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Pacific social work and its transformative capability

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Tu mau is a Tokelau phrase meaning 'stand strong'. *Tu Mau*, a periodic, Pacific-themed special issue of the journal of the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW), was initiated to encourage Pasifika social workers to write about social work practice from their cultural perspectives. The first *Tu Mau* editors in 2001 stated: "Pacific social workers will continue to develop our practice and an articulation of our practice in various forms, including writing. We look forward to what the future holds for Pacific social work and the future that Pacific social work will help facilitate" (Newport & Mafile'o, 2001, p. 2). Hohenberger (2006) concluded her editorial of the second *Tu Mau* with the words "We hope, too, that it [*Tu Mau*] inspires more Pasifika social work practitioners to 'Tu Mau' (stand strong), take up the challenge and publish and share our unique cultural inheritances to enrich and further the work of our profession" (p. x). The third *Tu Mau* comprised a collection of papers from the Inaugural National Fono of the ANZASW Pasifika Interest Group, a gathering of Pacific social and community workers from around New Zealand, which, Dalhousie (2010) reflects, was a day which 'shone the light on Pacific innovations'. This fourth *Tu Mau*, published 17 years since the first issue, reflects the strengthening of social work practice and scholarship from Pacific and Pasifika perspectives which has taken place over time.

We are now in that future mentioned in the first *Tu Mau*. What has changed over that time? How have we stood tall? What are our strengths and what are the challenges we face? What might lie ahead?

Looking at numbers, there has certainly been a strengthening of Pasifika social work in New Zealand. The election of Sally Dalhousie to the ANZASW Board in 2017 made history as she is the first Pasifika person (exclusive of Māori as Tangata Whenua in Aotearoa New Zealand) to be on the governing body of the profession in Aotearoa New Zealand. Across the country, social workers of Pacific ethnicities make up around 7% of all registered social workers, according to SWRB records in March 2018, which is similar to the percentage of those of Pacific ethnicities in the total Aotearoa New Zealand population. Of all social work students in this country, however, 17% were of Pacific ethnicities (SWRB, 2017 Education Providers Report), so it is expected the proportion of social workers of Pacific ethnicities will grow. Anecdotally, the numbers of social work educators of Pacific ethnicities in New Zealand has grown from around five at the time of the first *Tu Mau* in 2001, to at least 15 in 2018. While this is partly a reflection of the proliferation of social work education providers over this period, it likely also reflects the strengthening of the Pasifika social work workforce and qualification levels alongside educational institutions recognising the need for Pasifika content within their programmes. In 2001, at the time of the first *Tu Mau*, there were no PhD-qualified Pasifika social work educators in New Zealand institutions, whereas now there are at least six PhD qualified Pasifika ethnicity social work educators throughout Aotearoa New Zealand. More data are needed to map and strategise for the strengthening of Pasifika social work, not only in Aotearoa New Zealand, but in Pacific Island nations and across the Pacific diaspora.

Internationally, Pacific scholarship led by Pacific peoples has been building momentum

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in recent years and to some extent, this has occurred in the social work discipline as well (for example: Crichton-Hill, 2018; Halaevalu and Godinet, 2014; Ravulo, Mafile'o, & Yeates, 2019). Alliances between the Pasifika diaspora and development initiatives within Pacific Island nations and territories are an important part of the context of Pacific social work scholarship seeking to improve transnational Pacific family and community wellbeing. Recent collaborations amongst Pacific social work educators across the region, such as the establishment of the Social Work Regional Resource Centre of Oceania under the International Association of Schools of Social Work, go some way toward realising such alliances. The diversity of contributors in this issue of *Tu Mau* stems in part from such region-wide initiatives. Of all the *Tu Mau* issues to date, this issue has the most contributions written by authors working outside of Aotearoa New Zealand. Contributions are written from authors based in Samoa (Pala'amo, 2019), Papua New Guinea (Lawihin, 2019) and also Australia (Ravulo, 2019; Saxton, 2019). This issue also has a higher proportion of articles addressing Pacific social work education (Ikiua, 2019; Lawihin, 2019; Ravulo, 2019) and research (Pala'amo, 2019; Saxton, 2019).

Contemporary Pacific social work is facing some major challenges. Neo-liberal political agendas have fuelled increasing inequality in Aotearoa New Zealand which has adversely affected Pasifika peoples, for example, in income, wealth, housing, health and education (Marriott & Sim, 2015). The evidenced based practice debates, the social investment approach and big data used to determine social service delivery creates an environment which stands counter to the core of Pacific social work—relationality, spirituality, service, reciprocity and collectivity. Instead of a context conducive to recognising and harnessing creativity and diversity, there is the idea that the expertise needed for this context is found in *other* places (for example, Australia, Scotland or USA). Pacific social work is about celebrating the local. The challenge is to work with the tension between the local and the international, ensuring we value what happens locally in the Pacific. As with earlier issues of *Tu Mau*, this issue is a vehicle for social work in New Zealand, and indeed the region, to articulate, value and share local Pacific perspectives for social work practice, education and research.

This issue contains five articles, three viewpoints and one book review. The articles and viewpoints contain three themes: research, education and fields of practice. Professor Steven Ratuva opens the issue with a piece on social work in the Pacific from a non-social work perspective. He outlines the Pacific context, highlighting the norms that exist in Pacific societies and the health and social issues that are present. Social work, suggests Ratuva, can capture the sociological imagination by engaging in political action, making a stand, and transforming practice beyond the restrictions imposed by bureaucratic systems and processes. Social workers should, therefore, stand against the racism and stereotyping of Pacific people and work to de-mythologise Pacific cultures. The viewpoint explores how social workers can work in strategic and empowering ways to support Pacific people to engage their cultural knowledge to adapt to current and future challenges.

Next, Kate Saxton presents a reflective piece about using participatory action methodology to research Fiji social work. The viewpoint notes that, in terms of research, the impact of colonisation is clearly visible in Fiji through the dominance of Western theories and research methods. Western researchers, even when focused on eliminating oppression and marginalisation, can face challenges when conducting research in Pacific nations. She provides insight as to how non-Pacific social work researchers can privilege cultural needs and Pacific epistemologies in any research they might conduct with Pacific people.

In the third viewpoint article, Rachel Enosa, Fa'amatuainu Tino Pereira, Seini Taufa,

Gerardine Clifford-Lidstone and Akesa Filimoehala-Burling offer a focus on a field of practice in the operationalisation of a Pacific family violence programme. In their article, *Nga Vaka o Kaiga Tapu,* the authors background the development of ethnic-specific Pacific family violence frameworks before addressing the factors that contribute to the successful implementation of Pacific training programmes. While the focus here is on family violence, the success factors identified by the authors would apply to any Pacific education programme.

Alesana Fosi Pala'amo, in his article *Tafatolu (three-sides): A Samoan research methodological framework* addresses research, in his exploration of the synthesis of a Samoan cultural methodology with contemporary academic approaches to qualitative research via a methodological framework he has named Tafatolu. The author's own doctoral study on the counselling practices of ministers in Samoa forms the foundation upon which the synthesis of research methodologies is explored. Pala'amo locates the Tafatolu framework in the context of Samoan culture but notes that the framework could resonate for researchers from other Pacific and indigenous cultures.

The focus on social work education begins with an article by Jay Hikuleo Ikiua on *Pasifika pedagogies in an indigenous tertiary environment.* The article explores what makes for a positive learning environment for Pasifika students enrolled in a social work degree programme. Ikiua explores culturally responsive pedagogies in retort to the domination of Western pedagogies which so often seem to dominate social work education. In *Culturally relevant pedagogy for social work learning in Papua New Guinea,* Dunstan Lawihin explores how ethnic specific teaching methods might be used in the delivery of social work education in Papua New Guinea. In particular, Lawihin highlights how the Melanesian way and Melanesian pedagogy can enhance student understanding of social work models and their application in the field education setting. He reminds us to examine the knowledge base that underpins social work education and to pay mind to the cultural context within which that education is delivered. Continuing the focus on social work education, Jioji Ravulo in his article, *Australian students going to the Pacific Islands: International social work placements and learning across Oceania,* explores both the benefits and the challenges of international social work placements, and the reasons why students and educators might promote them. Ravulo reports on the experiences of social work students who undertook field placements in the Pacific region and from this work provides a Pacific model to support Pacific social work education.

Fields of practice forms the focus of the article on *Noqu Vale: Community organisation professionals' views on what works and what needs to change for Pasifika housing* by Joanna Camaira and Tracie Mafile'o. The authors report on work conducted as part of a Master's of Applied Social Work research project into Pasifika housing from the views of community organisation professionals located in the Wellington region. The authors argue that understanding social, political and cultural contexts and engagement in advocacy, empowerment, collaboration and holistic practice should sit at the heart of social work approaches to Pasifika housing concerns.

Finally, the issue finishes with a review by Niukini Hendriske and Melvin Apulu of a book addressing transnational Pacific Social Work.

It has been a pleasure to edit Tu Mau. We have found it encouraging to work with the authors who have provided us with such a rich and diverse range of articles. As a whole, this body of work on Pacific social work highlights the challenges that exist in positioning the Pacific voice in, often non-Pacific, social work contexts. That said, another voice emerges from the articles; a voice that prioritises the value that Pacific cultures bring to social work research,

education and practice. We must continue our efforts to discuss and write about Pacific social work and its transformative capability.

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Social work in the Pacific: The humble and unrefined views of a non-social worker

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ABSTRACT

I once worked in a university where sociology and social work were part of the same department, which I headed. I observed how social work, more than most "disciplines," was readily responsive, quickly adaptive and empowering with the potential to be readapted and aligned to suit different socio-cultural contexts. From the vantage point of a non-social worker, this makes it resilient and relevant in a fast-changing world where conflict, wealth accumulation and the creation of expanding subaltern classes take place simultaneously. As peripheral "participants" in the process of corporate, technological and cultural globalisation, Pacific Island countries (PICs), often see themselves increasingly subaltern in the global economic and political power game as manifested in increasing poverty, social dislocation, debt, crime and other social problems.

A growing capacity for responsiveness, adaptation and empowerment requires a critical approach to understanding the complexities of social dynamics and impact on human wellbeing. Social work crosses the arbitrary boundaries between sociology, anthropology, psychology, development studies, conflict/peace studies, education and health and this trans-disciplinary approach makes it well positioned to address issues such as inequality, poverty, alienation and marginalisation which are common amongst subaltern groups, including those in the Pacific (Sherif & Sherif, 2017). Social work also has the potential to bridge the gap between theory and practice in what Marxian scholars refer to as "praxis" (Freenberg, 2014). Its strength is also in keeping human wellbeing as the central focus in its analysis.

KEYWORDS: social work; interdisciplinary; Pacific; empowerment; wellbeing; community

Pacific praxis: The context

Although I am not a trained social worker, my interdisciplinary background in sociology (my primary "discipline"), politics, anthropology, development studies, peace-conflict studies, history and economics, has provided me with an appreciation of how social work, with its transdisciplinary potential, can be re-engineered to meaningfully engage with Pacific communities in the islands. Pacific Island societies, although geographically small, are highly complex with strong interconnections between social, economic, cultural and political institutions, norms and values. They have been framed as "syncretic" societies (Ratuva, 2005) because of the complex processes of interactions occurring between the global and local systems and narratives. Rather than forming a "hybrid" system, as Clements, Boege, Brown, Foley, and Nolan (2007) argue, these interactions are manifested in complex configurations which involve the simultaneous existence of contradictions, resistance, accommodation, acceptance, integration and synthesis. For instance,

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while there is some resistance against capitalist profit motives by those engaged in communal subsistence production, there is also accommodation of the idea of being rich. Capitalism and subsistence production are not always in opposition; there are also moments of accommodation and synthesis where people choose aspects of both in order to survive. This syncretic relationship pervades other aspects of Pacific Island life including communal and individual rights, Christianity and traditional cosmology, liberal democracy and indigenous governance, for example.

These complex, syncretic interactions can be potent driving forces for social transformation as well as sources of stress. As people move in large numbers to urban centres to escape a demanding village life to seek new opportunities, they are further burdened by lack of opportunities, unemployment and low income – these contribute to poverty, crime and other social problems. In the urban centres, variants of village social life are replicated through communal and kinship networking and, while this might work as a social safety net to facilitate resources distribution, it can also be a burden as people are expected to meet traditional obligations using meagre resources. The church also contributes to this stress through imposition of tithes and other religious obligations which further add to families' financial hardships.

In the main Pacific urban centres, squatter or informal settlements continue to grow unabated and a number of nuclear families might live under a single roof (Gero, Kohlitz, & Willetts, 2017). This overcrowding leads to health issues, problems of social morality and an inability for children to study and excel in education. Health problems are exacerbated by a lack of money to buy nutritious food and thus people resort to eating cheap, high-carb, high-fat and high-sugar food.

Family break-up is common and, in some Pacific countries, children are looked after by relatives – in some cases, children are taken into foster care homes. Family instability directly affects young people who sometimes end up committing crime. The culture of warrior masculinity in many Pacific communities, together with social stress and other socio-economic challenges, contribute further to family violence. Masculinity is reinforced through sports like rugby, church doctrines of male superiority, a patriarchal western education system, male-dominated power politics and cultural traditions which accord women inferior positions in the social hierarchy.

These issues are often concealed and distorted by a romantic notion of "paradise," propagated by tourist narratives as part of the process of neoliberal commodification of indigenous cultural imageries. The church's narrative on predestination and divine will, which preaches suffering on earth as pre-requisite for eternal salvation, has tended to legitimise inequality and poverty as natural. Often social workers, aid donors, governments and others dealing with these issues look at only the social manifestations of the problems without considering the ideological systems which help sustain and legitimise them. To address these issues effectively, social work in the Pacific needs to be framed and designed in a way that takes into consideration the syncretic interplay between the different factors and how they shape the conditions for nurturing poverty, social dislocation and marginalisation.

These problems are quite visible and are inescapable. But they should not be used to denigrate local communities but, rather, they should be used to create windows of opportunities to identify forms of cultural capital which can be used to empower and build up resilience. Pacific communities have, over the ages, developed mechanisms for survival and adaptation and the challenge is how to incorporate these into social work approaches. Social work in the Pacific needs to adopt a social protection stance in responding to these critical issues. Rather than just responding to the symptoms

and visible manifestations of the problems, it must aim at understanding and seeking solutions to the root causes.

A sociologist's advice for social workers

When C. Wright Mills (2000) coined the now overused but perpetually relevant notion of "sociological imagination," he was wary of the mainstream disciplinary trend of myopic intellectualism and moral self-righteousness, which were enshrined at the sacred altar of academia. He saw the need to map out the world in terms of trans-national, trans-personality, trans-issue and trans-everything connections, where the public and the private, history and the future and the "me" and the "them" are linked in a web of transformational synergies and connections. Social work must be inspired by the virtues of sociological imagination. This means being aware of the shifting social environment which shapes social issues and responding to these in new, innovative and creative ways. The rise in counter-hegemonic movements such as the reclaim the city movement, the me too movement, Bernie Sanders' youth revolution and groundswell of anti-Trumpism around the world are taking place in parallel to the growth in right-wing and racist politics. Social work, like any other discipline, needs to be cognisant of these developments and make an ideological and political stand. It must transcend its own boundaries, extend its sociological imagination far and wide and respond to emerging threats while embracing new hopes and opportunities in creative and innovative ways.

Often, when social work is institutionalised (especially by the state and service providers), it can become mundane, routine and leveraged for bureaucratic policy. This is what happens in many, if not all, the PICs. For instance, the social work unit at the University of the South Pacific which has been part of the sociology department for many years, has always been closely aligned to the regional government welfare departments to provide training for their welfare officers. While this is fine in relation to providing direct service to the public, the external control of university courses to suit a narrow external interest has potential to undermine creative, empowering and innovative initiatives which are transformative, as opposed to those which reinforce existing policies and associated political agendas.

Another challenge is how to make social work culturally relevant in the Pacific, especially when it is conventionally associated with urban issues such as unemployment, crime, poverty and other urban-based problems. In a region where most people still live in rural and semi-subsistence conditions and where culture still revolves around kinship and communal support systems, the image and role of social work need changes. For a start, the term "social work" itself needs contextual reconfiguration into something like "community engagement" to ensure that it "fits" into the local communal milieu and cultural narrative. "Social workers" can continue to work in more urbanised situations while "community engagement officers" can work in more rural settings. Terminologies have the potential to frame people's sense of reality and can also impact on behaviour and outcomes.

The work of the community engagement officers must reflect the syncretic changes taking place in rural areas and how best they can facilitate the transition and respond to emerging social problems in an empowering way. They need to deal with issues such as gender inequality and patriarchal hegemony which have been erroneously framed and justified as "cultural" in ways which are socially acceptable and transformative. Disputes over titles and land rights have caused communal instability in many villages in the Pacific and so the community engagement officers must be equipped with conflict resolution and peace-building skills.

In an age of globalisation where even the most remote Pacific villages are

connected by mobile phone, it is prudent to use both new and traditional modes of communication and engagement to maximise convenience and results. While modernity and its influences are imperative, how we deal with these to serve our purposes must be approached critically and strategically. Social work must provide the skills for empowering adaptation rather than facilitate passive domestication and subservience to globalization forces.

There was a time when anthropologists descended on the Pacific and used it as a laboratory for studying both "noble" and "ignoble" "savages" and the impact of their narratives remain embedded in contemporary subconscious prejudice and racial stereotypes of islanders. Historically, the narratives articulated by such as Bronislaw Malinowski, Raymond Firth and Marshall Sahlins about Pacific tribal societies with unsophisticated and backward social systems have become the basis for constructing contemporary racialised imageries associated with Pacific peoples (brawny with no brain, welfare leeches, violent, crime-prone and unhealthy). Social workers have a responsibility as agents of empowerment and transformation to transform and de-mythologize such perceptions, deconstruct negativities and create positive conditions for an energised diverse world.

Today, a substantial number of Pacific peoples make up the diaspora community and in their new cultural habitats, they have established social networks, support systems and cultural norms which reflect both their historical Pacific heritage and new social environment. As in Aotearoa New Zealand, this new diaspora has a new set of needs and expectations which must be understood and responded to. Social workers must have the critical intellectual narratives and relevant methodological tools to address these new challenges. It is their disciplinary calling. It is their moral responsibility. It is an opportunity to showcase who they are.

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Privileging participation in the Pacific: Researcher reflections

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ABSTRACT

This researcher reflection examines the challenges faced in using participatory action research (PAR) as a methodology when researching social work in Fiji. PAR allows for disadvantaged groups to engage in research and social action as a means to address inequity. However, PAR relies on people's ability and desire to participate in this process of change. The epistemological roots of PAR are well suited to Western notions of democracy and power, conflicting with how society operates within Fiji. This reflection examines some of the challenges faced in conducting PAR due to this cultural clash. In conducting this research, the researcher was forced to engage in deep and, at times, confronting, reflections about identity and positionality as both a critical social worker and researcher. By using a PAR approach as the starting point for research design and implementation, the research not only failed to empower Fijian social workers but at times replicated a form of neo-colonialism.

KEYWORDS: participatory action research; neocolonialism; social work research; Pacific Islands; Indigenous; cross-cultural practice

Social science research in Pacific Island communities has often been guilty of researching *on,* not *with* communities (Pacific Health Research Council [PHRC], 2003). Early ethnographic and anthological studies have positioned those in the Pacific as exotic or otherworldly, leading to a range of observational studies or research designed to *help* those less fortunate. Pacific Islander world views have been seen to be lacking in scientific knowledge and adding limited validity to social science research (Faleolo, 2013). Social and political sciences have maintained the idea of *expert social researchers* which can be seen through the extensive use of outside consultants and researchers in international aid and development projects in the Pacific Islands. This has led to local people's ideas being viewed as invalid as they might be untrained in the theories and methods of conventional social science, thus devaluing the contributions to both the form and the substance of a social research process (Greenwood & Levin, 2007; Trevithick, 2012). Sadly, this privileging of Western epistemological thought contributes to a cross-cultural research context where the Western researcher *examines* the experience of non-Western participants (Farrelly & Nabobo-Baba, 2014; Tamasese, Peturu, Waldegrave, & Bush, 2005). This approach fails to appreciate the nuances of the local context or to produce research that is not meaningful, appropriate and culturally viable for non-Western community contexts (Vaka, Brannelly, & Huntington, 2016). From my own experience, this viewpoint highlights the ideological tensions within cross-cultural social work research, particularly when the impetus to draw on Western epistemology remains. It is written from my perspective as a *kai valangi* (white person) engaged in doctoral research focusing on Fijian experiences of social work. This reflection examines some of the complexities I faced as a white researcher

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engaging in participatory action research (PAR) in Fiji.

I am a white, young, Australian woman with qualifications in both social work and international development. Coming from an academic environment I accept debate and the pursuit of knowledge to be normal and desirable goals. As a social worker I align myself with critical approaches that seek to address structural oppression and disadvantage. I reject the rhetoric of *capacity building* that positions many Pacific Island nations as deficit and lacking agency which only outside help can provide. I instead seek to work with, and alongside, communities in addressing structures of disadvantage that contribute to social marginalisation and hardship. I am overtly aware of the role both colonisation and globalisation play in the perpetuation of structural oppression and I cannot separate myself from potentially representing both these forces. And, whilst I recognise the epistemological positioning of critical social work may privilege Western constructions of social justice, I am grateful to the critical paradigm for supporting me to engage in reflective practice and research that questions the power and validity of Western influence within Pacific-based social work.

My exposure to, and interest in, social work within the Pacific Islands began when I was offered an AusAID-funded position to teach social work in Tonga. This sparked interest into what I observe as the international (read *Western*) agenda within the spread of social work education. From Tonga I came to live and work in Fiji and, at the time of my PhD research, I taught social work at the University of the South Pacific. Although I had some insider knowledge of Fijian culture, I was still firmly an expatriate and was paid a disproportionate salary compared to many of my local social work colleagues. Despite personal awareness of the privilege my positionality gave to me as a white researcher and academic, I soon discovered Western ideas proliferated in my work. This was a confronting notion – I considered myself an inclusive and culturally mindful individual. My attempts to engage with PAR both illustrate my well-meaning attempts to be inclusive and my blind-sightedness at the role of white privilege in cross-cultural research spaces.

To facilitate locally owned and meaningful research, I was attracted to the idea of PAR. PAR has found growing popularity globally and has demonstrated successes with diverse cultural groups researching social and community issues (McIntyre, 2008). For PAR to be truly participatory, it needs to operate on the principles of democratic participation, cooperation and empowerment. It can also be a cyclical process that needs to provide participants with the opportunity to review and critique the research process and it has a strong focus on reflexivity (MacKenzie, Tan, Hoverman, & Baldwin, 2012). For me, engaging in PAR seemed ideal as the principles of collaboration and democracy not only aligned with my own critical social work value base, but I also believed that local Fijian constituents would take ownership of the project and see the value of social research. What I failed to recognise is that PAR aligned well with *my* epistemological positioning, but failed to acknowledge the cultural nuances which underpin Fijian daily living.

Historically, social research has not been accorded high priority in the Pacific region (Pryor, Finau, & Tukuitonga, 2000). This is largely due to an inference that the pursuit of social knowledge is an intellectual luxury, in contrast to tangible outcomes which are clearly linked to the here and now of day-to-day survival (Finau, 1995). This has led to Pacific researchers and academics being perceived by Pacific communities as an "elite group" (PRHC, 2003). Many Pacific Island communities are disengaged from research generation limiting the recording of culturally informed knowledge and innovation. Research that has been conducted is often underutilised due to the divergence of social needs and misunderstandings between the researcher and the researched (Finau, 1995). Once again, the process of being researched

on rather than *with* has limited the application of social research in the Pacific Islands.

Colonisation has had an overwhelming influence on Fiji, including on the research process. As identified, my presence as a Western academic has inescapable connotations regarding how power and relationships were constructed. While the visible, physical acts of colonisation have not been pursued in Fiji for the past half century, the cultural and linguistic domination of Western philosophies has been in full force (Ravulo, 2016). The onset of globalisation has also seen a shift in the Fijian social landscape. With rapid urbanisation and a perceived increase in social issues, traditional family care and support networks have been eroded as the impetus for material and financial growth increases (Lockwood, 2003). This is a country that relies heavily on tourism and foreign aid to support basic health care and infrastructure. There is unspoken tension between the desire to resist foreign influence on one hand, and a financial overreliance on the other. As a social researcher, the distinctions between Western and Pacific identities became apparent, alongside existing tensions which hindered the ability to form collaborative understandings of social work that draw on both Pacific and Western ideologies (Ravulo, 2016).

Apart from failing to adequately recognise the colonial legacy in Fiji, I also did not fully appreciate the divergence between my own cultural values and Fijian community members in relation to participation. Whilst I was committed to the principles and process of PAR, I struggled to meaningfully engage with local social workers, who would often say "yes" to meetings and then not attend, or ask me prior to the interviews what it was I needed them to say. At that time, driven by my own research agenda and ideological push for democracy, I failed to acknowledge the hierarchical structure of traditional Fijian society, which is clan based and patriarchal. PAR also asks participants to be critical and actively review processes and evaluate content. This overt engagement with critical thought is a stark divergence from the lived experience of education in Fiji, where rote learning and the legacy of colonialism encourage students to obey authority and maintain the status quo (Tuinamuana, 2007). In my experience, "not rocking the boat" remained at the forefront of decision-making processes for many research participants. This on-the-ground reality was at odds with my vision for PAR; a vision predicated by my critical framework, driven by a commitment to social change. Because of my desire to avoid researching *on*, I was blindsided by my potential to reinforce foreign epistemological research practices that might be counter-cultural to traditional Fijian values and ways of knowing, being and doing. In short, I was running the gauntlet of the intellectual neo-colonialism which I so fervently strived to avoid.

In my attempts to conduct PAR, I also failed to properly account for the socio-historical context, in which Fiji was being governed by a military regime and has multiple experiences of coups and political instability (Trnka, 2008). While I am attracted to democratic principles and equal participation, such an attraction seems rooted in my white Western privilege and upbringing where I have been able to freely participate in political life and personal decision-making. Additionally, one aim of critical research is increased political engagement, brought about by raising the level of participant consciousness thus empowering people to act to change existing social structures and processes (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). An outsider in this context, it would have been easy for me to encourage a critical agenda within social work. However, this fails to acknowledge my Western privilege – being able to draw on my Australian citizenship status and the freedoms of travel, financial and legal resources. And my critical ideological approach could actually risk the safety and wellbeing of local Fijians. To be confronted with my own cultural ignorance in this way was challenging. This is especially so when I espouse a school of critical thought that

demands I acknowledge my own position and remain vigilant in situations where dominant discourse runs the risk of oppressing and marginalising the views of others.

If we are to honour cultural needs within diverse social work contexts, we need to appreciate how health, wellbeing and positive social care are defined, understood and experienced in Fiji (Kee, Martin, & Ow, 2014). This is paramount when Fijian worldviews differ from the prevailing, usually Western, constructions of health and wellbeing (Vaka et al., 2016). Correlated to this, if we are to facilitate effective cross-cultural research and response to Pacific issues, the use of traditional cultural epistemologies and processes becomes vital (Ravulo, 2016). Too often in social research, certain types of knowledge are privileged over others. In constructing paradigms of what constitutes social work by drawing on mainstream Western theory, social work marginalizes indigenous and local knowledge and engages in what Ravulo (2016, p. 191) refers to as "intellectual colonisation." In this manner, globalised notions of social work deny the very diversity and cultural dynamism they seek to celebrate. Whilst the importance and recognition of indigenous and subjugated knowledge has increased in recent years, this does not always carry as much perceived validity as the expert knowledge of professionals. There is a risk that Indigenous and local Pacific knowledge will be discounted or considered less relevant (Farrelly & Nabobo-Baba, 2014). My own experience illustrates how difficult it can be to ensure a non-colonial research position and process despite best intentions. As social workers and researchers we must continue to examine our own positions when working cross-culturally and develop much deeper, more nuanced understandings of terms such as *participation*. Finding culturally appropriate ways of working and researching in the Pacific Islands is deserving of more attention, creativity and reciprocity. I will continue to strive for new ways to engage, conceptualise and understand my role as a *kai valangi* and social researcher and attempt to learn from past mistakes.

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Nga Vaka o Kaiga Tapu

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Abstract

Pacific people have lived in Aotearoa New Zealand for over a century. Of Melanesian, Micronesian and Polynesian ancestry, there are over 20 ethnic groups represented under the umbrella term, *Pacific*, with the largest Pacific groups being of Samoan, Cook Island Māori, Tongan and Niuean ancestry (Taufa, 2015). The growth of these communities in Aotearoa New Zealand has been so rapid that, for some (Cook Island Māori, Niuean and Tokelauans), their communities in Aotearoa New Zealand exceed the size of the populations in their home island influencing their geographic perspective (Hau'ofa, 1994).

Internationally, Aotearoa New Zealand has the highest rate of family violence in the developed world (United Nations Development Fund for Women, 2011) With a population of 4.7 million people, in 2016, family violence accounted for 41% of a frontline police officer's time with 119,910 family violence investigations made by New Zealand Police (New Zealand Police, 2017, personal communication).

When broken down by ethnicity, Pacific people are twice as likely to be offenders who have committed a serious crime against a family member; Pacific students are three times as likely as Aotearoa New Zealand European students to report witnessing adults hit children in their homes and five times more likely to die from child abuse or neglect (Pasefika Proud, 2016).

Although there is no one single component that can be attributed to family violence, there are three contributing factors that are unique to the experiences of Pacific people in Aotearoa New Zealand. These are social and economic inequities, the impact of migration on families, and identity and culture. An underlying concern of identity and culture is the urgent need to understand ethnic-specific perceptions, beliefs and practices with regard to relationships between family members, and the impact of violence on kinship wellbeing.

Background

> I have always believed that culture is a vital ingredient for building relationships and meaningful engagement. It is culture that provides us with our unique perspectives, and also culture which often defines the ways we behave, and relate to the world, and shapes our values as collectives of people. (Dame Tariana Turia)

Nga Vaka o Kāiga Tapu was born out of a collaborative process of regional fono run by the New Zealand Ministry of Social Development (MSD) Pacific Advisory Group (PAG) on family violence. The PAG group were made up of clinicians and community leaders who were familiar with the impact of family violence on Pacific communities. The culmination of these events led to a national gathering called the Champions of Change fono, the participants of which collectively identified that culture must be the basis for constructing any solution to family violence.

In 2010, the PAG to the Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families held a fono in four regions throughout the country. The purpose was to seek the views of Pacific people and practitioners on ways to address

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family violence in their communities. The culmination of these regional discussions was a national Champions of Change fono held in Auckland where those in attendance identified that any serious approach to addressing violence in Pacific families would require a critical exploration of fundamental issues around culture, its values, practices, traditional contexts, and its ability to encompass the dynamics of contemporary Western society (Ministry of Social Development, 2013).

In March 2011, Cabinet agreed to fund the development and delivery of a Pacific family violence prevention training programme (annual budget of $1 million) and a Pasifika Campaign (annual budget of $500,000). As expressed in the Cabinet directive, the Pacific family violence prevention training programme is intended to build the capability of Pacific family violence service providers to deliver culturally appropriate interventions. The Pasifika Proud campaign is intended to address the prevention of family violence in Pacific families; designed, delivered and led by Pacific peoples.

Later in 2011, a Practitioners' fono was held where practitioners from different regions met in their ethnic groups to discuss practice imperatives for inclusion in their conceptual frameworks. Discussions also included design and development of the ethnic-specific frameworks. Information for the fono that were held was consolidated to inform the development of the conceptual frameworks. To ensure that the frameworks represented the cultural understandings of each of the Pacific ethnic groups present, each ethnic group had a Working Group and a writer. The writers were selected based on their facilitation skills, bilingual fluency and writing skills.

Supported by the Working Group, the writers were tasked with conducting a literature search and write-up for the conceptual framework for their ethnic group. Individuals with relevant expertise from the same ethnic group were then approached to review the ethnic conceptual framework document. After the review and revision of the documents they were submitted to the PAG for their consideration, comment and approval.

Nga Vaka o Kāiga Tapu was officially launched in May 2012 and encapsulates eight ethnic-specific Pacific conceptual frameworks across: Cook Islands, Fiji, Niue, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga, Kiribati and Tuvalu (see Figure 1). The frameworks set out the key concepts and principles that promote family wellbeing for each of the eight ethnic-specific Pacific communities. The development of the Nga Vaka o Kaiga Tapu Pacific Family Violence Prevention Training Programmes was informed by the frameworks.

At the launch of the frameworks, Dame Tariana Turia noted that "culture is always evolving, and therefore any framework developed for Pacific Nations must also be evolutionary. That is the intention of this document, which brings together not only our cultural perspectives on family violence, but also concepts of wellbeing" (Ministry of Social Development, 2013, p. 3). Consequently, Nga Vaka o Kaiga Tapu has always been a working document.

Following the launch of the frameworks, the family violence prevention training programmes were piloted in the greater Auckland area from 2012–2014. The eight training programmes varied in content, approach to delivery and length. For example, the Samoan programme initially had three modules and 20 sessions, the Tokelauan programme had three modules and three sessions. An evaluation of the process of design and effectiveness of the programmes was undertaken by an independent evaluation service (Malatest) and completed in September 2014.

This article provides an introduction and overview of the Nga Vaka o Kaiga Tapu programme, as a series of publications that will follow the birth and evolution of each of the Pacific ethnic-specific frameworks.

Figure 1. Key documents addressing violence in eight ethnic-specific communities.

Programme objectives

In 2016, Alliance Community Initiative Trust (ACIT) was contracted to implement the findings from the Malatest evaluation, to operationalise the cultural frameworks and trial a refreshed Samoan and Cook Islands programme. Upon the completion of evaluation by Malatest for the two programmes, findings were incorporated into the development of subsequent programmes. Based on the findings of the independent evaluation, ACITs contract was extended to include the delivery of Pacific Family Violence Prevention Training Programmes (PFVPTP) to the Tongan, Niuean, Fijian, Tuvaluan, Tokelauan and I-Kiribati communities.

Programme objectives for the PFVPTP included:

- Building the capability of Pacific family violence practitioners and

service providers to provide culturally appropriate interventions for victims, perpetrators and their families.

- Building best practice and training support for practitioners working with Pacific families/communities where there is violence.

ACIT also sought input from key stakeholders who indicated that, in order to achieve the objectives, the following outcomes would assist in successfully meeting programme objectives.

- Community influencers have increased awareness of and confidence to be responsive to issues of family violence within their sphere of influence.
- Practitioners are knowledgeable about and can implement culturally grounded frameworks as a response to addressing family violence.
- A strong network of trained Pacific family violence facilitators nationwide and an established and active community of practice for Pacific family violence practitioners.
- Ongoing opportunities to build the capacity and capability of Pacific family violence facilitators.
- An established pool of Pacific guest speakers who can safely and appropriately represent the diverse views of victims, people who have used violence, experienced practitioners who work in family violence, the Church and community in the context of Nga Vaka o Kaiga Tapu.

Creating an effective Pacific "Train the Trainer" programme

The importance of high quality and experienced ethnic-specific facilitators is highlighted in the preliminary evaluation findings as fundamental to the success of the programmes. By 2018, all programmes have a lead facilitator and a co-facilitator. Lead facilitators were chosen based on recommendations from their respective Working Group, and had to be skilled in facilitation, be culturally and linguistically competent, have a strong understanding of family violence as it related to Pacific peoples in the Aotearoa New Zealand context, and be competent in both mainstream and their ethnic-specific surroundings.

Programme delivery

Between 2016 and 2017, all programmes were five days in duration (five modules). The length of the programme was determined by programme content which covered: 1. Introduction to family violence; 2. Dimensions and dynamics of family violence; 3. Working with diverse (ethnic-specific) families; 4. Working with (ethnic-specific) family members who use violence; and 5. Working with (ethnic-specific) family members who experience violence. For each module there is an expectation that the cultural framework would govern key learnings.

Within the five-day programme, guest speakers from different agencies (i.e., Brainwaves Trust, Whitireia Community Law, NZ Police) also provided very useful and generic information about the impact of family violence which could be used across all programmes.

One of the barriers to participation has been the length of the programme. Through the evaluations, participants and facilitators alike acknowledged difficulty getting the required time off work to participate in a five-day programme. In order to try and mitigate this problem, ACIT split the modules over a two- to three-week period – providing a range of tangible training opportunities and options is likely to improve uptake and commitment to the programme.

Participant learning needs

Learning from the pilot programmes highlight that qualified practitioners who participated in the training found the generic family violence modules (legislation, data, types of abuse, risk management, safely planning) useful but noted that they covered topics that had been addressed comprehensively as part of gaining their formal qualification. These practitioners found the ethnic-specific conceptual frameworks and ways of working with each culture more useful as it is content that they have not previously been taught or exposed to.

On the other hand, participants who are community influencers, volunteers, community support workers and/or from the unregulated workforce found both the generic family violence content and the conceptual frameworks to be highly useful because they had not previously been exposed to any of the information. In addition to this, participants who did not speak their mother tongue or who had limited exposure to their culture as part of their upbringing found the training to be very useful but often felt "lost" when the facilitator or participants started to converse in languages other than English.

This generated a need to diversify the training options in a way that is not complex but meets the diverse needs of learners. This was achieved by separating the generic family violence content from the ethnic-specific conceptual frameworks. This created shorter programmes making it easier for participants to manage their workloads while participating in the programme. A further benefit found was that the information provided in the generic modules is largely pan-Pacific. This meant that any of the lead current lead facilitators can deliver the generic content which increases the pool of available facilitators while broadening the reach of the programme.

Increasing access to the programme

From 2016-2018, ACIT has held 22 Nga Vaka o Kaiga Tapu trainings nationwide. Feedback from participants about the programme has been overwhelmingly positive and ACIT continues to field numerous enquiries from the community about when the next programmes will be run and how to register for them. A waitlist of potential participants is also currently held by ACIT.

To date, programmes have been run in Dunedin (Cook Island), Christchurch (Samoa), Porirua (Tokelau), Lower Hutt (Fiji), Otahuhu (Niue), Manukau (Samoa, Kiribati, Fijian and Tongan) and Waitakere (Tuvalu). Police apprehension and offending data indicate that areas of particular need are Waitakere, Auckland City, Counties Manukau and Wellington/Porirua. However, keeping in mind that Pacific peoples are less likely to report family violence incidents to Police, decision making should not be based on Police data alone. Furthermore, ACIT have received enquiries from smaller Pacific communities from the regions who have indicated that, while their numbers are small, improving capability and competence around Pacific family violence is equally as important.

Conclusion

Nga Vaka o Kāiga Tapu was born out of a collaborative process of regional fono run by the Pacific Advisory Group on family violence. The culmination of these events led to a national gathering called the Champions of Change fono, the participants of which collectively identified that culture must be the basis for constructing any solution to family violence.

Since 2016, ACIT have delivered Pacific Family Violence Prevention Training Programmes with that in mind and, as a result, several success factors have been identified over time, with key insights and solutions also noted (Table 1).

Table 1. Critical Success Factors, Insights and Solutions

Critical success factor	Insight	Solution
High quality ethnic-specific facilitators	Competent facilitators who have both cultural, family violence/social work and teaching expertise are fundamental to the success of the programme.	Develop and implement a comprehensive "train the trainer" package for ethnic-specific facilitators.
Flexible learner options to meet a diverse	Evaluation findings affirm the need to provide a range of customised options for participants' learning needs	Increase the offerings and options for participation. Accommodate for the needs of Pacific peoples who are New Zealand born and youthful.
	Ability to capture and provide up to date and relevant metrics is important for measuring outcomes and impact.	Govt agencies to assist by providing up-to-date information and data for Pacific populations based on ethnicity, age and locality.

The Conceptual frameworks have always been viewed as working documents, evolving as culture evolves and through evaluations and constant dialogue with Pacific stakeholders, ACIT continues to work towards improving and refining the programme to cater to and reflect the experiences and needs of our Pacific communities.

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE
QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Tafatolu (three-sides): A Samoan research methodological framework

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: A Samoan research methodological framework called *Tafatolu* (three-sides) involves the synthesis of three key parts considered as valuable to any research – a *contemporary academic* approach to research, a *cultural* approach, and the *self* that represents the researcher's perspectives and positioning within the project. The rationale behind the *Tafatolu* methodological framework is to provide an integration of Western and Samoan perspectives to research that incorporates the cultural values and practices of the target population, as well as of the researcher.

METHOD: The researcher's doctoral study that conceptualised, articulated, and used the *Tafatolu* methodological framework involved the synthesis of a contemporary academic approach to research (qualitative approach), with a cultural approach (a Samoan metaphor *fetu'utu'una'i muniao* – manoeuvring a fisher's rod), merged with the researcher's own input into *doing* research (positioning as an insider/outsider researcher). Specifically, the *Tafatolu* methodological framework guided the researcher's study in its methodology, methods, and the analysis of data.

IMPLICATIONS: The *Tafatolu* methodological framework proposed and discussed in this paper provides a way to integrate western and contemporary academic approaches to research, with indigenous and cultural approaches. The fusion of its underlying concepts – a contemporary academic approach, a cultural approach, and the self – can accommodate both the context of the targeted populations under review, as well as the context of the researcher.

KEYWORDS: *Tafatolu*; three-sides; research methodology; qualitative research; *vā*; relational space; Samoa; self

Qualitative research methods parallel how most Samoans share their knowledge and understandings of the world around them. In particular, qualitative research methods involve the collection, analysis, and presentation of narrative information (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). McLeod (2001) describes qualitative research in the following way:

> Qualitative research is a process of careful, rigorous inquiry into aspects of the social world. It produces formal statements or conceptual frameworks that provide new ways of understanding the world, and therefore comprises knowledge that is practically useful for those who work with issues around learning and adjustment to the pressures and demands of the social world. (p. 3)

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There are many nuances in the Samoan language that contribute to how Samoans see, understand, and interpret the world. Metaphor and language are important tools of communication for Samoans. Non-verbal communication is also valuable – eye contact, a smile, a handshake, how one walks into a room and how one sits – such non-verbal communication can determine the level of engagement and, in this instance, the level of active participation in research. Qualitative research methods provide an overarching guide to investigate populations including Samoans. This paper adds to the available qualitative research methods and presents a framework that allows for components familiar to both the research participants and the researcher.

An interpretive theory of qualitative research known as phenomenology is applicable to Samoans in developing meaning in their lives. Phenomenology as a philosophical approach to qualitative research was founded by the German mathematician Edmund Husserl (1859–1938), who understood consciousness to be based on the meaning of the individual's experiences (Reiners, 2012). This theory of interpretation requires the researcher to work with the data attained through the phenomenological inquiry, to interpret the material that emerged by reflecting on one's own experiences (Morse, 1994).

An example of seeking understanding of the individual's experiences through phenomenology can be linked to Samoans who often make meaning from their lived experiences of *fa'aSamoa* – the culture and traditions of Samoa. Knowledge and learning for Samoans are practical phenomena (Tuisuga-le-taua, 2011) that are often shared through language and metaphors (Tui Atua, 2003). The theory of knowledge for Samoans is also understood through story-telling (Krämer, 1994) where culture and traditions and knowledge of honorific titles for families, villages and districts are passed onto the following generations through riddles (Tui Atua, 1994), metaphors and proverbs. As some authors have alluded to, understanding the lived experiences of *fa'aSamoa* give meaning to how Samoans behave and interact with each other, as well as differentiating island-born Samoans from New Zealand-born Samoans (Anae, 1998; Mailei, 2003; Tiatia, 1998).

Pacific methodologies

Pacific and Samoan research methodologies are widely used when researching populations from these regions. An example is *Talanoa*, a Pacific methodology that involves a talk, a conversation and exchange of ideas through face-to-face encounters that are both formal and informal where *Talanoa* creates knowledge (Vaioleti, 2006). *Talanoa* is used for discussions between individuals as well as for group dialogue. Further, the *Ula* methodology (Sauni, 2011) accommodates an equal relationship between researcher and participant to allow for the free expressions of beliefs and values. This Samoan research methodology accentuates an equal relationship between researcher and participant.

A widely used Samoan research methodology is *Fa'afaletui*. Various components of this methodology have been used by researchers investigating Pacific people including Samoans and their issues, located within the region (McCarthy, Shaban, & Stone, 2011; Suaalii-Sauni & Fulu-Aiolupotea, 2014). *Fa'afaletui* uses the metaphor of the traditional practice of weaving. This practice involves the plaiting together of sundried strands of the leaves from the pandanus tree (*laufala*) to create various household items such as *fala* (a mat). The most appropriate *laufala* are selected and used in the process of weaving, to generate a *fala* that meets its intended design. *Fa'afaletui* uses the same principle of selecting the best *laufala* by interweaving various perspectives gathered about the self to offer a Samoan perspective of self as being *relational* (Tamasese, Peteru, Waldegrave, & Bush, 2005).

The space in between people develops from an understanding of a relational self

for Samoans (Tamasese et al., 2005) and *communal* instead of being an *individual* self. *Vā* (relational space, or the space-in-between) for Samoans is a concept that identifies and defines culturally appropriate and inappropriate behaviours (Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2009); breaching these inherent *vā* would hinder relationships within such contexts. *Teu le vā* (Anae, 2010) is a Samoan research methodology that identifies the reciprocal relationships or the space between people as sacred, those that need to be nurtured and tidied when these relationships become *unsacred*. *Teu le vā* deals with the concept of maintaining and nursing *vā*.

The study

The researcher's doctoral study conceptualised and used the *Tafatolu* methodological framework as its methodology (Pala'amo, 2017), and is reported here. The study investigated the counselling practices of ministers in Samoa – also known as pastoral counselling – and the relevance and transformation of such practices when influenced by a concept identified as *a changing Samoan self.* The researcher himself is a minister. The study presented the voices of 34 Samoan participants living in Samoa that included ministers, ministers' wives, *matai* (title-holders), Aotearoa New Zealand born Samoans, church members, and service users of a domestic violence agency. Participants shared their expectations of being counselled as well as counselling others, together with reflections concerning effective and ineffective counselling practices.

The study used one-to-one, semi-structured qualitative interviews, to investigate the social worlds of Samoan ministers and their wives, and those who used their pastoral counselling services. This form of interviewing allows flexibility for the researcher to explore issues raised through participants' responses (Ryan, Coughlan, & Cronin, 2009), rather than following a structured and rigid schedule of explicit questions. The alternative, using focus group interviews, was also considered for the study. By using focus groups, some silent voices amongst the groups are expected (Kitzinger, 1995), even if the groups were aligned for ministers only, *matai* only and so forth – some voices will dominate and overpower others. Culturally, for Samoans, using group interviews may not be the best way to gather knowledge. To avoid this potential tension, one-to-one interviews were employed.

As part of ensuring the safety and comfort of all participants, women who expressed their interest in an interview were offered the option of having the researcher's co-interviewer, a woman colleague, conduct the interview alone. It has been documented that gender matching may be required for certain qualitative interviews, especially when the interviews discuss domestic violence with women (Byrne, 2004). It was important to provide a safe environment for participants during the interviews, especially if some felt uneasy speaking to a minister about sensitive issues.

The findings from the study included the development of conceptual frameworks to understand pastoral counselling and the concept of a changing Samoan self, from multiple perspectives.

The *Tafatolu* methodological framework

The *Tafatolu* methodological framework is presented as an inverted triangle with each of its sides representing three parts considered as valuable to any research – a contemporary academic approach to research, a cultural approach, and the self that represents the researcher's perspectives and positioning within the project. The following, Figure 1, illustrates the framework:

One side of the *Tafatolu* framework presents a contemporary academic approach to research. The contemporary academic approaches incorporate quantitative (e.g., Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009), qualitative (e.g., Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2016) or mixed methods methodologies (e.g., Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

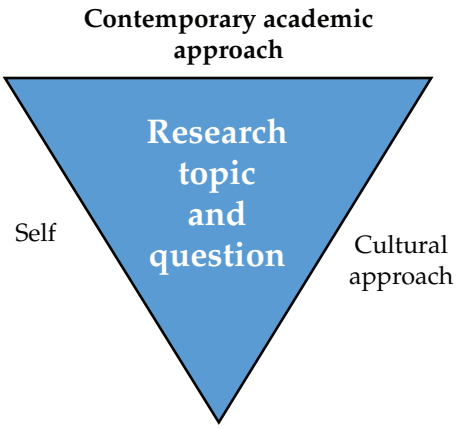

Figure 1. Tafatolu methodological framework.

These dominant methodologies in academic research are predominantly modelled on liberal humanist cultural values, and the values that inform these approaches may be incompatible with some cultures. Therefore, these contemporary academic approaches need to be infused and adapted to the values for any given culture in order to be relevant to the group being studied. This is part of the rationale for the inclusion of a cultural approach in the *Tafatolu* methodological framework.

A cultural approach to the research is another side of the *Tafatolu* methodological framework. Such an approach includes any indigenous methodology that has been developed and widely used by researchers specifically for the communities being investigated. The cultural component of the *Tafatolu* framework can also be a proverb or a metaphor familiar to the group being studied. The benefits of the inclusion of a cultural dimension to the research methodology are two-fold: (i) firstly for the participants, to encourage and attract prospective participants to take part in the research, by using imagery and concepts they are familiar with; and (ii) for the researcher, to help develop rapport with participants to elicit relevant data to meet the project objectives.

The third and final side of the *Tafatolu* methodological framework involves the self, which includes what the researcher brings to the project. More specifically, the self includes the positioning of the researcher along an insider–outsider continuum (Hellawell, 2006), as the research topic often concerns the lived experiences of the researcher to a greater or lesser extent. The movement along an insider–outsider continuum towards the outsider positioning of the researcher, signals that the researcher is a non-member of the group being studied (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). Further, favouring an outsider positioning suggests that the researcher is not, a priori, familiar with the setting and people under investigation (Hellawell, 2006) allowing for objectivity from the researcher. Promoting an insider positioning along such a continuum means the researcher has acceptance by participants that may lead to more open discussions and depth in the data collected (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). As an insider researcher, there will be lived experiences which inform the worldview of the researcher that the researcher brings into the project that need to be acknowledged and addressed. There may be times when the researcher is positioned as both outsider and insider (Hellawell, 2006; Kusow, 2003), during different stages of the project, and shifting from one position to the other is required.

In addition to the researcher's positioning at the *self* side of the *Tafatolu* framework, the participant as well must consider positioning upon the insider–outsider continuum. When articulating the lived experiences of *fa'aSamoa* in the study that this paper reports on, an insider positioning by the research participant is suggested with practices that align with the culture and traditions and the way of life for Samoans. For the participant who appears far removed from the culture and traditions of Samoa and the lived experiences of *fa'aSamoa*, this implies an outsider positioning is held by the participant. The positioning of the research participant in this instance is determined by the degree of involvement with a way of life that aligns with the culture and traditions of Samoans.

At the centre of the *Tafatolu* methodological framework (presented as an inverted triangle), is the research topic, including its research question. All three sides of the *Tafatolu* framework – the contemporary academic approach, the cultural approach, and the self – contribute to a respective way of knowing. Collectively, these approaches provide a methodology to develop answers to the research question at the core of the project. The sections that follow demonstrate the application of this Samoan methodological framework to research.

Applying the *Tafatolu* methodological framework

The application of the *Tafatolu* methodological framework to any research project is directed to its methodology, methods, and the analysis of data. For the study that this paper reports, the *Tafatolu* methodological framework was firstly applied to its methodology. This culturally appropriate methodological framework for Samoans involved a qualitative approach (contemporary academic), fused with the understanding of a Samoan metaphor *fetu'utu'una'i muniao* (cultural), from a researcher positioning (self). Secondly, the *Tafatolu* methodological framework was applied to the methods used. This approach included one-to-one qualitative interviews (contemporary academic), appropriate Samoan practices and language used (cultural), and acknowledging the concept of *vā* – relational space (self). Finally, the *Tafatolu* methodological framework was applied to the analysis of data, and included thematic analysis (contemporary academic), *Fa'afaletui* Samoan methodology (cultural), and interpretivism (self). *Fa'afaletui* (weaving together of knowledge) was used to weave together various perspectives and understandings of pastoral counselling practices for Samoans, and the concept of a changing Samoan self. Interpretivism, that places the story being told and its intended audience at the core of where meaning can be drawn (Geertz, 1973), was used for its parallel to hermeneutics, the interpretation of meaning from Biblical text (Osmer, 2008), and for its link to the researcher's insider positioning as a minister.

Cultural approach: *Fetu'utu'una'i muniao* – manoeuvring a fisher's rod

An understanding of the Samoan metaphor *fetu'utu'una'i muniao* (manoeuvring a fisher's rod) provided a cultural dimension to the methodology used in the study. The phrase itself is derived from the Samoan practice of traditional canoe fishing for the bonito fish. Bonito fishing traditionally involves two operators in the canoe who are men; women are involved in other types of fishing (Armstrong, Herdrich, & Levine, 2011). However, roles that previously were gender-specific for Samoans are now no longer clearly defined. Understanding this metaphor is not intended to be gender-specific for men only; women are just as skilful in assuming the roles specified in this method of fishing.

Bonito fishing has a rower located in the centre of the canoe, and a fisher at the rear (stern) of the canoe who manipulates the fishing rod. The moment the fisher at the rear anticipates the bonito fish taking the hook, he abruptly manipulates (*fetu'utu'una'i*) the rod in a forward motion pulling the traditionally woven string called *afa* out of the sea with the bonito fish attached to its hook, passing over or around the rower in the middle of the canoe. *Muniao* in the metaphor refers to the wooden fishing rod holder attached to the canoe. The fisher's rod must be manipulated precisely for a desirable outcome. The rower in the middle of the canoe must steady the canoe, while simultaneously anticipating the swinging bonito fish so that the fish lands into the middle of the canoe. A successful catch is when the bonito fish lands into the centre of the canoe. The partnership of rower and fisher is necessary for a successful catch – the rower steers the canoe to where the bonito fish may be found, and keeps the boat upright and balanced, while the fisher's primary task is to operate the fishing rod.

However, when unsuccessful, the bonito fish will collide with the rower in the centre of the canoe and may fall back into the sea and be lost.

This metaphor explains the use of one-to-one interviews as a research method. The researcher and participant work together to develop an understanding of pastoral counselling and a changing Samoan self through the interviews, just like the fisher and rower work together in bonito fishing. The researcher is the fisher with the rod; while the participant is the rower who navigates where the discussions lead. A successful interview between researcher and participant is where both co-operated to develop insight and understanding – a successful *catch* in terms of bonito fishing through *fetu'utu'una'i muniao.*

Self: *vā* (relational space)

Vā (relational space) as one side of the *Tafatolu* methodological framework when applied to the methods used in the study, means that certain cultural methods used would acknowledge and account for *vā*. *Fa'atūlima* – the sharing of hands (literally) – is a Samoan cultural practice used during the interviews that addressed *vā* between participants and the researcher. When Samoans meet for any given reason, after the guest has been greeted with a handshake and then seated, the host then welcomes the guest citing honorific titles and designations. If known by the host, the acknowledgement of the guest's village and family titles are also included. The guest responds by addressing any honorific titles and designations held by the host. After such verbal exchanges, only then will the reason for the visit be expressed. *Fa'atūlima* as a Samoan greeting practice extends beyond the literal shaking of hands – it is a practice that sets *vā* between the guest and host through acknowledging titles and designations for both the guest and host. All interactions from that point forward will be guided by *vā* that has been understood through the process of *fa'atūlima*. This cultural method set the scene for the interviews, and developed rapport with participants when any titles they had were acknowledged. It was a cultural practice that assisted in engaging participants, affording them respect and honour prior to the start of the interviews.

As an oratorical and communal people, relationship-building and the maintenance of relationships are important to ensure harmonious communal living. *Vā* therefore assists with relationship-building for Samoans. Members of each household have their assigned responsibilities and duties to perform, and each one understands their part in the larger familial and village setting. *Matai* and elders, for example, are regarded as leaders of the family, while the young men often are responsible for cooking duties. *Fa'aSamoa* itself assists in keeping such relationships intact, where appropriate practices and behaviours for Samoans have been laid down through the generations, according to the traditions and customs of Samoa. The acknowledgement and management of *vā* plays a vital role in harmonious living for Samoans.

Contemporary academic approach: thematic analysis

The application of the *Tafatolu* methodological framework in reference to the analysis of data involved thematic analysis. This strategy occupied the contemporary academic side of the *Tafatolu* framework. Thematic analysis is the process where both implicit and explicit ideas found in the data are grouped together into themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This method of analysis identifies key patterns that have come forth from the data collected.

Thematic analysis can either be inductive (where themes generated are linked to the data), or in a theoretical or deductive way, with a theoretical interest by the researcher in mind (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Specifically, for the study reported herein, analysis of the data needed to be dynamic, similar to the way the Samoan self is dynamic. Since

a major part of the investigation in the study involved the concept of a changing Samoan self, a dynamic approach to analysis aligned with the concept of change. Further, the Samoan language is rich with nuances where the same word can have several interpretations. The variety of interpretations is based on briefings and the emphasis given to particular vowels, and how the hearer hears the spoken word. The meanings of certain Samoan words that participants used were clarified with participants during the interviews, and also later with a *matai* who proof-read transcriptions for any grammatical corrections to the language reported. Due to these reasons, employing a flexible approach in the analysis of the data was necessary that included an inductive approach to thematic analysis.

One of the initial processes that preceded any thematic analysis, was transcribing the digital audio recordings of the interviews. Verbatim transcripts were developed from the audio recordings of the interviews and since the majority of interviews were done in Samoan, transcripts also were predominantly in Samoan.

An important consideration about the process of analysis was the language used. As mentioned earlier, the interviews and thus the transcriptions mostly were in Samoan. The analysis that led to generated codes and ultimately the themes that emerged were undertaken from the Samoan transcriptions developed. The benefit for the researcher in working closely with the data as both the primary interviewer and transcriber of a significant proportion of the data, presented many opportunities to identify key areas of interest during the interviews and also during transcribing. The thematic analysis process used in the study followed the process of thematic analysis suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) and was undertaken in four steps: (1) transcribing the digital audio recordings while simultaneously classifying areas of interest; (2) reading the verbatim transcriptions, creating and revising notes previously made; (3) using OneNote as a codebook to group and categorise codes that emerged from the transcriptions; and (4) comparing, revising, and merging similar codes into groups that became the underlying themes from this project. The theoretical models of information that developed from the process of analysis became the underlying themes from the data.

Assisting the process of grouping common data patterns into themes is the use of coding. Coding is identified as a way to decontextualize text (transcriptions) and formulate useful and meaningful coded material (Hesse-Biber, 2017). Ideas and theories are identified either inductively (that is, driven and generated by the data into codes), or deductively (beginning with theory and the codes formulated either confirm or deny the theory) (Hesse-Biber, 2017). OneNote computer software application was then used as a codebook in working with the codes generated.

Conclusion

The *Tafatolu* methodological framework proposed and discussed in this paper, provides a way to integrate western and contemporary academic approaches to research, with indigenous and cultural approaches. The research implications of this framework are that the fusion of its underlying concepts – a contemporary academic approach, a cultural approach, and the self – accommodate both the context of the targeted populations under review, as well as the context of the researcher. Although the study that conceptualised, developed, and used the *Tafatolu* methodological framework is about pastoral counselling practices for Samoans, as a framework for research it may also appeal to researchers exploring various issues from other indigenous and Pacific populations and communities. The *Tafatolu* methodological framework as presented herein is introduced alongside the available Pacific and Samoan research methodologies, and is proposed as a way to guide research projects from these regions.

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE
THEORETICAL RESEARCH

Pasifika pedagogies in an indigenous tertiary environment

Jay Hikuleo Ikiua, Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, New Zealand

ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: This article examines how culturally appropriate teaching contributes to a positive learning experience for Pasifika students on the Bachelor of Bicultural Social Work degree programme at Te Wānanga o Aotearoa (TWoA), an indigenous tertiary institution in New Zealand dedicated to promoting access to education for Māori and others and delivering an educational experience based on indigenous principles and practice.

APPROACH: Teaching in a social work programme is explored through the lens of the Kaupapa Wānanga framework and Ngā Ūara (values) that form the foundational ideology of TWoA. It draws on the personal experiences of a social services educator using culturally responsive pedagogies that embrace the unique links of Polynesia–Pasifika peoples.

CONCLUSIONS: Culturally responsive pedagogy is vital for Pasifika students to feel valued and culturally connected.

KEYWORDS: Social work education; indigenous education; Pasifika peoples; pedagogy

This article explores how culturally appropriate pedagogies integrated in classroom practice and the physical space contribute to a positive learning experience for Pasifika social work students at Te Wānanga o Aotearoa (TWoA), an Aotearoa New Zealand indigenous tertiary institution underpinned by Māori approaches. How TWoA's teaching and learning frameworks empower Pasifika social work students to value and express their own cultural identity and knowledge is explored.

I speak to the culturally responsive pedagogies of TWoA through my own Niue cultural lens and as an educator. For a Niue woman living in Aotearoa New Zealand, there are many similarities between Māori and Niue culture but there are also distinctions that make Pasifika people unique. I draw on my teaching experience, observations, and analysis and talanoa sessions with Pasifika students in seeking to serve the kaupapa of TWoA while valuing alternative ways of thinking about our world. Part of this journey is recognising the dominance of Western philosophy and pedagogy, not only in the lives of Pasifika people, but in my own. It is, further, coming to an awareness and an awakening of Oceanic perspective, knowledge, and wisdom that have been devalued or suppressed (Thaman, 2003, p. 2). The awakening is also to that of my own unconscious premise. Reclaiming a space of indigenous knowledge, not only of Māori but also Pasifika, is to firstly acknowledge our whakapapa as people of Oceania, tuakana–teina[1] relationships and as descendants of Maui. Reclaiming indigenous knowledge is the acceptance of multiple wisdoms.

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In Aotearoa New Zealand, the terms *Pasifika* or *Pasifika people* are collective labels identifying seven Pacific nations: Niue, Tonga, Vanuatu, Fiji, Samoa, Tokelau and Cook Islands. Finau (2014) notes the Aotearoa New Zealand government, for bureaucratic purposes, has labelled Pasifika peoples despite controversies surrounding generalisations such as these. Labelling in this manner intentionally subsumes the existence of indigenous people into political systems as demonstrated in Canada (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005). What should be consistently noted is that while the Pacific nations share similar beliefs, tradition and values, each possesses a unique cultural identity. However, TWoA also uses the term *Pasifika* in their analytics – so being specific and acknowledging the different nations and cultures of the Pacific in relation to enrolments makes a comparison impossible. Therefore, the term Pasifika will be used in this paper to identify the collective Pasifika representation as students participating in educational opportunities at TWoA.

The first section outlines the TWoA institutional context and the Pasifika student. Next, the essence of Kaupapa Wānanga is discussed. I then identify and discuss pedagogies identified by Pasifika students at TWoA as being culturally responsive. I have purposefully placed the literature review at the end, to acknowledge the value of indigenous knowledge and values that inform this kaupapa (Ruwhiu, 2018).

Te Wānanga o Aotearoa and Pasifika

TWoA has come a long way from its humble beginnings. Established in 1984, TWoA was created in response to the number of Māori not achieving in mainstream education. The training and education programmes offered through TWoA provide a holistic approach grounded on Māori values and principles. TWoA is now one of Aotearoa New Zealand's largest tertiary institutions and seeks to achieve whānau transformation through education.

There has been a steady stream of Pasifika students enrolling to study at TWoA. Pasifika have the third-highest enrolments behind Māori and European (see Figure 1). A large proportion of Pasifika students enrol in computer and business programmes. Tāmaki Mākaurau campus in Mangere, Auckland, has the largest number of Pasifika students across the country.

Kaupapa Wānanga

The Kaupapa Wānanga framework (Figure 2) was created to articulate the practices that are unique and distinct to TWoA. The framework was not to overtake or push aside existing Māori values within TWoA but to coexist in a space to support and uphold the practices of tikanga (procedure, guiding practices) Māori. The framework is encapsulated in the principles of:

- Kaitiakitanga – The constant acknowledgement that participants

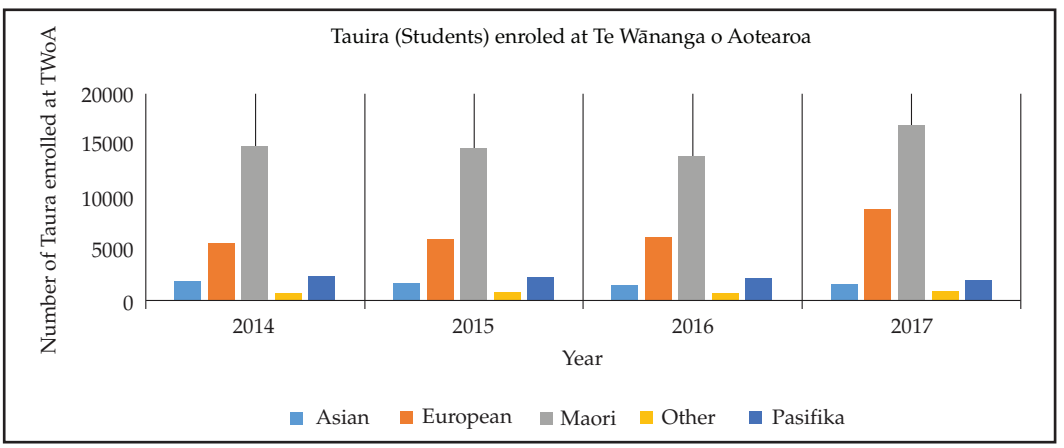

Figure 1. Pasifika students at Te Wānanga o Aotearoa (Watene, 2018).

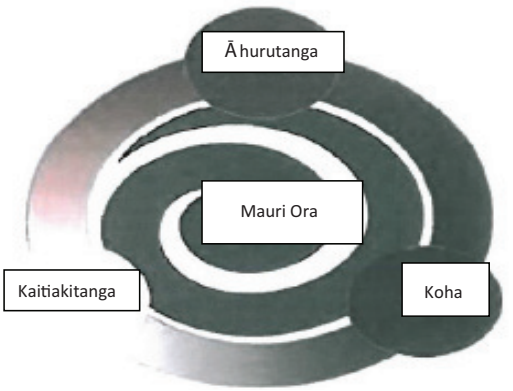

Figure 2. Kaupapa Wānanga framework (Hoani, 2012, p. 86)[2].

(including Te Wānanga o Aotearoa as an institution) at any time and place are always engaged in relationships with others, their environments and kaupapa.

- Koha – The constant acknowledgement that quality spaces must be claimed and maintained to enable activities to be undertaken in an ethical and meaningful way.
- Āhurutanga – The constant acknowledgement that valued contributions are to be given and received responsibly.
- Mauri Ora – The constant acknowledgement that pursuit of wellbeing is at the core of all Te Wānanga o Aotearoa kaupapa and activities. (TWoA, 2017, p. 8)

Kaupapa Wānanga guides how tauira (students) and kaimahi (staff) engage with each other.

Kaupapa Wānanga captures Māori epistemologies and exists "as a framework in which to anchor ourselves and restore our world order as we weave toward the future" (McRae, 2008, p. 198). According to Hoani (2012), Kaupapa Wānanga "complements and enhances existing values… [and are] guiding principles that contribute to our sense of purpose, meaning and destiny as a Wānanga – an indigenous tertiary provider (p. 1). A visual depiction is provided in Figure 2.

Further to the Kaupapa Wānanga framework, TWoA is also underpinned by Ngā Uara, a set of values – Kotahitanga, Te Whakapono, Te Aroha and Ngā Ture – presented in Figure 3. Ngā Uara upholds tikanga and guides best practice of engagement for all stakeholder relationships and what kaimahi at TWoA should aspire to.

Learning and applying Māori ways of knowing, doing and being through the

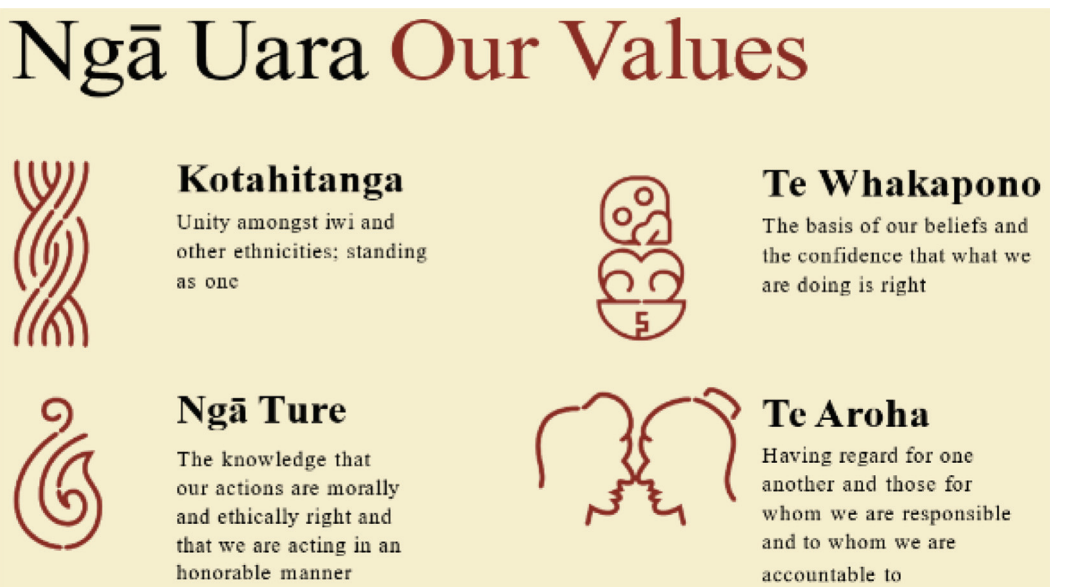

Figure 3. Te Wānanga o Aotearoa Ngā Uara Values (Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, 2017, p. 6).

application of Ngā Uara and Kaupapa Wānanga is filtered through my own cultural perspective and values. This is not to sanitise a "one size fits all approach" but to support Pasifika students to relate to, connect with, and broaden their knowledge of other indigenous knowledge.

Ngā Uara are interpreted by the individual's own lens and the application of practice but it must firstly be acknowledged how these frameworks are built on Te Ao Māori. In my practice I view Kotahitanga as unity alongside kaimahi to transform the lives of whānau through education. Ngā Ture is to act with respect within the realm of TWoA's tikanga. Te Whakapono is to stand with conviction in serving TWoA's kaupapa (purpose). Te Aroha – to serve with empathy and compassion.

The tenets of Kaupapa Wānanga state that, regardless of ethnicity, gender orientation or religious preference, TWoA tauira (students) do not leave their identities at the door. Tauira are encouraged to bring their worldviews, belief systems, values and culture knowledge to the classroom and the wider TWoA environment as shared by Hoani (2012).

Culturally responsive pedagogies for Pasifika students at Te Wānanga o Aotearoa

Culturally responsive pedagogy "… is teaching to the personal and cultural strengths through close interactions of ethnic identity, cultural background and student achievement" (Gay, as cited in Sleeter, 2012, p. 563). Sleeter argues that students of colour are well versed in their own cultural positioning and knowing and that by building on these capabilities good educational results will follow. Culturally responsive pedagogy for Pasifika students weaves their cultural values, beliefs and knowledge into their learning environments. According to the Aotearoa New Zealand government Pasifika Education Plan 2013–2017, Pasifika values are respect, belonging, service, family and relationships. Culturally responsive pedagogy specific to Pasifika students integrates culture into the learning environment (Ministry of Education, 2013).

Pasifika students become well versed in identifying and demonstrating the tenets of Kaupapa Wānanga in their everyday practice at TWoA. I have had many talanoa sessions (Vaioleti, 2006) – the sharing of stories, aspirations and values – with Pasifika Bachelor of Bicultural Social Work (BBSW) students throughout my teaching since 2015. Pasifika students come to a realisation that the principles of Kaupapa Wānanga are what they naturally do in their own physical and social environments and this prompts them to critically reflect on, explore and identify their own cultural values alongside Kaupapa Wānanga and to be confident in who they are. For example, I recall how a Pasifika student described that Āhurutanga (a sense of feeling safe in all environments) in the home as "eating mum's chop suey" (personal communication 11 March 2016). Or Kaitiakitanga (guardianship) as shared by Pasifika students is working in unity with the Pasifika community towards the preservation of cultural traditions and language.

The Ako Wānanga (the practice of learning and teaching) space at TWoA replicates a whānau space for all and enables Pasifika students to bring their cultural identity to TWoA. Ako Wānanga is TWoA's recipe for success and a culmination of narratives that reflect what works well through creating awesome learning experiences (TWoA, 2017). The culturally responsive pedagogy is demonstrated through what I call the magic of noho.

The magic of noho

The delivery of the BBSW degree at TWoA is noho based, meaning tauira (students) sleep over (for two nights) in the whare moe (sleeping area). Noho is not limited to the BBSW programme but is open to most programmes in TWoA. The noho delivery mode is more than providing a programme that is suitable for tauira who may not be

able attend the standardised weekly classes. Noho weaves in Te Ao Māori where values are expressed: wairua (spiritual), tikanga (customs) and the organisation's kaupapa that defines and differentiates the Wānanga way.

At the end of the learning day, those of Māori and non-Māori cultures retire to the whare moe. It is here in the vicinity of the whare moe that the camaraderie, wairua (spirituality) and a certain reverence arises that unifies tauira and kaimahi. The evening is spent supporting tauira to prepare for group presentations, completing assignments and socialising over many cups of coffee. Or in my case, I wait for the usual suspects to do the take-away run where we have kai (food) – yet again. The dining tables and classrooms surrounding the whare moe serve as a refuge for tauira to laugh or cry as they share their personal journeys, worries, heartaches and tribulations.

Kaimahi and tauira succumb to the *magic of noho*. We relax together singing waiata (songs) and talanoa about bloopers or the humorous mishaps of the day. Sometimes we are the shoulders to cry on, the heart that feels and listens to the narratives of those who experience self-doubts about carrying on in the educational journey. We comfort and ease the worried minds of parent(s) who miss their tamariki (children). We take delight in sharing radical social work experiences and critical views of events that impact on the social work profession.

In my experience, the magic of noho is created through upholding of tikanga, engaging in meaningful social activities, strengthening collegial relationships, sharing of talanoa until the early hours of the morning and telling stories in the dark that reclaim the traditional indigenous practice of preserving cultural knowledge and histories (Vaioleti, 2006).

For the first noho of 2018, I arranged to take the BBSW year one class on a hikoi (walk) up the maunga Rangatuhi[3] – otherwise known as Colonial Knob. The intention of the hikoi was to demonstrate a cultural pedagogy to demonstrate the principles of Kaupapa Wānanga and Ngā Uara.

The goal was to hikoi together as a class to see how far our feet or fitness levels would take us. The class walked with trepidation and some level of anxiety, not knowing how far the walk would go. I stopped the class every 10 minutes to reassess the situation and determine whether we continue with the hikoi or turn back. We accomplished what we could and, at the turning point, tauira (students) gave high fives, and encouraged and congratulated each other for making it so far. I did not realise the impact of the hikoi until tauira (including Pasifika) shared their reflections of the activity[4] and the mauri round.

A mauri round is another indigenous culturally responsive practice to prepare for, reflect upon and embed learning. The mauri round is a standing practice in my class and other programmes at TWoA. Tauira are seated in a circle and are given an opportunity to individually share their state of their mauri (wellbeing). This could be anything from how they are doing and how they felt about noho and the learnings. According to Pohatu (2002), mauri is vital to the wellbeing of relationships and informs how activities should be planned, progressed and monitored to achieve the intended goal.

The mauri round is a platform to build Whakawhanaungatanga (building respectful relationships) and trust as tauira share their state of being, the good and the bad, in an environment that is non-threatening and non-judgemental. According to Edwards, mauli (mauri) is known by the wider Polynesian family as the location of emotions and the very centre of the person (Edwards, 2014, p. 21).

Tauira shared the magic of noho through the mauri round and written work gathered from their reflective journals.

> I was amazed at how good I felt after participating in the climb, I felt more

> comfortable with my class and strangely enough energized and a clearer mind
>
> Noho was a great experience meeting everyone and settling in, created a close bond with most of my class mates, working together to hike Rangatuhi maunga and loads of compliments to each other and encouragement which made me feel great also having good conversations with each other learning about their interests and hobbies, family, heritage and culture.

The magic of noho creates learning experiences as tauira come together unified in their goal to complete the degree programme. As described by Pasifika students:

> My honest opinion about first day of noho was long, tiring…class was awesome, trying to familiarise ourselves with names, getting to know each other. The bond our class shares with each other is amazing. The Saturday morning 3rd on March…all tauira to [sic] go up the maunga [Colonial Knob]. At first I was not all for it me being unfit and all. Walking up the maunga together was a great way of creating Whakawhanaugatanga. A class that has only known each other for a few days and some for the first time, but as experience walking up the maunga together it felt like Whānau, aiga, we were all in it together meaning no one got left behind.
>
> Noho was a great experience meeting everyone and settling in, created a close bond with most of my class mates, working together to hike Rangatuhi maunga and loads of compliments to each other and encouragement which made me feel great also having good conversations with each other learning about their interests and hobbies, family, heritage and culture.

The hikoi can be best summed up by a Pasifika student: "we only got to tickle the feet of the maunga ... maybe next time we'll make it to the ankles" (personal communication, 3 March 2018).

Kai

Kai (food) is a social connecting that displays manaakitanga (caring about others) and aroha (love and compassion). Apiata-Vague (2011) affirms that food is a celebration of events big or small but that can also bring negative connotations through the offering of food between social worker and client. It can cross boundaries of professional relationships and at the same time break down the social barriers for reciprocity. Nguyen and Bowles highlight that to work effectively you must "first of all be a friend, only secondly a professional" (as cited in Apiata-Vague, 2011, p. 65). What better way to break down the barriers than through the sharing of kai?

Over the course of noho, kaimahi and tauira come together for shared kai. Kaimahi do not have a separate area with a *Staff Only* sign[5] unless they choose to retreat to the sanctuary of a more private space. Following kai, the social interactions continue where everyone is expected to perform the clean-up duties in the whare kai. The shared kai and space contribute to the whanau feeling of TWoA and does not differentiate between kaimahi and tauira. The atmosphere is buzzing as other tauira from different programmes come to know each other and engage in deep talanoa sessions. Tamariki are sometimes present as they come to share kai and grab quality moments with parent(s). What also contributes to the magic of noho is reciprocity. During noho, a group of tauira perform a waiata (song) to the catering kaimahi in acknowledgement of the preparation and hard work of kai in keeping the energy levels sustained throughout the day. There is no certain structure as everyone pitches in and helps – creating a sense of belonging to the physical space.

These social settings of noho and kai are embedded practices that contribute to

culturally responsive pedagogies. The ako (learning and teaching) space is not limited to the classroom but is also through the sharing of talanoa outside the classroom. The magic of noho and kai creates the space that is attuned to Pasifika way of doing things. This is set by spiritual messages of karakia (prayer) and waiata (songs) that are familiar in Pasifika social and formal environments. Whilst this may seem disruptive to professional boundaries of separating learning/teaching spaces in Western institutions that "disempower" students (Kawagley & Barnhardt, 2018), the teaching cultural pedagogy reinforces Pasifika social orientations in creating positive learning experiences.

Noho is akin to Place Based Education (PBE) (Penetito, 2009) approaches. PBE formalises connections for students to develop a love of the environment by placing an emphasis on teaching through culture rather than about culture. PBE is about identifying what the place means but also about relationships with the place. For Pasifika, connecting is not restricted to human relationships but to physical space and social scenes are attributes that are culturally appropriate for Pasifika students (Mila-Schaaf & Robinson, 2010) In my experience, TWoA does this for Pasifika students where the culturally responsive pedagogies are a natural occurrence in respect of tikanga, Ngā Uara and Kaupapa Wānanga.

The value of cultural knowledge for Pasifika students

Cultural knowledge, known as *indigenous knowledge*, is "active participation through story-telling, sharing activities, and ways of understanding themselves in a natural environment and affording opportunities of relating and understanding each other" (Sam, 2011, p. 317). Sharing of cultural knowledge in heterogeneous classrooms and the wider educational institution creates robust learning experiences where Pasifika students can bring their entire selves and have freedom to culturally identity through art, poetry, oral history, songs, dress, kai and, more importantly, their own indigenous interpretations (Thaman, 2003). Sauni (2014) highlights how Pasifika educational success can be achieved through advancing Pasifika cultural capital in the classroom – allowing a Pasifika way of being.

What drives cultural knowledge in the classroom at TWoA is, firstly, Pasifika students tend to gravitate towards each other by seeking out commonality with peers. Pasifika students feel strengthened as a collective and reassured that they do not stand alone in their own worldview. Secondly, sharing cultural knowledge is further enhanced by Pasifika staff. Pasifika staff navigate the bicultural teaching space with respect and humility but are also encouraging of Pasifika students to be confident in their own positioning and world views through sharing their own cultural knowledge and being creators of their own learning frameworks. This practice validates cultural experiences and knowledge – Pasifika students willingly oblige and reciprocate these positive relationships by speaking of their own realities. Thirdly, Pasifika students also observe *cultural humility* where Pasifika staff share the learning space equally with all students and demonstrate tikanga respectfully. Cultural knowledge comes through when the learner and teacher sharing the learning space equally. The teacher does not hold all the knowledge. Both the teacher and learner learn from each other. Finally, Pasifika students as a collective create and add to the whānau feeling that is embedded in TWoA's character. Sharing of one's cultural knowledge strengthens one's resolve to achieve and strengthens self-confidence for Pasifika voices to be heard, and reinforces a positive learning environment (Savage et al., 2011; Mila-Schaaf & Robinson, 2010).

Thaman (2003) argues that it is imperative for Pasifika students to share their cultural knowledge for not only "pedagogic reasons" (p. 11) but to improve class relationships

and equal partnerships. More importantly, indigenous knowledge enriches the curriculum by adding multiple perspectives (Penitito, 2009).

Māori and Pasifika relationships – People of Polynesia

Ilonia stated "the only difference between you Maori and the rest of us Pacific Islanders [is] that you came on a waka and we came on a jet" (cited in Anae, Burgoyne, & Iuli, 2006, p. 88). A statement that many Māori and Pasifika would find true and humorous. However, the synergies between Māori and Pasifika took place over thousands of years as descendants of Maui and from the Island of Hawaiiki. People of Polynesia left Hawaiiki a few hundred years before Māori thus cementing tuakana–teina relationships. Māori and Pacific peoples draw their history not only from the land but the ocean as voyagers. Somerville (2012) examines the two distinct communities of Māori and Pasifika relationships and how these relationships have been blurred through the diaspora and migration of Pacific peoples whilst these bicultural relationships are examined in a multicultural nation (Hill, 2010) and shaped by political and social developments. Somerville seeks to find where the connection takes place and how it is articulated. Māori and Pasifika people are spiritually linked and affiliate to land, ocean, culture, traditions and spirituality. We are also linked through the connection of indigenous knowledge.

My critical positioning, writing the first draft of this article, claimed that the Kaupapa Wānanga model and Ngā Uara were not Pasifika to claim. In saying this, I was denying how indigenous knowledge of Te Ao Māori ignited culturally sustainable pedagogy that is responsive and relevant to the cultural communities (Paris, 2012) namely for Pasifika students. Thaman (2003) claims that reclaiming indigenous knowledge is decolonising formal education. This is achieved though the experiences, narratives and wisdom of our people whether it be Māori or Pasifika.

Valuing indigenous knowledge between indigenous people enriches the learning experiences at TWoA. And this has been achieved through the culturally responsive pedagogies of physical spaces, the magic of noho and kai which are but a few of the positive learning experiences.

The literature review evidences the dire need for schools, teachers to be respectful and culturally responsive to cultural identity for Pasifika students (Chu, Arabella, & Paurini, 2013). Pasifika students need to feel validated, valued and respected in any learning environment. For an indigenous institution such as TWoA, the kaupapa steers away from the dominant discourse prevalent in Western education systems and seeks to unapologetically decolonise mainstream education through cultural responsive pedagogies.

Literature review

The article seeks to draw attention to the application of indigenous Māori frameworks and the cultural teaching pedagogies for Pasifika students; to consciously understand the journey of how both cultures coexist in the same learning space. The literature review also explores Māori participation at secondary and tertiary levels. I deliberately bring in Māori research for various reasons. I believe it is necessary to add the voices that have for so long advocated for the Eurocentric education systems to open their eyes (if not already open) to the ongoing oppression of indigenous people. I also believe this article serves as a platform to highlight what is working well for, not only Pasifika at TwoA, but for Māori; in the hope that other tertiary institutions/educators can be creative and innovative in creating magical moments for all students. Acknowledging Māori through this medium concurs with Molisa (2016) who highlights that solving social and ecological issues to firstly support Māori in their fight for social justice and rebuild our connections is a priority.

A considerable amount of research has been undertaken in Pasifika education. Pasifika early childhood development and transitioning is mentioned in the works of Meade, Puhipuhi, Foster-Cohen, and Anne Meade Associates (2003), and Taouma, Tapusoa, and Podmore (2013). Effective teaching practices and transitioning for primary and secondary schools are discussed in the publications of Hawk, Cowley, Hill and Sutherland (2002) and Hill and Hawk (2000). Additionally, tertiary participation, retention, cultural responsiveness and identity are explored (e.g., Chu, 2014; McCaffery, 2008; Porter-Samuels, 2013; Samu, 2006; Spiller, 2013). These researchers tell similar narratives: Pasifika students are underachieving and continue to struggle in mainstream education.

Māori are underrepresented at the tertiary level. The negative experiences during secondary school (Bishop & Berryman, 2009) can have dire effects, particularly when Māori students become withdrawn, non-engaging/non-productive; resulting in many at a young age withdrawing from education systems.

Bishop and Berryman (2009) assert a key reason for Māori failing in a Eurocentric school system is the lack of cultural responsiveness. The learning space is individualistic, dominated by the teacher rather than a collective approach by sharing of power between the teacher and student. The authors further suggest that learning experiences be interactive and engaging to connect with the learner. These sentiments are also echoed in (MacFarlane, Glynn, Cavanagh, & Batemean, 2007) who illustrate the importance of creating culturally safe schools for Māori students. In the current system Māori students are restricted and do not have the freedom to be culturally expressive and "…to be who they want to be" (p. 65).

Milne (2007) notes that education continues to push Māori learners into a realm of subordination, and little attention is given to cultural uniqueness, their values and personal freedom to articulate their own knowledge. This is further iterated by Tomlins-Jahnke (2007) who argues that "mainstream education" privileges a Western/Eurocentric system that fuels trauma and negative experiences for Māori and Pasifika learners.

The literature review for Pasifika education shared similar themes to those of Māori. Allen, Robinson, and Talafasi (2009) argue that Pasifika students were expected to conform and to fit into Western education paradigms that were unfamiliar and difficult to understand. The authors reiterate that, for successful educational outcomes, Pasifika students need to bring their own knowledge and being to the classroom. Samu (2006) writes about the inability of Aotearoa/New Zealand's school systems to be consciously aware and responsive to the diversity of learners. Too often the cultural identity of Pasifika students is dismissed and deemed insignificant. McKinley and Madjar's (2014) longitudinal research explores how Pasifika students experience transition from secondary to tertiary and how negative experiences hinder social progression.

Literature specific to Pasifika students at tertiary institutions speaks to the need for staff to be culturally responsive and for student support initiatives to be diverse to cater for the needs of Pasifika students. This has been accomplished by creating mentoring relationships (Chu, 2014) and enhancing cultural capital by creating Pacific-specific roles (McCaffery, 2008).

Mira (2014) examines how the experiences of Samoan woman at tertiary education in Aotearoa New Zealand strengthen or weaken their cultural identity. A research participant in Mira's study shared that "[P]acific voices were limited and seldom included" (p. 274).

Māori and Pasifika share similar narratives of an oppressive education system and the struggles encountered in tertiary institutions.

Pasifika people migrated to Aotearoa New Zealand and entered into an educational system perpetuated by colonial behaviour and therefore, like Māori, education was bound to fail Pasifika students.

The literature gathered portrays the ongoing deficit practices in the education system impacting on Pasifika students. Empirical research articulates the narratives of Pasifika students who have been undervalued, marginalised and oppressed. There is very little research that speaks to the narratives of the aspirations and successes for Pasifika's students as explored by Mayeda, Keil, & Dutton (2014). One of the few studies that does however, focus on the strengths is shared by Savage et al. (2011). The authors concur that teaching pedagogies should be culturally responsive to their students. They deliberately take a strengths-based view by focussing and enhancing Pasifika achievement by using the analogy of the zebras that can climb trees as opposed to discussing the *why* and the *how*.

This article provides only a snippet of Pasifika voices through reflective voices. However, identifying culturally responsive teaching pedagogies is a part of the magic that Penetito (2009) advocates for, and what others can learn from in raising good education outcomes for Pasifika students.

I have observed and assessed group presentations where Pasifika students apply traditional cultural practice with Māori kupu. The analogy that best describes the situations are the square pegs trying to fit into the round hole. Which, of course, cannot happen.

The study and research undertaken by So'o (2017) is the first to enquire about the Pasifika experiences at TWoA. The research explores tauira experiences of what contributes to success. He found 14 factors that contributed to success for Pasifika students, such as whānau supports. However, more ground-work is needed to further explore and identify TWoA's commitment to uplift educational achievement for Pasifika. This example of cultural teaching pedagogy does not profess to know it all, nor is it claiming to have the absolute answer, however, sharing good practice is encouraged in the social work field and social work educators should model this approach.

Conclusion

Culturally responsive pedagogies are important to support learning for Pasifika students (Chu et al., 2013). Kaupapa Wānanga as a framework resonates with Pasifika students as they come to a realisation that these principles are very similar to their own way of knowing, doing and being. They are encouraged to learn and reflect on Te Ao Māori through these frameworks and sharing the indigenous knowledge in enhancing their own learning and valuing alternative ways of thinking. At the same time, Pasifika students should be encouraged to be architects of their own frameworks. I believe the unique learning tool is allowing space for Pasifika students to consciously take a lead in their learning space by sharing their cultural identity and values through Pasifika frameworks thus creating multiple perspectives that are enriching and by reproducing cultural capital in the BBSW space at TWoA.

Culturally responsive pedagogy, the magic of noho and the sharing of kai all help to create the whānau feeling for Pasifika students to feel valued and culturally connected to enjoy the TWoA experience. This serves as a reminder for educators that "the culture of the student cannot enter the classroom until it has first entered the consciousness of the teacher" (McKenzie & Singleton, 2009, p. 5).

Acknowledgement

This article is dedicated to the Bachelor of Bicultural Social Work Students – achieving potential has no boundaries. Fakaue lahi mahaki for sharing your stories and

enriching my journey. Kia monuina ha mutolu a tau fakaakoaoga.

Notes

[1] Tuakana-Teina has the power to eliminate barriers for the learner and the teachers. It allows indigenous people to re-engage and participate in education through a methodology of knowledge sharing (Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, 2015).

[2] Text box inserted to clearly show the tenets of Kaupapa Wānanga framework – Ahurutanga, Koha, kaitiakitanga and Mauri Ora.

[3] Rangatuhi maunga is a local landmark of Porirua. The panoramic views from the top overlook Porirua Harbour, Cook Strait and Wellington, and on clear summer day, the South Island.

[4] Pasifika and Māori students on the BBSW Year 1 2018 programme consented to part of their Reflective Journal writing about the noho experience to be used for the article.

[5] This applies to Te Wānanga o Aotearoa – Porirua.

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE
THEORETICAL RESEARCH

Culturally relevant pedagogy for social work learning in Papua New Guinea: Perspectives from the University of Papua New Guinea's fieldwork programme

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: Social work education was introduced in the early 1970s in Papua New Guinea (PNG) and is still developing. Subsequently, its teaching and learning approaches have developed and, significantly, applied with greater flexibility than a standardised format although contemporary western methods predominate.

METHOD: The centrality of the PNG context for culturally relevant social work education and the paradigms of pedagogy in field education are discussed. PNG worldviews of teaching and learning have links to similar educational and practice perspectives from the Melanesian region, Pacific and other relevant non-western contexts.

CONCLUSIONS: PNG's ways of teaching and learning are yet to become formally integrated into contemporary social work education due to issues of credibility, relevance and quality assurance regarding professional social work values. The article argues for substantial integration and utilisation of traditional PNG-specific methods of teaching and learning in the delivery of social work education at the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) as important steps in developing the profession in the country. Indigenous local knowledge and practices of teaching and learning should become integrated into formal classroom pedagogical strategies in social work.

KEYWORDS: Melanesia; Papua New Guinea; cultural relevance; pedagogy; social work learning

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I am a tutor and researcher in social work of PNG/Melanesian origin writing within my own professional field and the socio-cultural context of which I am a natural, indigenous citizen. I have been coordinating the Field Education programme at UPNG since 2010. The position taken in this article centres on my passion for developing culturally relevant social work education by connecting local and global commonalities and differences in order to appreciate the uniqueness of social work education and practice in PNG, relative to the Pacific region and further afield.

Culturally relevant social work education is a significant human right and social work educators should be ensuring that social work students have the opportunity to realise this right. Central to this argument is the expectation that social work education should be delivered using culturally relevant teaching and learning approaches that promote professional identity and cultural

competence. Field education is an essential component of building a culturally relevant social work curriculum. In this article, where *social work education* is used broadly, *field education* is embraced as an integral aspect.

The development of a culturally relevant social work curriculum for PNG requires a rigorous empirical exploration of appropriate strategies for the localisation of global social work education standards and the incorporation of local knowledge and learning approaches. This article draws on relevant and accessible literature to discuss the significance of the PNG context in building culturally relevant social work pedagogy and paradigms for teaching and learning. Furthermore, my "insider" experiences and knowledge will be used to authenticate the significance of social work education and research for PNG in an increasingly globalised world.

This article endeavours to promote the development of culturally relevant social work education in PNG through the development and integration of indigenous pedagogical methods – through understanding PNG's social, political and cultural context and aligning local knowledge and practice principles that complement contemporary teaching and learning methods. First, PNG's political and socio-cultural context will be discussed followed by the examination of two key concepts indigenous to PNG culture: the *Melanesian Way* and *Melanesian Pedagogy*. The discussion on the Melanesian Way provides an understanding and contextualisation of conditions under which teaching and learning in social work field education occur, while the exploration of Melanesian Pedagogy lays the foundations for the identification of relevant PNG-specific pedagogies that can be adapted and applied for the effective delivery of contemporary social work field education.

PNG context: development and transition

PNG is a developing country and continues to explore development interventions for social and economic growth and prosperity. The Country Meters Information (2018) shows that PNG's total estimated population on 6 September 2018 was 8.15 million; growing at about 2% annually. Australian Doctors International (ADI, 2015) reports that 87% of the population live in rural areas (51% male, 49% female). Life expectancy is 64 and 68 years for males and females respectively.

PNG has a young population (60% are under the age of 25). The illiteracy rate is high and consistent with high levels of primary and secondary school dropout rates (ADI, 2015).

The predominant population in PNG is of Melanesian ethnicity. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) indicates that PNG is a Christian country with Roman Catholics comprising 27%, Protestants 69.4%, with 3.3% of population embracing indigenous beliefs (CIA, 2016). The three official languages for communication are Tok Pisin, English and Hiri Motu. Tok Pisin is widely used and understood, while English is spoken by 1–2% of the population; less than 1% of people speak Hiri Motu (CIA, 2016).

The important challenge for PNG beyond these demographics is to ensure sustainable socio-economic and environmental development amidst modernisation processes.

Transition from traditional to contemporary PNG

The pre-capitalist way of life in PNG emphasised small communities occupying a village or cluster of villages; kinship was the means of organising family and community life. Brydon and Lawihin (2013) maintain that PNG is still a nation in transition today. PNG has a history of colonisation dating from the 19th century and is Australia's only former colony. PNG achieved independence in 1975 and has since maintained a western-like constitutional democratic system of government, with customary laws and its own Melanesian governance systems recognised by the country's National Constitution.

Colonisation has taken its toll on PNG's cultural landscape, exposing vulnerabilities in many cultural practices and traditions. For example, tribal and social groupings initially had their own cultural practices and belief systems governing their livelihoods and promoting social wellbeing. Cultural knowledge and skills have remained the source of wisdom on which rural people depend for their livelihood especially where government services are non-existent.

While the colonial administration and missionaries were responsible for introducing western-oriented structures and values systems enjoyed today in PNG, Lovai (in press) argues that the initial integration of modern and traditional knowledge and value systems were not fairly considered. Thus, traditional and cultural knowledges have not been formalised and incorporated into modern knowledge systems in any integrated way.

Although PNG's National Constitution promotes western democratic values of human rights, equality of opportunity and individual freedom, it challenges the traditional PNG value of collective rights resulting in modern knowledge being accepted as superior to traditional knowledge – but Lovai (in press) contends that most people continue to value cultural knowledge in the form of PNG Melanesian wisdom. Such wisdom is fundamental for understanding local social issues and in navigating two different worlds with different sets of knowledge that co-exist in contemporary PNG.

Situating field education in social work practice and education in PNG

Field education is an integral component of professional social work education globally. Contemporary social work practice and education in PNG were introduced in the late 1960s and early 1970s respectively. Political self-governance and international pressure to have social work education introduced in Third World countries (O'Collins, 1993) are seen as the main drivers; however, traditional forms of governance welfare support were strong and existed prior to colonisation. Given the fickleness of political and social conditions over time, the focus of social work practice and education in PNG has evolved. Fundamental to this growth in social work education is the advancement of field education that connects knowledge to practice settings through research, policy, and practice

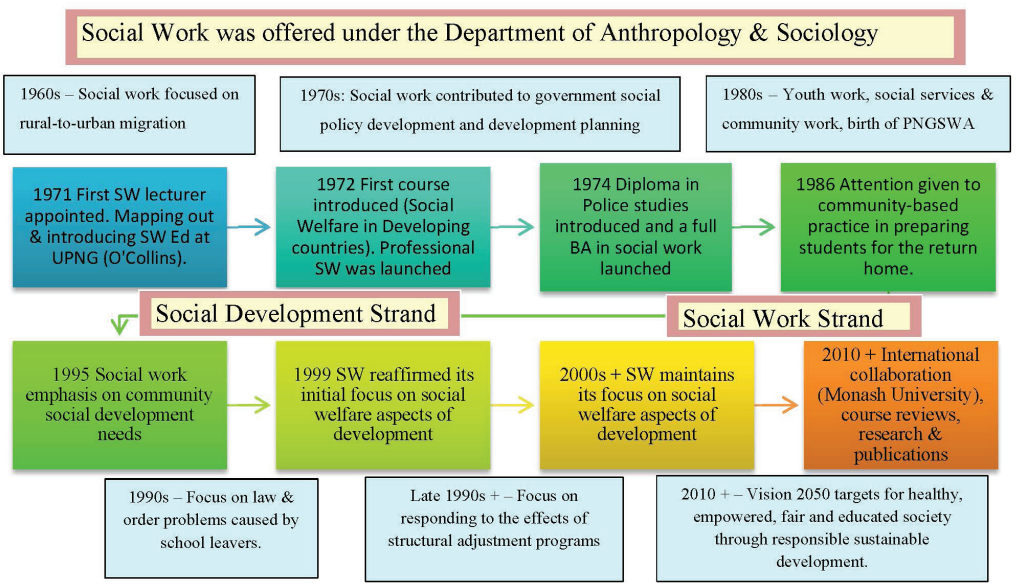

Figure 1. A timeline of social work development at UPNG and focus in PNG. Source: Lawihin (2017).

and training interventions. Figure 1 shows the development of professional social work education and the focus of practice in PNG at the UPNG – the only university in the country offering social-work-specific studies.

To develop a training programme that addressed local needs and problems, O'Collins travelled widely in PNG and gathered stories and experiences of people and communities to firstly understand different local cultures (O'Collins & Coleman, 2013). During the introduction of social work training and, after independence, social work education responded appropriately to emerging social issues. It should be recognised that students' fieldwork can play an important role in helping to address social challenges. For example, as experienced in fieldwork, the focus of social work education was on urban community development when there was increased rural-to-urban migration in the 1960s. In the 1970s, social work focused on contributing to government social policy developments and planning.

A school leavers' problem in the 1980s directed the focus of the UPNG Social Work programme (the programme) to youth work, social services and community work (Lovai, in press). However, youth work efforts could not effectively curb the increasing number of youth dropping out of school who by the 1990s, had become a serious law and order problem in urban areas. Social work education emphasised how to work with people, focused on meeting social needs and on the improvement of the social lives of both rural and urban communities. Towards the late 1990s, a restructure at the university set the context for the social work programme and its role in higher education as being:

> ...concerned with social welfare aspects of development and aims to enhance the quality of life of people in both rural and urban communities through the use of appropriate social work practices. It is also concerned with the application of social sciences to develop and to promote the wellbeing of the society. (UPNG, 1995 np)

Although UPNG Social Work was developed with Melanesian communities in mind, most of the current curricular content and pedagogical approaches, including the models of practice taught, are of western origin. This works against any motivations to develop a unique model of culturally fit social work (Brydon & Lawihin, 2014; Lawihin, 2017). These challenges continually exert pressure on the ability of social work to adequately respond to social, family and community needs and the needs of marginalised and vulnerable populations. Ensuring the appropriate application of relevant social work models supported by best practices is challenging. Therefore, the preparation of future social workers is critical, and such preparation should include tested knowledge and applied skills relevant to the local context.

The general oversight for the development and continuity of social work education and practice in any context is often provided by professional social work associations and academic institutions offering social work. In contexts where this is lacking, delivering social work educational programmes is a challenge. Flynn, Kamasua, and Lawihin (2016) describe social work in PNG as challenging in recent years due to limited academic and professional oversight. For example, although the Papua New Guinea Social Workers Association (PNGSWA) was established in the mid-1980s, it has remained less active since then. The programme was given international accreditation in 1974 by IASSW. While the IFSW (2014) still lists UPNG Social Work as a member organisation, Flynn et al. (2016) indicate that its accreditation status is unknown. Without the professional social work body, PNG is struggling to advance social work towards professionalisation.

UPNG social work fieldwork

As stated earlier, fieldwork is a critical component of the programme. The programme offers an undergraduate Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Social Work, as

well as a postgraduate qualification. The fieldwork courses of this undergraduate degree and their details are presented in Table 1.

Social Work Practice (SWP) A and B are third-year courses offered annually and are delivered in concurrent mode, where students spend two days on placement and attend classes on other days each week. Advanced Fieldwork is taken in the fourth year. Fieldwork courses provide opportunities for students to learn and apply values, principles, knowledge, skills and attitudes and to gain practical experience in approved social work settings. In the two third-year SWP courses, students are expected to complete 26 days of practical placement (200 hours) and relevant coursework assessments. Advanced Fieldwork consists of 13 weeks of full-time supervised professional fieldwork followed by a seminar presentation and the submission of a major (research) paper, making a total of 15 weeks. Advanced Fieldwork is undertaken when all the required social work courses have been successfully completed. The overall goal of the course is for students to develop the social work intervention skills required of a beginning social work graduate practitioner.

Table 1: UPNG Social Work Fieldwork Courses

Year of study	Course number	Course name	Semester	Credit points
3rd	4.31017	Social Work Practice A	1	3
3rd	4.31039	Social Work Practice B	2	3
4th	4.41025	Advanced Fieldwork	2	6
BA Hons	4.51028	Honours Advanced Fieldwork	2	3

Source: UPNG Social Work Strand (2010).

Fieldwork involves a multiplicity of organisations and people within the university and with agencies offering student placements. These agencies and supervisors are required to constantly collaborate with the university-based fieldwork coordinator and academics in order to collectively facilitate effective student learning. This is consistent with the Melanesian Way, and therefore is a culturally relevant approach to teaching and learning in PNG (Lawihin, 2017).

Core aspects of culturally relevant pedagogy in PNG: the Melanesian Way

The Melanesian Way is synonymous with the PNG Way and is a unique description of culture in Melanesian society that empowers and governs Melanesian communities (Narokobi, 1983). This culture is built on traditional values of communalism and collectivism across PNG, Fiji, New Caledonia, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. The culture also defines the way teaching and learning occur and is centred on existing strong and intimate reciprocal relationships, which are integral tenets of Pacific Island cultures (Narokobi, 1983; Sanders, 1983; Vallance, 2007) and is distinctively different from the way relationships are constructed and valued in the western context.

In this article, the Melanesian Way is discussed from the PNG perspective in relation to other Pacific and non-western contexts. The Melanesian Way covers an array of unique beliefs, values and principle-centred systems that guide how Melanesians behave and interact with each other and their environments. This happens mostly among Melanesians themselves in the Melanesian region, although such collectivist cultures are found across the South Pacific (Faleolo, 2013; Mafile'o & Vakalahi, 2016) and elsewhere such as in the Ubuntu Culture in Africa (Kreitzer, 2012; Mungai, Wairire, & Rush, 2014) and in the Confucianism of the Chinese tradition (Liu, Sun, & Anderson, 2013). Such collective cultures emphasise general collective responsibility

– which includes teaching and learning. This is where field education can make a significant contribution to the development of culturally relevant social work education because it involves developing collective and collaborative interactions between the university, practice settings and the local community.

Melanesian Pedagogy is a subsidiary concept within the Melanesian Way which determines acceptable and appropriate teaching and learning methods. Such pedagogy is linked to the concept of *culturally relevant pedagogy* developed by Ladson-Billings (1995) that stresses the needs of students from various cultures. As we endeavour, as a nation and region, to develop culturally relevant pedagogy for Pacific Island students, Ladson-Billings' (1995) work can help us set the framework for teaching and learning in PNG. Gay (2000) and Ladson-Billings (1995) highlight five principles (*identity and achievement, equity and excellence, developmental appropriateness, teaching the whole child*, and *student–teacher relationships*), that set the basis for Melanesian Pedagogy in PNG.

Experiential evidence has shown that Melanesian Pedagogy is effective because students and teachers can easily relate to, and connect course content directly to, practical examples and pictorial images thereby demonstrating their understandings in class. Thus, using Melanesian Pedagogy highlights the need to integrate indigenous pedagogical strategies to enhance understandings of indigenous local knowledge and practices in teaching and learning (Lawihin, 2017). An example is the use of Tok Pisin and metaphors to explain complex social work models and discuss sensitive issues during fieldwork meetings. Furthermore, the participation of fieldwork supervisors in the UPNG programme has built Melanesian practice perspectives into the UPNG field education programme and helps to "bridge" professional practice expectations and academic standards.

Narokobi (1983) remains the most influential advocate of the Melanesian Way which critics have challenged as being suppressive, out-dated and irrelevant in the contemporary PNG context. While his knowledge base is philosophical, and thus possibly a less convincing source of information for practice and understanding in any scientific enquiry based on empiricism, Narokobi's ideas about the Melanesian Way are valuable to Melanesians because they value local knowledge, culture and identity. The Melanesian Way is also protected by PNG's National Constitution which lists, as Goal 5: The PNG Way. The PNG Way calls for any development in PNG to be achieved through building on and using PNG's forms of social, political and economic organisation. This constitutional basis provides further rationale for the integration of indigenous local knowledge and learning approaches into the formal education system. This can be done by adapting and incorporating positive aspects of *community* and the Wantok system (described later in this article) approach to learning such as the collaborative learning common in social work field education. Like other collectivist societies, community and personal lives in PNG are lived out through the key values of the *community* and the *kinship* system (Kreitzer, Abukari, Antonio, Mensah, & Kwaku, 2009), which remain the core concepts of the Melanesian way, yet are not given prominence in contemporary learning and teaching approaches in PNG.

The value of community as the centre of supporting social work learning in fieldwork at UPNG

The community is the centre of life in Melanesia, and in PNG. Whilst there are clear boundaries regarding respect for elders, gender roles and hierarchical leadership power relations in PNG communities, life is characterised by reciprocal caring and sharing, which are also highly respected in teaching and learning. Maladede (2006) and Waiko (2007) as contemporary academics in PNG, re-emphasise that the Melanesian tradition is centred on principles of

collectivism, egalitarianism and communal care and mutual support – also important in social work practice and education.

Maladede (2006) focuses on religious perspectives, highlighting the aspects of Melanesian culture that complement Christian values. For example, ideas about the shared responsibility of caring for the elderly extends beyond immediate kin to include other more distant members of the community. Maladede (2006, p. 5) states, "an individual living in a particular village is related in one way or another to every other person in the village". This assertion reinforces that Melanesian communities are highly characterised by values of caring and sharing arguably key tenets of a helping profession such as social work, highlighting the fit between the community and professional values promoted globally. The conclusion drawn from Maladede's views is that these positive Melanesian principles can be promoted and integrated into Christian knowledge development. Other Melanesian values, such as the application of the Wantok system and kinship are also consistent with contemporary religious and social ideals (Brydon & Lawihin, 2014).

Waiko (2007), on the other hand, provides a historical perspective on Melanesian values. Waiko's views lead us to situate relationships, life and exchanges in terms of changes in the material context and lifestyle of Melanesian communities –here the focus is on communal wellbeing. This is where people work towards enhancing community wellbeing and the welfare of families rather than individuals. Because social work field education is delivered through shared responsibilities, among academics and field supervisors, the Melanesian community support system can be utilised to promote culturally appropriate learning.

However, neither writer discusses how these traditional Melanesian values can be, or are, applied in areas such as teaching and learning. This knowledge gap has been addressed in my recent study (Lawihin, 2017), drawing on the views of social work academics, students and fieldwork supervisors about how to develop a culturally relevant social work curriculum in PNG. Culturally relevant social work education in PNG is about connections, linkages and shared responsibility. This focus on relationships and exchanges in teaching and learning in social work education brings us to the concept of the Wantok system.

Evaluating the Wantok system in the delivery of UPNG's social work field education

The Wantok system is a traditional welfare support system based on kinship values. Wantok is a concept associated strongly with the closely-knit relationships in PNG. In the contemporary context, the term expresses an array of meanings such as "workmate," "business associate" or "a person from the same community." It has also retained its more traditional meaning, denoting a person from the same country, village or clan (Maladede, 2006). Therefore Wantok involves activities and interactions that occur and are undertaken along these relationships of sameness. Although, the Wantok system is arguably strong in PNG, close analysis of the system has revealed both negative and positive implications for contemporary development contexts, including social work education. The Wantok system's positive features are serving and mutual assistance and it is helpful because there is greater opportunity here for access to information and services based on the convenience of networks This is where teaching and learning in fieldwork can thrive on collaborative relationships between academics, students and field supervisors (Lawihin, 2017). Some fieldwork placements and learning opportunities provided to social work students have been conducted by utilising these existing, strong informal networks (Brydon & Lawihin, 2014).

Conversely, the contemporary version of Wantok carries negative connotations that

include a lack of independence, increasing liabilities and unwarranted payback. From a social work point of view, lack of independence poses risks in relation to maintaining professional ethics and confidentiality of information. It may even be associated with corruption and nepotism through gratuitous promotions and privileges (MacDonald, 1984; Maladede, 2006). Wantok may also inhibit initiative and responsibility, ultimately resulting in the emergence of ethnocentric enclaves indifferent or hostile to the wider society (MacDonald, 1984, p. 224).

Applying the Wantok system in social work teaching, learning and assessment, and particularly in fieldwork, could potentially undermine professional social work education and practice standards (IFSW, 2005), because it is often done in secrecy unless it is an open act of helping. Such collective and kinship practices are also evident in other contexts where local cultures have been shown to have a significant effect on the education and practice of social work (Clark & Drolet, 2014; Gray, Kreitzer, & Mupedziswa, 2014; Kreitzer, 2012; Yishak & Gumbo, 2014).

Although community forms are undergoing change, the need for community as a place of support remains. The Wantok system acts like the social security model does in western societies. Thus, people depend on, take care of, and help each other. However, this system in the current state of public affairs offers community support in what appears to be new and foreign situations (Lawihin, 2017; Lovai, in press) driven by contemporary democratic idealistic governance – yet within PNG's Melanesian collective society and communalistic living arrangements.

Earlier research also supports the above analysis (Lawihin, 2012). This study sought to answer the question, "What should social work look like in PNG?" The research uncovered relevant information about the Melanesian Way with regard to social work field education. The study explored and documented the challenges of delivering fieldwork practicum at UPNG and established a list of factors that have influenced the use of various delivery approaches applied there. The findings indicated that aspects of the Melanesian Way present in the delivery and assessment of fieldwork had both positive and less positive ramifications for field education outcomes.

Positively, UPNG social work builds on the concept of Wantok when organising fieldwork placements, especially where no formal agreements have been entered into between UPNG and agencies. In addition, *sharing*, as the essential principle of the Melanesian way, is also reflected in how academics and fieldwork supervisors engage in shared responsibilities in training future social workers, again, often without formalised arrangements. The Melanesian Way also created a relaxed environment for students, providing time for reflective thinking and reporting. However, this relaxed environment led to both students and teachers not completing tasks in a timely manner. Furthermore, in terms of student assessment, the Melanesian Way views both teachers giving negative feedback and students asking critical questions as a bad thing. The latter is considered disrespectful towards lecturers and supervisors, although contemporary teaching and learning approaches encourage active student participation in the learning process.

In that study (Lawihin, 2012), I argued that, due to compelling local realities that favour the application of the Melanesian Way, less attention has been placed in the UPNG programme on embracing international field education standards. In a published account of that research (Brydon & Lawihin, 2014), the authors concluded that some Melanesian approaches to fieldwork have undermined the professional tenets of social work. However, the study did not go so far as to highlight how that had happened or make suggestions for improvement. This presents an opportunity for further research in order to address this gap in Melanesian Pedagogy.

Melanesian Pedagogy for UPNG social work field education

Melanesian Pedagogy is about teaching and learning methods and patterns in Melanesia, especially PNG in this case. Therefore, if pedagogy refers to an educator's teaching strategies and techniques, classroom management practices, evaluation methods, and ways of interacting with students (Tsang, 2006), then Melanesian pedagogical traditions are culturally specific strategies and techniques for teaching and learning in traditional Melanesia. Melanesian Pedagogy thus refers to Melanesian cultures, values, lifestyles and practices, and how these are uniquely expressed and lived in the context of learning. It concerns both the how (approaches), and the what (content), of knowledge that is transferred from the knower to the learner.

The following section reviews and discusses the existing knowledge on Melanesian teaching and learning in order to re-establish the basis for a relevant Melanesian Pedagogy in social work field education. There is evidence regarding the relevance of Melanesian worldviews of pedagogy for social work field education (Brydon & Lawihin, 2014, 2013; Lawihin, 2017) and general pedagogy in Melanesia (Paschke, 2004). However, this area of research is still in its infancy, requiring more contributions. Subsequently, many of the materials reviewed are expert opinions, personal and professional accounts, and reflections of experts (including Brownlee, Farrel & Davis, 2012; Guthrie, 2015; Hahambu, Brownlee, & Petriwskij, 2012; Narokobi, 1983; Waldrip, Taylor, & Wilikai, 2012), along with traditional local knowledge drawn from my own experiences, backed by similar cultural knowledge from sources elsewhere. The discussion begins with a focus on historical context and the introduction of formal education in PNG.

Education approaches in PNG: formal and traditional

Education involves teaching and learning as the core elements of knowledge transfer and acquisition. In all societies, both formal and traditional forms of education coexist. Prior to the Second World War, formal education was not considered important for the indigenous population and was left to the missions and churches (Megarrity, 2005). The 1950s and 1960s marked a period of distinct focus on education where largely westernised Australian educational values and models were introduced. Megarrity (2005) describes this as "blending the cultures" (p. 5). During the 1960s and 1970s, the education system in PNG went through changes taking the form it is in today, without any real decolonisation of the introduced educational policy, frameworks and curriculum, which are still predominantly western.

Guthrie (2015), an educational expert, presents a controversial argument about ideal educational practices in PNG. He argues that traditional cultural practices of knowledge sharing are a close fit with formalistic education practices, because both are teacher-centred and rely on accepted dynamics of expert and student. He describes PNG as having a revelatory epistemology, where knowledge comes from deities and the ancestors – and where knowledge is transmitted – not discovered by the student. From this position, knowledge is to be *accepted* not *challenged*, and, "The task of the learner [is] to look and to listen to people who [are] known to be trustworthy" (p. 36). Guthrie talks about different styles of traditional education – highlighting the role of storytelling and the important role of experts and observation – albeit indirectly.

He summarises the argument by saying that:

> Numerous elements of traditional education, especially formal education involving sacred knowledge, anticipated the formalistic classroom teaching that was introduced in the colonial period in PNG. One key element was that the traditional paradigm was revelatory. This is consistent with an underlying

> element in modern formalism, where the assumption also is that the teacher knows and transmits and the student does not know and receives. A second key element was that the learner's job was to find people who had knowledge and would teach it, which schools now institutionalise. (p. 42)

Although Guthrie's arguments concern primary/secondary education, it is apparent that all students come through this system and are primed, both educationally and culturally, toward particular ways of learning. He argues that there are established cultural reasons for teacher-centred learning, where students often do not ask questions and where knowledge is passed on from expert to student – often using storytelling and observation of specific skills. He argues that, rather than trying to change this, we should improve existing formalistic classroom practice.

Lindstrom (1984) presents information regarding the development of these ideas, identifying Melanesian approaches to teaching as either operational (instructive) or interpretive (explanatory). These early arguments are similar to what Guthrie (2015, p. 36) describes as:

> …informal education, through which much knowledge is passed, usually from an older person to a younger one within the family or clan, but also among peers and often through story-telling [interpretive – explanatory].

And

> …non-formal education, where knowledge is passed from experts in a particular field such as gardening, fishing, sago making or tribal warfare, for example; to others who are learning these skills on the job [operational – instructive].

Operational knowledge is used in rituals, initiations and other behaviour in the form of instructions from the possessor of such knowledge, while the latter concerns expertly organising ideas and presenting them meaningfully to audiences. The application and transfer of these forms of knowledge is predominantly verbal.

Oral knowledge sharing (storytelling and recital) is accompanied by metaphors, modelling, signs and imagery. Learning in PNG has been and continues to be through listening, observation, memorising and imitating (Interchurch Organization for Development Cooperation (ICCO) & German Development service (DED), 2004); Lindstrom 1984). These Melanesian instructional approaches are analysed in the following section, with consideration of their application to social work field education.

Melanesian pedagogical strategies for fieldwork

Although the pedagogical strategies discussed here are not unique to PNG, the aspect needing further exploration and understanding is how these approaches are enacted in field education and in what context they are effective. Paschke's (2004) work on traditional Melanesian learning patterns for cross-cultural learning highlights strategies common across many areas of Melanesia that reinforce the major informal learning patterns that are also dominant in PNG's traditional learning space, yet are significant places for the development of culturally relevant knowledge based in a contemporary social work education context. He highlights observation, imitation, listening, participation, and enquiring as common Melanesian learning methods. The following discussion examines storytelling and the language of instruction, metaphors, modelling and observation for integration into current fieldwork learning at UPNG.

Storytelling as a teaching method for fieldwork meetings and seminars

Oral history is the source from which Melanesian communities draw their

identities and proclaim their origins. As a mode of instruction, story is about developing and transferring knowledge and is acquired through listening, memorisation, reflection and recitation. Diverse forms of stories (*stori*) exist in Melanesia and serve different purposes.

Fostering knowledge through storytelling was emphasised in a small project in PNG (ICCO & DED, 2004), which sought to develop an indigenous organisational development approach for NGOs. ICCO and DED reflect on their PNG experiences of developing and implementing a PNG approach to organisational learning and development in the NGO sector. Their case study was based on the local knowledge and experiences of PNG organisational development facilitators. They argued, similar to Guthrie (2015), that there was strong acknowledgement that story-telling is PNG's strongest and most utilised learning and teaching style, although not isolated to Melanesian cultures alone (Paschke, 2004). They concluded that storytelling is critical in building the capacities of local organisations.

This case study claims that stories are a highly developed art form for negotiations, passing on information about history and genealogy, land matters, rituals and relationships, and peace building among families, groups and villages. Storytelling therefore has become the main approach for transferring knowledge and a favourite tool for teaching and learning in PNG. Faleolo (2013) similarly highlights the significance of storytelling in social work teaching and learning in contemporary Samoa, making specific reference to the Talanoa phrase *ailelI'a*, which means talking. He emphasises talking through issues directly with students to help them make meaning of the context and to understand the nature of problems. This enables students to develop an understanding of relevant strategies and possible solutions.

There is also evidence from a broader human psychology perspective supporting the value of stories in education. Green (2004), an authority in human psychology, stresses the importance of stories in the classroom-learning context, claiming that stories can be used to spark student interest, aiding the flow of lectures, making material memorable, overcoming student resistance or anxiety, and building rapport between the instructor and the students, or among students themselves. Sharing knowledge and experiences through stories has been an inevitable part of human history and forms part of everyday conversations in both informal contexts and more structured contexts such as in formal conferences, meetings and school settings.

Furthermore, Alterio's (2002) experiences in school settings highlight that storytelling in formal teaching and learning contexts has multiple benefits. Storytelling is an ideal teaching and learning tool because it enables students to make sense of their own experiences and views, to link theory to practice and to stimulate their critical thinking skills. Storytelling further provides a way to enhance relationships between students, where they create new knowledge and learning from each other; the students and teachers can learn about themselves and their surroundings. According to Alterio (2002), storytelling only becomes meaningful when processes and activities incorporate opportunities for reflective dialogue, foster collaborative endeavour, nurture the spirit of inquiry and contribute to the construction of new knowledge. Besides, cultural, contextual and emotional realities are acknowledged, valued and integrated into storytelling. As a mode of inquiry, student learning is enhanced when storytelling is used in a robust manner. All these contributions make a strong case for stories to form a key learning strategy for fieldwork students to reflect on their experiential learning experiences in formal classroom settings – field education is an experiential form of teaching and learning that takes place in a social service setting.

The key question related to developing a Melanesian Pedagogy in social work field education is: "In what form, shape and

style should story occur in classroom and placement settings?" There is also recent evidence (Ilai, 2012) suggesting that the language of instruction also affects the quality of learning and feedback. According to Ilai, the level of thinking, reflection, feedback and understanding of the meaning of a story are flexible and depend on the language used

Tok Pisin as language of instruction in field education

The choice of language for instruction is critical to student learning. PNG is culturally and linguistically diverse, making the choice of language for instruction problematic. With more than 830 different spoken languages, PNG has the highest linguistic diversity in the world (McCarthy, 2015), however, only three are official languages – English, Motu and Tok Pisin. Most villages and tribal populations speak and understand their specific mother tongue. Mother tongue is often restricted to specific locations and cultural boundaries. English is mostly used in formal settings and in classrooms, while Tok Pisin (Melanesian Pidgin) is becoming popular among those with greater exposure to modern lifestyles and urban communities. A recent study (Lawihin, 2017) reveals that Tok Pisin is increasingly becoming PNG's most commonly spoken language in many informal social settings. Two other studies (Gure, 2010; Ilai, 2012) also confirm that Tok Pisin is increasingly used in elementary schools as the language of instruction in both rural and urban PNG despite English remaining the main language of instruction in formal schooling.

The current trend is that Tok Pisin is used more frequently and by most Papua New Guineans than English or Motu. Tok Pisin is also emerging as the language of business, including teaching and learning. From the UPNG Social Work Field Education example, all the key stakeholders are Tok Pisin users and most use English only when in lecture rooms and engaging in formal conversations. UPNG social work students and most of the field educators use Tok Pisin in all other personal and group interactions. In the practice context, ICCO and DED (2004, p. 29) argue that the use of Tok Pisin in organisational development work is considered "indigenous to Melanesia because some of the tools and concepts of organisational development are named and described in Tok Pisin."

The above evidence presents a significant argument that Tok Pisin is a culturally relevant language of instruction in PNG and therefore the UPNG Social Work Programme could benefit from utilising it in field education. The next section focuses on the use of metaphors – a form of oral story that can further enhance student learning.

Metaphors (tokpiksa) for enhanced fieldwork instruction and learning

Metaphors are analogies or parables. Anecdotal observations suggest that metaphors are an integral part of purposive daily communication in Melanesia yet more research is required in this area. ICCO and DED (2004) suggest that metaphors are more often used for diplomatic reasons in PNG, for confidentiality purposes or to show respect to someone when communicating sensitive topics. According to ICCO and DED, common metaphorical communication in PNG is the language of adults and happens in strategic rituals and events. The application of metaphors in the organisational development context suggests an indirect transfer of information that the recipients require to engage in deep reflection, analysis and discussion which are also important in social work field education.

Metaphors are best applied to broach direct criticisms in a learning environment. As indirect methods for communicating sensitive matters, metaphors allow educators and students to reflect on their experiences and learning. ICCO and DED (2004) argue that Papua New Guineans tend not to say things which openly and directly criticise those controlling knowledge. This has

led to challenges for field educators who struggle to provide constructive criticism and negative feedback to students. Although the work of ICCO and DED focused on facilitator reflections and did not utilise a robust and systematic methodology for data collection and analysis, this source is practical and locally relevant and therefore adds value to the current discussion.

Elsewhere, Mouraz, Pereira, and Monteiro (2013) found that metaphors could effectively be used in explaining and interpreting scientific events to produce knowledge in teaching and learning in higher education. The authors concluded that analogical reasoning and metaphors are vehicles for learning, and they recognised their pedagogical power to enhance students' motivation and to deepen knowledge production and acquisition. This finding is valuable because it focuses on metaphors as vehicles for learning in a course offered in a specific university context such as social work field learning at UPNG. Pramling (2011) similarly notes that the use of metaphors is relevant in learning in the science field, and in primary and secondary education. Empirical research (Northcote & Fetherston, 2006) however, indicates that conceptualising metaphors and figurative stories is often difficult and requires deeper reflective thinking, reading between the lines and critical analysis to uncover the essence of the behaviour portrayed in the story. For social work, this is positive because metaphors can help students and their teachers develop deep, complex, varied parallel and integrated understandings about the processes of teaching and learning in fieldwork. Magalhães and Stoer (2007) study metaphors as key approaches employed in teaching and learning, using case studies to investigate their mode and effectiveness as interpretive and explanatory models in the learning process.

Haggis (2004) considers that metaphors can be used to shape thoughts and action in both creative and restrictive ways. However, her study was limited to students' views on teaching and learning in order to understand how the nature and meaning of learning is articulated differently. In a related area, both Jensen (2006) and Pitcher (2013) used metaphors as a research method, concluding that such an approach allows for the development of a more nuanced understanding of the social context of the issue being examined. This evidence is supportive of efforts in PNG to develop culturally relevant social work field education.

Faleolo (2013, p. 109) notes the importance of parable as a form of metaphor in the development of social work curriculum with a strong representation of cultural content and knowledge. While this opinion may be questioned for its empirical validity, the argument is that parables reveal significant culturally valid knowledge, which can develop an understanding of specific cultures' knowledge and practices. Yet, metaphoric communication in PNG is not often utilised in formal teaching and learning; an element that needs further investigation so that metaphors are fully utilised as a recognized Melanesian learning strategy.

Whilst metaphors and analogies are valuable learning strategies, imitation and observation have also been an integral part of PNG, Melanesian learning culture.

Modelling (imitation) and observation to enhance fieldwork learning

Imitation and observation have long been traditional methods of teaching and learning in PNG that complement oral literature and metaphors. It is important to recognise that imitation and observation emphasise skills development and acquisition because they are technical and involve action. They also provide the opportunity for applying knowledge by imitating or responding through direct learning encounters. Modelling and observation are some of the most utilised teaching and learning methods in

contemporary education and training and are supported by wider scholarship and theory, including the work of Bandura (McLeod, 2016) on social learning theory, and Kolb on experiential learning theory (Kolb & Kolb, 2011). According to Clark, Threeton, and Ewing (2010), Kolb's model involves four modes of grasping experience: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation. While educators may prefer one mode to introduce to their students first, Clark et al. (2010) refer to Kolb and Fry's (1975) comment that "the learning process can begin for students at any one of the four modes and should be viewed as a continuous cycle" (p. 49). These pedagogies can work effectively in field education.

Craig, Vanlehn, Gadgil, and Chi (2006) point to collaboratively observing tutoring as a promising method for observational learning. Although observational learning is essential during childhood, the principles may also be applicable to adult students. Ilai (2012) and Gure (2010), highlight this consistency with traditional Melanesian culture where oral "literature," observation, and learning by practice and imitation are dominant sources of building knowledge and establishing experience. However, the effect of these activities on learning is enhanced by multiple other alternatives including the use of images, artefacts, and metaphors to uncover deeper, inner and intuitive knowledge or expand on existing knowledge (Gure, 2010). The use of stories and metaphors in traditional knowledge transfer gives essence and meaning to the signs and images in understanding a wide range of community life, history, culture and nature. Drawings and carvings, on the other hand, are often used for historical and genealogical purposes. These cultural symbols are useful traditional knowledge representations in PNG and can effectively be used in supervision and reflective sessions as learning strategies in field education to enrich students' experiences in fieldwork.

Such cultural pedagogies and historical knowledge can add value to social work education, with an emphasis on the historical development of social work and the protection of signature social work values. Therefore, imitation and observation are "culturally fit" learning and teaching approaches for PNG and participants across the Pacific.

Conclusion

In the search for a culturally relevant pedagogy for social work (field) education, I have highlighted the approaches to contemporary teaching and learning in educational research and practice. This article has discussed the Melanesian way and its related concepts (community and the Wantok system) as overarching domains for culturally relevant learning strategies which connect to Melanesian learners. The article also deliberated on several aspects of Melanesian pedagogies in order to shape future research. I have highlighted the integration of Melanesian Pedagogy to contemporary methods of instruction for social work field education including community-oriented learning approaches and pedagogies such as storytelling, the use of metaphors, observations and imitation as potential enhancers of social work teaching and learning. This initial discourse is a first step towards developing and delivering culturally relevant social work education that considers traditional approaches to knowledge acquisition as integral to contemporary fieldwork learning and teaching, formal teaching and supervision of social work students in PNG.

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE
QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Australian students going to the Pacific Islands: International social work placements and learning across Oceania

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: This paper explores various issues pertinent to international social work practice, including its definition, how Western epistemologies affect international placements, barriers to effective placements and student motivations for undertaking practicum away from home.

METHOD: Reviewed literature will be coupled with Australian student-participants' evaluations of their experience in completing social work placements in Fiji and Samoa.

FINDINGS: A new model of approaching Pacific social work across Oceania emerges from the study. Entitled *Tanoa Ni Veiqaravi* (Serving Bowl of Serving Others), this culturally nuanced framework integrates both Western and Pacific social work perspectives to support professional practice, policy development and research across the region.

CONCLUSIONS: Recommendations for the improvement of international field practice are offered.

Keywords: International Social Work; Field Education; Pacific Islanders

The desire for tertiary institutions to provide global learning opportunities for students is a growing trend across Australian universities. The ability to provide an international experience whilst completing field education placement hours' requirements is attractive to students and can provide universities with opportunities for teaching and research endeavours. However, how do we ensure that students from the Global North are prepared to participate in such learning and are aware of their biases? The issues may, in turn, be perpetuated by westernised perspectives within the social work profession itself. This article explores tensions and possibilities for collaboration between local knowledges and social work field education, providing a new approach to further assist in bridging this divide.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Defining international social work

The effects of colonisation and globalisation have deeply impacted upon social work as a professional field. These realities are now more defined than ever, as there is an increasing focus on the validity and, as perceived by some, the necessity of internationalising social work as a profession

to combat social inequalities that have emerged in the wake of globalisation. There is also an ongoing need to recognise the importance of indigenous peoples around the world and their ontologies and epistemologies in social work practice.

In order to evaluate the features and effectiveness of international social work programmes, it is pertinent to define what *international social work* means, as there is a lack of clarity regarding its definition and its implications. Nuttman-Shwartz and Berger (2012) state that international social workers are those who possess "professional practice that crosses national boundaries" (p. 227). They believe it should be redefined as: "[a] professional discipline that promotes transnational knowledge studies and experiences to foster equality and justice as vehicles of international understanding, collaboration and collective human development" (p. 228).

International social workers, then, are those who attempt to reduce the impacts of globalisation on social problems, and seek to "prevent the erosion of human rights" (Nuttman-Shwartz & Berger, 2012, p. 237), to protect "excluded and neglected populations, and provide support during crises in developing countries" (p. 237). However, international social work is *not* cross-cultural social work. The former focuses on "comparative social development, social problems, social welfare and social policy" (p. 228); the latter focuses on "cultural diversity, inter-cultural communication and cross-cultural understanding" (p. 228). Within this context, cultural competence aids understanding and is the "crucial link between immersion in the new cultural context, practice encounters and theory" (Parker, Ashencaen Crabtree, Azman, Carlo, & Cutler, 2015, p. 42). There is recognition of the need for praxis to be carried out, not only through "the hegemonic constructions mandated by the Global North" (p. 43), but that which seeks to apprehend and understand "indigenous and authenticised bodies of knowledge" that can impact upon practice (p. 43). Inherent in this approach is an understanding that "the unquestioned 'superior positioning' of western paradigms" (p. 43) is brought into scrutiny, as these concepts promote Western hegemony.

Western imperialism and international placements

The domination of Western values and practices within social work cannot be ignored, and has been described as "professional imperialism" (Nuttman-Shwartz & Berger, 2012, p. 229) that duplicates its models all over the world, treating the Western practitioner as the "expert" even when in non-Western countries, "while ignoring power differences between them" (p. 229). Yeom and Bae (2010) highlight how Western practices can be imposed upon Korean social work practice, and argue that there ought to be "a constructive analysis of westernized practices and indigenous needs…[rather than] international exchanges [which] are suffused with the legacies of colonialism and imperialism" (p. 311). The idea of Western hegemony is "inherent in western pedagogy, practice, education, and attempts at globalization" (p. 315) and social workers "have an ethical responsibility to question international exchanges in this light" (p. 315). This responsibility demands that they address issues such as the "tripartite dilemma [of] indigenization, universalism and imperialism" (p. 315) that faces international social work. This responsibility extends to supervisors, who may unwittingly impose Westernised methods of practice at the expense of indigenous models (Mathiesen & Lager, 2007; Cleak, Anand, & Das, 2014).

Western and non-Western issues and practice

Some Western concepts, such as individualism, objectivity, professional distance and self-determination are notably "incompatible with other, more collectivistic cultures that value interdependence"

(Nuttman-Shwartz & Berger, 2012, p. 230). For Western practitioners in non-Western contexts, there needs to be an integration of their cultural values with those of the host (p. 230). Social work in some contexts seeks to "assimilate western theories" within their own practice, which can be counterproductive to creating indigenized social services, which "support a two-way exchange of knowledge" between two cultures (p. 231). This neo-imperialism, should it persist, promotes "misconceptions and cultural stereotypes" and reproduces "social injustice, inequities in international involvement and oppressive relationships" (p. 231). Yeom and Bae (2010) believe that students from non-Western cultures are poised to benefit from these programmes in that they are able to ascertain the best practices from the West, and reject those practices that are least helpful within their cultural contexts (p. 324).

Benefits of international social work placements

International field practicums are understood to be "a key way to foster cultural competency and acquaint students with the ways in which globalization affects social welfare" (Yeom & Bae, 2010, p. 312), and can serve to make social workers "internationally ready" (Nuttman-Shwartz & Berger, 2012, p. 227). Such programmes have the potential to shift institutions' approaches to field placement, encouraging "the development of agencies for the practicum which previously had little understanding of the scope and role of social work" (Yeom & Bae, 2010, p. 313). Further, forming the networks for these placements serves to not only bolster an "integration of knowledge and values", but "can act as a force for organisational change and a catalyst for social development" (pp. 313–314).

International placements have the potential to "redress inequalities in a global context" (Bell & Anscombe, 2012, p.1033). They emphasise the need for social work in the 21st century to respond to challenges in the "economic, political and cultural relationships between people across the world" (p. 1033) on local and global scales in all forms of its practice. The core values of social work, empowerment, social justice and human rights, highlight the profession's emancipatory ethos, and can be enacted through internationalising the profession.

Motivations for doing international placement

Having conducted many international social work practicums in both Canada and Lebanon, Wehbi (2009) emphasises the need for practicums that actively understand students' motivations so as to negate "reproducing inequitable North/South power relations" (p. 49). Essentialising the characteristics and needs of the different people groups served through such placements inhibits social workers' abilities to assist them, and does not aid in respectful and meaningful engagement with individuals. Students must come to realise that "ethnic heterogeneity is the 'norm, not the exception'" (p. 48). Wehbi suggests that, by conducting thorough preparatory programmes which detail relations between the country of residence and country of placement, there would be a more contextualised awareness of the relationship between the two countries which would make such placements more effective. These programmes could also include foci on "resistance, alliance-building and personal agency" (p. 55), so as to "reverse North/South power relations" (p. 54), and also prepare students cognitively and emotionally regarding power relations in society, assessing situations from an organisational perspective, understanding the potential risks of placements, the historical roots and current realities of the host country and how these are impacted by global economics, political pressures and colonialism, the relationship between the home and host countries, and the level of contribution that they can expect to make

within these social work settings (Nuttman-Shwartz & Berger, 2012).

Perceptions and skills developed by social workers

Several attitudes and perceptions emerged from the literature as a result of students' experiences on placement. Some considered it helpful to be modest, and maintain a "listening and respectful attitude, letting the host take the lead, and contributing only as the host invites" (Magnus, 2009, p. 376), all the while seeking to learn and gain professional competence, especially through mistakes. Students often became more informed in the political and social realities of these communities which, in turn, inspired advocacy in their home countries (p. 376). These experiences also taught students the importance of being aware of a diversity of values which often comes from understanding oneself and one's cultural bents better (p. 376). Several authors highlighted the importance of students keeping continuous note of their placement experiences, so as to encourage their personal and professional development in the field (Crabtree et al., 2015; Marlowe, Appleton, Chinnery, & Van Stratum, 2014; Nuttman-Shwartz & Berger, 2012; Magnus, 2009; Wong & Pearson, 2007). These include students naively practising without being critical of their own cultural imposition (Crabtree et al., 2015), and students developing the ability to suspend their own judgments and being completely present with the client (Marlowe et al., 2014).

Placement models and considerations for good practice

Several models for international placements have been identified throughout the literature. One of the most drawn upon is that of Pettys, Panos, Cox, and Oosthuysen (2005), who describes four models:

1. Independent/one-time placements in a specific geographical region;
2. Neighbouring country model, where students were residents or citizens;
3. On-site model where adjunct faculty member in host country could stay as on-site field supervisor;
4. Exchange/reciprocal model, in which the home university sent faculty members to the placement site at their own expense. (pp. 282–287)

Apart from the models themselves, Mathiesen and Lager (2007) identify specific areas that these placements ought to fulfill: establishment of a feedback loop with potential participants; to gain an overview of the other country; to provide orientation at micro, mezzo and macro levels; to identify gains, consider costs; clarify expectations, and establish roles for the student, field liaison, and field supervisor. This model emphasises long-term relationships and "commitment to reciprocity at all stages" (p. 280).

There is an expressed need and recognition for international social work at this level, but it appears that many institutions are not truly moving in a direction that will foster such relationships (Mathiesen & Lager, 2007). A lack of understanding and clear communication between all parties involved at every stage of such programmes, particularly for the students and supervisors, can occur, and consequently, *cultural factors* are used as the scapegoat for their breakdown (p. 280). Evaluations should, therefore, be mutual, and not only coming from the student(s) undertaking practicum.

Selection for such international placements ought to happen on the basis of one's ability to deal with stressful and insecure situations, interpersonal communication style and the "ability to interact effectively with people of diverse cultural backgrounds" (Nuttman-Shwartz & Berger, 2012, p. 236). This does not simply mean having cultural, ethnic and racial sensitivity but, rather, "high levels

of maturity, flexibility, adaptability and perceptiveness to cultural norms [that] are necessary prerequisites for students to live and work abroad" (Mathiesen & Lager, 2007, p. 286). Bilingual students are highlighted as having an advantage in many host countries, though such enterprises can stimulate a desire to learn languages.

University of Western Sydney student experience

The next section details the experiences of University of Western Sydney social work students who took part in that university's placement programme for three months, completing 500 hours of a required 1000 hours to be eligible for accreditation as an Australian social worker through the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW). The placements discussed here took place between 2013 and 2015. Most students completed their placements in and around Suva, Fiji; with one student completing in Samoa. A total of eight students were interviewed, and their perspectives shed light on pertinent issues involving international student placement in the Pacific, and how these impacted upon their experiences as developing social work professionals. Importantly, one ought not to speak of the Pacific Region as a collective whole; it is made up of many different languages, cultures, and ontological and epistemological understandings, and obviously heterogeneous people groups, even within one nation. Therefore, the countries of Fiji and Samoa, which were countries of placement for students, are treated separately throughout this article.

METHODOLOGY AND METHOD

Methodology

Indigenous methodologies play an important role in creating a broader understanding and approach to knowledge – not just within a neo-colonial context, but also within a larger scope to decolonize the way in which we construct and deconstruct knowledge in teaching and learning. To uphold a genuine commitment to such perspectives, this research acknowledges the "transformative power of indigenous knowledge, the ways that such knowledge can be used to foster empowerment and justice in a variety of cultural contexts" (Kincheloe & Steinberg, & Shirley, 2008, p. 132). Consequently, students within a learning context can experience multilogicality (p. 132) – where one starts to see the world as complex, rather than linear, upholding imperial notions of Western epistemological and ontological truths. As students recruited into the the University of Western Sydney initiative came from varying socio-ethnic, socio-cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds, this research methodology provides further opportunities to validate the individual experience within the larger group. That is, as people actively contribute to their learning space enabled to share their perspective, this creates a greater platform for diversity to be explored, as "in this sense, different frames of reference produce multiple interpretations and multiple realities" (p. 138). Underpinning this construct is the much-valued narrative approach, where participants contribute their perspective in a meaningful way. Additionally, in upholding the approach of challenging the researcher as the gatekeeper of knowledge, the findings in this article have been presented to reflect the key themes by directly utilising key words and statements participants have provided; rather than the researcher placing their own interpretation on the data given. In turn, this deters a traditional power imbalance that may occur between a researcher and participant.

Method

In the spirit of *talanoa*, a Pacific concept of sharing through articulating your collective thoughts and feelings within a group, widely evident across indigenous cultures throughout Oceania (Vaioleti, 2006), all 12 students who had previously participated in the University of Western Sydney programme were invited

to gather to share their experiences. Nine questions were asked as part of a semi-structured group interview, divided into two sections – "Pacific social work questions" and "Post placement questions." Students were given the opportunity to contribute as much as they felt comfortable, with responses recorded via hand-written notes and an audio-recording device. As not all students were able to attend the group interview, with five in attendance, interviews with the additional three students were conducted individually via telephone; still promoting scope for students to contribute communally through the data-collection phase of this study. Overall, this notion of inclusion fostered a shared approach to understanding the experience of social work education around international student placements. As mentioned earlier, key themes were developed directly from the narratives participants shared, rather than assumed by the researcher; ensuring indigenous, and non-indigenous perspectives are understood and valued in their immediate and present context.

Ethics

Ethics was granted for this project by the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Western Sydney. All participants completed written consent forms or agreed verbally to provide consent for their views to be shared, which was electronically recorded.

KEY FINDINGS

Perceptions of social work in the Pacific

One of the most significant impacts upon the students' experience in the Pacific was the way that social work is perceived there. There were notable differences between Fijian and Samoan perspectives of what a social worker was. In Fiji, a social worker is understood to be someone "probably [like] a counsellor, along that line," or anyone who helps someone else – "it's quite fluid, in the sense that everyone in the organisation can be a social worker" (a participant). One student expressed it in this way:

> A social worker is defined as somebody who helps someone in the Pacific Islands. And that could be somebody retired from a finance background, but now retired in a CEO's position – being in charge of the whole service, and not actually having a social work system in how they're thinking.

This very general definition of a social worker means that people from any professional background with a desire to help other people are considered to be social workers, even without any specific training in the field. One student remarked that "you didn't have to do much to identify with [being a social worker]…it wasn't given a huge value [as] it is here in Australia".

In Samoa, the profession is "not really… recognised", and "there are other social workers, but they're in completely different fields. So as a profession it's not very well known." The student on placement in Samoa reported that, apart from herself, her supervisor was the only other known and professionally trained social worker.

Various reasons for such an understanding of social work in the Pacific were put forward by participants, including the general perception of social work as "women's work," and something which is done "out of your love, not out of a particular need or for the pay." As a result, participants noted that social work, while needed, is "given a lesser value" as a profession. Coupled with the very strong presence of volunteerism in both Fiji and Samoa, one may perceive social work as not a needed area of professional expertise within the region. Some students even stated that, when describing their career to some on placement, "they all kind of laughed off the profession almost." The understanding of the profession, being in a nascent stage in the Pacific, requires

ongoing presence and must prove its worth if it is to be validated in a cultural context that has for centuries depended on (non-Western) practices and traditions to sustain and support their peoples. However, the need to professionalise such activities may also fall in line with ongoing social stratification occurring across the Pacific due to globalising influences, and the need to compete with capitalistic expectation and realities. As a result, marginality is becoming more evident, and the need to create a shared approach between Western and Pacific perspectives is enhanced.

Experiences on placement: challenges and honing skills

In light of these perceptions of social work in Fiji and Samoa, the profession in these countries does not receive the same levels of support and funding from governments as in most Western countries. Frequently students highlighted difficulties in accessing appropriate facilities, such as interview rooms, pens, and basic necessities needed to complete practicum tasks, including obtaining sensitive information from clients. Time and again, a lack of funding was stated to impede the ability of social workers in these two nations from serving their populations in a more professional manner. At the same time, the importance of certain practices has not yet been captured and appropriated within Fiji and Samoa, such as the need to develop detailed case note writing and referral systems that could assist clients if the organisation itself could not provide further assistance. Participants did a lot "from scratch" as a result, with one student even putting together "a yellow pages [directory] of services" to assist in referring clients to the most appropriate organisations to meet their needs. One student powerfully encapsulated this reality and the effect it has on the social work profession:

> While in Fiji, it occurred to me that there's more of a reliance on an individual social worker and their skills, than there is on the service in itself. Because it really came down to how well connected and how creative that social worker could be in accessing support for their client, and how skilled they were to [do that]. As opposed to the service having a huge amount of funding and being able to just, you know, access everything….

One of the major points highlighted by the participants was the lack of supervision, which has been considered one of the most important aspects of sustaining professional social work practice. As social workers in Fiji can be drawn from a range of backgrounds and not specifically trained in social work, this can create a frustrating and potentially unsafe situation for students doing placements:

> If you're stuck in an ethical situation, who are you going to go to? Your supervisor's someone from finance or someone from legal, and they're not able to provide that support that you need. In terms of self-care, in terms of situations that involve risk.

As a result of some of the students' challenges, the importance of indirect social work was repeatedly mentioned, which fostered a sense of *sustainability* for the organisations they worked in. One student conveyed this concept:

> Everyone views social work as direct placement…or as direct exposure… you could see how indirect social work provides sustainability for organisations, and that was probably the biggest lesson I learned about social work and the need to build, you know, connections with organisations, write policies, do evidence-based research…I mean, that's how an organisation is going to continue doing [its work].

The importance of indirect social work was not considered as significant prior to these placements. Despite the apparent lack of resources within Fiji and Samoa, University

of Western Sydney participants were able to hone their aptitudes in these areas, and emerged from the placements with increased confidence and a sense of validation:

> When I was in Samoa, I felt like a real social worker. You end up feeling really validated by the end of it.

Students felt that their skills were needed and regarded as such within the organisations that they worked for, even though on a national scale social work was not very well understood as a profession. While some felt apprehensive in taking part in the programme initially, their confidence grew noticeably as a result of participating. At the same time, their ability to further understand cultural perspectives and practices as part of their learning was evident; informing their learning outcomes and the way in which University of Western Sydney was implementing the respective placement model.

Other lessons from the experience were students' ability to develop patience, especially regarding different perceptions and promptness with time, finding "my own way to learn about things," the importance of boundaries and being aware of the self and the importance of self-reflection in social work practice.

Experiences after placement: considerations for next time

When asked to consider what they would change about the Western Sydney programme, most participants wanted a more detailed explanation and orientation regarding living in their country of placement for three months. Students maintained that there are often romantic, and quite false notions surrounding the Pacific Islands. Realistic accounts of former University of Western Sydney student experiences are important aspects of orientation programmes that can set realistic expectations for students seeking to complete placement overseas. Other issues included the need for groups completing placements together to have social gatherings before departing for the Pacific, to ensure that personalities could be mutually encountered and any potential clashes be apprehended prior to commencement. One student suggested that there be more exploration of Pacific social work models prior to departure, alongside more Pacific students taking part in the programme, as they have cultural insider knowledge that is often very helpful in experiencing different aspects of the placement countries. Interestingly, for one student who was from the placement country, there have been noticeable developments in her heritage culture which she, too, needed to comprehend:

> I learnt that I needed to understand the culture – I remember the culture…when my parents lived there and what they taught me, but culture as we have learnt is evolving and it has changed. I found that some cultures were replaced to fit in with the demands of the Western culture, and this contributed to the positive and negative issues of social work due to evidence based practice.

Some students highlighted the need to know more about services within the placement countries and even within their specific organisations prior to departure. One student emphasised the importance of being made aware of cultural practices, as it is a sign of respect already knowing all of this, instead of them having to brief you when you get there. This also highlights the need to parallel social work concepts, perspectives and skills within a Pacific context. Such notions of deconstructing previously learnt social work theories to then reconstruct and include Pacific knowledges in a meaningful manner might be part of this approach.

Better international field placements are therefore dependent upon more comprehensive orientation programmes that prepare students for the cultural realities of

living in their placement country, as well as information pertaining to "dos and don'ts" that translate to cultural understandings of the place(s) being visited. As a result of their experiences, participants from this project developed further guidelines and other support documentation for future students wanting do a placement in the Pacific.

Experiences after placement: impartations from international exchange

Despite some of the difficulties encountered in placements in Fiji and Samoa, there was a resounding sense that students had walked away deeply challenged relative to their own perceptions of social work, the development of their skills as practitioners, and gratitude for the experience of being able to partake of an entirely different cultural setting and to be of assistance to those in need through their organisations' work:

> Having the opportunity to be immersed in a culture for that amount of time is such a good way to build on…your cultural competencies, and really being able to understand what the culture is about.

One student emphasised the importance of her placement, stating that Fijian culture is "something that we all have to learn something from." She also highlighted the dilemma she experienced when she initially came to Fiji; her initial reaction was one of "Oh my God, this is all wrong, these people are wrong." After time passed, however, she thought, "Oh my God, I'm so wrong! I'm a completely wrong human being!" This then plateaued to an understanding that "nobody's wrong." This process of acclimatisation to a new culture has left a definite imprint upon the social work practice and worldview of this student.

This same participant expressed one of the most profound statements brought out from these interviews in her understanding of how she had grown as a burgeoning social worker. I quote her at length here, as her words powerfully capture the potential potency of such placements:

> I learnt that I'm definitely not the expert in anything, and I think that's a really good thing to learn as a social worker. That social work isn't about being a professional and an expert. It's about…I went there knowing nothing…and learning as I went along, and I just think that's how a social worker should be in this world. I think a social worker should go into a position believing that they know nothing and learning. Learning with the client. Never going there as a professional thinking they know better. Never never never never never.
>
> We might know how to get the funding, or we might know how to contact other agencies, and we might have a better skill in typing on a computer than other people. But we certainly under any circumstances don't know anything about what these peoples' lives are like and what it is that they need. They know that.

Although this student initially faced significant culture shock when she arrived in Fiji, her placement taught her to assume a posture of humility and learning rather than as an *expert* with Western models and ideologies. This issue remains a site of tension, even within the perspectives shared earlier. Several models of Pacific social work have been written about at length (Faleolo, 2009, 2013; Lauta-Mulitalo, 1998; Tamasese, 2002; Tamasese, Peteru, Waldegrave, & Busch, 2005; Tuafuti, 2011); if orientation programmes covered some of these models, and implementing them formed part of the assessment for students while in the Pacific, this would serve to greatly bolster their own sense of cross-cultural awareness, potentially provide more relevant frameworks for practice when in the Pacific, and orient these students in epistemologies and ontologies that are

more relevant to Pacific peoples. Utilising these practice models would also redress colonialist ideologies that can be present when social workers from the Global North (including Australia) come to the islands with their Western educational practices and values, which are often assumed to be better simply because they are more developed. This is not necessarily the case, and if Pacific models are not understood by students who take part in such placements, the professional imperialism mentioned by Nuttman-Shwartz and Berger (2012) will continue to be present.

Despite these realities, the experience of completing a placement in the Pacific was seen as deeply rewarding and enriching for all involved. When one student was asked what they would say to another student contemplating a Pacific placement through the University of Western Sydney programme, she responded in the following way:

> Definitely do it…You'll never do anything more rewarding, more educational for your learning, more, I would even say soul-searching than what you'll do in this.

IMPLICATIONS: A NEW MODEL

Tanoa Ni Veiqaravi ("Tah-noah Nee Ve-in-ga-ravi") – Serving Bowl of Serving Others

In the desire to take into consideration the learning gained in preparing and sending social work students to undertake a placement in the Pacific, a new model has been developed to support the teaching and learning of both contemporary approaches in social work, and Pacific values and ideals. Previous models developed to work with Pacific communities have incorporated traditional Pacific epistemologies and perspectives as a universal framework; with the view that such perspectives underpin, and apply in, differing contexts based on the practice approach or discipline (Ravulo, 2016). For example, the Fonofale model postulated by Pulotu-Endemann (Pulotu-Endemann, 2001) was initially developed to broadly support public health initiatives for Pacific communities. The new model being outlined in this article has been developed to assist students and practitioners to further appreciate the synergy between Western ideologies in social work, and the role Pacific epistemologies play in professionalising social work approaches with Pacific people, both in the diaspora across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand, and communities living across the Pacific Islands. The model is called *Tanoa Ni Veiqaravi*, a Fijian phrase translated in English as the "Serving Bowl of Serving Others." As social work has been traditionally viewed in the context of human services, the notion of serving others is ingrained in Pacific discourses, further nuanced by the notion of *solesolevaki*, the idea that an individual's duty is to innately support both self and others in everything they do and undertake concerning the family and community.

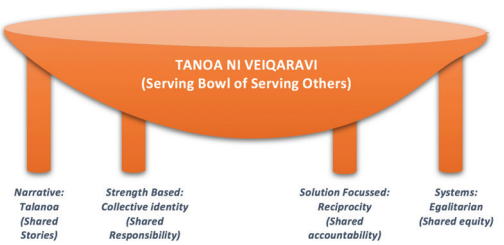

Figure 1. Tanoa Ni Veiqaravi ("Tah-noah Nee Ve-in-ga-ravi") – Serving Bowl of Serving Others

As noted in Figure 1, the model is visualised by a *tanoa*, a serving bowl traditionally used to serve kava. Kava is a grounded root used culturally by Pacific people in rituals and ceremonies, and is commonly used as a gift symbolising the reaching of an agreement or acceptance of self, and family in community. The *tanoa* is a symbol of bringing people together (Ravuvu, 1983), where groups will sit around the serving bowl to *talanoa*; participants express and share individual perspectives in the context of the community and their overall wellbeing (Farrelly &

Nabobo-Baba, 2014). In essence, by using the *tanoa* illustration, I am inferring that social work, or the social work practitioner themselves, is the conduit through which service to others occurs. That is, people are able to come together through the support of social work, to discuss and reflect on areas of celebration, communal concern, and possible strategies to overcome such situations.

Social work as a profession is then underpinned by the four legs or approaches that uphold effective and engaging service with Pacific people: narrative, strength based, solution focussed and systems. Each leg is then nuanced by a cultural perspective, and leads to a shared outcome.

The narrative approach has been utilised in social work to assist individual, groups and communities understand their experience, positioning an insight into in the past, how this has impacted the present, and considerations for the future (Burack-Weiss, Lawrence, & Mijangos, 2017). The benefits of a narrative approach in this cultural framework is supported by the notion of *talanoa*; where individuals share their own insights and perspectives on situations and circumstances (Vaka, Brannelly, & Huntington, 2016). Traditional stories reflecting Pacific ways of thinking, knowing, doing, and becoming also resonate with the concept of *talanoa*, as people will come to understand their own realities in the context of previous family encounters, or narratives passed through generations to further highlight possible skills and attributes that will assist in overcoming certain adversities. A narrative and/or *talanoa* approach promotes a shared story, reiterating the importance placed on the individual being inextricably connected and bound to others in the immediate, and extended family; let alone shared stories developed over time through other relationships evident through kinship and regional ties underpinned by a connection to land, space and place.

A strength-based approach has provided scope in social work to acknowledge, and highlight the possibilities beyond an individual circumstance or situation. By reviewing the possible skills, attributes, talents or gifts of a person, one is able to possibly utilise such qualities to work towards the betterment of self and others (Kemp, Marcenko, Lyons, & Kruzich, 2014). In the context of Pacific communities, being part of a collective identity is part of the strength in itself, where we are stronger as a community by communally contributing to each other's wellbeing and including a sense of purpose and place across society (Mafileo & Vakalahi, 2016). This notion of shared responsibility provides further awareness to how an individual strives to achieve, as one's own success translates to the success of others. For example, within a family, an individual's identity is underpinned by the reputation and success of others within it, and a family's name holds merit in understanding your social standing across a community. Each individual in the family is then responsible for upholding this positive association to a family's name, further offset by the need to contribute positively to other families in and around your own community. Therefore, the ability to utilise individual and family strengths to support and assist wellbeing, and to forge ahead despite adversity reflects this approach in social work within a Pacific context.

A solution-focussed approach promotes scope for individuals to look towards possibilities, and search to overcome various difficulties. An alternative perspective is provoked through an individual's desire to change, and to be part of the process that may be underpinned by nominating goals, or other achievable outcomes (Payne, 2014a). Within a Pacific perspective, solutions are developed to benefit a wider range of people; not just the individual developing the goal, but others connected through the family unit or local community. A desire then to promote a solution that will also provide a reciprocal benefit to the wellbeing of the community is part of also enhancing a shared accountability to self and others (Mafileo & Vakalahi, 2016).

For example, the need to promote positive physical health may be offset by the ability to secure and sustain food crops within a family home. The family's ability to harvest such produce for their own meals, but also for the benefit of others, like neighbours, is also at the forefront of this notion of shared accountability – if one family is able to share their naturally sourced and purchased food with others, then the others will reciprocate by sharing their produce and food items. Furthermore, this notion is adopted in regional, and urban settings, further fostering a level of community and sense of belonging.

A systems theory approach strives to look holistically at an individual, and peruse the various systems one is involved in; ranging from family systems, local community support systems and overarching societal systems that also permeate and pervade (Payne, 2014b). These micro, meso and macro perspectives are also evident across Pacific communities, where everyone plays a role in supporting the functioning of a family, local support groups and regional development (Emerging Pacific Leaders Dialogue Alumni, 2007). Pragmatically, every individual is born into a family that brings a certain role and responsibility in a particular community/village. The ability for one family to carry out their duties promotes scope for others to benefit – this egalitarian context then promotes a purpose for people to contribute accordingly. This shared equity enables people to uphold a system that is underpinned by a desire for being fair and just which, accordingly, impacts on an equal opportunity system in Pacific society. Granted, such tenets may be somewhat aspirational and thinning in the face of capitalism and consumerism; however, the scope to promote a sense of purpose to an individual and their family is still held in high esteem.

By developing a model of this nature, we are striving to support the development of Pacific social work education; where indigenous knowledge and perspectives are meaningfully integrated into teaching and learning practices across Oceania. To support the implementation of practices, policy and research across the region, students, like those from Australia, are reminded of the existing strengths and capabilities of communities in the Pacific Islands. Students are also able to enhance their perspectives whilst re-shifting their own positions of privilege that may hinder working collaboratively with indigenous peoples. The model may also assist in promoting the development of existing social work practices to be more nuanced and rigorous, where the notion of community development is seen as more than economic outputs alone, but also guided by existing forms of cultural and social capital that lead to more fair and sustainable outcomes.

CONCLUSION

Despite the challenges of working in nations where social work is not yet fully recognised as a profession, and not as valued as it might be in Australia, all students grew in their professional and personal lives as a result of the experience. Their insights have revealed areas of improvement for future placement programmes, such as a need for more detailed understanding of services available in these countries, the ongoing struggle to have social work recognised as a legitimate and valuable profession within the region, and the potential impact of such services for clients and their practitioners. Due to the limited timing and ethics approval of the research project, the ability to directly consult with local stakeholders in Fiji and Samoa who were involved in supporting the placements was affected. Future explorations on the viewpoints of service providers, and clients themselves on the role of social work in the region will further enhance the positionality of the profession. Through the introduction of the *Tanoa Ni Veiqaravi* model via this research article, we are striving to emphasise and promote Pacific voices and their influence to further promote the inclusion of such perspectives in a more meaningful

relationship between social work approaches evident across the Global North and South.

It is hoped that the recommendations from this paper to further understand the distinctions of Pacific social work and its ability to interact and guide westernised forms of the profession in the region will inform future ontological positions around arranging and conducting social work placements across Oceania, specifically drawing upon Pacific epistemologies as a part of training students in preparation for such placements. Australia is in a unique position to implement placements funded via government study loans that bridge Western and Pacific knowledges in social work practice. Working collaboratively with our Pacific neighbours and engaging their organisations from a position of humility and learning could potentially transform understandings of the social work profession and create integrated models that are unique, people-centred, and cater to the needs of the diverse region that is the Pacific.

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE
QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Noqu Vale: Community organisation professionals' views on what works and what needs to change for Pasifika housing

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: The shortage of suitable and affordable housing within Aotearoa New Zealand is creating vulnerability in communities and is a barrier encountered by community organisation professionals (COPs) working in the housing field. Pasifika peoples are particularly disadvantaged, experiencing higher levels of household overcrowding, being less likely to own their own home, and being more likely to be tenants of social housing than other ethnicities. Increasing numbers of Pasifika peoples affected by housing issues require immediate (emergency, crisis) or long-term community social housing support, in an already constrained housing system. While there continues to be significant literature exploring facets of Pasifika housing in Aotearoa New Zealand, there is a lack of research on COPs' perspectives regarding Pasifika housing focused on the Wellington region.

METHOD: This research takes an exploratory, qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews with three COPs based in the Wellington region. Interview transcripts were thematically analysed.

FINDINGS: Findings address "what's working" and include: wrap-around services, collaboration, advocacy, and empowering families. COP perspectives on "what needs to change" include: quality and quantity of housing, affordability, and racism and discrimination.

IMPLICATIONS: The implications are that a holistic and collaborative practice approach taken between community and government organisations, needs to be harnessed if outcomes for Pasifika housing are to improve.

KEYWORDS: Pasifika; housing; community organisation professionals; Pasifika housing; Wellington New Zealand; what's working; what needs to change; housing shortage; affordable housing

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Introduction

Housing issues are worsening in Aotearoa New Zealand, especially for Pasifika peoples (Johnson, Howden-Chapman, & Eaqub, 2018). Pasifika peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand are more likely to experience higher rates of household overcrowding, higher rental rates, lower quality rental properties, and are less likely to own their own home in comparison to other ethnic groups in Aotearoa New Zealand (Baker, Zhang, Blakely, & Crane, 2016; Fu, Scott, & Laing, 2015; Tanielu & Johnson, 2014; Statistics New Zealand, 2016). Research reveals that sub-standard housing quality contributes to poorer health, and to negative educational and social outcomes (Quirke, Edwards, & Brewerton, 2011). Moreover, children are

more susceptible to the negative health impacts of inadequate housing. Children at higher risk are those living in lower income rental dwellings within larger family sizes, exacerbated by New Zealand's unregulated housing stock (Centre for Housing Research, 2010; Statistics New Zealand, 2017). Housing, therefore, is a multidimensional issue warranting consideration when community organisation professionals (COPs) work with Pasifika communities in Aotearoa New Zealand.

In the Wellington region, the shortage and high demand for suitable and affordable social housing, places considerable pressure on families to locate affordable housing further north. The Wellington housing taskforce report (Wellington City Council, 2017) found there was a shortfall of 3,900 homes in Wellington City. Population forecasts project that between 20,000 and 30,000 additional housing units are required to meet the range of projected population growth by 2043 (Wellington City Council , 2017). Porirua, which is north of Wellington City, has a higher density of Pasifika peoples with 31,047 peoples living there, 12,738 (24.6%) identifying in the 2013 census as Pasifika (Greater Wellington Regional Council, 2017a), compared to the 190,956 people living in Wellington City, 8,928 (4.7%) identifying as Pasifika (Greater Wellington Regional Council, 2017b).

This article reports on the findings of a small-scale Masters of Applied Social Work (Massey University) research project, exploring COPs' responses to Pasifika housing needs in the Wellington Region. The first author completed the study, and the second author was the research supervisor. Both authors identify as Pasifika and are motivated to contribute this article given their own extended families' experiences with housing issues. The article title, "Noqu vale", pronounced (no-goo vah-lei) and translated into English as "My house", was chosen to represent the first author's identity as an Aotearoa New Zealand born Fijian, who spent a majority of her childhood growing up in Housing New Zealand (HNZ) property in the Wellington region. Two specific research questions were posed: what's working, and what needs to change? COPs identified four strategies which were working well: wrap-around services, collaboration, advocacy, and empowering families. COPs identified four strategies outlining what needed to change: quality, quantity, affordability and discrimination. The next section discusses the research methods, before the findings are discussed. The implications of the findings for practice, programmes and policy are considered, and finally conclusions and recommendations are offered for further research in relation to housing for Pasifika peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Within this article, the term *housing* is used to encompass and describe private dwellings offered by private landlords, or social housing via community organisational owned properties (managed by HNZ), or housing directly rented from HNZ. Affordable housing describes any type of housing which is affordable relative to income and living expenses. Sub-standard housing relates to any private rental, or social housing offered which poses a direct risk to the health, safety, or physical well-being of the tenants due to poor housing conditions. In Aotearoa New Zealand, social housing (also known as affordable housing) is generally understood to refer to the provision of assistance with housing costs to those who cannot otherwise meet their own housing needs (Housing Shareholders Advisory Group, 2010). Social housing in Aotearoa New Zealand is primarily delivered centrally via key organisations such as: HNZ, Ministry of Social Development (MSD), local councils, with a small number of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and community groups which operate in HNZ dwellings. Furthermore, complexities regarding the distinction of social housing arise around questions of ownership, provision and subsidy. For example, in Aotearoa New Zealand social housing can be: privately

owned but publicly operated, publicly owned but privately operated, or privately owned and rented; however, the occupier is generally reliant on housing subsidies and service contracts with a key organisation (Johnson, 2017).

The term *Pasifika* is a collective term in Aotearoa New Zealand which generally refers to people from the South Pacific (New Zealand Educational Institute [NZEI], 2012). However, the term does not refer to one single ethnicity, nationality, gender, or culture, rather it is a term used more out of convenience and which encompasses the diverse range of peoples from the South Pacific region made up of Polynesian, Micronesian and Melanesian populations now living in Aotearoa New Zealand (Ministry of Education, 2016). Each Pasifika nation has their own unique identity, land, laws, and culture which form part of their heritage and history (NZEI, 2012).

Methods

This was a small, qualitative study, utilising semi-structured interviews with three COPs located in Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand. Two participants worked for community social service organisations which held community housing portfolios, and offered wrap-around services. The third participant worked for a housing organisation which supported people accessing social, community, and private housing. Practice experience among the participants ranged from 1–20 years. Of the three participants, two were female and one was male, each identifying with a different ethnicity: Māori, Pasifika and Pākehā European. The study was advertised amongst relevant community organisations and participants responded by contacting the researcher and opting into the study. All interviews were digitally voice recorded and transcribed verbatim. Thematic analysis was undertaken allowing for the exploration of the key emerging themes (Marlow, 2011) within a narrative context (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Riessman, 2008), thus permitting the data to express itself. A matrix was created using participant responses, and key, related, and similar responses were firstly identified, then secondly colour coded and grouped under themes, enabling visual comparison and contrast. The project was assessed as low risk and notified to the Massey University Human Ethics Committee accordingly. Pseudonyms are used throughout this article, with participant organisation names omitted. Due to the small number of participants, the findings are not generalisable; nonetheless, the findings provide insights from the participating COPs' practice experiences addressing Pasifika peoples' housing.

Findings

Approaches to Pasifika housing – what's working?

This section discusses strategies and approaches that work in relation to Pasifika housing from the perspectives of the COPs who participated in this study. Successful approaches were identified as: wrap-around services, collaboration, advocacy and empowering families.

Wrap-around services

COPs recognised the intersection of psychosocial factors (such as health, unemployment, or relationship breakdown) affecting Pasifika peoples seeking housing services. COPs identified targeted and holistic wrap-around services as an effective approach to addressing Pasifika housing needs.

> Again, not just a focus on one area, such as housing, rather a holistic approach to addressing family needs is undertaken. (Maria)

> We are helping whānau that have children in Oranga Tamariki, so basically everything, everything is there, the services. (Frank)

Effective types of wrap-around support services included: parenting courses, counselling,

alcohol and drug support, life skills, spiritual support, budgeting and finance, foodbank, and clothing donations. One organisation offered a programme specifically designed for women, with programme content dependent on the current issues COPs had identified in their interactions with clients and families. Therefore, service delivery within this style of programme delivery was fluid and flexible enough to cater to the presenting needs.

> Thursdays are Lifestyles programmes. It could be about parenting, anger for women, whatever is going on and we can see, oh this would be really good to talk about, or whatever issue seems of concern. (Maria)

In addition to providing physical and immediate support for Pasifika families and individuals, Maria's organisation offered spiritual support, and viewed this service as a unique and vital component further contributing to and complementing the wider holistic approach her organisation offered.

> Some of the families get linked into churches, prayer is offered to families, and they are welcome to decline prayer. Being PI and Christian makes it easier, and it's up to the person if they accept this or not. I believe this is what makes our community organisation unique, is that they can go even further, offering a holistic approach to care… it's all about connecting with the wider community. (Maria)

Mental health was recognised by COPs as a significant factor which affected peoples' access to housing, in particular, Pasifika youth. Participants supported clients who had sought assistance with housing, whilst dealing with anxiety, depression, suicide, unemployment, alcohol and drug abuse, relationship issues, and domestic violence.

> And then we've got a lot of people in our community that suffer from depression and anxiety… like mental health issues. So we have counsellors, and then also there's alcohol and drugs, there's relationship stuff going on, and budgeting stuff. (Frank)

> In particular, some of the younger ones are dealing with multiple issues and problems, particularly in mental health. (Maria)

Saville-Smith et al. (1996) suggest that people who suffer from mental health issues are more likely to be confronted with difficulties such as locating, affording, and maintaining housing. On the other hand, sub-standard housing and homelessness further exacerbates existing mental health problems (Saville-Smith, McClellan, Mainey, & McKay, 1996), and substance abuse and mental illness are two of the major causes of homelessness (Zufferey & Chung, 2006; Zufferey & Kerr, 2005).

According to participants, many Pasifika families struggled with debt and lacked basic financial literacy and budgeting skills. A reoccurring issue highlighted by COPs was Pasifika peoples and families borrowing large sums of money and then struggling to meet loan repayments, with higher interest and penalty rates if the repayments were not made within contractual time periods. Two budgeting initiatives offered by Maria's organisation provided Pasifika families with access to lower interest loan schemes, allowing individuals to borrow larger sums at lower interest rates.

> We offer two budgeting initiatives which is ideal for Pasifika families as many deal with loan sharks and end up having to pay more back in terms of interest. (Maria)

> [Organisation] recently introduced a scheme of low interest loans, and no interest loans to help people with maintenance stuff like that, because it is a thing. (Lisa)

The COPs in this study were cognisant of the complex issues intersecting with housing needs, viewing wrap-around services offered

by their community organisations as an aspect which worked well to address Pasifika housing needs. According to Furman, Nalini, Schatz, and Jones (2008), the wrap-around process identifies, builds upon, and enhances the capabilities, knowledge, skills, and assets of, not only the client, but also the community, and other team members involved. As such, a collaborative approach is inherently strengths-based and, by incorporating a wrap-around team approach, professionals are able to identify resources, programmes and services that may best serve to meet the needs of clients, thus promoting resourceful intervention strategies (Furman et al., 2008). A wrap-around holistic approach resonates with Pasifika approaches to health and social care such as the *Fonofale* framework which incorporates the consideration and integration of physical, spiritual and mental, aspects of well-being, with aiga or whānau as the foundational base, and culture as the overarching adhesive (Agnew et al., 2004; Mafile'o, 2013). Aligning with an ecological systems approach (Nash, Munford, & O'Donoghue, 2005), COPs understand that the social issues their clients experience interconnect with other areas of well-being, and thus dealing with housing issues in isolation may fail to fully address the overall interconnectivity of the challenges faced.

Collaboration

Community organisation professionals viewed collaboration with other social service organisations, housing providers, and external government agencies as necessary in order to best support Pasifika peoples and families presenting with housing issues. For instance, if a client's needs could not be met by their own agency, then a referral to an appropriate alternative support service would be made.

> But we just collaborate, like if you got families then let us know if we can help… and if [organisation] have nothing available then they'll send their people to us. (Frank)

> MSD [Ministry of Social Development] hold the new contract, people who approach our organisation for emergency housing need to have been on the HNZ waiting list, or [be] close to being on the list. (Maria)

> We work with other Pasifika health social services… and that's really across the Mental Health and Addiction Services… so we get referrals from them, and so we work together with them to get access [to] housing to support people. (Lisa)

Collaborative partnerships with key government agencies, such as Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ) and HNZ, were viewed as vital and necessary partnerships to best deliver housing services. However, one participant identified their frustration when dealing with external funding agencies with changing contract requirements, coupled with the lack of inter-agency communication and how this impacted on social and housing service delivery to clients.

> Stakeholder relationships are vital if services offered are to be delivered in a timely fashion, with a client-centred focus in mind. (Maria)

> There is a need for better communication between inter-agencies. (Maria)

Staff collaboration, in the form of regular meetings within community organisations, was also viewed as important in order to better track client or family progress. Such meetings were particularly useful if several staff members or agencies were simultaneously working with the same referral.

Ongoing material and financial contributions were another aspect of community collaboration for addressing Pasifika housing needs. Foodbank services, vegetable co-operatives, clothing donations and external business donations were among some of the extra supports provided to Maria's organisation, and were a vital source of support within the community.

Collaboration and information sharing between non-government agencies and government ministries is necessary at the grass-roots level, as a significant number of service users are in a sense, "service-hopping" (Mills et al., 2015; Richardson & Patana, 2012). However, Mills et al. (2015) outlined that some social services were not flexible enough to cope with complex client needs, dealing only with specified needs, for example, focusing on mental health only, as opposed to incorporating a holistic approach. One way of addressing this would be to implement service integration, particularly where service users have multiple and complex needs, and where addressing one particular need in isolation is unlikely to be effective (Majumdar, 2006).

Advocacy

Advocating was core practice for all participants. Participants found that, at times, external systematic processes became a hindrance when attempting to house families with urgent housing needs. Participants shared their experiences about their use of unorthodox methods to advocate and support people due to the urgency of the situation.

> We've gotta be really nimble, and dynamic, and a bit pushy…So trying to be as determined as possible to make things happen, because it's tough!…that's one of the things that we do well,…we take a very dynamic approach….Doing whatever it takes, advocating, you've gotta be pretty determined and clever and quick to make things happen, and use all your powers of persuasion and confidence to get in there. (Lisa)

> In theory, [censored occupation] are supposed to do the work with WINZ, but what actually ends up happening is with the housing, because it often feels incredibly urgent and we don't have time, it's not always easy to coordinate people's availability and timing, so sometimes we end up doing those appointments just because it's more expedient. (Lisa)

> The rubbish started building up because she just wasn't able to get the rubbish out. She had no way of removing it from the property. And so, [I applied] for a flexi fund to pay to get someone with a van and a trailer, to go there and just remove all the rubbish, so that they don't then evict her….We've actually ended up paying to remove the washing machines and stoves that were sitting there before she even moved in. (Lisa)

One participant worked for an organisation whose core service delivery focused on supporting and advocating for Pasifika and non-Pasifika people, who were navigating their way through the rental housing process.

COPs found that many Pasifika and non-Pasifika families face the challenge and frustration of navigating and comprehending multiple systems. These challenges were further intensified by the varying processing time-frames, creating further uncertainty for individuals and families already facing the risk of becoming homeless. Participants spoke of the value of utilising dynamic approaches within their practice and service delivery when supporting clients to navigate external systems, particularly in cases of urgency where individuals or families were facing impending eviction. This approach aligns with findings from Mills et al. (2015) which acknowledge that tenants benefited from extended support when transitioning from short-term emergency accommodation to long-term affordable housing.

Empowering families

Participants recognised Pasifika family strength, and empowerment of the wider family unit, as a resource in their practice with Pasifika housing needs. Family resiliency was found to be a resource within many Pasifika families and individuals. Pasifika families were viewed as strong, social, self-empowering units, who were able to tap into natural supports, and by

integrating a strengths-based approach, participants were able to strengthen the family system, and thus encourage Pasifika family and individual problem-solving. For example, if a Pasifika individual or family was in urgent need of housing, other family members would attempt to accommodate their needs, until the individual or family were able to secure housing of their own.

> A lot of the positives is that these families do really well with what they've got... they're really resilient, they're strong families and they have ups and downs like everyone else… they're clever people, and they learn to live off resources that most of us couldn't live off… and we've got a lot to learn from them. (Frank)

> What happens is when people are desperate, friends and family take them in. (Lisa)

> Most families take in people they know and house them… culturally, a lot of our Pasifika people know whānau and end up getting taken in by them. (Maria)

Pasifika peoples tend to draw their sense of health and well-being from the quality of their relationships within their collective contexts, including extended family and community networks (Counties Manukau District Health Board, 2006). Involving housing support services can also assist individuals and families with moving from difficult and deteriorating situations, to a more positive and empowering situation with increased options (Mills et al., 2015).

In summary, participants' practice narratives reveal how collective and holistic approaches have worked well to address Pasifika housing needs in their contexts. The themes of: wrap-around support services, collaboration, advocacy, and empowerment of Pasifika families as a collective whole offer a Pasifika-focused framework approach to Pasifika housing work. The next section outlines what needs to change as identified by the participants.

Approaches to Pasifika housing – What needs to change?

Participants were asked to share their views on what needs to change to better support Pasifika housing needs in the Wellington region. Responses were categorised under the following themes: housing quality and quantity, affordability, and racism and discrimination.

Quality of housing

The quality of current rental and social housing in the Wellington region was highlighted by participants as a major issue for many lower-income Pasifika families. The lack of housing options meant that many Pasifika families have no choice but to live in sub-standard housing. According to one participant, due to higher volumes of applicants on the HNZ waiting list, clients facing impending homelessness who are most at risk had no choice but to accept the type of housing offered.

> The organisation owns old HNZ homes. They're like those units, so there's twenty-three units….So those homes we've got are insulated…fully furnished. The idea is these whānau can move straight in, but they're coming off the street. (Frank)

> When you're homeless with your children it's not a nice place to be. They're just desperate … what's working well is that there's homes available, families are getting roofs over their heads, so that in itself is a success. I mean the idea is that a few of them are transitional, so they're with us for twelve weeks, and the idea is that they're working with HNZ together for somewhere to go permanently… it's just to keep them, and give them a roof till they find a HNZ rental, because the HNZ list is so long. (Frank)

Poor quality of rental housing was found to be a significant challenge faced by many Pasifika families in the Wellington region.

Many families had no choice but to accept sub-standard housing, and at times felt unable to complain for fear of eviction. For housing which was available, marked differences in quality were evident. One participant spoke of the negative transition families experienced when moving from housing offered by her organisation, into a HNZ property – referring to the difference in housing quality as "a step down". Unemployment was also identified as a contributing factor, forcing many Pasifika families with limited financial resources into "doubled-up" living situations with extended family members, or renting make-shift housing.

> These families are desperate, they're going to be homeless otherwise, you know in one person's eyes it's a mansion, in another person's eyes it's a dump you know… personally myself I'd find it hard pressed to go live in them. (Frank)

> Because of this increased pressure on housing, people are less likely than ever to say, "there's a big leak here, or there's a problem with my plumbing"… And so, they live with the mushrooms growing out of the corner of the bedroom because they don't want to get into a situation where either the rent's going to be put up even more, or they might [be given] notice and then what? And so, you've got a situation where people aren't dealing with stuff landlords don't have to. (Lisa)

> There are a few places where, like say, somebody's got a Skyline garage out the back of their property, they might have built a wall up the middle of it and put a sort of flat in the back of it. So there might be a kitchen, bathroom, living area, but it's not a proper flat, it's a makeshift kind of arrangement. There's a few of those… or there's ones where somebody's carved off part of their home and sort of subdivided it… and somebody will come along and pay to live there. (Lisa)

The quality of private and social housing remained questionable, with many rental properties suffering from overdue maintenance, lack of insulation, and disrepair. According to Mills et al. (2015), renters were three times more likely to live in sub-standard housing if they were single-parent families, or identified as Māori or Pasifika. Participants spoke of the need to implement nationwide housing standards in an attempt to standardise and provide a benchmark for good quality rental housing.

> There's still a chronic shortage of insulation and basic maintenance, and a lot of them desperately need a paint job, it's beyond deferred maintenance.… they're actually allowing them to completely decay to the point where it's going to actually require them to be knocked down and completely rebuilt because they haven't been kept weathertight. (Lisa)

Sub-standard housing quality also posed a risk to the health, safety and welfare of families and children. One participant highlighted their organisation's concerns around the paramount safety and welfare of clients with children moving into rental home properties, and then falling ill due to unknown previous drug activity inside the property. Existing health issues were further exacerbated when families and children had a history of respiratory diseases, placing them at risk of health complications.

The importance of healthy housing was outlined in a study by Keall, Baker, Howden-Chapman, Cunningham, and Ormandy (2010) which revealed that structural defects, inadequate insulation, dampness and mould, contributed to poor health outcomes. Butler, Williams, Tukuitonga, and Paterson (2003) state that Pasifika peoples face more significant housing problems than other ethnicities, with research revealing links between sub-standard housing quality and maternal depression and the incidence of asthma. This places children living in such households at a higher risk of poor health outcomes. For example, a study of 106 child admissions to Wellington Hospital in August 2012 identified a pattern of high

rates of respiratory admissions for Māori and Pasifika children, strongly associated with sub-standard housing conditions (Denning-Kemp et al., 2012). One third of the parents whose children participated in the study had noticed dampness and mould in their homes, 50% claimed their homes were much colder than they preferred, and 20% lived in uninsulated housing (Denning-Kemp et al., 2012).

Quantity of housing

Participants highlighted the need for an increased supply of housing, especially given the loss of a substantial number of HNZ properties across the Wellington region. As housing demand exceeds supply, the increased pressure on not only individuals and families, but also landlords and property managers, constrains an individual's likelihood of accessing housing.

> We've lost in our region [470] HNZ places, and only [69] have been built. So there's massive net loss, and the ones that are still there are desperately in need of maintenance. (Lisa)

> At the moment the demand for housing way exceeds the supply, and so if people have issues and challenges like they don't have ID, or they have bad credit, or they don't have good references because of you know, what happened at their last tenancy …then it's very difficult to access housing. (Lisa)

The increased pressure in the housing market was seen to add a shift in who occupies available rental housing. Landlords and property managers were now able to select desirable tenants, whereas historically similar housing spaces were commonly known to house those most in need.

> They used to take the people that would come… Because the pressure has increased, they can fill their place easily without having to house the people… in greatest need…Better off people [or] employed people, people who would be considered more respectable, are now having to resort to the grotty boarding houses, and the people that traditionally occupied that space are now even more on the margins. (Lisa)

The housing shortage in the Wellington region has also placed increased pressure on Pasifika peoples to look for housing outside of their areas of preference and convenience.

> Because it's become so difficult and so unaffordable in Wellington, there's a movement and pressure to go North. And so people in Wellington are being told, "Oh have you looked in Porirua or Kāpiti?", but there's nothing in Porirua or Kāpiti. It's just as difficult if not worse, in that there's very little available, what there is, is expensive and not very good quality. (Lisa)

The participants experiences reflect the well documented shortage of affordable housing in the Wellington region (Wellington City Council, 2017). Unfortunately, this is not an issue isolated to the Wellington region, nationwide the New Zealand housing market has failed to deliver both the quantity and quality of housing required, further compounded by historic low levels of building consents (Mills et al., 2015; Howden-Chapman, Baker, & Bierre, 2013; New Zealand Productivity Commission, 2012).

Affordability of housing

Rising housing and rental costs is another issue in need of change, according to the participants in this study. Due to the shortage of affordable housing, people on HNZ waiting lists were required to find short-term or emergency accommodation until suitable housing became available. Social housing homes with three or more bedrooms are limited, therefore when they do become available, larger sized families have no choice but to accept, even if the housing is located outside their area of preference. For those who can afford to rent privately, higher rental prices are a barrier, often becoming unsustainable for individuals and families on lower incomes. Issues around

housing affordability were also challenged by other factors such as: unemployment, or previous issues such as bad credit, making it difficult for people to access housing.

> High rentals, people unable to sustain private rental because their incomes are low, this is a huge one for Pasifika, unrealistic expectations. (Maria)

> Availability, and with that come the sizes, they need to be the right size… Location, because ours are in [censored location] and a lot of these families, their children are coming to school out this way, so now they have to find transport or relocate their children, cause a lot…don't have transport…HNZ waiting list that's certainly an issue. (Frank)

Racism and discrimination

Experiences of racism and discrimination were challenges many minority groups faced when attempting to access housing. COPs discussed the ways in which those offering housing discriminated against other non-white cultures, based on ethnicity, family size, and colour.

> So they'll look at Māori families and think, more likely to be overcrowding, less likely to care for the place, more likely to punch a hole in the wall, may not be able to afford to pay the rent… Who's the person who looks like they do meth? And I probably don't want little kids 'cause you know they're cute, but… I really don't want the mess… So you end up with a situation where people discriminate … You could argue that they're just trying to manage risk and reduce the cost of operating the asset. All those judgements amount to discrimination which discriminates against people who are mentally ill, discriminates against people of colour… It doesn't matter whether [you're] Nigerian or Pasifika, it discriminates against people on low incomes, and it's really tough… Its impacting all different kinds of people now… All housing is difficult to access, and I do think that racism is a thing. (Lisa)

Discrimination in the form of lack of housing for smaller or individual households, more specifically housing for single males, both young and old, was reported as significantly lacking in the Wellington region. COPs mentioned that women and children were given priority (in the context of emergency and safe housing) over single men regardless of age, or if the male was a member of the household.

> There is a desperate need for accommodation for single men. The current housing stock for single males are mainly for older single men – long-term residents. They don't put males in with females. They can put two families in a house, and if the family has a grown-up son, [organisation name censored] cannot house them in the same house – this is more for protection. Therefore, the young man in this situation would have to find his own place – [organisation censored] turn away quite a few single men, however, they never turn away single women. (Maria)

> There's no purpose built one-bedroom places… there's a couple of converted motels, which are not actually really great for long-term living. (Lisa)

The closure of significant social housing areas in the Wellington region, typically renowned for housing many lower-income Pasifika families, was a major loss which impacted many Pasifika families across the Wellington region.

> *We went along to some of the public meetings leading up to that closure, and one of the things that was striking to me was the number of Pasifika people and families that were there… At that time it was some of the lowest priced accommodation available…. there was a staggering number of Pasifika that were impacted by that. (Lisa)*

Participants identified the need for structural, social, and political change, to create a more level playing field, viewing housing as a fundamental right for all people, regardless of socio-economic status.

> It just gives a bigger social picture, because I think this all happens in a larger context. And personally, I'd like to see New Zealand more like it was in the 1970s when we had a much more egalitarian society… Things needed to improve for Māori, and needed to improve for Pasifika… What I would like to see is actual recognition that housing is a fundamental need and a right, and that there [is a way in] which everybody becomes homeowners. (Lisa)

Rankine (2005) found consistent evidence of discrimination in private and state rental housing, noting several reasons why tenants were reluctant to take action: shortage of housing, fear of eviction, and a lack of knowledge regarding consumer rights and how to complain. Challenges such as stigma, discrimination and racism are widely experienced by Pasifika peoples, and are a barrier to accessing housing, particularly individuals with mental health problems (Koloto & Associates Ltd, 2007; Peace & Kell, 2001).

Implications

COPs' perspectives on what works and what needs to change for Pasifika housing issues in the Wellington area have practice and policy implications. The findings show the importance of holistic, linked-up and collaborative practice approaches (Crawford, 2012; Weinstein, Whittington, & Leiba, 2003) to practice. Collaboration – including between government, city planners, construction companies, and Pasifika communities – could result in more innovative programme design and implementation. For example, the Matanikolo Project, a collaboration between government and a Pacific church to build houses in Auckland (Tanielu & Johnson, 2014), could be replicated elsewhere. Such collaborations could also work to ensure culturally informed home design (Gray & McIntosh, 2011) suitable for larger families.

Practice must be able to address the root causes of Pasifika housing issues located within the broader social, political, and economic context. Advocacy (Wilks, 2012) is a practice implication. COPs acknowledged constraints when attempting to perform systematic advocacy, given external and contractual obligations, or changing contract requirements, or at times lack of inter-agency communication. COPs advocating on a political spectrum address the socio-economic housing disadvantages faced by many Pasifika families. In advocating to influence a shift in political ideology underpinning housing policies and to address the presence of racism and discrimination (Dominelli, 2018), social work practice operates more within a social change discourse, and moves beyond practice within a social order and empowerment orientation (Payne, 2014). Effective practice responding at individual and family levels, the findings suggest, is just one aspect of what is needed. Policy and macro level changes are also needed, to tackle structural impediments to housing well-being, including racism and poverty, and to create more equitable conditions overall in Aotearoa New Zealand. Social work analysis and action in the Pasifika housing field of practice in Aotearoa New Zealand must take cognisance of the context of coloniality (Mignalo, 2011) which manifests in the overrepresentation of Pasifika in poor housing conditions. Critical and anti-oppressive social work approaches, which address the intersectionality of race, gender and class (Mattsson, 2014), are therefore called for.

Conclusion

This small-scale, qualitative study explored what works and what needs to change to address Pasifika housing issues in Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand, through an analysis of practice reflections of three

COPs working in the area. Themes generated from the semi-structured interviews in relation to what worked included wrap-around services, collaboration, advocacy and empowering family strengths. Themes for what needed to change included quality, quantity and affordability of housing and racism and discrimination.

The COPs' insights portray the complexity of housing issues for Pasifika communities. Wrap-around services were promoted, including spiritual support, given that housing issues were interconnected with a range of other issues. A lack of good-quality, affordable housing was seen as a major barrier for many low-income Pasifika families in the Wellington region. Participants highlighted a significant lack in the *right supply* of housing that could cater to varying accommodation needs, such as larger sized families, or accommodation for single males. The lack of suitable housing placed further pressure on people to look for alternative housing from other sources, and outside the Wellington region. Community housing areas, such as boarding houses which once housed those most in need were now able to use the shortage and demand for housing to their advantage, and in a sense, pre-select preferred tenants. Racism and discrimination were quite marked issues disadvantaging Pasifika peoples. Participants promoted the idea of shelter as a fundamental right for all peoples, regardless of socio-economic status, and the creation of a more egalitarian society. The findings suggest the importance of collaboration, advocacy and critical, anti-oppressive practice to address structural, policy and macro-level change.

Future research could explore strategies and programmes which would support Pasifika peoples through the housing continuum, moving from long-term renting into home-ownership. A longitudinal study tracking health and social outcomes following housing programme implementation could provide quantitative evidence of what works to address Pasifika peoples' housing.

While this study was too small scale for conclusions to be generalisable, the findings do give insight into the practice reality in community organisations. It is an important perspective, nuancing the statistical data which reveal disproportionate housing disadvantage for Pasifika individuals and families in Aotearoa New Zealand (Johnson et al., 2018). While COPs are working with innovation in this space, overall practice, programme, policy and research on Pasifika housing needs to be stepped up for better outcomes to be realised by Pasifika individuals and families.

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Transnational Pacific Islander Americans and social work: Dancing to the beat of a different drum

Halaevalu F. Ofahengaue Vakalahi and Meripa Taiai Godinet (Eds.), 2014
NASW Press, Washington DC
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This book offers an important resource for social workers, educators and social service agencies working with Pacific transnational communities in the United States of America (US). The book proudly and intentionally weaves in the rich indigenous heritage and identities of Pacific communities. Editors Vakalahi and Godinet have invited a number of authors from Pacific indigenous groups to speak from their own backgrounds, such as Chamorro, Chuukese and Yapese from Micronesian communities as well as Samoan, Tongan and Hawaiian Polynesian communities in the US.

The book draws together commonalities and unique differences between Pacific Island communities in the US, and fills a critical knowledge gap in this region. There is a need to build critical capacity and visibility for groups which are not well known or written about such as Chamorro, Chuuk and Yap communities. Their narratives offer refreshing insider narratives from indigenous communities. A particular focus is the transnational perspective of Pacific Island communities who have migrated from their indigenous homelands and are now living in the US, and who maintain indigenous ties to their homelands.

In order to work competently with any cultural community, it is important for social work practitioners to have cultural competency and to continually build their own skills and knowledges to work with other communities. Each chapter gives an historical, political, social and cultural context, focussing on key factors to be cognisant of within each indigenous culture. Stories of cultural communities migrating from their own homelands to the US are shared. Cultural identity, acculturation, assimilation and colonisation are common themes. The book demonstrates ideal ways that social workers and agencies can respond more culturally effectively with respective Pacific Island communities in the US.

Examples include chapters focussing on the experiences of the Chamorro indigenous peoples, highlighting the impact of colonisation on their people, language, land and culture. The chapters give powerful voice and insight for social work practitioners on ways of working. Reclaiming indigenous histories and recognising the impacts of colonisation are critical starting points to understanding the Chamorro people. The social work practice considerations for those working with Ulithian clients are invaluable – we cannot assume all Micronesian cultures are homogenous as there is such a diversity amongst the languages, dialects, cultures and lifestyle. Social workers must be self-aware of the unique nuances and be willing to challenge their own assumptions and examine their own positions when working cross-culturally with Pacific communities.

Each chapter offers a context to be mindful of when engaging Pacific communities. The final chapter affirms strengths and considerations for moving forward in approaching and engaging in social work practice with Pacific American families. In particular, the strengths

of cultural indigenous and spiritual ways of healing, including through forgiveness processes such as ifoga or fakalelei are examined. Many of the narratives shared, of Pacific clients being exposed to culturally ignorant and culturally insensitive practices, are heart-warming, and yet also heart-breaking.

The book highlights the need and importance for us all to have a deeper understanding and awareness of different Pacific contexts and histories, colonisation and immigration when working with Pacific American families. The need to be sensitive, self-aware and non-judgemental is highlighted so as not to label all groups as "Pacific Islanders," and to recognise the challenge to increase our own cross-cultural awareness. These cultural indigenous practices, which are deeply embedded in Pacific cultures, offer a tension against western American social systems and social services, particularly in how to respond more effective cultural ways. By comparison, there are similar themes and issues (such as migration, acculturation) which are shared in Pacific communities in Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia, although the cultural nuances are context-specific to local regions.

One possibility for the book might have been to offer some discussion questions for consideration. This would be particularly useful for social work students and educators who would like to further their knowledge of transnational Pacific social work practices and challenges across the globe.

As social workers improve ways of working with other cultural groups, it is imperative to have an understanding of the historical, political, and cultural worldview, spirituality, rituals, practices, languages and context of Pacific communities. Important tensions are highlighted in maintaining indigenous identity against (or within) an American western context, particularly for many Pacific nations where the western form of social work is still foreign.

The book is highly recommended, and particularly useful for social workers, agencies, and social work educators interested in cross-cultural social work practice with Pacific communities in the US local context. It will also appeal to Micronesian communities and social work educators as a useful resource in the classroom and in social work practices.

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