the programme was also seen as an enabler of decolonising practice. One of the sector-wide initiatives involving Māori leadership was the development of the draft Kaitiakitanga Framework. This would potentially create a more detailed set of standards around Tiriti-based practices in programmes, a significant gap for the SWRB regulator currently.

Further questions arose for a Kaupapa Māori based programme in considering how it might partner with a mainstream programme on something like co-publishing but still have an honourable relationship with mutual benefit. Other leaders noted the value of doctoral research and publications such as *Te Kōmako* (a Māori focused edition of the Aotearoa NZ social work journal) that targeted Tiriti based social work practice and education.

DISCUSSION

The findings have established the importance of Te Tiriti for social work educators and the fundamental place and value it brings to the profession. It is seen as critical in advancing decolonising practices in Aotearoa New Zealand. Indeed, the way in which Te Tiriti influences Aotearoa New Zealand law, policies and practice across the whole of government, its institutions and various public sector type groups reinforces a strong commitment to honouring Te Tiriti and partnering with Māori more broadly. Notwithstanding the long struggle that Māori have led and continue to lead so that Te Tiriti is honoured, Te Tiriti provides an overarching influence upon Aotearoa New Zealand, arguably creating what Andrews, Pritchett, and Woolcock (2016) call an “authorizing environment” (Andrews et al., 2016, p. 2).

Originally derived from the work of Moore (2013), the notion of an authorising environment has been developed by Andrews et al. (2016) as a way of critically influencing organisational behavior, and providing legitimacy and accountability for action. This idea has recently also been developed to include human services work, for example see Connolly, Healey, and Humphreys (2017). Andrews et al. (2016) notes, however, that creating an authorising environment is not always easy, particularly when systems “are commonly fragmented, and difficult to navigate” (Andrews et al., 2016, p. 5). Given the nature of entrenched White privilege underpinning structures, policies and programmes, there is an institutional bias toward the dominant colonial discourse. Therefore, both establishing appropriate authority and also undertaking the agreed change can be difficult to secure, even more so when the problems being addressed are often wicked in nature due to their size and complexity. This further highlights the importance of a strong base of authority and inherent influence from which to operate.

In the context of Aotearoa New Zealand, the concept of Te Tiriti as creating a foundational and ubiquitous authorising environment is particularly useful as it illustrates how influence can permeate aspects of government, social and economic policy, and law. The pursuit of Tiriti based partnership and decolonisation is a major initiative that involves both government and non-government agencies in Aotearoa New Zealand working together for its achievement albeit with varying levels of commitment. If we apply the notion of an authorising environment to Te Tiriti and its implementation within tertiary social work education, then we can conceptualise the way in which it influences and legitimises Tiriti-based partnership and decolonising practices (Figure 1).

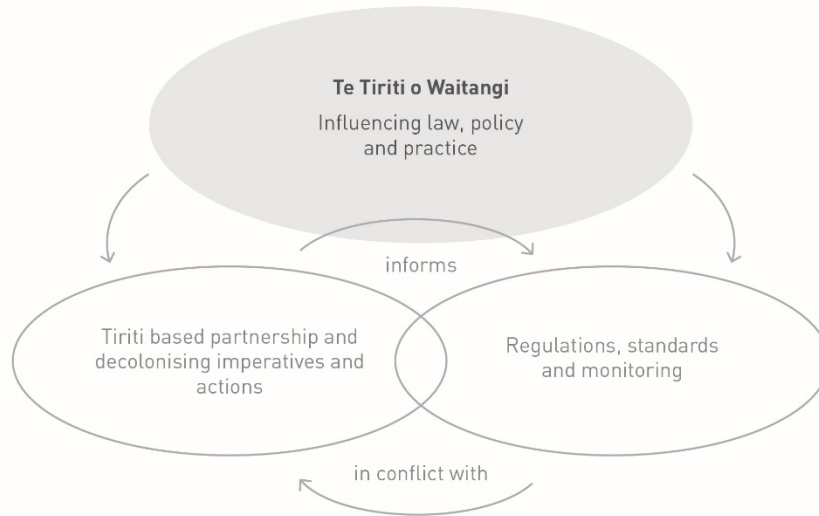


Figure 1. Te Tiriti o Waitangi creating an authorising environment for social work education.

From the findings of this research it is clear that a strong, authorising environment creates the scaffolding necessary for the sharing of high-level goals and their implementation in service delivery. At the same time, the research also illustrates the tensions that can exist when government imperatives give effect to conflicting expectations. The area of regulation and standards which are contained in the remit of the regulatory body in Aotearoa New Zealand, the Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB), provides a good example of this (Figure 1). Recent requirements that social work educators have a master's or doctoral degree (SWRB, 2017), has meant some Māori staff have been lost to programmes. This directly weakens the Māori workforce in contradicting the decolonising aims of Te Tiriti that specifically privileges Māori interests. Indeed, it also critically weakens the SWRB's own goal of producing graduates who are competent to practice social work with Māori (SWRB, 2016).

Although the social work profession is well represented on the SWRB, the entity nevertheless intersects with government as the Social Workers Registration Act (2003) requires the Board to report directly to a government minister who is ultimately responsible for the standards it establishes and monitors. This regulatory responsibility creates a fundamental tension with the Crown's imperative to advance and operationalise Te Tiriti. Ultimately, conflicting expectations have operational consequence for social work education programmes.

Although a heavy responsibility for creating safe practice systems rests with the SWRB, particularly in the context of child protection and risk-focused practice (Connolly, 2017), unless the regulatory body also pays attention to, and incorporates the decolonising expectations of Te Tiriti, social work education programmes will continue to be constrained in advancing Tiriti based imperatives.

It is clear that leadership activism by Māori and non-Māori allies is needed to work through these complexities, and to move forward in ways that are consistent with the clear requirements of Te Tiriti and the partnership expectations it presents. A ray of light within the regulatory environment of social work education is seen in the Kaitiakitanga Framework which fleshes out the implications of honouring Te Tiriti and of further clarifying priorities in terms of “competence to practise social work with Māori” (SWRB, 2016, para. 4). While early in its development, this strategic partnership between the SWRB and Māori social work educators and practitioners has the potential to break through what has become something of an impasse that places real constraints on the development of Te Tiriti based social work education and practice.

CONCLUSION

Te Tiriti is a major feature of the Aotearoa New Zealand landscape that provides a strong, authorising environment for the advancement of decolonising practices in social work education. This has created a public discourse around Te Tiriti that has supported its growing influence. This authorising environment has, nevertheless, been critical for Tiriti based social work practice to develop in Aotearoa New Zealand where both government and non-government bodies are inextricably involved.

Like Aotearoa New Zealand, countries with colonial histories either have treaties with their Indigenous peoples, or are exploring these possibilities. For example, Australia is in the process of considering a treaty between the state of Victoria and Aboriginal peoples (The Guardian, 2018), something that this research suggests could ultimately scaffold the development of a partnership to integrate Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledges. In this context, the implementation of the recently developed *Getting it Right* framework (Zubrzycki et al., 2014), a major policy document for decolonising social work education in Australia, could be enabled by a stronger, authorising environment over time.

Notwithstanding the strength of the authorising environment, however, it is clear that regulatory frameworks can also present challenges to the attainment of decolonising practices. This research reinforces the importance of resolving regulatory misalignments with Te Tiriti imperatives in Aotearoa New Zealand. As efforts toward the mandatory registration of social workers in Australia intensify, ensuring regulatory alignment with decolonising ideals will also be important to the development of partnerships that integrate Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledges in social work education and practice.

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A Treaty-based framework for mainstream social work education in Aotearoa New Zealand: Educators talk about their practice

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: Globally, indigenous social work educators have pursued decolonisation and the development of decolonising practices as part of the indigenous peoples' rights movement and based on social work principles of self-determination and social justice. Māori have advanced decolonisation based on the original partnership that was envisaged in the Treaty of Waitangi signed between Māori and the British Crown in 1840. Aotearoa New Zealand social work education has a stated commitment to a Treaty-based partnership approach.

METHODS: This research engaged focus groups along with interviews of social work educators from nine of the 19 programmes across Aotearoa New Zealand to explore if, and how, this commitment to a Treaty-based approach was being demonstrated in the real world of practice. A diverse group of participants included Māori, Pākehā, Pasifika, and people identifying with other ethnic groups.

FINDINGS: Māori and non-Māori participants gave a range of perspectives relating to practising within a Treaty-based context. The Treaty should be understood historically but also in its contemporary expressions noting the extra demands placed on Māori. Non-Māori had an important role in demonstrating Treaty partnership and confronting White privilege. The Māori cultural approach of Kaupapa Māori was a foundation for a Treaty approach, and presented a challenge for non-Māori to learn this. A major challenge for programmes was having sufficient Māori staff.

Conclusions: Based on the findings, a Treaty-based teaching and learning framework has been developed to support educators as they advance decolonising practices and the indigenisation of social work education in Aotearoa New Zealand.

KEYWORDS: Social work education; Te Tiriti o Waitangi; decolonisation; Kaupapa Māori; White privilege

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He waka eke noa.

This whakata uki (Māori proverb) has several meanings, one of which is “a canoe we are all in together.”

In the context of this article on decolonising social work education, it is important to note that I identify myself as a non-indigenous Pākehā social work educator with British roots that go back to the arrival of my

ancestors to Aotearoa New Zealand in 1843. Many people have contributed to my research and to the development of the ideas articulated in this article, in particular, Māori social work colleagues and others whose support and assistance is acknowledged below.

Social work and social work education trace their roots to Western cultures and paradigms. Born primarily in the context of industrialised countries including Britain and the USA, the expansion of formalised social work was largely influenced by British and American imperialism. Indeed, the forerunner to the International Association of Schools of Social Work began in seven European countries between 1928 and 1929, and spread beyond the West only after World War II (Healy, 2008). As such, it has developed a range of expressions of culturally responsive practice over time following global anti-oppressive social work traditions (Dominelli, 2002). These have included a range of responses such as radical social work, anti-racism social work, feminist social work, critical social work, green social work, decolonising social work and community development more generally. All embrace the core values and principles of social work which include respect, self-determination, social justice and human rights. Despite the profession's deep commitment to advancing these important principles, social work has nevertheless had a complex history with respect to indigenous peoples, often finding itself at odds with indigenous communities, particularly in the context of disadvantaged populations where social work has represented state welfare interests and expectations to the detriment of indigenous peoples (Connolly & Ward, 2008).

Indigenous people have long fought for their rights and championed the establishment of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) (United Nations, 2008). This has formed part of the challenge to the profession of social work as a Western construct and its global alignment

with Western hegemony and globalisation. Slow to respond, it was only in the 2014 revision of the definition of social work that indigenous knowledge was included and recognised as legitimate knowledge within the profession (International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) & International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), 2014). Writers have argued that the experience of many indigenous social workers reflects a continuation of colonisation and its oppressive effect by the dominant West (Gray, Coates, Yellow Bird, & Hetherington, 2016). Other countries and groupings of people from the global South and East have also resisted assimilation with the West (Sewpaul, 2014).

Frameworks supporting decolonising practice in social work education are established globally, such as in Australia with the *Getting it Right* framework (Zubrzycki et al., 2014), although they may not necessarily sit within regulatory systems. The Australian framework, while built on an explicit conceptualisation of knowing, being and doing linked to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (Martin & Mirraoopa, 2003), was also informed by other indigenous models and broader social work approaches including community development and human rights-based perspectives. Other human service professions such as medicine have also addressed colonisation with a global indigenous led network calling for the decolonisation of medical education (Jones et al., 2019).

In Aotearoa New Zealand, Māori have pursued their indigenous rights and resisted colonisation with *He Whakaputanga—the Declaration of Independence*, signed by Northern Chiefs and recognised by the British in 1835 (Orange, 2015). Māori have asserted the primacy of the Treaty of Waitangi signed in 1840, particularly Te Tiriti o Waitangi (hereafter Te Tiriti), the version in the Māori language that most Māori leaders signed which more clearly affirmed the sovereignty of Māori as equal partners to the British (Orange, 2015). Te Tiriti held the

vision of a mutually beneficial partnership and even of “bi-polity” where equitable governance could have been developed (Ruwhiu, Te Hira, Eruera, & Elkington, 2016, p. 80). Part of the movement for addressing breaches of Te Tiriti are tribal settlements with the Government through the Waitangi Tribunal hearing process where a number of settlements have now been completed (Waitangi Tribunal, 2019).

Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW), the social work professional body for Aotearoa made a formal commitment to honouring Te Tiriti in 1992 (Nash, 2001) and has operationalised that commitment in various ways including a shared governance model between Māori and non-Māori beginning in the 1990s (McNabb, 2014). The *ANZASW Practice Standards* also incorporate this commitment (ANZASW, 2014). More recently ANZASW has changed the *ANZASW Commitment to Biculturalism* to the *ANZASW Commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi* within its ethical code to further emphasise the foundation provided by Te Tiriti (ANZASW, 2019). The Aotearoa tertiary education sector also has a broad commitment to aligning with principles of Te Tiriti and boosting the achievement of Māori (Ministry of Education & Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment, 2014). Examples of Māori academic success include achieving the goal of 500 Māori PhD graduates in 2006 (Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga, 2019).

Honouring Te Tiriti requires a partnership approach where indigenous partners are recognised for their insider knowledge of the colonisation problem, alongside non-indigenous allies who are often the dominant majority and a key partner in creating change within conservative systems (Ruwhiu et al., 2016). This has become an imperative in Aotearoa New Zealand because of the deprivation experienced by Māori and their call for self-determination in finding solutions. It also invites major work by the non-indigenous partner to engage in decolonisation (Huygens, 2016).

One of the arguments made for adopting a Tiriti-based approach to education, which brings a Māori approach alongside a Western approach, is that a holistic Māori approach is likely to benefit all learners as well as accelerating learning for groups such as Māori who may have traditionally done poorly within education. In research within a secondary education context, it was found that the holistic Māori approach within *Kia Eke Panuku: Building on Success*, led to improved outcomes for Māori and non-Māori alike (Berryman & Eley, 2017).

There are a number of accounts of decolonising practice in social work education internationally, including the Hawai’i example where a whole social work department in a major university undertook the process of change (Morelli, Mataira, & Kaulukukui, 2013). Other accounts include more personal stories of the journey by non-indigenous practitioners confronting the reality of racism, White privilege and general ignorance of indigenous histories and knowledge, in Australia (Gair, 2007) and in Aotearoa (Crawford, 2016). Research examining global and local social work education standards has found that there was a general affirmation of decolonising and democratising practices in both Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand (McNabb & Connolly, 2019). However, the research noted that there was more that could be done to advance the goals of equity and social justice by regulatory authorities and the wider profession in advancing decolonisation and democratisation (McNabb, 2017). Further research in Aotearoa New Zealand has clearly illustrated the importance of leadership in advancing democratising and decolonising practices (McNabb, 2017).

Building on these earlier studies, this research explores how a stated commitment to a Tiriti-based approach is being operationalised by social work educators in their practice. From this, and insights from international research, a Tiriti-based framework for practice is presented.

Methods

The study included qualitative focus groups and individual interviews with social work educators to investigate questions relating to decolonising practices in Aotearoa. Focus groups are a well-established approach within qualitative research (Barbour & Morgan, 2017) as are individual interviews (Lichtman, 2014). These approaches allowed a more flexible and deeper conversation with educators exploring their daily experiences of promoting decolonising practices in social work programmes.

Social work educators from all 19 social work programme providers in Aotearoa New Zealand were invited to participate in the study ranging across university, polytechnic, and private institutional contexts. Unlike many other countries, Aotearoa allows for a range of tertiary education institutional contexts for social work education. A range of providers were engaged which gave a sector-wide spread of representation. Participants from nine of the 19 institutions were involved. This representation covered: Wānanga, polytechnic and university institutions; metropolitan and regional geographies; campus based and distance mediums; Māori, Pacific and mixed cultural settings; bachelor and masters level programmes; and small and large programmes. They represented a range of women and men of varying ages and experience in both practice and education; Pākehā, Māori, Pacific, African, and other European ethnicities were represented.

Numbers of participants in the focus groups varied, most had a minimum of three participants, while one had only two. There were seven focus groups conducted. Much of the literature talks about four being a minimum number for a focus group but others discuss the importance of the quality of what is shared as being more important (Liamputtong, 2011). Interviews were conducted with three people from different programmes due to insufficient

numbers being available to make up a focus group.

Most focus groups and interviews were conducted using online synchronous digital technology through the Blackboard Collaborate platform or through Skype with a minority of interviews conducted in person. A semi-structured schedule of questions was used that included themes from previous document analysis, specifically relating to “service user and student participation, student representativeness, indigenous rights and political action, gender and cultural equity, access and equity, and quality social work education and broader issues of equity” (McNabb & Connolly, 2019, p. 8). Participants were asked to what extent and in what way the themes were evident in their programme. The data were analysed thematically using the NVivo data analysis software tool. Quotes reference whether a focus group or an individual participant was involved and use numbering to account for all contributors.

Ethics approval was gained and the study was regarded as a minimal risk project by the Human Ethics Advisory Group of the University of Melbourne; approval number 1748887. All participants in the study gave informed consent. A Māori Reference Group included three senior Māori leaders, and was engaged for consultation at key points of the research including ethics approval and for the initial research-based publications. Consultation was also sought for key publications with experienced Māori social workers. Indigenous researchers have criticised the effect of colonisation on indigenous people and on the research approaches that have been used to study them (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012). As noted, I identify as Pākehā (European ethnicity, non-Māori) and have been working with Māori participants in this research as well as exploring themes of colonisation in the knowledge that I am linked to the dominant Pākehā group. Engaging with the Māori Reference Group supported me in

working more effectively with decolonising methodologies and directly with Māori participants. An example of this practice is Te Kāhui Kaihautū, the Māori Reference Group for the research organisation, the New Zealand Institute of Language, Brain and Behaviour (2016).

There are a number of limitations relating to this research. The research explores the views of participant social work educators and cannot be generalised more broadly across the whole group of social work educators in Aotearoa New Zealand. Nor does the research include the voices of students or people who represent the wider social work sector including service users, iwi and Māori organisations, community organisations and other stakeholders such as government. Also of note is that the research is a doctoral study and, although a Māori Reference Group was engaged for consultation, I have undertaken this research as a sole researcher, and have not engaged with a Māori partner as might otherwise be indicated given the theme of Tiriti-based partnerships. The findings, and also the framework developed later in the article, are therefore limited in this regard. The framework is presented in order to encourage further debate and action on ways in which non-Māori social work educators might advance a Tiriti-based approach. Future research and practice development would indicate a partnership approach was essential.

Findings

Social work educator participants are at the frontline of teaching and learning, interacting with students on a daily basis. They highlighted the overall challenge of operationalising a commitment to Te Tiriti in practice.

The findings have been gathered under the headings of: Ngā Mōhiotanga—knowing; Ngā Whakaahuatanga—being; and Te Whakatinanatanga—doing. The frame of knowing, being, and doing resonates

with conceptualisations of indigenous research and practice within the Australian context (Martin & Mirraboopa 2003) and, in particular, with the findings of the study, as participants spoke about “doing, understanding, knowing and being Māori” (Focus Group 5).

Ngā Mōhiotanga—knowing: Understanding Te Tiriti and Kaupapa Māori

All programmes expressed a commitment to honouring Te Tiriti and its expectations with respect to partnership and self-determination for Māori. It is a broad-based commitment that can be expressed in many ways. It links to many other expressions of inequity such as poverty and its disproportionate rate amongst Māori, and it relates to having a deep knowledge of, and commitment to, decolonising practices. Educators noted that developing a depth of understanding of Te Tiriti and Kaupapa Māori involves people in an ongoing process of learning: “How we’re committing to Treaty principles? It’s a work in progress” (Focus Group 1).

Educators also appreciated the dynamic nature of culture—it is not static and unchanging. Rather, it adapts and responds to contemporary contexts, requiring continual engagement and development of new understandings. Some Māori staff in particular made a plea for staff and students to be aware of this dynamic context of Te Tiriti settlement and support for ongoing political change:

Just linking the work politically in terms of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and continuing to do that; especially as we’re going into post-settlement ... Things are changing very quickly in terms of tangata whenua [people of the land] and it’s getting people to move forward with us and not keep us back in the past. (Focus Group 7)

Hence, Te Tiriti has contemporary expression in the settlement process and the way in which many hapū (sub-tribes) and iwi

(tribes) are undergoing development in this post-settlement phase. Along with understanding issues for Māori historically and the contemporary issues arising from this, an understanding of the extra demands that Māori face from their whānau (family) and hapori (community) were considered to be important for both Māori students and staff. Understanding the cultural demands for students and how these impact on dynamics in the classroom was noted: “You see with the Māori students, the extra demands that are placed upon them, in terms of family whānau commitments” (Participant 3).

Understanding cultural dynamics operating in the classroom was also seen as critical. For example, educators spoke of Māori staff and students experiencing racism and discrimination and the need for cultural safety practices across the programme:

You know, I’ve got to be honest; I have experienced institutional racism as a tangata whenua and Māori practitioner and lecturer ... from a staff point of view, but also a student point of view ... I mean, that’s a reality for them—not just within this institute but externally as well. (Focus Group 7)

The employment of Māori staff brought an essential and critical contribution to the programme:

I think we are quite lucky here in that for 20 years we’ve had at least two or three Māori staff and we’ve had amongst the rest of the staff cohort, a commitment to doing, understanding, knowing and being Māori. (Focus Group 5)

Educators also noted, however, the importance of having non-Māori staff both knowledgeable and committed to a Tiriti partnership approach. While they saw Māori staff as having the primary engagement with respect to teaching Te Tiriti and Māori knowledge, they saw non-Māori staff as having a role as allies and partners in the building of a Te Tiriti-based approach.

At the same time, non-Māori recognised the limitations of their competence and questioned the appropriateness of teaching and assessing the competence of students to practise social work with Māori: “Is it ... appropriate for me, as [a] Taiwi [non-Māori] educator, to then be teaching Māori knowledge? ... we don’t want to overly rely on our Māori colleagues” (Focus Group 1). Nonetheless, non-Māori staff were seen to have a role in both understanding and advancing Māori knowledge in the programme and, in particular, having a responsibility to teach about White privilege and racism amongst other structural themes, and to ensure students demonstrated this knowledge in their learning and practice: “Then there are things like teaching about White privilege, which they [Māori staff] don’t see as their responsibility; it is our [non-Māori staff] responsibility to teach that” (Participant 4).

Ngā Whakaahuatanga—being: Integrating a Tiriti-based programme identity

Participants suggested that becoming knowledgeable about Te Tiriti and Kaupapa Māori and understanding its impact in contemporary contexts represents the beginning of a process of developing a Tiriti-based programme identity. Internalising the knowledge base does not always come easy. Indeed, some programmes noted a minority of students who were taking time to be open to the message about Te Tiriti and to cultural responsiveness with Māori.

One of the principles of Te Tiriti is sharing power between Māori and non-Māori based on rights that Māori have. Appreciating that there is a difference between knowing about Kaupapa Māori and actually integrating this knowledge as a fundamental aspect of programme identity was noted:

One of the critical things about this for us is, just because people are well-educated in regards to the Treaty and they have understandings of things like

human rights and social justice, it does not ensure they share power with Māori. (Focus Group 5)

Students can learn this, and learn how it can inspire political action. Educators saw this as important learning within programmes, as well as being publicly activated by staff. This was seen as requiring appropriate knowledge by staff about Te Tiriti and the skill to support this type of student learning and action.

Strengthening Pākehā responsibility for teaching Te Tiriti and a partnership approach requires in-depth integrated knowledge, and some programmes highlighted the efforts non-Māori staff had gone to in strengthening their identification with cultural change. At the same time, Māori staff have to make choices about how their identity is expressed in mainstream social work programmes. It was acknowledged as complex when they attempt to engage in a Kaupapa Māori way:

They ask, "Are you a Māori social worker or are you a social worker who's Māori?" That is the question, because one would attribute to mainstream thinking and the other would attribute to pedagogy Māori ... thinking. (Focus Group 9)

Students from the Pacific or other migrant ethnic groups who do not identify as Māori or Pākehā often struggle with their relationship to Te Tiriti and indigenous rights. Staff were nevertheless seen as important contributors to complex cultural identity discussions. At the same time, it was considered important that students and staff with migrant experience be supported to claim a safe migrant space, "where we can talk about settling in and finding resources" (Focus Group 10).

The strength of a programme's integrated Tiriti identity varied, which was something that Māori students sought advice from Māori staff about, particularly when considering which programme to apply for. Appreciating that not all programmes

provide the depth of Kaupapa Māori teaching that may be sought, a student could be guided toward a programme offering a better cultural fit:

In terms of the student make-up there are some students that come to us with particular requests ... [we may] send them somewhere else, because they particularly, or strongly want to work with hapū [Māori sub-tribes]; ... they want their starting point for learning and interpreting to be Māori. (Focus Group 5)

The Wānanga (Māori-based education institution) is, arguably, most likely to have the strongest Tiriti identity, providing a more solid base for teaching Māori knowledge and practice than mainstream institutions. This raised questions for some educators about the degree to which mainstream programmes can fully integrate a Kaupapa Māori identity: "And so, if you think about the Wānanga, the likes of Raukawa and Aotearoa, their starting [point] for understanding is te ao Māori [the Māori world]" (Focus Group 5). This is not necessarily the case for mainstream programmes, where the degree to which they are able to integrate a Tiriti identity also depends upon their ability to employ sufficient Māori staff.

In practical terms, participants spoke about the struggle to recruit and retain Māori social work academics. Although external Māori experts could be contracted in, non-Māori staff saw the importance of partnership relationships for effective teaching. Non-Māori have a role in supporting Māori workforce development and in sharing Te Tiriti-based partnership responsibility in the programme. Some were critical of the standards set by the Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB) especially the requirement for a master's level qualification which excluded many Māori staff, ultimately impacting on their ability to advance an integrated Tiriti identity: "I don't know why Māori are not applying, but it's also restricted by the

SWRB requirements and I think that's the biggest [reason] ... we've [also] lost staff because of that" (Focus Group 2).

Te Whakatinanatanga—doing: Operationalising Te Tiriti and Kaupapa Māori in practice

Giving effect to bicultural practice in the classroom was seen as complex by many participants, particularly in mainstream programmes. Educators expressed some of the challenges: "Our bi-culturalism course ... there's always sort of a fear from teachers around teaching this course. It's one of the hard ones ... students feel uncomfortable, and they give poor evaluations" (Participant 6).

Within this dynamic teaching environment, teaching staff need to have a deep understanding of, and confidence in, engaging with the ideas, and be skilled facilitators who are able to manage "hard conversations in the classroom." Te Tiriti provides a base for addressing indigenous justice which can then be applied across a range of equity issues: "I think, irrespective of the issue with gender, ethnicity, socio economic ... once you've applied the framework with the students once ... it's far easier for them to see it in other areas" (Focus Group 9).

Te Tiriti itself is a major topic for study, along with the context of colonisation and its negative effect on Māori. Moving beyond the basics, developing an advanced course on Te Tiriti was seen as a sign of leadership and solidarity by staff. In addition, having a specific focus on Te Tiriti, and embedding Māori culture across the programme was seen as a way of integrating Māori culture and knowledge more thoroughly and also for gaining feedback for programme improvement:

I think in addition to that specific cultural context stream ... we also try and embed te reo Māori [Māori language] in all the other subjects, as much as we can. So, every single day we have karakia [prayer]

and waiata [singing], and finish [with] the karakia. (Focus Group 1)

Integrating Māori approaches and Western bodies of knowledge was also seen as a way to learn Māori knowledge while, at the same time, helping to meet the social work professional obligation of Tiriti-based practice aligned with the *ANZASW Code of Ethics* (2019): "In my programme of sociology and psychology ... [what] I've been excited about is ... developing an understanding about different Māori models" (Focus Group 9).

Some staff were using theories of intersectionality, which interrogates how multiple oppressions interact and accumulate harm for those with related multiple identities, alongside the relevant dimensions of privilege (Almeida, Werkmeister Rozas, Cross-Denny, Lee, & Yamada, 2019). This was seen as a means through which this blending of knowledges could occur:

I would say that certainly the dynamic in this country is far dominated by culture, and I think that the feminism and the class issues are embedded within [this] ... I think we've got a course at first year level which unpacks intersectionality really well, and gets students to do the sort of "ko wai au?" self-identification and location (Focus Group 8).

Pacific and Māori participants wove Pacific and Māori models alongside critical Western models in their teaching:

This year for research methods, I decided to not include the Pasifika and Māori models but to focus on emancipating post-modern and feminist research; because I had a feeling that the students were thinking that the Brown models were weak links and we weren't but of course emancipating post-modernist and feminist research led us all the way back to being Māori, Pacific and Aotearoa New Zealand. (Focus Group 9)

Educators also spoke of a range of initiatives that have been shown to support Māori students. These often involve Māori staff and senior Māori students mentoring other students and using culturally rich ideas and processes. This cultural richness helps to bring holistic responses to the person and their issues within the context of family and community: “I’m part of the faculty Māori advancement group. We meet once a month, and we talk about Māori student retention, and ways of encouraging Māori mentorship, and growing Māori post-graduate students” (Participant 3).

Overall, educators considered programme leadership to be critical in driving Kaupapa Māori, particularly where non-Māori show courage to act and Māori staff are respected for their position and unique contribution:

It’s imperative that you have a senior right up the very top level of support for this; it’s too hard otherwise. And, our senior academics behind us as well, our academic leads ... I also want to acknowledge how we have to have courage when we go into cultural space ... our colleagues are having those courageous cultural conversations with us [and] also respecting our status as tangata whenua. (Focus Group 7)

Discussion

Indigenous voices have raised major questions about how well Western-rooted social work can ever form an equitable partnership with indigenous knowledges and practices (Gray et al., 2016). The effects of colonisation are pervasive and the contemporary context of neoliberalism and globalisation only serve to strengthen Western pedagogies. Even when members of the dominant group are committed to change there seems to be a myriad of obstacles that get in the way of operationalising such a commitment. Indigenous social work educators nevertheless continue to pursue an equitable partnership as a matter of self-determination

and supporting the principle of social justice. Non-indigenous social work educator allies also remain committed to the challenge and to the invitation by indigenous colleagues to partner in this cause.

The findings of this study highlight the challenges and rewards of developing culturally responsive practices in social work education. The key terms: *Ngā Mōhiotanga*—knowing, *Ngā Whakaahuatanga*—being, and *Te Whakatinanatanga*—doing, that relate to understanding, integrating and operationalising *Te Tiriti*, present an important and strongly aligned conceptualisation of the issue from the perspectives of the participants in this study. These findings have now been incorporated into the following framework (Figure 1) that serves to privilege a Māori ontology in ways that challenge colonialism, racism and White privilege, and respectfully builds more culturally responsive practices.

Honouring Te Tiriti partnership

Te Tiriti is at the centre of the “authorising environment” for a culturally responsive approach to social work education in Aotearoa New Zealand (McNabb & Connolly, 2019). The central place of *Te Tiriti* is also evidenced within institutional policies and charters (see for example, *Te Noho Kotahitanga* (Unitec Institute of Technology, 2001)). ANZASW, the social work profession, has had a constitutional commitment to upholding *Te Tiriti* since 1992 (Nash, 2001), and the SWRB includes a commitment to *Te Tiriti* in its *Programme Recognition Standards* (Social Workers Registration Board, 2018). The SWRB also initiated a consultation process on the expression of *Te Tiriti* within its practice standards which yielded the draft policy *Kaitiakitanga Framework* (Social Workers Registration Board, 2016b).

Having enough Māori staff remains a priority issue for many programmes, as noted in the findings, and is a critical

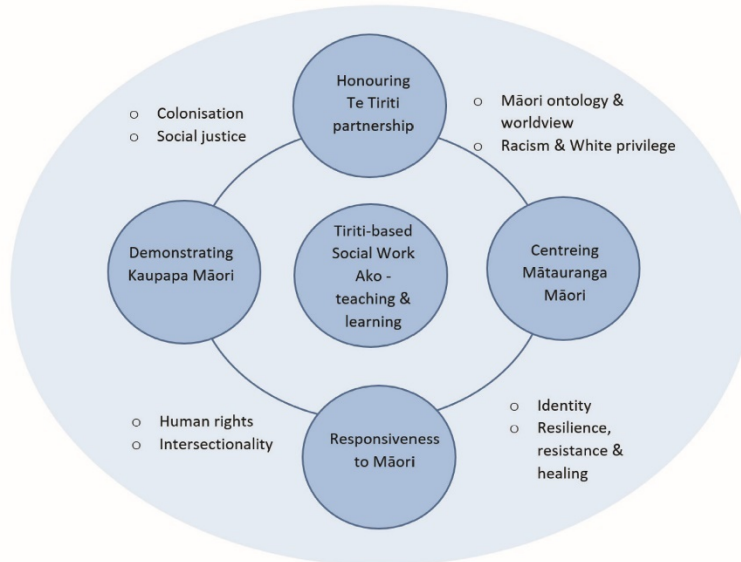


Figure 1. Framework for Tiriti-based social work: Ako—teaching and learning.

component of a Tiriti-based programme. However, changes to the standards requiring all social work academic staff to have completed a master's qualification for teaching on a bachelor-level programme signaled a barrier to Māori staff in particular, as a number were either yet to start a masters or were needing more time to complete it. This led to the Council for Social Work Educators in Aotearoa NZ (CSWEANZ) to write and ask for more flexibility on this requirement with the suggestion that each programme could have one position where a staff member with key Māori, Pacific or fieldwork knowledge was in the process of completing their master's qualification (CSWEANZ, personal communication, August 5, 2017). However, the SWRB declined this request saying that these staff could be hired in a tutorial-type role and not have full responsibility for core social work courses (SWRB, personal communication, October 6, 2017). CSWEANZ remained

unsatisfied and the problem of hiring enough Māori staff continues.

This broad-ranging commitment to honouring Te Tiriti influences all dimensions of the *Framework for Tiriti-based Social Work*, supporting the criticality of partnership between Māori and Tangata Tiriti (non-Māori Tiriti partners) in all aspects of practice. Honouring Te Tiriti is aligned with the social work commitment to social justice, human rights and the validity of indigenous knowledge (IFSW & IASSW, 2014). This is very much a dynamic process that will be inherently challenging given its relational context and the structural disjuncture between the colonised and the coloniser. The tension and potential within this process has been termed the "3rd cultural space" based on Bhabha's theory of culture (1994, cited in Zubrzycki et al., 2014). It speaks to the space where "new knowledge, insights and understandings about identity and positioning emerge" (p. 19).

Centring Mātauranga Māori

Centring Mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) and de-centring Western knowledge is a critical component of the Framework. Participants in the research frequently spoke of their own experience of this process as the use of Mātauranga Māori is ubiquitous across education in Aotearoa New Zealand, though at varying levels of strength. Mātauranga Māori was embedded in education legislation in 1989 to support new *kura kaupapa* (Māori language medium schools) linked to government obligations under Te Tiriti (Calman, 2019). This plays out operationally in a number of particular ways. Within the tertiary education context, there is a range of government policies of relevance including the strategy for developing Māori success, *Ka Hikitia—Accelerating Success 2013–2017* (Ministry of Education, 2013). The government also funds *Ako Aotearoa*, an organisation which supports tertiary educator practice development to ensure students' success, with a priority of Māori student success.

The term *epistemological equality* (Zubrzycki et al., 2014, p. 17) is one of four key concepts in the *Getting it Right Framework* and has been used as a way to talk about how two sets of knowledges can be applied within a learning context. This sits within the notion of ontology, one of 10 key dimensions used in the *Getting it Right Framework*, where it relates to what is believed to be real, whereas epistemology relates to ways of thinking about that reality (Zubrzycki et al., 2014). Holding two sets of knowledges aligns well with the partnership spirit of Te Tiriti. The fact that indigenous and Western-based knowledge come from two different paradigms nevertheless highlights the challenge in incorporating these different knowledges in an equivalent way, also noted in other cultural contexts such as the Pacific with its varying epistemologies. As such, the joining of two sets of knowledge across the whole curriculum will avoid the risk of indigenous knowledge being an add-on or treated as a minor or less important

area of learning. As a way of exposing the dominance of Western knowledge, it is an important aspect of addressing colonisation and racism. Zubrzycki et al. (2014) proposes that Whiteness theorising is vital to this process of supporting non-indigenous students to recognise the privileges of being White and/or non-indigenous to help set up more respectful and collaborative relationships with indigenous people.

Demonstrating Kaupapa Māori

This dimension examines the Māori cultural values and practices that support teaching and learning Mātauranga Māori. This demonstrates rangatiratanga (self-determination) and the right of Māori to determine what and how Māori knowledge and culture should be taught. As with the other dimensions, Kaupapa Māori principles can operate alongside good Western educational principles. The *Hei Toko* research report found that “good Kaupapa Māori based practice needs to be learner centred, whole-of-organisation, dynamic, responsive and highly adaptive” (Apanui & Kirikiri, 2015, p. iv). They identified six components of a Kaupapa Māori model: Whakamana (empowerment), Ako (holistic teaching and learning), Te Tiriti o Waitangi (dual governance), Manaakitanga (care and support), Whanaungatanga (building relationships), and Kotahitanga (collaboration).

Demonstrating Kaupapa Māori practice can be a challenge, particularly so for non-indigenous lecturers when it represents a weakness in their knowledge base requiring focused development, and is often part of a broader decolonisation process (Apanui & Kirikiri, 2015).

More recently, the government tertiary quality assurance body for non-university institutions launched a Kaupapa-Māori-based framework, *Te Hono o Te Kahurangi Evaluative Quality Assurance* (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2017). This principle-based approach privileges Māori

responses to tertiary quality assurance with a focus on Māori-based institutions, but also looks to mainstream institutions wanting to improve Kaupapa Māori in practice.

Māori practice responsiveness

Cultural competence has been frequently used as a term to describe the way in which people practise respectfully and with relevance to people from diverse cultures. Competencies is the language used by the SWRB for social work practitioners in describing expectations of their practice with service users (SWRB, 2016a). *Cultural responsiveness* is nevertheless emerging as a more helpful term that speaks both to the ability to develop collaborative relationships with people and to critically reflect on one's own positioning and the structural context in which practice occurs (Connolly, Crichton-Hill, & Ward, 2006; Zubrzycki et al., 2014). I have used the term *Māori practice responsiveness* in the framework to focus specifically on this aspect of critical reflexivity and to emphasise the importance of "building culturally responsive practices that resonate with the world of Māori" (Ruwhiu, 2017, p. 107). As noted earlier, intersectionality is a helpful tool for critically engaging with the differences within groups as well as between groups that addresses other dimensions of oppression and privilege such as gender, sexuality, class, ability and age among others. The goal for social work being anti-oppressive and anti-privilege based education and practice (Mullaly & West, 2018).

A focus on identity is important for both students and educators. Whereas Te Tiriti brought two parties together as tangata whenua (literally people of the land) and tangata Tiriti (literally people of the Treaty, non-Māori represented by the British signatory of Te Tiriti), the breaching of Te Tiriti and the effects of colonisation mean both parties are located in a social and structural arrangement of ongoing oppression for Māori that has created challenges for embracing both Māori and non-Māori identities. Māori

have a right to be fully Māori, and non-Māori, including White people, have a responsibility to address colonial and White privilege that comes with their identity and position. Stories of Māori resilience and resistance form important knowledge for both partners to hold and is a prerequisite to developing a more equitable relationship with the prospect of healing for Māori and a healing of the breach of partnership that was originally promised in the signing of Te Tiriti.

Conclusions

Te Tiriti o Waitangi is the founding document for Aotearoa New Zealand and provides an authorising environment for those wanting to build their practice on Te Tiriti (McNabb, 2019). It has been embraced by various fields of practice, including the education sector and the social work profession, as the cornerstone for their activities. The global movement for indigenous rights provides a vital backdrop for the Aotearoa context, and there are strong parallels with the global initiative to decolonise education across health and human services, including social work.

The social work education sector has committed itself to honouring Te Tiriti but the findings of this research suggest that it is challenged in its efforts in a number of areas. *The Framework for Tiriti Based Social Work: Ako—Teaching and Learning*, has been presented as a way to assist social work education on its decolonising journey, through further debate and action. Offering an organising construct for social work education and its allies within Aotearoa New Zealand, it supports a movement for change and contributes to the global mission of decolonisation.

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Chapter 8

Democratizing Social Work Education: A Leadership Framework for Action



David McNabb

...although our interests as citizens vary, each one is an artery to the heart that pumps life through the body politic, and each is important to the health of democracy (Moyers 2007, p.)

Social work has long supported the democratization of systems and processes in ways that are both fair and equitable, and that better respond to the needs of service users. This commitment to inclusive development has implications for social work education as efforts to democratize are shaped by various cultural demands and imperatives from within, and outside the academy. The chapter begins with an introduction to the core social work theme of equity and its application to social work education. This includes the way in which participatory practices can demonstrate a commitment to the goal of equity. The place of democratizing practices within social work education is explored along with the role of standards and how they can reinforce the process of democratization. Based on research, a number of enabling elements of a democratizing environment within social work education are proposed, highlighting leadership as a key dimension in operationalizing democratizing practices.

Democratizing Practices and Leadership in Social Work Education

Introducing democratizing principles into social work and social work education has long been a feature of the discipline's commitment to social justice and inclusivity. Shapiro (2011) argued for a democratic basis for human relationships with practices that have the ability to 'promote the democratization of power relations as they are reproduced into the future' (Shapiro 2011, p. 273). In practice, it requires that systems and processes are made accessible to people and that they also participate and have a say in decisions that affect them (Gathiram 2003).

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A further key focus in practice has been the participation of service users in aspects of social service delivery. Giving effect to both representation and citizenship rights, this is seen as a particularly important focus across international contexts (Kjellberg and French 2011; Gutman et al. 2012). McNicoll and Yan (2009, p. 149), from a perspective of Chinese social work, nicely capture this connection between democracy and citizenship: 'if democracy is real, it has to fit the wants and decisions of the citizens it serves', as they call for a 're-creation of social work spaces around democratic principles' (p. 140).

In promoting democratizing practices, standards and regulatory frameworks have been identified as having an important role to play (McNabb and Connolly 2019). The Global Standards for the Education and Training of the Social Work Profession (Global Standards) and a country's local standards highlight the importance of reinforcing equity across social work programmes. This includes service user and student participation, but also a broader set of equity-related expectations: 'student representativeness, indigenous rights and political action, gender and cultural equity, access and equity' (McNabb and Connolly 2019, p. 42). Leadership at the local level is seen as necessary, particularly in the context of countries sharing a colonized history where decolonizing practices can have a critical impact (McNabb 2017). Despite the importance of the Global Standards both reinforcing and shaping equity-focused expectations, research suggests leaders of programmes in some countries may actually have minimal knowledge of the standards (McNabb 2019c). This potentially limits the impact that they can have.

Despite this, social work educators have often led the charge in terms of promoting democratizing practices, and leaders are seen as being particularly important in negotiating and enabling the organizational context in which social work education is situated (McNabb 2019c). Indeed, a group of social work education leaders in Australia has noted the pressing issues in their sector and highlighted the significant demands on leaders (Connolly et al. 2017). They particularly note the importance of thinking creatively and acting with future requirements in mind, not only reacting to what is considered most urgent. In a review of the global literature relating to social work education, the social work academic workforce is highlighted as critically important to both succession planning and leadership into the future (Howard and Williams 2017). The importance of growing the indigenous social work academic workforce in Aotearoa New Zealand (Aotearoa) is also seen as critical (McNabb 2019a), and the same can be said for other countries with similar histories such as Australia (Zubrzycki et al. 2014), Canada (Bruyere 2008), Hawai'i in the USA (Morelli et al. 2013), and Africa in general (Kreitzer 2012). This emphasis on pursuing diversity and indigenous development is a key element in advancing democratizing and decolonizing practices internationally across social work education.

Operationalizing Democratizing Practices

The challenge of leadership is one of mobilizing others ‘to make extraordinary things happen in organisations’ (Kouzes and Posner 2012, p. 2). For busy social work academics who find themselves in combined managerial and leadership positions, the notion of moving beyond the daily operational demands of contemporary tertiary institutions towards the creative advancement of democratizing practices might seem overwhelming, or at least daunting. Moved by Einstein’s vision of making the complex simple, an empirically based framework has been developed to support leaders to better enable a broader strategic engagement with democratizing practices in social work education (Fig. 8.1). The framework is informed by a number of studies that explore democratizing practices, beginning with an analysis of global social work education standards and local standards within Australia and Aotearoa (McNabb and Connolly 2019) and its application to the field of leadership within social work education (McNabb 2017). The equity issues that arose from this early study led to research with social work education leaders in Aotearoa using semi-structured interviews (McNabb 2019b, 2019c) and further research with social work educators in Aotearoa, also using semi-structured interviews but this time with focus groups (McNabb 2019a), where democratizing and decolonizing practices were explored within their own schools. The findings from these studies specifically inform the framework suggesting that there are a number of enabling elements that promote a stronger democratizing environment within social work education, all equally important to the embedding of ideas over time. The framework captures

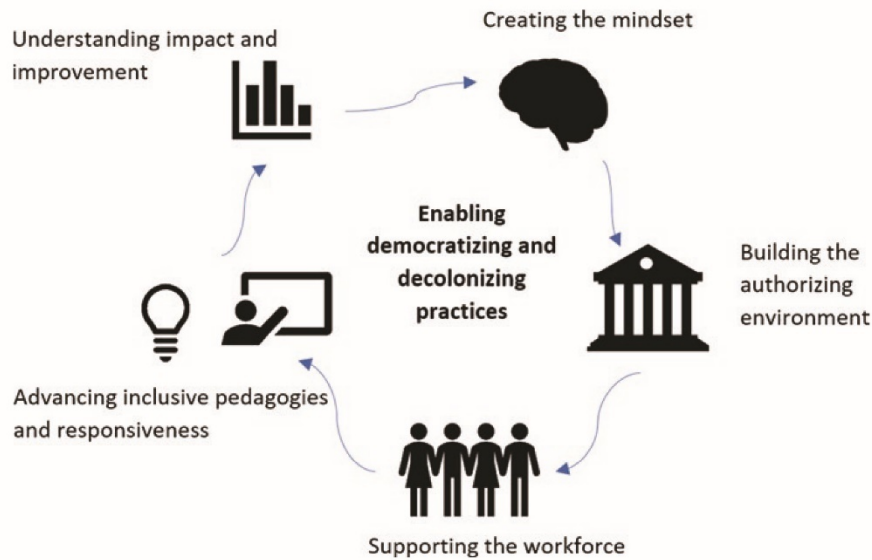


Fig. 8.1 Enabling elements of a democratizing environment within social work education

these critical elements of a democratizing environment that will support the development of a strategic and integrated approach to the embedding of democratizing practices. While this includes service user and student participatory responsiveness, it also incorporates organizational and workforce elements that leaders say are critical to creating a democratizing programme (McNabb 2019c). Shier (2001) developed a five-level model of citizen participation that progressed from listening to people, supporting them to express themselves, noting people's views in decision-making, involving people in decision-making, and finally sharing power and responsibility with people. This has also been applied, in particular, to service user involvement in social work education as an example of democratizing practices (McNabb 2017). These enabling elements supporting the framework are identified as creating the mindset, building an authorizing environment, supporting the workforce, advancing inclusive pedagogies and cultural responsiveness, and understanding impact and improvement (Fig. 8.1).

Creating the Mindset

Creating the democratizing mindset relates to aspects of organizational culture and leadership. It is about creating and embedding internalized ways of thinking that share some similarity with Bourdieu's notion of habitus (2002). Habitus represents a level of group cultural thinking that, when internalized, has the potential to influence individual and organizational behaviour. They become the way things are thought about and done. Accepting that there have been criticisms of Bourdieu's concept of habitus (Archer 2007), but nevertheless influenced by the spirit of its creative potential, instilling a democratizing habitus within the academy has the potential to help create processes of learning that engage actively with democratizing ideas and thereby position democratizing practices at the forefront of individual and organizational thinking. Leaders can help to make democratizing practices integral to the mindset of their organization.

This idea of creating the mindset as a purposeful process of learning offers potential for leaders to create an environment in which the democratizing mindset aligns with disciplinary and potentially organizational values and beliefs about what is important to uphold and advance:

Fuse those values that you know about... and then we're moving from that toward decolonization (of the whole programme). (11) (McNabb 2019b, p. 41)

And leaders saw themselves as having an important enabling role in this:

As a manager or a leader, that's where I see I have quite a high level of responsibility for the profession to ensure that we are being genuine in our commitment and I see my role as the enabler of that. (3) (McNabb 2019b, p. 41)

This enabling role is action-oriented, involving the development of strategies that identify the particular cultural change elements that require attention, and working on a plan that reinforces and targets what needs to change:

So, the view was we've started a process. So, I would say we're probably average. Well, yeah, okay; but actually, the intention is to take us beyond that, and really start to do the tough stuff. (11) (McNabb 2019c, p. 9)

It is about vision and values – creating the vision of what is possible, and engaging with the values of staff, the profession and the broader community.

Building the Authorizing Environment

An authorizing environment provides the authority that is needed to make change happen. Originally conceptualized by Moore (1997), the authorizing environment refers to the legitimizing of processes across and within systems. It provides the mandate for action. Some leaders I spoke to suggested that when senior members of the organization created an authorizing environment, it had the potential to cascade down to programme level:

It came from the top, in terms of our commitment to biculturalism (indigenous and non indigenous partnership)... So, we've had conversations as a faculty about that.. I think it's flown through to our school and conversations at staff meetings, and it's gone through to our program level and it's showing up in class. (6) (McNabb 2019b, p. 42)

There was also a plea by minority staff to have senior staff backing a culturally responsive and democratizing approach to teaching:

It's imperative that you have a senior right up the very top level of support for this; it's too hard otherwise. And, our senior academics behind us as well, our academic leads... I also want to acknowledge how we have to have courage when we go into cultural space. I see that that's developing more and more, and a number of our colleagues are having those courageous cultural conversations with us. So, I need to acknowledge our colleagues as well for coming into that space with us; but also respecting our status as tangata whenua (indigenous people) as well, which I have personally appreciated – that I'm not challenged constantly because that would just drive me up the wall. (7)

Others stressed the importance of drivers for change at the local level, suggesting an interplay of influence:

But, there has to be something from below; there has to be a cultural change from below that embraces that commonality and uses it to work together. (10)

Sometimes, social work can contribute to an authorizing environment for the wider institution given its strengths in equity-focused policy and practice:

We start off with (addressing) racism, and then develop from there into decolonization. So, hopefully what we want to be is an example to the rest of (the) institution; about how you can do some of this stuff. That's our plan. (11)

The social work profession should also claim its strengths towards an authorizing environment within the interdisciplinary context and even globally:

I think Aotearoa is looked at, and looked upon, as being quite progressive in this area (decolonizing practices). So, in our profession, we need to be driving this and leading this; or else, people from other broader social service professions will drive and lead it for us. (13) (McNabb 2019b, p. 44)

Leaders of social work programmes have the opportunity to create an authorizing environment through the clear articulation of the vision, communicated creatively, authentically and continually – and backed up with action. Some people will engage with the communicated vision, while others need to be a part of an active plan for change where success is validated. Success is inspiring and motivating – key elements in helping to embed innovative practices.

Supporting the Workforce

Perhaps not surprisingly the academic workforce is key to advancing democratizing practices in social work education. Building a diverse workforce that brings diverse world views and different ways of thinking has the potential to create a rich environment where democratizing values and ideas can flourish. Some of the academic leaders I interviewed indicated that being responsive to ethnically diverse communities was an important and ongoing task:

There are concerns about the number of immigrants and refugees and whether social workers are up to scratch; their abilities and cultural responsiveness to those groups, and I don't know if we've cracked that yet. (10) (McNabb 2019c, p. 5)

Building a diverse workforce was seen to be challenging by many of the social work programme leaders in Aotearoa, particularly when qualification requirements presented limitations for people with non-traditional academic backgrounds:

...when you want to advance tangata whenua (indigenous Māori, literally 'people of the land') and biculturalism (partnership between Māori and non Māori) within a university setting, the key thing that you need is building Māori staff and capability. (2) (McNabb 2019c, p. 5)

A diverse workforce is also important as a way of reflecting the diversity of the student cohort and as a way to better match the service user demographic:

So, yeah, we're hoping to change that because at the moment, bearing in mind you've got one-thirds student body (Pasifika – Pacific Island heritage), and we've only got one member of staff (Pasifika); it's pretty bad. So, we're constantly trying to change that now; it's very difficult to recruit... particularly with all the qualifications and requirements, and everything else now as well, it's tough, and there's not an easy entry point to get people in, so that's annoying. (11)

While planning for and creating career pathways for people with non-traditional academic backgrounds is likely to help in the building of a diverse workforce, it

represents only part of the picture. In colonized countries, for example, indigenous staff are often keenly recruited because of their cultural knowledge, skills and networks. Once in the academy, they frequently carry broader responsibilities internally and across their communities. Often they are seen as the people responsible for all things cultural. This not only results in unbalanced workloads, but it also places responsibility for indigenous staff to teach non-indigenous students the history of White privilege and the ways in which these insights can inform anti-oppressive practice. While this is important for the students, it can expose indigenous staff to challenging and potentially inappropriate responses as students work through their understandings relating to curriculum content. One way to support indigenous staff, and staff from minority populations, is to develop partnership approaches to teaching.

Advancing Inclusive Pedagogies and Cultural Responsiveness

In many ways, advancing inclusive and responsive pedagogies has a lot to do with creating more democratic teams that unify around a set of common values:

'Okay, team values, let's have that'. It's a lot of work, and we got the whole team to agree to them, and they define them which is important; and then what's happened from there, is that we've ended up with a slightly more democratic team; even process. (11)

There was also a view that critical social work theory was an important underpinning for democratizing and decolonizing practices:

So there's some review of the program going on at the moment and hopefully the end of this review will reflect in more papers that emphasise the theoretical underpinnings of democratization and decolonization; i.e. structural, critical social work. (4) (McNabb 2019c, p. 11)

The use of indigenous practices was often seen as a major support for learning by members of those cultural groups, along with non-members learning about those cultural practices:

I think some of the advances we have; the tutorial model works really well. I think the Māori and Pasifika kind of hui group (indigenous group processes) that we have, offers something... in terms of participation... I think that's an area of development for the team. (14) (McNabb 2019c, p. 8)

Māori staff and students (along with other people of colour) experienced racism and discrimination so a practice of cultural safety for the programme was critical. It was particularly important for White staff and students to step up and address racism and discrimination and to be allies in anti-oppressive and democratizing practices within the programme:

You know, I've got to be honest; I have experienced institutional racism as a tangata whenua and Māori (indigenous) practitioner and lecturer... from a staff point of view, but also a student point of view as well. I mean, that's a reality for them; not just within this institute but externally as well. So, this has to be a safe place for them to be able to learn

and be treated fairly and with respect. We cope with it because we're used to it, but that doesn't make it okay. (7) (McNabb 2019b, p. 7)

Then there are things like teaching about White privilege, which they (Māori staff) don't see as their responsibility; it is our (non Māori staff) responsibility to teach that. (4) (McNabb 2019b, p. 9)

The operationalizing of democratizing practices within the curriculum is therefore critically linked to the democratizing elements explored earlier: creating the mind-set, building the authorizing environment, and supporting staff.

Understanding Impact and Improvement

At a general level of quality improvement many participants were engaged in formal and informal processes. At an informal level exploring excellence in a programme is a useful approach along with a pragmatic stance to support a sustainable process:

I think in Aotearoa (NZ)... we should all be asking... what is excellence going to look like for us next year; and, realistically, what of that can I achieve and still stay sane? (5) (McNabb 2019a, p. 6)

One of the key issues for most programmes was employing sufficient Māori staff. The regulatory standards required all academic staff to have completed a minimum Masters level qualification which, while supported in principle, meant some Māori staff had left teaching due to not having completed this qualification or could not be hired. A longer timeline was requested by programmes but denied by the regulatory authority which displeased many academics:

We, as staff, are excited if Māori do apply here, eh; and that's cool. You know, we recognise the value of that. So, for some reason too, I don't know why Māori are not applying, but it's also restricted by the SWRB requirements and I think that's the biggest (reason)... we've (also) lost staff because of that. (2) (McNabb 2019a, p. 8)

The sad thing for us is that we lost them (expert Māori staff) in the last couple of years. And we lost them actually primarily around the SWRB requirements, which I think has been quite sad for us as a programme. (13) (McNabb 2019b, p. 8)

All leaders had to engage with the formal profession-based regulatory process for the accreditation and regular review of their programme, based on the programme recognition standards of the Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB) (2017). Many found the process positive and were affirmed in the progress they had made and could receive helpful advice. There was an element of benchmarking and peer review based on critical reflection on the state of their programme. Ideally, other institutional review processes could be combined so the programme resource was applied efficiently. It could also provide leverage with the institution for particular resources and issues:

I think the SWRB was really helpful because when you have someone objective and looking at what you're doing, I think they (are) in a position to find the issues we don't really see. (9)

I think it's useful also in terms of our own thinking about curriculum, to know what's the bigger picture and to be part of that national thinking of accreditation and registration and those sort of things, so it's been useful, and I've been supportive, as head of school, to have staff be on those roles and even be on panels. (6)

What the standards give us is an ability to externalize and argue for things within our institution, in terms of requirements of our profession. (2)

However, the regulatory review had some negative aspects. It was sometimes experienced as merely a 'tick box' compliance exercise, that was also onerous, was not well targeted to the particular stage of the programme, and not necessarily addressing the question of what quality programmes should look like:

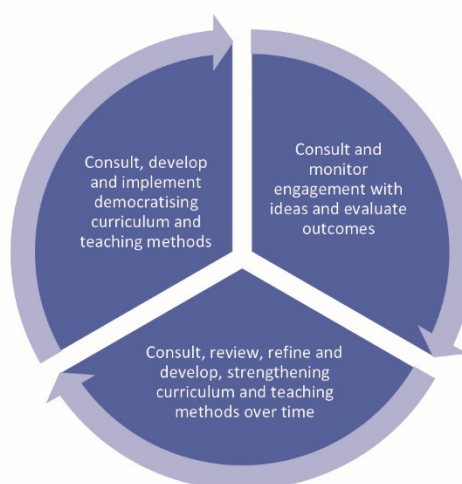
And, I think some pedantic legalism coming from the Social Workers Registration Board is actually a major road block. (7) (McNabb 2019a, p. 6)

Although academics within social work programmes undertake evaluative research across a range of areas, understanding learning outcomes and the effectiveness of teaching often tends to be informed by student evaluations of teaching:

Like most tertiary institutions we have a system of course evaluation and teacher evaluation, so that's a great opportunity for students to have quite a powerful voice in terms of giving feedback on their education. (1)

While this feedback from students is indeed a good means through which the student voice can be engaged and heard, understanding the effectiveness of democratizing efforts requires an action method to explore a broader range of enquiry (Fig. 8.2).

Fig. 8.2 An action method to improve democratizing efforts over time



There are a range of accounts of the decolonizing and indigenizing process in social work education that have informed this action method, for example in Canada (Bruyere 2008); the US (Morelli et al. 2013); South Africa (Harms Smith and Nathane 2018; Ross 2018); and more generally within China (Yuen-Tsang and Ku 2008). For explanatory purposes, however, the Hawai'ian experience of decolonizing a social work programme over a number of years is used below as a detailed example of programme improvement-based development that nicely illustrates the action method for improving democratizing efforts over time (Fig. 8.2).

Engagement with Ideas

Leaders of the Hawai'ian programme had a key role in clarifying the goal of becoming a more indigenous-based social work programme and then leading the process of consultation and development. The process began in 2002 and formed a period during which the faculty could become ready to further engage with this mission. It involved several years of meetings with staff and targeted consultation with their primary stakeholder, local indigenous people, along with other community representatives. A formal expression of consultation with local indigenous people involved the formation of the Kupuna Council in 2005 which consisted of six well-respected indigenous leaders who were experienced in social welfare work and indigenous practices. This group was able to offer direct guidance on the indigenizing project as well as support the school's leadership (Morelli et al. 2013).

At times there was disagreement amongst staff and so the discussion was left for a period. During this period, the school was also grappling with the global issues of ecological and economic sustainability. These issues were aligned with indigenous knowledge and practice as a new way forward. They successfully hosted the global International Indigenous Voices in Social Work conference in 2007 which refocused the indigenizing agenda. Several Holomua – traditional meeting processes, were held over a two-year period which allowed staff to safely debate their concerns. This included analysing the effects of indigenization on curriculum and teaching practices, and how education standards could still be upheld. Staff whose knowledge base was primarily rooted in the western paradigm faced the challenge of having to learn indigenous knowledge. Finally, a consensus was reached in 2009 to formally begin the indigenizing journey for their programme (Morelli et al. 2013).

One of the challenges faced by staff was keeping up their day to day academic work while investing major energy into the indigenizing project. It was important that an inclusive process was used to keep staff engaged and to build consensus. This also meant taking a number of years to move through the consultation phase. The team development aspect of the internal consultation phase formed an important support for sustaining the process over a lengthy period (Morelli et al. 2013).

They also consulted with staff, students, their organization and the wider community in their process of developing an approach for their mission.

Developing Curriculum and Teaching Methods

The development of the curriculum and teaching methods is fundamental to any social work programme. The Kupuna Council maintained a vision for re-centring indigenous knowledge within the curriculum which meant major change for the curriculum and of course for the faculty who would be teaching it. This was another reason why the indigenizing process would take years and not months as the development of new knowledge and pedagogy involved a significant change process.

The school took an ambitious step in approaching their regulatory body, The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) covering the USA, to undertake a project that allowed them to further pursue their indigenizing mission. This led to the submission of the project being formally agreed to by CSWE in 2007: *Indigenization and the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa School of Social Work: Exploring and developing concepts, processes and applications – Alternative Reaffirmation Project*. They successfully gained full reaccreditation in 2009 (Morelli et al. 2013). Along with the courage of the school to initiate such a project, it is notable that CSWE responded positively and had the facility to address this indigenizing initiative with their Alternative Reaffirmation Project policy.

One of the ways they supported the indigenizing of the curriculum was the initiative of a Hawai'ian Place of Learning, where indigenous values and practices were privileged. This also aligned with the policy of the university. These features included teaching the following: the Hawai'ian history of colonization and struggle, cultural competence for practice, staff and students sharing their own cultural stories, professional development for new staff to learn about Hawai'ian culture, and appreciating the learning environment as a place where holistic Hawai'ian culture is experienced. A specific course was developed that integrated Hawai'ian values and practices with social work (Morelli et al. 2013).

Democratizing Processes Over Time

The experience of undertaking a democratizing process that focused on the indigenizing project at Hawai'i is a salutary one and not for the faint hearted.

'Our experience continues to teach us that the work of indigenizing social work education is a difficult, unpredictable journey with struggle, frustration and contention at every turn. Thinking about this experience and its relevance for other contexts, there is no single, prescribed path to indigenizing social work education' (Morelli et al. 2013, p. 217).

The recruitment and retention of Native Hawai'ian and Asian-Pacific students and faculty was noted as a priority for the school and the university. While this was proportionately high for the school, it exposed a low level of representation at the university compared to the wider population. In this way, the school was able to contribute to the equity-based recruitment and retention goal of their university.

They noted four critical success factors that were integral to sustaining their indigenization journey. These included prioritizing indigenization for the school, all

faculty being open to embracing indigenization and becoming part of the leadership of the process, a distributed leadership process where formal leaders and all parties had an important role, and where evaluation and development were built into the life of the indigenization project (Morelli et al. 2013). This suggests that an holistic approach is important for long-term sustainability of change and development where internal factors of leadership and faculty consensus are aligned with external factors including community allies, institutional leadership and policy, along with regulatory policy.

This process suggests key social work and humanistic values at work such as respect, trust, transparency, openness, courage and the pursuit of social justice, along with practices of engagement, consultation, partnership and leadership.

Barriers to the indigenization journey can be seen as a mirror image of the success factors outlined above. The barriers faced to indigenization within Aotearoa are illustrated with examples from the Aotearoa study below.

The institutional prioritization of indigenization may vary across regions or even within countries. The challenges presented by a lack of institutional support for indigenization was noted by a leader in the Aotearoa study:

The social work program particularly is totally committed to the bicultural Code of Ethics and teaching in a bicultural manner... But, our institute has not supported us well with that and it's been a continuing challenge. (7) (McNabb 2019b, p. 41–42)

Problems will occur when all faculty, including leaders and other academics are not embracing of the indigenization journey. This can be related to having a poor representation of indigenous staff, along with the challenges that staff turnover may provide:

And my concern is as soon as critical staff leave it's a true indicator that people aren't necessarily committed to it (biculturalism) 'cause it goes back to the same old... the challenge though is how you sustain it. (13)

It is particularly important for the majority non-indigenous staff to engage in the indigenizing process and not to leave the leadership to indigenous staff; otherwise, the partnership process is degraded, the teaching suffers, and efforts can lack authenticity:

For me as a Māori lecturer, it's something that I get a little bit frustrated about, but I understand as well; so, I understand if I'm thinking on the level of my (non-Maori) colleagues; they're very open minded and willing, they do align with what social work in our context is cemented in; but, I think there are some that maybe don't understand enough of that, and I think our program management too, has an impact on all of those things that float down to what happens in the classroom, but definitely in that development stage; all those intentions were there, the foundation was there, the opportunity was there. I think it has been watered down, and I don't think we're delivering enough, authentically in line with all those things that you mentioned before. (6) (McNabb 2019a, p. 12)

If evaluation and development are not well built into the life of the programme, then momentum can suffer with the corresponding risk of a programme losing its way.

In the Aotearoa study, regulation was found to be an important barrier to the indigenization journey. One of the significant expressions of evaluation is the

SWRB five-yearly review process by which each programme is assessed against the social work education standards. While reviews were generally perceived positively, they were seen as conservatively prescriptive, lacking in strategic vision and a deeper engagement with quality improvement:

So, I think sometimes these standards are quite socially controlling, but are they socially changing? (9) (McNabb 2019c, p. 11)

Returning to the example of the Hawai’ian school, it was left with the challenge ‘The question is whether we can sustain the necessary long-term efforts to indigenize social work education successfully’ (Morelli et al. 2013, p. 218). This is an important question for any democratizing project undertaken by a school or a wider group within social work education – what will allow us to not only begin a change process but sustain it for a sufficiently long enough period to achieve our democratizing goal?

Conclusion

Social work education holds a commitment to progressive values and the pursuit of equity goals that is well supported by democratizing and decolonizing practices. Leaders hold a special responsibility for operationalizing that commitment within the challenging organizational and policy contexts of contemporary social work education. A focus on democratizing practices offers a way forward for social work programmes to express professional integrity, not only through the curriculum and pedagogy but in the wider demonstration of equity-aligned practice. Programme standards and the regulatory audit process can be incorporated into a broad-based practice of quality improvement. The challenge for undertaking democratizing practices is assisted by the use of action methods and strategic approaches; however, the long-term engagement required for deep change requires that passionate sense of mission on which our profession is founded.

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