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Economic justice and social policy in Aotearoa New Zealand

A special issue "Child protection, the family and the state: Critical responses in neoliberal times" published in 2016 in this journal held a collection of articles with a focus on children's policy. In that issue, Mike O'Brien (2016) considered the ideological roots of contemporary policy for children and families at highest risk of poor outcomes. He noted that "ideologically, the issue is framed in individual, market driven terms. This framing means that the economic and structural forces which create and sustain the poverty and inequalities which shape the lives of those families and communities are ignored" (p. 12). We have had a change of government, but we have also faced the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. Research has been appearing over this year that points to some of the effects of Covid-19 on family income and food insecurity (see, for example, these open access reports, Humpage & Moore, 2021; Neuwelt-Kearns et al., 2021). In thinking about the last two years, the lack of any substantial advancement of incomes and support for families, we might well ask "What has changed?" Looking back at the journal over the last five years, an issue with a focus on social policy and social justice is well overdue. We are pleased to include, in this issue, articles that explore policy matters and encourage social work practitioners, educators and researchers to share their projects and viewpoints with the journal's readership.

This issue of *Aotearoa New Zealand Social Work* begins with a special section on economic justice, co-edited by Anaru Eketone (Ngāti Maniapoto, Waikato) and Marissa Kaloga from the University of Otago. Marissa Kaloga introduces this special section with a Commentary, "Social work and economic justice in Aotearoa New Zealand." Kaloga notes that, in Aotearoa New Zealand, both income and wealth inequality have reached historically high levels. Inequality research has demonstrated a causal link between inequality and a host of social and health issues that, while they impact society as a whole, affect the nation's most marginalised populations to an increasingly greater degree. Social work has generated only limited research in this area. Kaloga asserts, "[a]s a profession of action, we cannot only wrestle with the 'alligators' alongside families in poverty without being equally attentive to the 'swamp' of income and wealth inequality." A multi-disciplinary Economic Justice Forum was hosted at the University of Otago in 2020 to explore these issues. Kaloga's commentary provides an overview of the concepts, history, and current opportunities for advancement of economic justice for Aotearoa New Zealand social workers. The commentary addresses three themes. The first section focuses on key concepts in economic justice, including distributive justice, income inequality, and wealth inequality. The second section presents the proceedings of the forum which aimed to establish a research agenda for social work and economic justice and, lastly, Kaloga includes a call to action for social workers.

Food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand is a major element of economic injustice but there has been limited quantitative evidence concerning those in greatest need of support, which limits policy and practice decisions. Helen Robinson, Kelsey L. Deane, Allen Bartley, Mohamed Alansari, and Caitlin Neuwelt-Kearns report on a quantitative study entitled "Shining a light on food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand: Modification of the food security scale for use with individuals who have extreme food security needs." Robinson et al. modified Parnell and Gray's (2014) Aotearoa

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New Zealand based food security scale to better capture the severity of food insecurity for individuals living in poverty and used a questionnaire to collect data from people seeking help from foodbanks in Tāmaki Makaurau. The study authors note that, "at the severe end of food insecurity gender and ethnic subgroups appear to suffer at similar levels", but they caution this does not suggest that different approaches are not required to best meet the needs of different groups. Robinson et al. call for further research to ascertain how similar levels of food insecurity may produce differential effects on wellbeing outcomes for different demographic groups.

Housing unaffordability is the focus of Michael Webster's article "Human rights and housing unaffordability: Applying policy practice engagement to a wicked problem." Housing insecurity is a major problem that social workers encounter on a daily basis in their practice, mostly related to scarcity and unaffordability. Webster notes that the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted by Aotearoa New Zealand, identifies housing deprivation as a human right of relevance to social work. In this exploratory study, data were collected via semi-structured interviews with eight experts in housing affordability including: public sector economists; a private sector economist/developer; two public sector urban planners; one public policy advisor; one non-governmental policy analyst; and a private sector housing strategist.

Social work is mandated to "engage in action to change the structures of society that create and perpetuate injustice" (Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers, 2019, p. 7). Accordingly, along with presenting the findings of the study, Webster examines the potential for change in the context of the housing unaffordability crisis through the Policy Practice Engagement [PPE] framework (Gal & Weiss-Gal, 2015). The PPE offers a conceptual framework to examine *why* and *how* social workers should engage in policy practice. This article proposes that, by applying the PPE framework, social workers in Aotearoa New Zealand will be enabled to engage with policy advisors and decision-makers responsible for the complex problem of unaffordability.

In "Assessing the Labour Government's new procurement approach through a Māori economic justice perspective," Katharina Ruckstuhl (Ngāi Tahu), Sequoia Short (Ngāti Apakura) and Jeff Foote examine "social procurement—the intentional generation of social value through an organisation's procurement and commissioning processes"—is being adopted globally and in Aotearoa New Zealand as progressive social policy. Some of the issues that lie behind calls for economic justice, such as economic opportunity, rights for vulnerable workers, and unemployment, may be addressed through social procurement. While Māori may also benefit from this, there are other factors that should be considered from a Te Tiriti o Waitangi perspective. In this research brief, Ruckstuhl et al. outline the context of the government's current initiatives, drawing on policy and research literature as part of a scoping study aimed at developing a Te Tiriti approach to social procurement. The authors conclude by noting the opportunities for economic justice for Māori, but also highlight some of the caveats. The authors question whether there is a level playing field in the social procurement process and note that there is an argument that self-determined Māori economic development has been held back due to failure to fully honour Te Tiriti.

Irene Ayallo's article entitled: "Intersections of immigration law and family violence: Barriers preventing ethnic migrant and refugee background women from obtaining Immigration New Zealand's Family Violence Visa" explores the underutilisation of the visa available for women who are victim survivors of family violence. The visa separates the visa status of survivors from that of their perpetrator, enabling

them to leave a partner without fear of deportation. Ayallo first outlines the descriptive data on the use of the visa, then outlines the possible reasons for the low uptake of this visa despite its apparent availability to meet the needs of this specific group of women. She points out that women from migrant and refugee backgrounds face distinct circumstances that shape both their experiences of violence as well as the barriers to visa access. The process of migration and settlement can exacerbate both violence and women's social isolation; there is the possibility of multiple perpetrators; transnational abuse can occur; and women's vulnerability to control is heightened because their visa status is linked to their partner's. There are also "extant cultural values and practices that may hinder help-seeking in situations of domestic violence" that play a role in limiting the use of the visa.

Problems relating to the need to provide evidence of the abuse, as well as the financial vulnerability of women leaving such relationships must both be addressed for the visa to meet its worthy objectives. The circuitous logic of bureaucracies is also at play, for example, the need to receive a benefit to qualify for legal aid, but without residency, even low-income migrants cannot qualify. Without legal aid, applying for protection orders is too expensive, yet a final protection order is one of the few acceptable methods to evidence the abuse, and evidence is required by Immigration New Zealand when assessing the application for a family violence visa. Women stuck in these kafkaesque rabbit holes often surmise there is no other option but to remain in violent relationships. There are also difficulties meeting other requirements for the visa, for example the person must be in a relationship with an Aotearoa New Zealand resident or citizen, yet the majority of the violence is perpetrated by people also on temporary visas. This appears to undermine the purpose of the visa and certainly its accessibility. Ayallo concludes more research on women's own experiences of applying for the visa is needed to understand how they navigate these complexities and address barriers to its uptake. It appears policy advocacy relating to its obvious deficiencies is also required.

In "Community resilience demonstrated through a Te Ao Māori (Ngāti Manawa) lens: The Rāhui" Leila-Dawn Rewi (Ngāti Manawa, Ngā Puhi, Whānau-ā-Apanui) and Jeanette Hastie (Ngāti Ranginui) report on a research project about a small rural community utilising the Te Ao Māori (Ngāti Manawa) understanding of Rāhui as a means of decreasing the possibility of negative impacts for their mostly Māori population during the Covid-19 pandemic that was first experienced in March 2020 in Aotearoa New Zealand. This mixed-methods study identified how Ngāti Manawa of Murupara employed Rāhui as a "mechanism of resilience" in order to keep local residents safe and well during, and beyond, the Covid-19 lockdown by setting up checkpoints on the borders of their rohe and restricting both vehicle and human traffic into Murupara. The authors found that support for the Rāhui was significant with input from five hapū leaders and a community survey revealing a sense of safety that the checkpoints offered to a vulnerable and mostly Māori rural area.

In a Viewpoint piece, "Asians in Aotearoa New Zealand: A population of interest for social work", Hagyun Kim makes a case for improved content, including relevant knowledge and skills in the social work curriculum in relation to working with Asians in Aotearoa New Zealand. Kim argues that some Asian people seem to have limited access to the benefits of an inclusive society, resulting in social isolation and marginalisation. This requires social workers to "attend to Asians' life challenges, justified by key principles of human rights and social justice".

Participation in, or facilitation of, Family Group Conferences (FGCs) and *hui-ā-whānau* (family meetings) require core competencies in Aotearoa New Zealand (New Zealand

Association of Social Workers, 2019; Social Workers Registration Board, 2016). Social work students are expected to graduate with the cultural competence necessary to work ethically with *whānau Māori* according to the bicultural practice principles of Ti Tiriti ō Waitangi. Cultural competence includes skills in the facilitation of joint decision making and the use of Māori engagement principles, all of which are fundamental to both traditional and professional practices of *hui* (meetings). In a Practice Note, "Disrupting Family Group Conference practice in Aotearoa New Zealand: A learning project", Raewyn Nordstrom (Ngāti Hine, Rongomaiwahine, Ngāti Whakaue and Tainui) and Deb Stanfield draw on Māori and Western pedagogies to describe a learning strategy developed over a period of four years with social work students. The Reality FGC Project began as a way of assisting students to develop skills and apply theory to practice, and unexpectedly became an opportunity to, reflexively and iteratively, consider the role of social work education in re-thinking FGC practice in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Finally, we have two book reviews. Dalice Prebble has reviewed Mathew Gibson's *Pride and Shame in Child and Family Protection: Emotions and the Search for Humane Practice* (Gibson, 2019) and Liz Beddoe has reviewed Paul Michael Garrett's *Dissenting Social Work: Critical Theory, Resistance and Pandemic* (Garrett, 2021).

Despite the challenges faced by authors, reviewers and authors over 2021, we have been able to publish four issues with 23 full-length articles, two research briefs, four commentaries, seven viewpoint pieces and numerous reviews. This would not be possible without the hard work of many. Plans are in place for an issue of *Tu Mau* and a special themed issue on "Dissent in Social Work". On behalf of the Editorial Collective, I wish everyone a refreshing summer break. Keep safe and we will welcome your contributions in 2022.

Liz Beddoe

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Social work and economic justice in Aotearoa New Zealand

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ABSTRACT

The social work profession is dedicated to the promotion of social and economic justice, but often has a limited appreciation of what economic justice actually looks like either in theory or practice. Economic justice, a form of distributive justice, assesses how fairly economic resources are distributed in a society. Currently, in Aotearoa New Zealand, both income and wealth inequality have reached historically high levels. Inequality research has demonstrated a causal link between inequality and a host of social and health issues that, while they impact society as a whole, affect the nation's most marginalised populations to an increasingly greater degree. Social work literature in Aotearoa New Zealand has limited research in this area. This introductory article will begin with an overview of concepts related to economic justice, such as distributive justice, income inequality, and wealth inequality. Following this is an overview of the 2020 Economic Justice Online Forum and an exploration of the implications for social work.

Keywords: Economic justice; Aotearoa New Zealand; social work; inequality

Introduction

This article is intended as an overview for social workers on the concepts, history, and current opportunities for advancement of economic justice in Aotearoa New Zealand. The text is organised into three sections. The first section provides an overview of key concepts in economic justice, including distributive justice, income inequality, and wealth inequality. In the second section, I present the proceedings of the multi-disciplinary Economic Justice Forum held in 2020, which aimed to establish a research agenda for social work and economic justice. The third and final section includes a discussion and call to action for social workers.

What is economic justice?

The promotion of social and economic justice is core characteristic of social work's mandate as a profession, and differentiates it from other professional areas such as psychology or counseling. This is written into the values and core competencies of social workers in Aotearoa, as "Competence to promote the principles of human rights and social and economic justice" (Social Workers Registration Board [SWRB], 2021). It is also described internationally through the International Federation of Social Work (IFSW) stating that "Social, Economic and Environmental Justice are fundamental pillars underpinning social work theory, policy and practice" (IFSW, 2020). In recent years, the idea of "social" justice has been further disseminated into popular knowledge along with terms like "structural racism" and "implicit bias" increasingly becoming part of the public lexicon. However, the notion of "economic" justice is, for many social workers, merely an addendum to a phrase, lacking an operationalised definition or practical application (Simmons, 2017). Nevertheless,

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social and economic justice are intricately tied, and the pursuit of one is inherently linked to the other. In *Poverty and Famines: An Essay in Entitlements*, Sen (1983) famously pointed out that famines are not by and large caused by an absolute lack of food, but instead because marginalised people in poverty do not have an entitlement to the food that exists. Social and economic justice are likewise connected in major social work practice areas in Aotearoa New Zealand such as child abuse and family harm which have been found to be linked to poverty (Drake & Jonson-Reid, 2014; Fahmy et al., 2016). Thus, while poverty finds an expression downstream in social inequalities, its causes are often found upstream in unequal resource allocation. Without a thorough understanding of how economic, material realities are tied to social injustice, social workers can struggle to be effective in supporting wellbeing and sustainable solutions for the most marginalised people.

Distributive justice

One can best understand economic justice through the lens of "distributive justice," which is primarily concerned with how resources are allocated within society. This can apply to basic resources such as housing, food, and livelihoods, but it can also apply to less commodifiable shared societal resources like clear air, education, and opportunities. John Rawls' 1971 book, *A Theory of Justice* (revised in 1999) provided a widely employed framework for understanding justice, which he defined as fairness under a social contract arrangement in society. In order to implement fairness and attain justice in a society, he outlines three necessary principles, namely the *Greatest Equal Liberty Principle,* "Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive total system of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar system of liberty for all" (p. 266); the *Difference Principle,* "Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are (a) to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged members of society" consistent with generational equity (p.266); and the *Equal Opportunity Principle,* "Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are (b) attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity" (p. 266). Rawls argued that justice could be ensured by following these principles.

While his work continues to serve as an influential model of justice, Amartya Sen's book, *The Idea of Justice* (2009) critiques and elaborates upon Rawls' work. In particular, Sen focuses on Rawls' notion of a single, transcendental view of hypothetical justice. Rather than looking for a single idea of justice, Sen's post-modern argument advocates for a plurality of "right" approaches (Brown, 2010), understanding that different claims to justice may have equal weight. Sen's pluralist approach is particularly important in considering distributive justice in the context of competing claims within a bi-cultural society like Aotearoa New Zealand. There is a tension here—much European influenced thinking draws heavily from an Enlightenment-based tradition where a "best" solution or approach is desired, whereas an Indigenous approach more closely resembles Sen's post-modern argument that allows for different approaches that have equal validity. Justice, as understood by these two groups, may look different and continuously needs to be renegotiated. Victory or even homeostasis may not be the desired outcome but rather a dynamic, active and respectful relationship.

Income and wealth inequality

Economic Justice is a specific kind of distributive justice focused on people's access to economic resources and their ability to use them as part of their own self-determination. Economic justice is concerned with money and wealth; the ability and opportunity to get money, use it, and save it are crucial to engaging fully in the 21st century world. The unequal opportunity to do these things can result in economic injustice, routinely

measured as income and wealth inequality. The terms "income inequality" and "wealth inequality" are related, but distinct. Income is paid wages and net profits and does not include assets like houses, or liabilities like consumer debt. Income inequality refers to the difference between earned wages across all deciles, specifically looking at the ratio between the top and the bottom of the income spectrum. In his book, *Wealth and New Zealand*, Rashbrooke (2015) refers to the great divergence, a marked trend in ever-widening income inequality over thirty years in Aotearoa New Zealand, from the 1990s until the 2010s. Inequality in Aotearoa New Zealand began to widen after the neoliberal policies of the 1984–1990 Labour Government and reached their current high levels in the 2010s (Rashbrooke, 2015). This broadening inequality has resulted in the poorest kiwis seeing stagnant wages for more than three decades while the richest doubled their wages in that same timeframe (Rashbrooke, 2015). The impacts of high income inequality like that seen in Aotearoa New Zealand can impact multiple generations, and lead to an intergenerational reduction in social mobility (Corak, 2013). These effects are also relevant when looking at wealth inequality. Wealth consists of a person or household's assets like real estate and investments, minus liabilities like a mortgage or credit card debt. Wealth inequality is a measure used to look at the differences in levels of wealth across the population, which provides important information about how the country's resources are distributed. In Aotearoa New Zealand, while the top decile earns 27% of all after-tax *income*, the top decile of asset holders hold 59% of all *wealth* (Rashbrooke et al., 2021). This is in stark contrast to the bottom half of the population who own only 5% of the nation's overall wealth (Rashbrooke, 2015). This concentration of wealth at the top continues to increase and creates an increasingly unequal society that limits opportunity and mobility.

This widening inequality can be seen in a well-recognised form of wealth: owning a home. Rates of homeownership have fallen steadily since their high point in 1991 and are now the lowest they have been in 70 years. In a 2020 report on housing, Statistics New Zealand (StatsNZ) cited a 64.5% rate of homeownership (StatsNZ, 2020). This has followed a nationwide trend where fewer people are able to buy a home. For people in their prime working years, their late 30s, rates of home ownership fell 20% from 1991 (79%) to 2018 (59%). Homeownership rates are even lower for Māori (28.2%[1]) and Pasifika (18.5%) families (Goodyear, 2017). The drop in overall rates of homeownership coincides with an increase in the concentration of homes owned by investors. In January 2021, for example, 30% of all homes available were bought by investors rather than families (Leahy, 2021).

Inequality and wellbeing

The idea of fairness, or justice, in income and wealth is not just a moral imperative; it is also intricately tied to our wellbeing as individuals and a society. In their book, *The Spirit Level*, Pickett and Wilkinson (2010) present a compelling argument about the relationship between inequality and health where higher levels of inequality negatively impact the health and wellbeing of all people in a society. Since that time, a compelling body of evidence has been created by researchers in multiple disciplines to support this causal link confirming that income and wealth inequality are detrimental to health and wellbeing outcomes population-wide, not just in vulnerable or marginalized groups (Atkinson, 2016; Pickett & Wilkinson, 2015; Stiglitz, 2015). Inequality causes population-wide disparities, including: shorter life expectancy, higher infant mortality, higher rates of obesity, HIV infection prevalence, increased property crime, increased rates of violence, increased teen pregnancy, decrease in women's equality, decrease in child well-being, increase in school dropout rates, increases in mental illnesses such as depression and suicide, and a decrease in social capital and social cohesion (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2017). With such a

widespread evidence base of the negative effects of income and wealth inequality, it is imperative that social workers have a working understanding of these terms and their application in Aotearoa New Zealand. For example, the falling rates of homeownership and concentration of property in the upper wealth deciles has downstream impacts on myriad health and wellbeing issues that practising social workers see on a daily basis. While these effects are often blamed on individual choices, this body of research strongly illustrates their relationships to structural inequities.

New Zealand and the egalitarian ideal

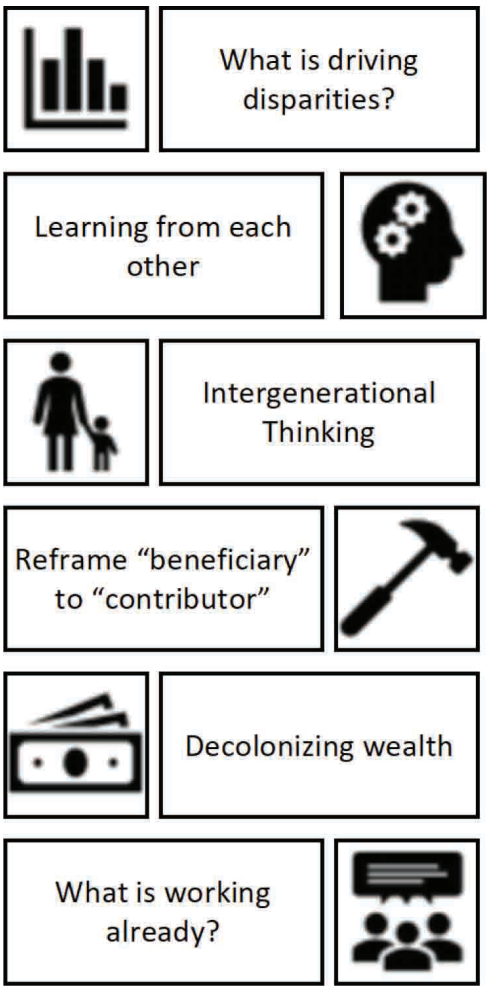
These widening inequalities and concurrent social issues are at odds with Aotearoa New Zealand's longstanding commitment to the ideal of egalitarianism. Historically, Aotearoa New Zealand has held *egalitarianism* as an "aspirational ideal" (Easton, 2015). Just as the US falls short of its values of *freedom and justice for all*, kiwis' value for egalitarianism has been an unevenly applied project with inequity in opportunities for women, people with disabilities, migrants, and indigenous people (Easton, 2020). However, the value still holds strong and acted as a guiding principle for much of Aotearoa New Zealand's modern history. In recent times there has been a growing recognition that, while some sectors of Aotearoa New Zealand society have been doing well, others have not, shown by indicators such as high levels of child poverty that were a major platform of the 2017 coalition government and translated into the Child Poverty Reduction Act (2018). The struggle for economic justice has led to the emergence of forums such as the Child Poverty Action Group, the Equality Network, and a series of discussions prompted by Max Rashbrooke's (2013) book, *Inequality: A New Zealand Crisis*. The increasing attention to inequality in the public sphere has not been met with equal attention within social work practice or research in Aotearoa. As front-line witnesses to the impacts of inequality on our most vulnerable populations, and with our strongly held values in the promotion of social and economic justice, it is imperative that social workers are active contributors to this national conversation.

Online forum economic justice

Associate Professor Anaru Eketone and Dr Marissa Kaloga are social work academics with practice experience in promoting economic justice. We had both concluded that social work's lack of attention to economic justice was not reflective of the importance of economic issues for the families we worked with and wanted to explore what a kiwi-specific focus on it might look like. In 2020, with support from Te Puni Kokiri, we co-hosted an online "Economic Justice" forum with the following objectives: 1. To identify gaps or areas for future inquiry in the application of economic justice in Aotearoa and 2. To establish connections between interested parties, which will form the basis of a research and action network organised around principles of economic justice. During this forum, speakers from varied disciplines shared brief presentations of their research and/or practice work. Speakers included (in order): Dr Marissa Kaloga, Mr Trevor McGlinchy, Dr Diane Ruwhiu, Ms Rasha Abu Safieh, Professor Stephen Knowles, Dr Pushpa Wood, Ms Lisa Lopeti, and Dr Anaru Eketone. Following the speakers, small group and open discussion centred on what was driving disparities, how to learn from one another, intergenerational thinking, reframing the concept of "beneficiary" to contributor, decolonising wealth, and learning from what is already working (see Figure 1).

Following the forum, the authors reviewed detailed notes taken during the event, and identified several emergent thematic areas, namely: 1. setting a new direction with ambitious goals; 2. Aotearoa's specific context and diverse economies; 3. the need for correct information on issues of

Figure 1 Economic Justice Forum Conversation Topics



economic justice; 4. making connections between diverse stakeholder groups; 5. the need to address urgent needs; and 6. the role of hope in economic justice. These six themes comprise a first attempt at exploring a social work agenda for economic justice in Aotearoa, New Zealand that draws from multidisciplinary thinking on the topic.

1. Setting a new direction with ambitious goals

The participants at the forum recognised that social work in Aotearoa was not focused on economic justice as a foundational area of practice. That, combined with the current severe state of inequality in the country, led participants to support setting ambitious goals. They reasoned that a larger vision would encourage transformational ideas rather than supporting status quo with band-aid solutions. National economic policies like the Wellbeing Budget (Keck, 2021), increases in minimum wage (McClure, 2021), and transition to a sustainable financial system (BBC, 2021) are gaining global recognition for being progressive and innovative. Social work in Aotearoa must also set innovative and progressive goals for economic justice to ensure that the most vulnerable among us are not left behind as these and other policies are implemented.

2. Aotearoa New Zealand's specific context and diverse economies

While social work academics and practitioners outside of Aotearoa New Zealand have generated impactful research on economic justice (Center for Social Development (CSD), 2021; Grand Challenges for Social Work (GCSW), 2021), the implications and recommendations from this work do not consider the unique context of Aotearoa New Zealand. The bi-cultural society, small population, geographic isolation, and export economy make Aotearoa New Zealand's economy unique among other Global North countries. Participants related that, while existing literature and practices in this space can inform social work's response to issues of economic justice, our unique context requires that our responses are generated and validated locally.

3. The need for correct information on issues of economic justice

Because of the need for unique solutions, it is crucial that social workers have access to information that can inform their research and practice. Multiple participants voiced a concern that there are areas of economic justice where social workers do not have sufficient data, either quantitative or qualitative, to have a holistic understanding

of economic justice issues. With this data, plans can be made to prioritise key indicators and to identify any success such as with the government's child poverty objectives in the Child Poverty Reduction Act (2018).

4. Making connections between diverse stakeholder groups

The speakers at the forum had expertise in diverse sectors, including social work, economics, management, social enterprise, refugee services, and non-profit leadership. Multiple participants noted that the inter-disciplinary nature of the forum challenged them to look at similar issues from different perspectives and learn from one another's experience and knowledge. The issues of economic justice are complex, and as such finding realistic solutions will likely require significant inter-sectoral collaboration. Participants observed that, while there were gaps in research within their own discipline or sector, it was possible that useful data were available in other disciplines or sectors. Thus, the lack of information and data on issues of economic justice noted above might be somewhat mitigated by collaboration and information-sharing.

5. The need to address urgent needs

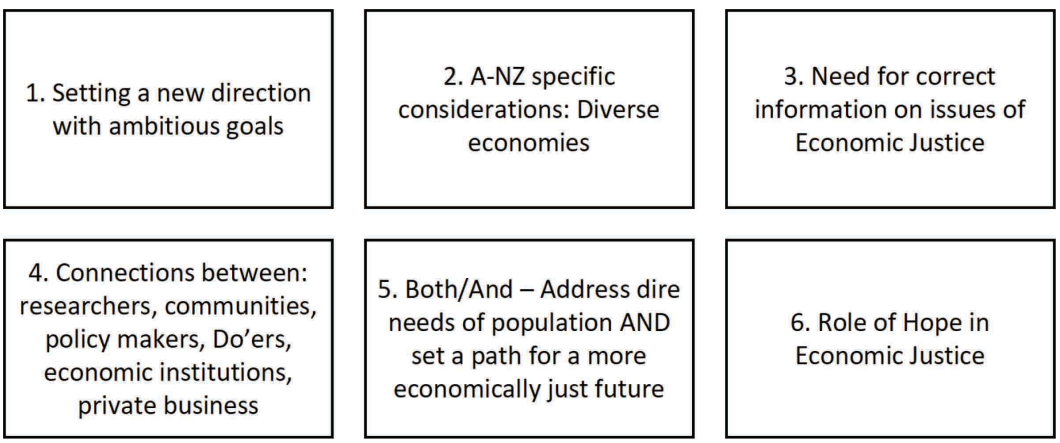
Some participants discussed macro-level and policy interventions to support economic justice, but others supported addressing families' urgent economic needs now. The interplay between micro and macro social work practice was evident in the discussion, where the need to advocate and create positive systems and structural change in the future did not diminish social work's obligation to address individual suffering in the present. Participants agreed that a "both/and" solution was necessary, where micro and macro social work practitioners worked collaboratively to understand the historical roots of economic injustice, address issues of injustice in the present, and promote better solutions for the future.

6. The role of hope in economic justice

The role of hope was brought up by a practitioner working on issues of economic inequality. Hope, the desire and expectation of a better world, is what inspires practitioners across disciplines. Social work has to be more than assisting people to be comfortable in their oppression and grateful in their poverty. Social change is as linked to social justice as economic change is to economic justice.

In order to begin delivering on this agenda and fulfil the objectives of the Economic Justice Online Forum, Associate Professor Eketone and Dr Kaloga are co-editing this

Figure 2 Six Thematic Areas from Economic Justice Forum 2020



section on economic justice for publication in the *Aotearoa New Zealand Social Work* journal.

Social work implications

Fulcher (1994) borrowed a familiar idiom to describe the Aotearoa New Zealand health sector reform: "When you're up to your neck in alligators, it's hard to remember the original aim was to drain the swamp." This phrase can equally be applied to the social work profession, where the immediacy and omnipresence of individuals' and families' needs can distract from the necessity to advance justice through structural and system changes. The alligator metaphor can be also applied to social workers' engagement with issues of economic justice. On a micro level, social workers constantly engage with issues of economic poverty as they work with people to secure employment, food, or housing. However, these issues are the consequences of larger systemic issues of economic inequality. With the front-line knowledge they generate through their work, it is thus imperative that social workers have an understanding of those structural drivers and advocate for just policies and actions when appropriate, as their practice-wisdom provides a valuable perspective in these conversations. In addition, the applied systemic approach unique to this profession suggests that social work can have a strong convening presence on the complex issues of economic injustice. As described in the themes from the Economic Justice Forum, there is a need for strong datasets to inform our thinking, but some data are not available. This is particularly critical in the unique context of Aotearoa New Zealand, as answers generated in other nations—while they can inform our thinking—will likely not be sufficient to create solutions to our distinct needs, or use methods that adhere to our values and Treaty obligations. One way to address the lack of data is through interdisciplinary collaboration, which provides the opportunity to learn from others' data and analysis using diverse perspectives. Social workers' pragmatism centres our focus on supporting positive change in peoples' lives, not on maintaining territory or authority, and this stance allows us to act as good-faith relationship builders across professional boundaries and topical research areas.

Conclusion

Ultimately, the struggle against economic injustice is not new. It has come to the fore at numerous times throughout the history of Aotearoa New Zealand and feeds into the New Zealand psyche that has traditionally upheld equality and egalitarianism as a dominant theme in the identity of the nation. However, due to the unprecedented spike in economic inequality, both income and wealth inequality have reached historically high levels and the current situation is untenable. Economic injustice causes hardship not only for people in poverty, but more broadly it is linked to dozens of health issues across the entire population (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2017), including increases in family violence and mental illness. Therefore, social workers cannot claim to promote social justice if we continue to ignore the impact economic injustice is having on the very families and communities we work to support.

The Economic Justice Forum was a first step in bringing social work into the larger research and policy conversations on these issues. During this event, participants developed ideas about how to best address economic injustice in Aotearoa New Zealand including setting ambitious goals, the need for good research and data, utilising networks, and the role of hope in Aotearoa's unique political and cultural environment. Interdisciplinary collaboration is necessary to address the economic injustices currently faced. Social work has an important role to play in the struggle for economic justice, but the profession is neither applying its full practice wisdom and convening power nor developing new knowledge in economics necessary for effectively advocating for people in poverty.

Bold solutions are necessary, and while social work can be a strong driving force behind the work, it cannot act alone. As a profession of action, we cannot only wrestle with the "alligators" alongside families in poverty without being equally attentive to the "swamp" of income and wealth inequality. Social work's perspective is critical in developing solutions that are systemic, interdisciplinary, pragmatic, responsive to the needs of marginalised people, and protective of the inherent dignity and human rights of each individual. The history of economic justice work has already been written. The present state of economic injustice is unsustainable. The Economic Justice Forum provided a platform for social work to engage with interdisciplinary knowledge in this area, and to create a set of opportunities for action. The future of social work's role in advocating for economic justice will be written through the actions of social work academics and practitioners who engage in this space.

Notes

1 In her paper, Goodyear adjusts the homeownership rate for age of population, and suggests 35% for Maori and 24.4% for Pacifica. These numbers are still below general homeownership figures, and are shown to be declining.

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE
QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

Shining a light on food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand: Modification of a food security scale for use with individuals who have extreme food security needs

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: Food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand is a growing concern but quantitative evidence focused on those in most need of support is scarce in the Aotearoa New Zealand context. This limits policy and practice decisions.

METHODS: We modified Parnell and Gray's (2014) Aotearoa New Zealand based food security scale to better capture the severity of food insecurity for individuals living in poverty and used a questionnaire to collect data from a sample of individuals seeking food assistance from foodbanks in Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland). We used confirmatory factor analysis to assess the psychometric validity of the modified scale. We also tested group differences in food insecurity by gender and ethnicity using analysis of variance and investigated correlations between age, household size and food insecurity.

FINDINGS: We found a six-item version of Parnell and Gray's (2014) scale to be psychometrically robust for use with the study population. The sample participants reported concerning and chronic levels of food insecurity. We did not find any group differences.

CONCLUSIONS: At the severe end of the food insecurity continuum, gender and ethnic subgroups appear to suffer at similar levels; however, this does not suggest that different approaches are not required to best meet the needs of different demographic subgroups. Further research is needed to ascertain how similar levels of food insecurity may produce differential effects on wellbeing outcomes for different groups. We recommend more widespread and regular use of the modified scale to assess the experience and impact of food insecurity for individuals living in poverty because it provides a more fine-grained understanding of the severity of food insecurity challenges experienced by individuals seeking food assistance. Fit for purpose measures enable accurate assessments that can better inform policymaking and practice decisions to reduce inequality and promote economic justice.

Keywords: Food insecurity; psychometric validation; gender differences; ethnic differences; poverty

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The sudden economic downturn generated by the Covid-19 pandemic led to a sharp increase in families accessing foodbank services across Aotearoa New Zealand (Salvation Army Social Policy & Parliamentary Unit, 2020). The subsequent response by the Labour government to provide $32 million for community food distribution and free school lunches in the 2020 budget provided welcome relief to over-stretched foodbanks across the country. Nevertheless, major policy change and intervention are needed to address the entrenched problem of food insecurity that was present and growing well before Covid-19 hit our shores (Salvation Army Social Policy & Parliamentary Unit, 2020). Policy decisions are more effective when informed by robust evidence (Gluckman, 2013) but the evidence on food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand is limited and restricts possibilities for responsive solutions.

The families and individuals accessing foodbank services in this country are, arguably, those needing the greatest attention from policymakers, but they have largely been lost in the evidence presented in the literature to date. It is common for researchers to experience barriers in effectively engaging with socially and economically disadvantaged groups for research participation (Bonevski et al., 2014). Barriers to engagement may contribute to information gaps, but the problem is exacerbated by the lack of suitable measurement tools. Parnell and Gray (2014) developed a robust measure of food insecurity for use in Aotearoa New Zealand but they designed it to capture prevalence within a national population, not severity at the high end of the food insecurity continuum, where policy and intervention are most urgently needed.

Based on a partnerships project between the Auckland City Mission and University of Auckland researchers, this article describes the psychometric validation of a modified version of Parnell and Gray's (2014) food security scale for use with individuals currently experiencing high levels of food insecurity. The modified measure provides a more fine-grained picture of the severity of food insecurity challenges experienced by individuals seeking food assistance. Using the modified scale, we also report on demographic differences in food insecurity severity for a sample drawn from those seeking assistance from the Auckland City Mission to deepen understanding of this growing problem.

Defining food insecurity

The term *food insecurity* was first used in relation to conditions of mass starvation and malnutrition experienced in low-income countries (Reid, 1997). Food insecurity, since then, has been used to describe a similar, albeit broader, experience in higher-income nations that reflects the complex reality of food insecurity that encompasses elements beyond mass starvation and severe malnutrition. Whilst absolute agreement is yet to be reached, commonalities exist. Food insecurity includes the experience of hunger, but it also reflects a context where there is a lack of adequate quality and quantity of food and/or the presence of uncertainty in being able to access what is needed. Food security, in contrast, requires that appropriate food is accessed in socially acceptable ways (Riches, 2018).

Food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand

In the late 1980s, Aotearoa New Zealand's economic and social policies reflected a fundamental shift away from the protective, regulated, state-dominated form of governance of the post-war era, as introduced by the First Labour Government (Easton, 1994), to policies that, in response to the emergence of a globalised world and economy, sought openness, competition and the market's self-regulation. Reducing the role of the state in the provision of social security and regulation of the labour market was key to the changes instituted.

This is evidenced in the significant cuts made to social security benefits (up to 20%) in April 1991 (O'Brien, 2014). It is in this context of reduced state support for those on low incomes that the charitable sector stepped in and foodbanks first appeared in Aotearoa New Zealand. Riches (2018) reports that the first foodbank was established at the Auckland City Mission in 1985, quickly developing throughout Aotearoa New Zealand after that and aligning with the international movement of foodbank development, often run by community organisations to accommodate for gaps in state-funded support to address basic human needs.

O'Brien (2014) situates the rise of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand against a "framework of growing inequality and poverty which has shaped so much economic and social policy in this country over the last 25 years" (p. 103) and resulted in the increasing economic injustice that we continue to see today. In Aotearoa New Zealand, rises in the cost of living relative to income have compromised the ability of many to access adequate, decent food, with food often regarded as a discretionary item when household budgets are tight (Graham et al., 2018). Housing costs relative to income have become increasingly unaffordable over the last three decades, particularly for renting households. The proportion of renters spending more than 30% of income on housing costs (the generally accepted threshold for *unaffordable* housing) doubled from roughly 20% of renters in 1988 to over 40% in 2019 (Statistics New Zealand [StatsNZ], 2020). The Covid-19 pandemic has only accelerated increases in rental costs, with an increase of 11% to average rents across the country following the lifting of a temporary Covid-related rent freeze in September 2020 (Foneska & Newton, 2021), at a time when the number of people on benefits was up 23% from the previous year (Ministry of Social Development [MSD], 2020a). Inflation has had uneven impacts, with increases in the cost of housing, petrol and food, and corresponding decreases in the cost of luxury items such as vacations and electronics. These trends have contributed to higher rates of inflation for beneficiary and low-income households compared to those on higher incomes (StatsNZ, 2021a; Morrison, 2017), putting those on low incomes under increasing financial pressure.

In recent times, food has remained the main reason for needing hardship assistance according to MSD data collected from 2014 to 2019. In the December 2019 quarter, 307,291 grants for food were provided, more than triple the number in December 2014 (92,167) (MSD, n.d.). This has worsened still in the context of Covid-19. In the June 2020 quarter, 566,647 Special Needs Grants for food were approved (MSD, 2020b).

Unfortunately, food insecurity data in Aotearoa New Zealand is limited. The most recent, nationally representative prevalence data on food insecurity in this country is derived from the 2008/9 National Adult Nutrition Survey (University of Otago and Ministry of Health, 2011). The results of that study revealed that, while 59.1% of households were fully food secure, 33.7% were moderately food secure, and 7.3% of households had low food security. Women were generally more likely to be food insecure and Pasifika peoples fared significantly worse (compared to both the general population and all other ethnicities), closely followed by Māori. Since that survey was administered, there has been no further nationally representative data collection on food insecurity for the whole population.

The Ministry of Health (2019) published data from the Aotearoa New Zealand Health Survey for Children for the 2012/13, 2014/15 and 2015/16 years, which offered a glimpse of food insecurity amongst children. Looking at the 2015/2016 year, there were just over 917,000 children in Aotearoa New Zealand. The report indicates that just under one in five children experienced severe to moderate food insecurity. Again, both Māori and Pasifika were over-represented.

Representing only 25.7% of the child population at the time, 28.6% of Māori children were identified as food-insecure and 38.8% of children categorised as food-insecure were Māori. Pasifika children made up 13.5% of the child population but 37.1% were categorised as food-insecure and 26.3% of food-insecure children were Pasifika (Ministry of Health, 2019). Although these data are nationally representative of children, they do not represent households without children, a significant proportion of our population. Further, the experience of the Auckland City Mission indicates that foodbank usage had increased since 2015/2016 but this had occurred well before the surge in demand for food assistance that accompanied the Covid-19 pandemic. In the four years from 2015/16 to 2018/19, food parcel figures increased from 13,714 to 23,020. More recent figures show the pandemic significantly accelerated this increase; in 2019/20, 35,130 food parcels were distributed and in 2020/21, this figure had grown to a staggering 48,679 (Child Poverty Action Group, n. d.).

Beyond prevalence data, there have been a number of geographically based investigations of food insecurity. Since the mid-1990s, Aotearoa New Zealand researchers have attempted to describe the phenomenon of foodbank usage, but this has only occurred for discrete regions, for example Palmerston North (Leslie, 1996), Wellington (Else, 1999), Dunedin (Crack, 2001) and Whangarei (Carne & Mancini, 2012. McPherson (2006) analysed the sociodemographic characteristics of foodbank clients accessing support through the Christchurch City Mission, the first of its kind in Aotearoa New Zealand. She found that Māori, sole parents and those receiving benefits were significantly over-represented amongst foodbank clients. McNeill (2011) and Graham (2017) both focused on Hamilton and sought to understand the experience of food insecurity in the lives of families and individuals and to illuminate what people do to survive. They, like Garden et al. (2014) in their Auckland City Mission's Family 100 Report looking into the reality of the lives of 100 families who accessed Mission food services, describe a reality where sourcing food is difficult, time consuming and stressful.

North American research on food insecurity mirrors some of the trends described earlier. Women, particularly those who are sole parents in large, low-income households are over-represented in low food-secure statistics according to large-scale surveys conducted in the Canada and the US, as are indigenous peoples and other marginalised ethnic groups (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2019; Tarasuk et al., 2012). The gendered impact of food insecurity has also been illuminated by qualitative studies. For instance, Buck-McFayden (2015) drew attention to the stories of affected women in Canada who discussed the severe emotional and physical impacts food insecurity had on their lives. The sense of responsibility they bear to care for their family leads to putting themselves last when it comes to nutrition, self-care and accessing necessary medications. Other studies lend support to the sacrifice theory that women sacrifice their own food needs for the wellbeing of their children (Franklin et al., 2012).

Given the finding that Māori and Pasifika groups are also disproportionately affected by food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand (McPherson, 2006; University of Otago and Ministry of Health, 2011), culturally specific issues related to food insecurity have been detailed in various research studies completed in Aotearoa New Zealand. For instance, Rush's (2009) and Ahio's (2011) research focusing on Pasifika people highlighted the symbolic role that food plays in their cultures and the related expectations to show hospitality and contribute to their communities through food provision, even if that meant less food for their households. Ahio's (2011) interviews with Tongan health workers and mothers pointed to the central role of mothers and the church in influencing food supply for their families as well as the challenges for food security

resulting from immigration to Aotearoa where concepts of financial budgeting and property ownership, and access to healthy food are fundamentally different to life in Tonga. To improve circumstances for Tongan families, some recommendations therefore emphasised the need to partner with Tongan churches to design solutions and for community education that was linked to immigration support (Ahio, 2011). Beavis et al.'s (2019) Kaupapa Māori and ethnographic study of four households similarly showed how cultural values associated with manaakitanga, expressed through sharing food with whānau, is linked to a family's mana but also produces stress for families, particularly women. The four Māori households who participated in Beavis et al.'s (2019) study developed strategies to cope with food insecurity that aligned with their cultural values. This included developing food literacy skills, gardening and sharing food; however, the authors highlighted that food security would only be improved with an increase in household income. These studies and others (e.g., Moeke-Pickering et al., 2015) all affirm the need for ethnic-specific understandings of the drivers and experiences of food insecurity to inform culturally responsive solutions.

Measuring food insecurity

It was the growing demand for food and the rise of foodbanks that inspired Reid (1997) and Parnell (2005) to develop food insecurity measures appropriate for Aotearoa New Zealand. Drawing on international research outlining previously validated measures and focus groups conducted in Aotearoa New Zealand, Reid was the first to develop indicators for use in the New Zealand Ministry of Health's 1997 National Nutrition Survey. Parnell (2005) sought to assess the utility of these questions to adequately measure the existence and degree of food insecurity. Using Rasch analysis, she produced a unidimensional food security scale with good construct validity. Parnell's scale includes eight items that enable differentiation of full, moderate, and low food-secure households in the general Aotearoa New Zealand population. This scale was used in the 2008/9 National Adult Nutrition Survey, the results of which are described earlier. Parnell and Gray (2014) explained the validation process of their food security scale and argued that each of the included eight items are well-grounded in the experiences of food-insecure New Zealanders, having been first informed by exploratory qualitative data, and each item capturing a distinct aspect of the food security construct.

The work of Reid, Parnell and colleagues has established an internally and externally valid food security prevalence measure for Aotearoa New Zealand, but the only nationally representative data available for adults are over 10 years old. There is no comparative data to see if findings are consistent or variable. In the absence of nationally representative data, foodbank usage is often used as a proxy measure of the prevalence of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand (McNeill, 2011). This is, however, only a signpost of the existence of the phenomenon and caution must be applied to these statistics given the lack of shared data amongst foodbank providers and the variable quality of the data (O'Brien, 2014). Further, all available data does little to reveal trends associated with those at the severe end of the continuum.

Study rationale and aims

In summary, since the 1980s, there has been a growing concern and attempts to make visible the issue of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand. This is set against a context of radical economic, public and social policy change. Much of the work to assess and understand food insecurity and its consequences in Aotearoa New Zealand has been done in isolated geographical pockets across now a 30-year time span. Despite the piece-meal picture, the difficult, and de-humanising experience of being food insecure in Aotearoa New Zealand has been

captured and reaffirmed across small-scale or qualitative studies (Garden et al., 2014; Graham, 2017; McNeill, 2011). Different responses have been explored, as described above with reference to Ahio (2011) and Beavis et al.'s (2019) research, and note how different factors influence the experience of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand. Nevertheless, it is unclear if the group differences we see in prevalence at the total population level are mirrored in the low-security end of the spectrum. In addition, we do not have a good grasp of the degree of severity experienced by those seeking food assistance. The sudden increase in people seeking food assistance during the Covid-19 pandemic points to different drivers of food insecurity which may influence different degrees of severity. The need to understand these nuances is particularly pertinent at the present time but this requires fit-for-purpose measures. Robust measures facilitate accurate practice assessments of food insecurity. Accurate assessments then enable analysis of the impact of food insecurity on other important health and wellbeing outcomes and support decisions about how support should be targeted.

Parnell and Gray's (2014) food insecurity scale is a robust tool designed to measure the prevalence of food insecurity in the national adult population, but it is underutilised and does not capture the degree of severity experienced within specific bands (i.e., low, medium and high) of the food insecurity continuum. Accordingly, the objectives of this study were two-fold: 1) to psychometrically validate a modified version of Parnell and Gray's (2014) food insecurity scale that can provide a more nuanced understanding of the severity of food insecurity experienced within an adult sample; and 2) to use the modified tool to describe trends in the severity of food insecurity experienced by individuals seeking food assistance from the Auckland City Mission's foodbank services, including differences by gender, ethnicity, age and household size. Deeper investigation of food insecurity trends is an important step towards developing more responsive policies and interventions for those with the highest food security needs.

Based on trends described in the existing North American and national literature, our hypotheses were:

1) H_1: Women, on average, will report more severe levels of food insecurity;
2) H_2: Māori individuals will report more severe levels of food insecurity, on average, than non-Māori;
3) H_3: Pasifika individuals will report more severe levels of food insecurity, on average, than non-Pasifika individuals;
4) H_4: Household size will be significantly and positively correlated with severity of food insecurity.
5) H_5: Age will not be significantly correlated with food insecurity severity.

Methods

This study is derived from a questionnaire-based research project developed as a collaboration between the Auckland City Mission and a team of University of Auckland researchers. A Statement of Collaboration articulated the interests, rights and responsibilities of each party, including joint ownership of data and strategies to manage any potential conflicts of interest (see Conflict of Interest declaration). The University of Auckland's Institutional Human Participants Ethics Committee granted approval for us to undertake the project.

Questionnaire design

The results we report for this study are based on analyses of a subset of closed questions from a larger questionnaire that included standardised items and a small number of open-ended questions. Because we intended for data collection to occur at a point where respondents were seeking food support, thus potentially in a vulnerable state, ensuring confidentiality and minimising participant burden were key concerns in

the design of the questionnaire. To ensure confidentiality, we did not request any individually identifying information. To reduce respondent burden, we included demographic questions on a separate page to the hard-copy questionnaire. This enabled Food Intake Assessors, who were employed by the Auckland City Mission and trained to administer the survey to complete the demographic section (with permission from participating clients) while conducting their food intake assessments. We gave consideration to the use of appropriate questions, easily understood English, a sensible and sequential order of questions and designed the questionnaire to take no longer than 15–20 minutes. We trialled several versions with staff and volunteers of the Auckland City Mission.

Demographic information

The demographic data for this study included the respondent's age, entered in numeric form in years; gender with response options of Female, Male and Gender Diverse; and ethnicity with response options of NZ European/Pākehā, NZ Māori, Tokelauan, Fijian, Tongan, Cooks Islands Māori, Samoan, Other Pacific Islands, Chinese, Indian, South-East Asian, Other Asian (e.g., Japanese, Korean), European, and Other (with a request to specify). Respondents could select all options that applied. In addition, respondents were asked to list characteristics (age, nature of relationship and gender) of all the members of their household. This information was used to derive the total number of individuals in the respondent's household.

The food security scale

The food (in)security scale employed in this study is a modified version of Parnell and Gray's (2014) scale. Their scale measures self-reported food security with eight items and four response options (always, often, sometimes, never). We retained all of Parnell and Gray's (2014) original items; however, to capture greater subtlety in the severity of the food insecurity present within a population already identified as highly food insecure, we asked respondents to consider how often, over the past 12 months, they experienced food insecurity challenges described by the eight items and to select one of eight response options for each, with response options ranging from "every day" at the highest end, to "every couple of weeks" and "once a month" at the mid-points, and "once a year" at the lowest end (higher values represented higher levels of food insecurity). Example items included "How often does food run out in your household due to lack of money?"; "How often is the variety of food you can eat limited by a lack of money", and "How often do you feel stressed because you cannot provide the food you want for social occasions?" (see Ministry of Health, 2019, for full item list). To ascertain the longevity of the challenges faced by respondents, the modified measure also asked how long they had been experiencing the challenges associated with not having enough money for food (response options: Under 1 year, 1–2 years, 2–5 years, 5–10 years, and over 10 years).

Sampling frame and participant recruitment

The sampling frame for this study included all individuals seeking food assistance over the specified data collection period of June–December 2018 from the Auckland City Mission and its four satellite foodbank sites; all organisational partners consented to be involved in the research. The five sites were all based in the wider Auckland region and included two marae-based services.

Potential participants came to the participating sites seeking support for food. An Intake Assessor, after assuring the individual of this food support, then asked them if they would be willing to participate in the survey. Posters and information sheets placed at each site raised awareness of the study for potential participants before they were invited to participate. We sought only adults over the age of 16 who Food Intake Assessors deemed competent to consent to participate on their

own at the point of the intake assessment. The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee deems people aged 16 years or older competent to consent to research participation without approval of a legal guardian.

Questionnaire administration

As noted earlier, the survey administrators were staff or volunteers who normally acted as the Intake Assessors at their respective foodbanks and all undertook training in questionnaire administration before data collection began. Ethical concerns were discussed and the trainees were directed to prioritise the needs of people presenting over administration of the questionnaires. Intake Assessors are well trained in social service provision and were able to respond to such needs as part of their normal role.

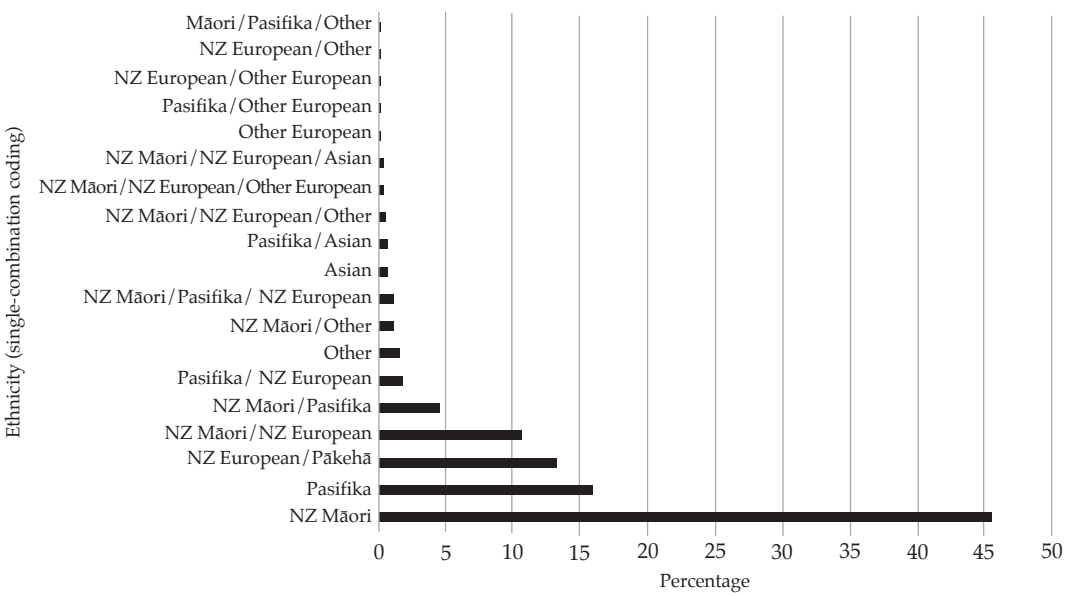
The Intake Assessors reviewed the required ethical documentation with each consenting participant before administering the questionnaire. After an individual agreed to participate, the Intake Assessor sought specific permission to record de-identified demographic data for the participant based on the information given during the assessment. The Intake Assessor attached this information to their questionnaire prior to placement in a sealed envelope. All respondents were given the option of self-administering the questionnaire or having it administered orally and face to face by the Intake Assessor. Intake Assessors administered the questionnaire in hard copy, placed it in a sealed envelope ensuring it contained no identifying information. A team from the Auckland City Mission collected these envelopes on a regular basis from the five different sites.

Analyses and results

Missing data analysis and imputation

The Auckland City Mission data collection team entered responses from 728 hard-copy questionnaires collected from the five participating sites into an IBM SPSS 25™ data file. Missing data analysis conducted in SPSS revealed that any additional values missing from the Food Insecurity scale could be considered missing at random as Little's MCAR test was not significant ($\chi 2 = 45.833$, DF = 130, $p > .05$). We therefore decided to impute the missing values using the Expectation Maximisation algorithm

Figure 1. Percentage of Respondents by Ethnicity (Single Combination Coding)



in SPSS and this enabled the full sample (of n = 728) to be included in subsequent analyses.

Sample characteristics and representativeness

With regard to ethnicity, we asked participants to identify with as many ethnic categories as they self-determined. These data were re-coded according to Statistics New Zealand's (2005) Level 1 classification and single/combination ethnicity data are presented in Figure 1. To increase the statistical power of the inferential analysis of ethnic group differences we further categorised ethnicity using the Level 1 categories with priority given to Māori, then Pasifika, Asian, and Other where more than one ethnicity was indicated, as recommended for priority coding by Statistics New Zealand (2005). These proportions are reported in Table 1 and illustrate that more than half of the respondents identified as Māori. Pasifika were the second most prevalent group of respondents.

Table 1. Percentage of Respondents by Gender, Ethnicity, Age and Household Size June–December 2018

	% of Respondents
Gender	
Male	30.20
Female	68.70
Gender Diverse	.50
Ethnicity (Priority coding)	
Māori	64.00
Pasifika	18.50
NZ Euro/Pākehā	13.50
Asian	.80
Other	1.50
Age Groups	
17-25 years	12.40
26-35 years	36.60
36-45 years	30.00
46-55 years	12.50
56+ years	8.40
Household Size	
1 person	30.9
2 people	13.2
3 people	15.7
4 people	12.8
5 people	12
6+ people	14.6
Total Respondents	728

Table 1 also presents sample proportions by gender, age groups, and household size. Respondents identifying with a female gender were more than double the number of people identifying with another gender. Young adults aged 24–35 were the largest age group represented in the sample followed by adults aged 36–45. Those aged 56 years or older were the smallest age group. Household numbers include both adults and children. Single-person households were the most prevalent, with 30.9% of people being in this category. However, two-, three-, four- and five-people households represented, cumulatively, the majority of the food-insecure population participating in this research.

The modified eight-item food insecurity scale theoretically represents a unidimensional construct; thus we expected all items to load on a single latent factor. This essentially means that the way individuals respond to the items in the scale was expected to co-vary in a manner that confirms they are all valid, measurable indicators that reflect the same abstract phenomenon of "food insecurity". However, two items had low factor loadings and contributed to poor model fit. These were "How often do you make use of special food grants or foodbanks when you

do not have enough money for food?" and "How often do you feel stressed because you cannot provide the food you want for social occasions?" The problematic nature of these items was understandable given the sampling frame exclusively focused on people who were at a point of crisis and accessing a foodbank at the time of research participation. We return to this point in the Discussion section.

We therefore removed these items and reassessed the loadings and fit. The remaining six items all had strong unique loadings (standardised regression weights > .70, see Figure 2) and together demonstrated good model fit for a unidimensional food insecurity construct (see Table 2). Although, the model $\chi 2$ is significant and the $\chi 2$/df value is higher than the recommended criterion for this fit index, this is expected due to this test's sensitivity to sample size and all of the other indices meet the model fit criteria outlined in the Table 2 note. Internal consistency for the six items was also high (Cronbach's α = .91).

Food insecurity severity trends

We calculated the means and standard deviations for the food insecurity severity and longevity measures. These are reported in Table 3 for different demographic groups. Overall, the average level of food insecurity severity experienced by the respondents was 5.65 (SD = 1.24) for the imputed sample which means the great majority of respondents indicated that they were insecure about access to food between once a month (four on the scale) and three or more times a week (seven on the scale). With regard to the length of time this sample of respondents had been dealing with such challenges, 16.89% of the respondents have not had enough money for food for five years or more. Another 19% had experienced food insecurity for two to five years. Note that 12.5% of responses were missing or invalid.

Because the number of gender diverse individuals in the sample was so small (n = 3), we created a binomial category of

Figure 2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Food Insecurity with Statistically Significant Standardised Regression Weights at p. < .001

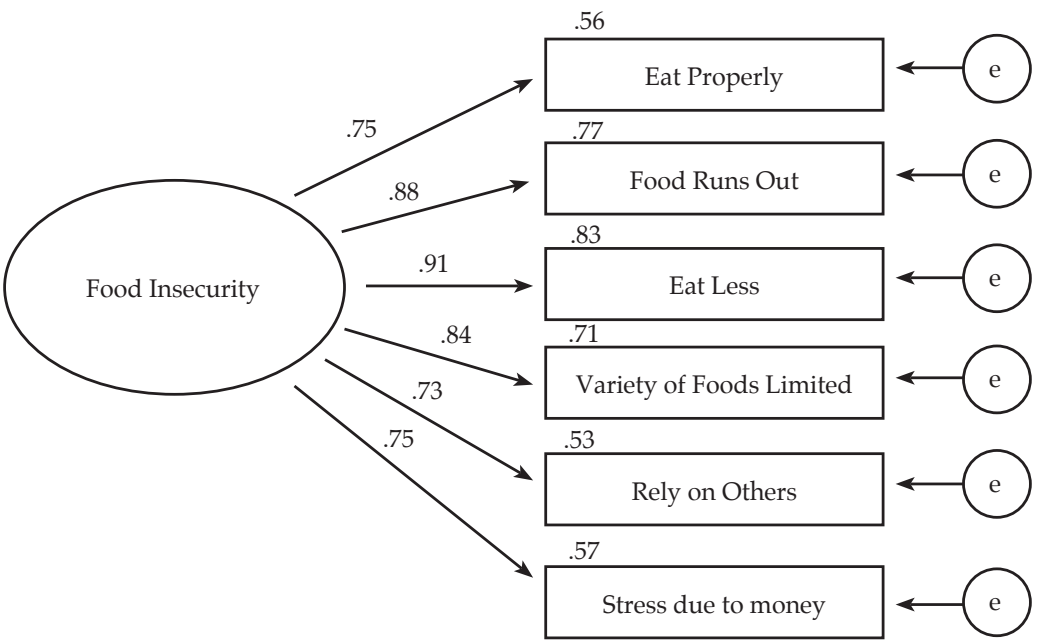


Table 2. Model Fit Indices for Confirmatory Factor Analysis with Fit Criteria

		Model Fit Indices						
Model	$\chi 2$	df	$\chi 2/df$	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	TLI	$\hat{g}$
6-item Scale	49.89*	9	5.54	.079	.02	.99	.98	.98

Note: *n = 728; $\chi 2$ = Chi-square; * = p. < .05; df = degrees of freedom; $\chi 2/df$ = Chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; SRMR = standardized root mean square residual; CFI = comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis index; $\hat{\gamma}$ = gamma hat.*

Criteria for acceptable fit: non-significant $\chi 2$; $\chi 2/df$ < 3.0; RMSEA < .08; SRMR < .05; CFI > .90; TLI > .90; $\hat{\gamma} \geq .90$ (Alansari, 2017; Fan & Sivo, 2007).

female and non-female and used a t-test to test gender differences in food insecurity, in accordance with the first hypothesis that females would experience higher levels than non-females. We tested ethnic group differences, as per hypotheses 2 and 3, which stipulated that Māori and Pasifika groups would experience more severe levels than non-Māori and non-Pasifika (respectively), using a one-way ANOVA and re-categorised the 5 Level 1 ethnic groups into three. Given the over-representation of Māori and Pasifika groups experiencing food insecurity in previously published, population-based research (University of Otago and Ministry of Health, 2011), we were particularly interested to see if these trends were mirrored in the highly food insecure segment of the population. In addition, the numbers in the Asian (n = 5) and Other (n = 11) groups were too small to enable meaningful group difference analyses thus we combined these groups with the NZ European/Pākehā group, relabelled as non-Māori/Pasifika. No statistically significant group differences were obtained; therefore, all hypotheses pertaining to group differences by gender and ethnicity were rejected. We calculated Pearson bivariate correlations to test associations between age, household size and food insecurity. Again, none of the bivariate correlations was statistically significant. Accordingly, hypothesis 4, which indicated that age would not be correlated with food insecurity, was supported and hypothesis 5, which suggested household size would be positively correlated with food insecurity, was rejected.

Table 3. Means and Standard Deviations for Food Insecurity Scores by Gender and Ethnicity

	n	Food Insecurity Severity Mean (SD)
Gender		
Male	220	5.64 (1.25)
Female	500	5.65 (1.25)
Gender Diverse	3	5.58 (.24)
Ethnicity		
Māori	466	5.66 (1.24)
Pasifika	135	5.46 (1.34)
NZ Euro/Pākehā	98	5.80 (1.11)
Asian	6	5.71 (.67)
Other	11	6.02 (1.24)
Overall	728	5.65 (1.24)

Discussion

We sought to psychometrically validate a modified version of Parnell and Gray's (2014) Food Insecurity Scale for use with those who have very high food insecurity because the original scale was developed to

discriminate between three levels (low, mid and high) food security levels within the general adult population in Aotearoa New Zealand. Parnell and Gray's (2014) measure did not enable differentiation of severity within a group of individuals already deemed to have high food insecurity by virtue of their need to seek food assistance from a foodbank. Greater understanding of their food insecurity experiences is needed to inform better policy and intervention initiatives to increase economic justice as these are the individuals with the greatest need for support. As an initial step towards this end, we used the psychometrically validated version of the modified scale to analyse differences in the severity of food insecurity experienced by gender, ethnicity, household size and associations with age. Through a community-university research partnership, we were able to conduct robust analysis on a large sample of people who have been obscured in previous quantitative research on food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand. We discuss our insights below.

Modification of Parnell and Gray's food security scale

First, the confirmatory factor analysis revealed unexpected findings regarding the factor structure of the modified food security scale as applied to our highly food-insecure sample. Although the results supported an anticipated unidimensional food-insecurity construct, two of the eight items did not contribute well to the common variance of the latent food-insecurity construct reflective of the other six items. Theoretically, we could appreciate why this occurred. One problematic item focused on the frequency with which the household required food grant or foodbank assistance. Interestingly, the Ministry of Health (2019) found that this item indicated the most severe level of food insecurity for respondents of the Household Food Insecurity among Children Survey. Because the sampling frame including only those individuals who were seeking food assistance from a foodbank, it is not surprising that the food grant/bank usage indicator operated differently in terms of differentiating levels of severity within the current sample in comparison to when the scale was applied to the general Aotearoa New Zealand population. Similarly, the second problematic item asked about stress associated with not being able to provide food for social occasions. Concerns associated with opportunities to host or contribute food for social occasions are likely rarer for the individuals surveyed for the current study compared to concerns associated with meeting their household's basic needs (i.e., stress associated with not having enough money to eat or enough food, or food of adequate nutritional quality or having to rely on others for food). This highlights the importance of re-assessing the construct validity of previously validated population-based measures when applying them to segments of the population whose experiences are likely to be substantially different from the norm as this improves measurement accuracy.

Group differences in the severity of food insecurity experienced

We also anticipated closer alignment between the severity of food insecurity experienced by different groups within our sample, based on gender, ethnicity, and household size, and food-insecurity prevalence rates seen in large-scale surveys of broader populations. In North America, women tend to report higher levels of food insecurity, as do people managing larger households (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2019; Tarasuk et al., 2012). Māori and Pasifika groups are over-represented in food insecurity statistics in Aotearoa New Zealand (McPherson, 2006; University of Otago and Ministry of Health, 2011) as are indigenous peoples and marginalised ethnicity groups in the USA and Canada (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2019; Tarasuk et al., 2012). When we consider that foodbank access, on its own, is an important threshold criterion of severe food insecurity (Ministry

of Health, 2019), the review of gender and ethnic group proportions in the respondent sample also suggests entrenched gender and ethnic disparities.

However, we also found that, once that threshold is met and severity is assessed within the low end of the food-security continuum, these group differences disappear. Importantly, this does not signal that standardised policy and practice responses would meet the needs of food-insecure individuals and households across these demographic groups. Rather, it only indicates that the severity of the food-insecurity experience is similar and needs to be addressed regardless of one's demographic characteristics. As discussed above, existing research illustrates how people of different demographic groups are differentially impacted by (and find different ways to cope with) food insecurity (Ahio 2011; Buck-McFayden 2015; Franklin et al., 2012; Moeke-Pickering et al., 2015; Rush 2009). For instance, Ahio (2011) recommended partnership with Tongan churches and education programmes focused on budgeting for new Tongan immigrants. Beavis et al. (2019) argued that economic development goals are needed to reduce Māori unemployment and to support upskilling for greater workforce participation and enterprise development, as well as Māori food sovereignty. Moeke-Pickering et al. (2015) also emphasised the need for a national Māori food sovereignty strategy. Research should continue to explore the effectiveness of gender, age and culturally responsive solutions.

The fact that, using a validated measure, we found no group differences in the severity of food insecurity experienced and that, on average, respondents in our sample experienced food insecurity between once a week and every couple of weeks is confronting. This means that multiple times a month, they eat less, run out of food, have a limited variety of food and cannot afford to eat properly, are stressed and have to rely on others for food. Not only that, but almost 40% of the respondents in our sample have experienced this reality for more than two years. We show in related research with the same sample that this food insecurity predicts increased psychological distress and reduced emotional wellbeing (Robinson, 2019). Further, when these participants were asked about the main reasons they are food insecure, the great majority (83%) indicated it was because their incomes were insufficient to meet their living costs (Neuwelt-Kearns et al., 2021).

In expanding the limited quantitative research focussed on those who are most food insecure in Aotearoa New Zealand, this research seeks to contribute to an evidence base that will inform policymaking and practice. That a substantial proportion of the population—disproportionately female, Māori and Pasifika—must dedicate significant energy to securing adequate food on a weekly to bi-weekly basis is deeply concerning, and a product of the design of current economic and social policy. Disproportionately high inflation experienced by those on low incomes (StatsNZ, 2021a) must be responded to by policy interventions to ensure incomes are adequate—including setting benefits and the minimum wage at liveable rates—as well as interventions to control the cost of living, such as addressing the rising cost of food (StatsNZ, 2021b) and housing (Foneska & Newton, 2021). It is our hope that the development of more systematic measurement of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand will shed light on the need for a more just economic system that ensures all have access to incomes adequate to experience consistent access to enough, appropriate food.

Study limitations

The primary focus of this article was to establish the psychometric validity of a modified food insecurity measure so that it could be used more fruitfully with individuals who experience severe challenges with food insecurity. A secondary

focus was to explore demographic group differences using the modified scale to better understand what the measure could reveal about the food-insecurity experiences with a sample from a single food support organisation. There are limitations that must be carefully considered with respect to the generalisability of the group difference findings.

First, the findings will be biased by the research selection criteria and self-selection bias. Only individuals who Food Intake Assessors deemed competent to provide independent consent to participate were invited to complete the survey. Those who were under the age of 16 and those who presented with mental health or substance use challenges that compromised their ability to provide independent consent are thus not represented in these findings. Intake Assessors were also advised to prioritise the wellbeing needs of participants over research participation thus, in some instances, practice judgement would have influenced decisions about who should be invited to participate. A small proportion (~15%) of individuals who seek assistance from the Auckland City Mission do not, or struggle to, speak English and, although the Intake Assessors were available to support participants in answering questions they did not understand on their own, it is likely there is selection bias associated with English language ability.

The findings are also limited in their representativeness because the study scope was restricted to foodbank services operated by the Auckland City Mission within Tāmaki Makaurau. Whilst the Auckland City Mission is one of the largest emergency food distributors in Tāmaki Makaurau, there are other food-assistance providers in the city. The five sites included in the research cover a broad geographical region and diversity of service delivery (e.g., two sites are marae-based) thus our sample captures a reasonably broad sample of individuals seeking emergency food assistance, but we cannot speak to its representativeness for the whole population of food-insecure individuals in Tāmaki Makaurau let alone all of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Finally, the group difference findings are based on crude demographic categorisations (e.g., gender, ethnicity) that do not speak to the reality of how intersectional identities may position people differently in terms of their food-insecurity challenges. Applying an intersectional lens to the analysis would likely reveal important nuances in experiences that are important to consider. Unfortunately, our sample size was limited as to enabling robust analysis at different intersectional subgroup levels.

Future research and policy implications

As argued above, there is a paucity of quantitative evidence on food insecurity and its impact in Aotearoa New Zealand. The aim of this project was to develop a validated measure of the intensity of food insecurity amongst the least food-secure population in Tāmaki Makaurau, in order to begin to address the lack of robust data about a population that is traditionally difficult for researchers to engage in research. As a result, this research offers a tool that can be used to measure the severity of food insecurity amongst the most vulnerable in Aotearoa New Zealand but the development of the tool is a mere first step. The food security measure used in this survey could be used to further such research by all foodbanks, in a co-ordinated effort to give further voice to this group of people. This would be most effective against a backdrop of bi-annual measurement of the adult and child population, respectively, and with large enough samples to enable analysis of experiences from an intersectional identity lens. Our hope is that these data should be sufficiently compelling to lead to the creation of national food security strategy. Such a strategy would give vision and direction, cohesion and co-ordination to the most

fundamental of questions: how can Aotearoa New Zealand ensure all its citizens have enough, appropriate food? More effective interventions require better evidence than is currently available. The current study creates a platform for further research.

Conclusion

The modified version of Parnell and Gray's (2014) food security scale validated in this research allowed us to shine a light on the challenging reality experienced by marginalised individuals who are not well captured in population-based assessments or investigations focused on children and young people. This research also illustrated why measurement beyond foodbank usage is important. Severity trends at the lowest end of the food-security continuum do not mirror population trends with respect to demographic group differences; nevertheless, women, Māori and Pasifika are, consistently, the groups with the most extreme food-security needs in Aotearoa New Zealand.

It is clear that not all citizens in this country have access to enough, nutritionally appropriate food to fuel their health and wellbeing. The surge in demand at foodbanks in the context of Covid-19 has made the need for determined intervention all the more urgent and pressed home the desperate precarity of those on the lowest incomes. For these individuals, the emergency provision of food alone will not address food insecurity. Disruption to the structures that have created, maintained, and exacerbated economic injustice is what is needed, with urgency. Further investment in research on food insecurity is also needed to inform ongoing policy and practice decisions.

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Declaration of interest: The first author is the current Missioner and Chief Executive Officer at the Auckland City Mission. This study formed one part of her Master of Social and Community Leadership thesis project, which was supervised and supported by the second and third co-authors. The fifth author is also an employee of the Auckland City Mission. A Statement of Collaboration between the University and the Auckland City Mission formalised the partnership and declared the integrity of the research as a shared priority.

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(Endnotes)

1 Dr Mohamed Alansari was affiliated with the Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Auckland at the time the research was conducted. He has since moved to the New Zealand Council for Educational Research.

ORIGINAL ARTICLE
QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Human rights and housing unaffordability: Applying policy practice engagement to a wicked problem

Michael Webster, University of Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand

ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: In working with marginalised communities, social workers are confronted with the consequences of housing unaffordability. The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted by Aotearoa New Zealand, identifies housing deprivation as a human right of relevance to social work. This study explores the application of the Policy Practice Engagement (PPE) framework (Gal & Weiss-Gal, 2015) as a tool by which social workers can contribute to policy-making processes to address the human right to affordable housing.

METHOD: The project used a descriptive/exploratory design. Data were collected by semi-structured interviews of eight subject matter experts in housing affordability: two public sector economists; one private sector economist/developer; two public sector urban planners; one public policy advisor; one non-governmental policy analyst; and one private sector housing strategist. Data were analysed thematically, followed by an inter-rater process.

FINDINGS: Participants identified human rights as relevant to the wicked problem (Grint, 2005) of housing affordability. Participants also identified political, economic and environmental factors impacting affordable housing. They considered that these factors are found in local body planning regulations, leading to land supply constraints. Some participants considered that housing unaffordability is the price paid to live in liveable cities.

CONCLUSIONS: The PPE framework offers a conceptual structure through which social workers can address housing unaffordability. By understanding the factors causing unaffordability, social workers are enabled to examine why and how they should contribute to policy processes.

Keywords: Housing unaffordability; policy practice engagement; Universal Declaration of Human Rights

In October 2018, the Minister of Education in Aotearoa New Zealand's government, the Hon Chris Hipkins delivered a speech to the Post Primary Teachers Association. In it he drew the attention of his audience to what he had earlier described in Parliament as the "housing crisis":

> Poverty. That's why too many of our kids turn up to school hungry. Too tired and too undernourished to learn. That's why too many of our kids living in damp, squalid rentals turn up at our hospitals - with preventable illnesses. About 42,000 children go to hospital every year with infectious and respiratory diseases that are largely the result of cold, damp, mouldy homes? We can do better than having our children

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> attend school from the back of a car seat. Or at best, from the bedroom of a motel. That's why we have all committed to building 100,000 affordable homes for New Zealand families and to building 6,400 new public houses for families in need. (Hipkins, 2018)

Although political in nature, Hipkins' speech appropriately introduces the subject matter of this article: the human right to affordable housing enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights [UDHR] (United Nations General Assembly [UNGA], 1949). Starting with a definition of housing affordability and describing homelessness, this introduction will set out relevant themes for social workers in Aotearoa New Zealand needed to address the housing crisis: housing affordability as a "wicked problem" (Grint, 2005) and the Policy Practice Engagement [PPE] framework as a tool enabling social workers to change societal structures (Gal & Weiss-Gal, 2015). This article's intended audience are social workers employed in the housing provision sector.

The context of the author's current research provides the rationale for applying "diverse fields and types of practice" (Gal & Weiss-Gall, 2015, p. 1084) proposed by PPE. In late 2020, an Infrastructure Initiative group was set up in the University of Auckland comprising two civil and environmental engineers; a mechanical engineer; a health researcher who is also a medical doctor; an international management researcher focusing on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals [SDGs]; an urban infrastructure planner; a constitutional lawyer; a computer scientist in the domains of architecture, engineering, and construction; and a research impact specialist. The author's contribution focuses on people's wellbeing, and housing affordability in urban environments. The purpose of the group is to apply transdisciplinary research to create a better infrastructure in Aotearoa New Zealand. In pursuing that purpose, workshops with extra-university infrastructure experts were held, a research proposal is being constructed, and interfaculty lecturing has taken place. Transdisciplinary research is defined as:

> Research efforts conducted by investigators from different disciplines working jointly to create new conceptual, theoretical, methodological, and translational innovations that integrate and move beyond discipline-specific approaches to address a common problem. (Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health, 2021)

While PPE cannot be described as transdisciplinary, synergies exist between the multiple routes for policy engagement by social workers described by Gal and Weiss-Gal (2015) and the innovation of different disciplines working jointly to address a common problem (Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health, 2021).

Housing affordability

To define housing affordability, economists determine median household income, "the point where half the population is above and half below the stated amount" (Statistics New Zealand /Tatauranga Aotearoa, 2021, p. 6). For housing to be affordable, economists use a 3:1 ratio of the median house price to median household income; i.e., a dwelling should not cost more than three times the median household income (Eaqub & Eaqub, 2015; Parker, 2015). By 2015, the median price of a home in New Zealand's most unaffordable city, Auckland, was $765,000, equating to 9.6 times the median income of $79,356 (Parker, 2015, pp. 40, 41).

Homelessness

Homelessness represents the extreme end consequence of the housing affordability crisis. Drawing on census figures from 2001, 2006 and 2018, Amore (2019) reports

on the incidence of homelessness as a stark reminder of the human cost of this crisis. People subjected to a "lack of access to minimally adequate housing" [LAMAH] (Amore, 2019, p. 224) amounted to 28,917 in 2001 (77.4 per 10,000 people) and 33,946 in 2006 (84.3 per 10,000). The equivalent 2018 census figure is absolutely and proportionately higher: 41,644 (88.6 per 10,000). Woolley (2014) suggests that "we also know that many people who are homeless are never counted, living in caravan parks, in overcrowded houses [and that] homelessness in regions such as Auckland and Christchurch is intensifying" (2014, p. 1). Social workers are particularly concerned with homelessness (Johnson et al., 2018, p. 35).

Article 25 of the UDHR—endorsed by Aotearoa New Zealand—states that "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself [sic] and of his [sic] family, including housing and medical care" (UNGA, 1949). Because human rights underpin social work globally and locally (International Federation of Social Workers [IFSW], 2018; Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers [ANZASW], 2019), article 25 of the UDHR is of specific relevance to social work practice in New Zealand. The Human Rights Commission (Human Rights Commission Te Kāhu Tika Tangata [HRCTKTT] (2017) describes the human right to adequate housing in New Zealand as a "binding legal obligation of the State" (HRCTKTT, 2017, p. 1).

In considering political and economic factors contributing to housing unaffordability, the author proposes that unaffordability is a "wicked problem" defined by Grint (2005) as "complex and often intractable...there is no 'right' or 'wrong' answer. There are better or worse alternatives" (Grint, 2005, p. 1473). When considering factors relevant to housing unaffordability, the true nature of a wicked problem emerges. From where does unaffordability originate? Political policy platforms? Monetary policy on interest rates? Tax as an instrument of government's fiscal policy and its spending actions? Perhaps town planning? Rittel and Webber (1973) capture this issue: "The formulation of a wicked problem *is* the problem!" (1973, p. 161, emphasis in original).

Social work is mandated to "*engage in action* to *change the structures of society that create and perpetuate injustice*" (ANZASW, 2019, p. 7, emphasis added). This article will explore the potential for change in the context of the housing unaffordability crisis through the Policy Practice Engagement framework [PPE] (Gal & Weiss-Gal, 2015). The PPE offers a conceptual framework to examine *why* and *how* social workers should engage in policy practice. This article proposes that, by applying the PPE framework, social workers in Aotearoa New Zealand will be enabled to engage with policy advisors and decision-makers responsible for the complex problem of unaffordability. The PPE framework will be discussed in the literature review informing this research.

Following this introduction, the article will set out a literature review describing the human rights challenge in housing unaffordability; draw on relevant literature from urban economics and environmental sustainability; discuss urban planning policies; and most significantly, explore the PPE proposed by Gal and Weiss-Gal (2015). Second, the ethics consent required for the research; methodology used; the principles informing the research process; and the rationale for selecting participants from diverse professional backgrounds (Table 1) will be described. Third, results from data analysis will be given, followed, fourth, by a discussion of the literature including the PPE and the findings. Last, a conclusion will address the implications for social work practice by applying the PPE.

The aims of this article are informed by the view that housing unaffordability should be treated as a human rights challenge of prime concern to social workers in Aotearoa

New Zealand. Those aims are, first, to articulate a practical pathway for social workers to address that challenge consistent with the mandate in our *Code of Ethics* to "engage in action to change the structures of society that create and perpetuate injustice" (ANZASW, 2019, p. 7). The second, interrelated, aim is to propose the PPE framework (Gal & Weiss-Gal, 2015) as the tool by which that pathway may be effectively applied.

Literature review

In order to understand and address the issues relating to housing unaffordability, the knowledge contained in disciplines like urban economics, city planning, and environmental engineering is essential. Kemp et al. (2018) note that, to be effective and transformative "in the context of rising economic inequality" social work "must form new partnerships [for example] with urban planning and environmental engineering" (2018, pp. 4, 6). Unaffordable housing represents a specific dimension of that "rising economic inequality." For that reason, this literature review will draw from urban economics, environmental sustainability, urban planning policies, human rights and social justice, and the PPE (Gal & Weiss-Gal, 2015). Exploring these disciplines is intended to provide housing sector social workers with at least an introductory knowledge to understand the wicked problem of unaffordability.

This review also draws on the "person-in-environment" concept as a long-accepted approach in the social work profession (Gall & Weiss-Gall, 2015; Simmons, 2012). In their survey of 123 jurisdictions, Tay and Diener (2011) assessed the place of essential accommodation and other basic human needs in these terms:

> Basic needs for food and shelter were satisfied when in the past 12 months a respondent (a) had enough money for food, (b) had enough money for shelter, and (c) did not go hungry. (Tay & Diener, 2011, p. 356)

This definition falls under the human rights housing provision (Article 25) of the UDHR cited earlier and is therefore a critical expectation for informed social work practice. To be effective in the housing policy context, social workers must also understand the essentials of city planning and economics to enable the development of the partnerships proposed by Kemp et al. (2018).

Human rights and housing unaffordability in Aotearoa New Zealand

The statistical base which demonstrates the existence of an unaffordability crisis and, in particular, homelessness, is now presented in the light of societal injustice. Increasing homelessness levels noted by Amore (2019) are the evidence of the breach of human rights if in fact Aotearoa New Zealand is committed to Article 25 of the UDHR. The Human Rights Commission (Human Rights Commission Te Kāhu Tika Tangata [HRCTKTT] (2017) has set out its commitment to "the human right to adequate housing in New Zealand" by describing it as a "binding legal obligation of the State" (HRCTKTT, 2017, p. 1). Affordability means that "housing costs should be at such a level so as not to compromise the attainment of other basic needs [such as] buying food" (HRCTKTT, 2017, p. 2).

The announcement, on August 2, 2021, of a "national enquiry into the housing crisis" by the Human Rights Commission (Hunt, 2021) suggests that the Commission is re-asserting its concern about the issue. The Commissioner Paul Hunt sets out the intention of the HRCTKTT to "clarify what the right to a decent home means…an affordable, healthy, accessible home" (Hunt, 2021). Mr Hunt asserts that "serial governments bear a heavy responsibility for this massive human rights failure which is blighting lives and communities…this housing crisis is also a human rights crisis" (Hunt, 2021).

The author suggests that social workers are more likely to take note of this initiative by the HRCTKTT than the citation of statistical evidence of the 3:1 ratio of median house prices vis-à-vis median household incomes. Such statistics fail to adequately communicate the impact on marginalised communities of homelessness as the sharp end of unaffordability. Practitioners working in housing provision are familiar with that "sharp end."

Housing and environmental regulations

Some research participants identified environmental planning regulations as a significant driver of unaffordability. These regulations have been influenced in Aotearoa New Zealand by the sustainable development goals (SDGs) developed by the United Nations. Originating in the "Rio Declaration" of 1992, by 2015 the SDGs had become known as Agenda 2030 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade [MFAT], n.d.; UNGA, 2015). The SDGs apply environmental sustainability to urban planning policies—explicitly, the impact of cities on global climate (UNGA, 2015, pp. 9, 35). The SDGs in themselves are applicable in Aotearoa only if enacted in law, but the Ministry for the Environment (MfE) notes that environmental sustainability policies have contributed to the economic dimension of housing affordability (MfE, 1993, 2016, 2018). The Rio Declaration informed the Resource Management Act which, although currently under review, underpins government thinking on urban planning (MfE, 1993, p. 5). The environment was no longer to be treated as available for cost-free exploitation.

The commitment to sustainability is politically bipartisan but has arguably attracted a higher profile since the formation of the Ardern (Labour-led) government in 2017, re-elected with an absolute majority in 2020. The priority accorded to the issue is illustrated by a speech delivered in March 2018 by the environment minister, the Hon David Parker, in which he unequivocally described climate change as the world's greatest environmental challenge (Parker, 2018). Consistent with the call by Agenda 2030 (UNGA, 2015) to minimise the influence of cities on global climate, environmentally friendly policies have been introduced into urban planning—but there has been a consequence. Integrating environmental concerns into urban planning and infrastructure is estimated to have cost $530,000 for an average home (Treasury, 2017, p. 22). This is arguably another manifestation of Grint's (2005) "wicked problem." Weaver's (1984) observation that "ideas have consequences"—in this instance, the commitment of urban planning to environmental sustainability—is illustrated by that additional cost. To address that cost by increasing housing supply, Treasury advocated the removal of rural–urban boundaries (Treasury, 2017, p. 22), a call taken up by the government (Twyford, 2019).

In recent years, social work literature overseas and in Aotearoa has addressed environmental sustainability. Lena Dominelli's (2012) *Green Social Work* made an eloquent plea for the profession to become involved in "caring for the environment" (2012, p. 2); but Dominelli also noted that social work's voice has been virtually absent in taking collective action over damp, mouldy housing. Similarly, Carole Adamson's (2014) article calls for the extension of social work's commitment to the natural world.

Applying a PPE framework

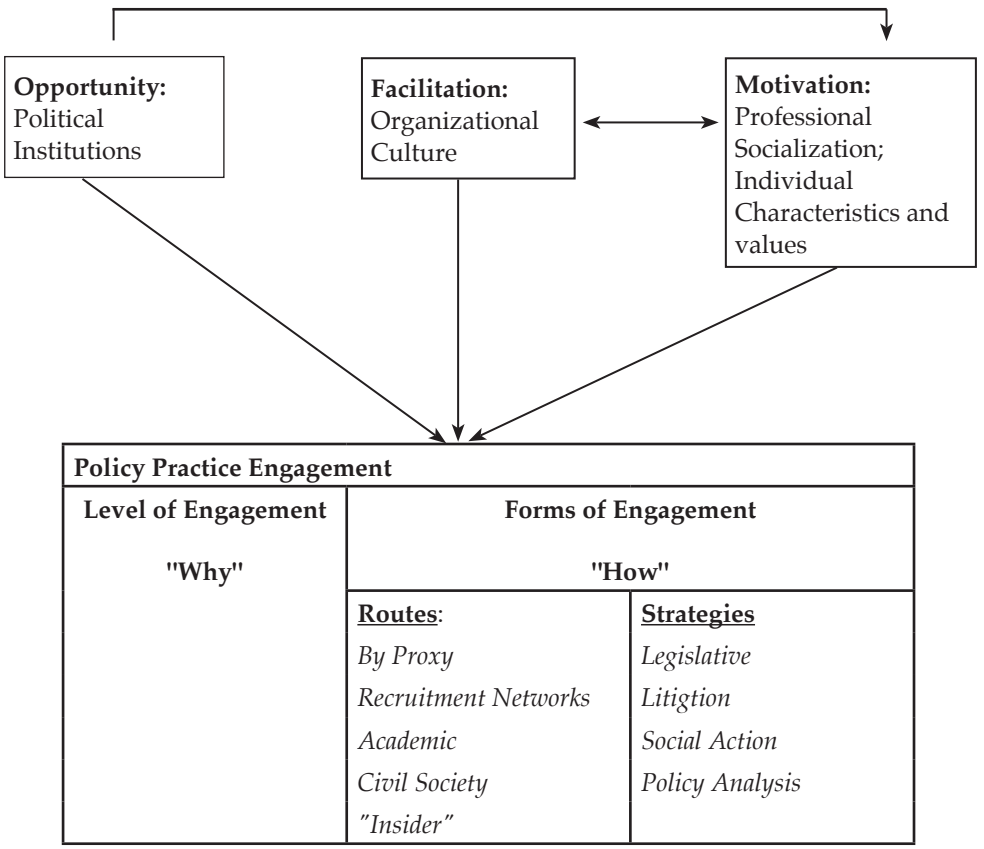
The PPE framework, created by Gal and Weiss-Gal (2015), poses two questions of direct pertinence to this article:

> Why do some social workers seek to influence social policy while others do not? How do social workers that engage in policy practice seek to impact policy formulation and what influences their chosen route to affect policy? (2015, p. 1083)

Gal and Weiss-Gal answer their first question—*why* social workers seek to influence policy— by proposing certain external and internal motivators of social workers to engage in that field. These motivators are determined by their professional socialisation, individual characteristics, and values (Figure 1). Socialisation is developed externally: first, by professional discourse, the expectation that practitioners will engage in policy practice; second, through expected activities as set out in their codes of ethics; and third, by attitudes engendered in degree courses. Internal motivators are derived from the individual values and personal interests of a practitioner (Gal & Weiss-Gal, 2015, pp. 1095, 1096). They cited Gray et al. (2002) who noted that social workers in Aotearoa are indeed active in the policy arena.

Responding to the second question—*how* social workers engage in policy—falls under the opportunity afforded by political institutions of the jurisdiction and the influence of organisational culture on facilitating action. Facilitation addresses the extent to which social work organisational culture influences policy practice activities. Organisational culture (Schein & Schein, 2016) simultaneously influences and is influenced by internal and external motivators, as already discussed (Gal & Weiss-Gal, 2015, p. 1097). It will be discussed under the "Facilitation" subheading. The three "legs" in Figure 1, opportunity; facilitation; and motivation directly influence why and how social workers apply PPE. Social workers who understand and apply the framework are enabled to engage

Figure 1 Policy Practice Engagement (PPE) Conceptual Framework



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with policy advisors and decision-makers responsible for the complex problem of unaffordability. These legs are now described.

Opportunity

In their study, Gal and Weiss-Gal (2015) identified five pathways by which PPE can be advanced. First, "policy practice by proxy" (2015, p. 1085) represents actions taken *on behalf of* social workers by such bodies as the ANZASW. The second pathway extends the proxy route by the *direct participation* of members in advocacy and other actions such as submissions "initiated and organised by [their] social work organisations" (2015, p. 1085)—i.e., ANZASW.

A third, distinctive, pathway is expressed through social work academics. Policy practice by academia can take advantage of the tertiary sector's relative autonomy augmented by access to relevant data, critical approaches and the policy implications of their research (Gal & Weiss-Gal, 2015, pp. 1085, 1086). Such autonomy is exercised through the professional status of academics and their ability to access policy makers and the media.

Fourth, social workers can utilise the "civil society route" (Gal & Weiss-Gal, 2015, p. 1086) as members or employees of "advocacy organisations, social movements and social welfare providers" (2015, p. 1086). In Aotearoa New Zealand, the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) is an example of an advocacy organisation (see, e.g., Asher & St. John, 2016). Dr Mike O'Brien (ONZM) a former associate professor at the School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work at the University of Auckland is well-known for his PPE activities through CPAG.

Finally, Gal and Weiss-Gal (2015, p. 1086) describe the "insider route" as the vehicle by which social workers employed in the public sector can exercise direct policy practice through policy strategies. Alan Johnson, although not a registered social worker, is such an example. Alan is described as a "community activist" by CPAG where he is a researcher. He has also occupied governance roles in the Auckland Housing Association, the Auckland Community Housing Trust and as chair of Community Housing Aotearoa. Employed by the Ministry for the Environment, Alan has exercised significant policy influence through his co-authorship of *A Stocktake of New Zealand's Housing*, commissioned and published by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment in 2018.

Facilitation

Gal and Weiss-Gal's second leg for potential PPE initiatives, facilitation, occurs primarily in the context of workplaces: organisations where most social workers are employed (2015, p. 1087). In evaluating the potential for PPE organisationally based actions, Gal and Weiss-Gal (2015, p. 1089) acutely observe that the "values, norms and behaviours" which constitute organisational culture become critical factors for several reasons. In their work on organisational culture, Schein and Schein (2016) suggest that, although professional actions are intended to express those values and norms, that may not actually be the case. Social workers may espouse the values in their *Code of Ethics* (ANZASW, 2019) but, in fact, those values may not be reflected in their behaviour (Argyris & Schön, 1996; Schein & Schein, 2016, p. 20). For example, managerialist thinking expressed as the drive towards greater efficiencies, effectiveness and economies may be so dominant in an agency that the ethical mandate to challenge structures which marginalise communities is rendered inoperative. At the other end of the spectrum, Monte Cecilia is a not-for-profit housing agency and a major employer of social workers. In a television interview with John Campbell in November 2020, the agency's chief executive Bernie Smith engaged in unmistakable policy advocacy. The interview title told the story: "More than a crisis"—Emergency housing group calls

for urgent Government action as demand soars." Smith stated: "A year ago we would have five or ten families waiting for a housing solution; today we have 400. We are one of 16 agencies in Auckland. We need a government that recognises that this is more than a crisis" (One News, 2020).

Motivation

In their third leg, Gal and Weiss-Gal (2015) focus on professional socialisation processes and Public Service Motivation (PSM) research (2015, p. 1089). They propose that these factors combine to enable social workers with the commitment and self-efficacy to take part in PPE actions. Why are social workers motivated to engage in policy practice? Gal and Weiss-Gal suggest that a commitment to altruism which seeks to serve humankind activated, for example, by social justice (2015, p. 1089) is one such reason. One instance is found in the work of the University of Auckland social work academic Professor Jay Marlowe in working with refugees (Marlowe, 2018). The idea that "belonging," the first word in the title of his book, includes the mundane need for housing captures the altruistic motivation in Marlowe's work (Marlowe, 2018, p. 2). Altruism, attraction to policy making, and identification with social justice come together to activate such PPE activities by social workers. Practitioners may then select one or more of the pathways described under Gal and Weiss-Gal's "opportunities" leg to initiate PPE action.

Ethics and methodology

The design of the research acted as a bridge between the literature, specifically Gal and Weiss-Gal's PPE framework, and the process by which participants supplied data. Analysis of those data provided substantive knowledge of housing unaffordability by which social workers can use the PPE framework.

Ethics

The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (UAHPEC) approved the project in March 2018 as a low-risk study. Participants, subject matter experts in their fields, are professional public figures whose contact details were readily available. The ethics committee approved direct approaches by the researchers through an informed consent procedure inviting participation by email in which an information sheet and consent form were included.

Methodology

The project used a descriptive/exploratory design methodology. Descriptive research is required to understand the phenomenon of housing unaffordability and is the starting point for exploratory research which enables the investigation of a topic previously unexamined by social workers. Exploratory studies result in a range of causes and alternative options to address a specific problem (Sandhusen, 2008).

Constructivism

A constructivist paradigm was selected as an underpinning epistemology for the research. The rationale is drawn from Guba and Lincoln's (2005) "meaning-making activity" in which acquired knowledge is derived from the consensus of collective reconstructions (2005, pp. 195, 197). As a qualitative researcher, the author applied the ethical value of empathy when interpreting data. This epistemology led into Crotty's theoretical symbolic interactionist thinking: what makes sense to the researcher. The filter applied is the idea that the researcher "put[s] oneself in the place of the other" (Crotty, 1998, p. 75).

Symbolic interactionist thinking is reflected in the value of aroha expressed in the Aotearoa New Zealand *Code of Ethics* as love, concern, compassion, empathy (ANZASW, 2019, pp. 12, 15). The code makes a critical statement in this regard: social workers use *professional judgement without being judgemental* (ANZASW, 2019, p. 12, emphasis added). This was

the position consciously adopted when interviewing participants and analysing data.

Design

The research question to which the eight participants responded reads:

> "What critical questions inform the development of a diagnostic tool to identify the drivers of housing unaffordability?"

This question represents a wider investigation than is reported in this article: further findings will be presented in a future article. The critical issue for the current article is to provide relevant transdisciplinary information to social workers wishing to engage in PPE over the housing crisis. In designing a framework for research into housing unaffordability, it became self-evident that social workers do not generally possess the knowledge or skills to generate or analyse data relating to urban economics and city planning. The rationale for selecting the disciplines (Table 1) was two-fold. First, the subject matter expertise needed to supply that relevant knowledge to a social work audience required the input of those professional disciplines. Second, those disciplines provided the substance called for in the project's conceptualisation as an alliance between social work and other professionals.

Analysis

Qualitative data were thematically analysed using NVivo12 (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). Initial analysis by the author was followed by an inter-rater process (Armstrong et al., 1997) carried out by a research assistant. A total of 547 thematic references divided into 15 nodes were identified following the inter-rater exercise. Using NVivo terminology, those 15 nodes were collapsed into two parent nodes, described in this article as *categories*. Each category had sub-categories which are listed:

Category 1. The human factor: Housing affordability as a human right
- Sub-category 1: Severe deprivation
- Sub-category 2: Inadequate income to meet housing costs

Category 2. Political, economic and environmental factors and housing affordability
- Sub-category 1: Planning regulations affecting the human right to meet housing needs
- Sub-category 2: Soft political power
- Sub-category 3: Geographic-specific factors

Table 1. Participants

Participant designation	Professional identity	Location and status
Participant A	Private sector economist/developer	Tāmaki Makaurau, self-employed
Participant B	Non-governmental social policy analyst	Tāmaki Makaurau, senior analyst in well-known NGO
Participant C	Public policy advisor	Pōneke (Wellington) senior public servant
Participant D	Public sector economist	Pōneke (Wellington) senior public servant
Participant E	Public sector economist	Tāmaki Makaurau senior local government officer
Participant F	Public sector urban planner and designer	Tāmaki Makaurau senior academic
Participant G	Private sector housing strategist	Tāmaki Makaurau senior manager in NGO
Participant H	Public sector city planner	Tāmaki Makaurau senior local government officer

Limitations

As this is qualitative research, generalisations cannot be made. Although the participants came from public, private and not-for-profit sectors, a small sample of eight informants is, in itself, a limiting factor. The project and its findings are best seen as raising issues of interest to social workers by providing a perspective which lends itself to PPE.

Results

Two categories, (1) housing affordability as a human right and (2) political, economic and environmental factors informing housing affordability, have been presented. Together with social justice, human rights are seen as the primary value underpinning social work and compelled the research reported in this article. Investigating the second set of political, economic and environmental factors necessitated engagement with town planners, urban economists and housing analysts spanning the public and private sectors and non-governmental organisations. Interdisciplinary relationships to advance common concerns are not uncommon in social work. Defining housing unaffordability through a social justice and human rights lens provides an empirical base to discuss research findings.

Overview of findings

Table 2 sets out an overview of the findings divided into the two categories identified in the previous section. As qualitative research, impactful or explanatory quotes have been included as illustrating the perspectives of selected participants. Their occupations have been listed after each verbatim quote with the purpose of capturing the views of diverse professional groups, enhancing the focus in this article on PPE. In respect of affordable housing, a measure of common ground exists between social work and the private sector as well as NGO and public sector occupational groups.

Definitions of categories 1 and 2 are appended at the end of this article as a glossary.

Table 2. Overview of Findings: Categories/ Impactful Quotes/Number of Participants Who Referred to the Category

Category and quote	# of participants
1. **The human factor: housing affordability as a human right** **Quotes:** • [Unaffordability is] *the biggest issue facing New Zealand in recent history. How could it not be?* You have half the population paying two to three times what they should be for housing. *They can't afford to feed themselves; they live in garages.* That is unnecessary. (Private sector economist/developer) • I think there is something *inherently wrong* in places like Auckland if our key workers like our teachers, our nurses, [and] our police can't afford to buy a house, something *really wrong.* When you have got key people that provide services that we all need and they can't get on the housing ladder there is something *fundamentally wrong* (Private sector housing strategist)	**6**
2. **Political, economic and environmental factors** **Quotes:** • Well-paid planners telling people how they can't live, but are happy with people living in cars and under bridges... *I believe planning and building control rules actually impinge on human rights* (Senior NGO analyst) • The *planning profession and local government control supply [of] zoned land and the rules that enable you to develop that land.* If supply is constrained prices go up—it is that simple. (Private sector economist/developer) • When land is constrained it balloons in price. In Auckland the underlying cost of land is about $58,000 per section but the price of land is $580,000 a section. *So the price is 10 times bigger than the cost.* (Public sector economist)	8

Category 1: Housing affordability as a human right

The references to human rights and social justice from a group of six non-social-work professionals demonstrate that those concerns are not confined to social work. In addition, the awareness of those concerns suggests that applying the routes and strategies listed in the "how" of PPE offers productive potential.

In one instance, the awareness of a social justice dimension to housing was far more acute. Participant A, a private sector economist/developer, identified unaffordability as:

> … the biggest issue facing New Zealand in recent history. How could it not be? You have half the population paying two to three times what they should be for housing. They can't afford to feed themselves; they live in garages. That is unnecessary.

The author suggests that social workers would find common ground with the views of this private sector economist/developer. It is noteworthy that a participant who derives much of his income from property development is convinced that unaffordability is not only the largest single issue facing the country, but is also of the view that marginalised populations reduced to living in garages is unnecessary.

Participant B—a non-governmental policy analyst, although not a qualified social worker—saw human rights as underpinning the right to housing of human communities. In his view, this right includes building a dwelling, but local body regulations have in effect removed that right. He also believes that under Te Tiriti, Māori possess the right to construct a dwelling on traditionally owned land. Participant B's perspective clearly prioritises human rights and a society that integrates Te Tiriti into policy formulation and implementation. He argues that regulations which govern planning, land supply and zoning have marginalised those human rights, a tension that will be explored later in this article. Participant B also articulated a view that brought him into alignment with an interpretation held by the social work profession:

Interviewer: Do you think in fact we do face a housing unaffordability problem?

Response: Yes we do but I think it is more to do with the distribution of income ... the housing affordability problem is a consequence of the misdistribution of income in our society. It is a symptom of a very unequal society.

Such views are evidence of a systemic or ecological perspective in which diverse components of society—in this case, home ownership and income distribution—become interdependent relationships.

Other participants concurred with the view that city planning influences housing affordability but employed different analytical lenses in coming to that opinion. Participant B, the non-governmental social policy analyst, bluntly criticised "[w]ell-paid planners telling people how they can't live, but are happy with people living in cars and under bridges... I believe planning and building control rules actually impinge on human rights." A sense of outrage is evident in those comments, connecting this participant with social work ethics coming from the UDHR and notions of social justice. He added: "I am a planner by background. I would argue that people have a right to build housing on their land.".

The social justice theme also emerged in the comments of Participant F, a public sector urban planner in relation to housing affordability as a wicked problem. He identified people from lower socioeconomic groups as suffering disproportionately from

this wicked problem and specified Māori and Pasifika as being overrepresented among those groups. Participant F also drew attention to "a lot of white people in the same boat." Participant G, the private sector housing strategist, drew attention to what she described as the "inherent wrongs" in our communities:

> I think there is something *inherently wrong* in places like Auckland if our key workers like our teachers, our nurses, [and] our police can't afford to buy a house, something *really wrong*. When you have got key people that provide services that we all need and they can't get on the housing ladder there is something *fundamentally wrong* [emphases added].

This acknowledgment by a private sector strategist that unaffordable housing in our community is "fundamentally wrong" illustrates an awareness of social justice as a moral issue. Participant G sees the provision of housing as meeting a greater need than shelter by individual families. She articulated a deeply held "vision" by which housing connects and strengthens whole communities.

We now turn to the second category in the findings: the views of participants on political, economic and environmental factors as these factors relate to housing affordability.

Category 2: Political, economic and environmental factors relating to housing affordability

Data analysis giving rise to the second category reveals no less than 5½ times greater frequency of transcript occurrences relating to political, economic and environmental factors than housing affordability as a human right. Planning regulations incorporate environmental factors. The thinking that informed the 1992 Rio Declaration has been integrated into New Zealand environmental law (MfE, 1993, pp. 5–7.) All eight participants made reference to these category 2 factors.

Participant A, the private sector economist/developer, drew particular attention to the influence of Agenda 21, now known as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. His overall analysis emerged in this exchange:

Interviewer: You are saying that Agenda 21 informs the way planners think?

Response: That is the foundation of the planning profession at this point. Their primary objective is the implementation of Agenda 21 through the smart growth documentation. Smart growth is the city's part of the implementation of Agenda 21.

Smart cities in the context of this view are sustainable spaces which are not harmful to the environment (Eremia et al., 2017, p. 14). Participant A extended his views by directly linking the implementation of Agenda 21 with unaffordable housing. He considers that the planning profession believes that achieving the goals set by Agenda 21 to address climate change are justified even if those measures increase rents, for example, by $200 per week: "That would be a price worth paying if it addressed the global warming issue."

The theme of land costs as a factor in housing affordability was voiced by several participants. Participant A, the private sector economist/land developer, attributes price increases to planners and local government who together "control" the supply of land. In his view, this becomes a simple economic equation: if supply is constrained, prices increase. That view is also held by the public sector economist, Participant D:

> When land is constrained it balloons in price. In Auckland the underlying cost of land is about $58,000 per section but the price of land is $580,000 a section. So the price is 10 times bigger than the cost.

Participant B as an NGO social policy analyst concurred with the views of the land developer (Participant A) regarding urban land release policies in his statement that "The cost of land has made housing unaffordable." It is noteworthy that a social policy analyst with a keen sense of human rights agrees with a private economist and land developer by focusing on the cost of land as the primary factor in unaffordability. Similarly, public sector economist, Participant D, commented that "in a well-functioning market, land is usually only 20% of the price of a house."

The views about land supply as a major factor in pushing house prices up was not shared by two public sector participants, an economist (Participant E) and town planner (Participant F) respectively. They proposed that expensive housing is evidence of a "successful city" because people are willing to pay "anything" to live in cities such as Auckland. The city's location on the water, pleasant climate, well-developed service sector, strong international connections, and safe communities create demand which translates to higher prices.

Participant F compared affordable Midwest US cities—that is, where dwellings cost no more than three times the median household income—such as Detroit with "liveable" cities, including Auckland. He attributed their affordability to economic hardship because of unemployment and poor city amenities. Participant C, a senior public policy advisor, was arguably more candid in his assessment, drawing attention to the view that affordable cities in states such as Texas espouse neoliberalism with a "completely unregulated market." He perceived this environment as one where the focus is on making capital returns and commented: "I really don't like the Houston market. I don't like the absence of regulation." This suggests an ideological difference of opinion.

Discussion

This article has sought to apply the literature and the perspectives of subject matter experts to enable social workers to understand housing unaffordability. The author has argued that a commitment to human rights in relation to housing affordability is needed; that social workers must develop an understanding of the political, economic and environmental factors relating to housing affordability; and finally, that social workers must understand factors that contribute to housing unaffordability and its extreme consequence, homelessness. By grasping these factors, social workers will be enabled to engage with policy advisors and decision-makers responsible for the wicked problem of unaffordability through the PPE framework (Gal & Weiss-Gal, 2015).

The author proposes that, between the literature and the participants, a consensus has established a common understanding on three issues: Chris Hipkins (2018) has accurately identified a housing affordability crisis; there is increasing homelessness; housing unaffordability is appropriately addressed as a human right through the UDHR (UNGA, 1949) and indeed has been taken up by the Human Rights Commission by its announcement of a national enquiry into the housing crisis in August 2021 (Hunt, 2021). There is less consensus on the factors that have contributed to the crisis. The grey literature and several participants suggest that housing and environmental regulations designed to apply the United Nations' sustainable development goals have contributed to unaffordability. Other participants propose that the desirability of living in cities such as Auckland has increased demand and therefore housing costs. The author adopts the perspective that there is no single factor precisely

because of the formulation of housing unaffordability as a wicked problem (Grint, 2005).

The author proposes that tangible examples exist in Aotearoa New Zealand of the application of the "three legs" of the PPE Framework (Gal & Weiss Gal, 2015): opportunity through political institutions, facilitation afforded by social work's organisational and professional culture, and professional and individual motivation. The work of such advocates as Dr Mike O'Brien in the Child Poverty Action Group; Alan Johnson in the same context and additionally in the housing field through commissioned research by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Enterprise; Bernie Smith's public advocacy as chief executive of a major housing non-governmental agency; and the work of Professor Jay Marlowe in working with and advocating for refugees are all, in their diverse fields, models for the PPE.

Conclusion and implications

Food security and the human need for shelter are foundational to well-being. This article proposes that an effective focus on housing requires the social work profession in Aotearoa to engage in three interrelated actions.

The first is to establish a transdisciplinary research team comprising social workers, urban economists, town planners, social policy analysts, and housing strategists. The initial purpose of this group will be to select a research director and design (and secure funding for) a project that will investigate the categories identified in this article as indicative initial pathways. The longer-term objective will be to set out a solid, research-informed base which will encourage cross-party political support to take effective action on the affordability crisis.

The second action will be to develop a professional interest group, possibly under the umbrella of the ANZASW, but ideally comprised of diverse disciplines, who will acquire expertise in Gal and Weiss-Gal's (2015) PPE framework. Depending on time commitments, this group could draw members from the transdisciplinary research team. The purpose of this group will be to practically apply the PPE, taking advantage of the three legs identified by the framework in conjunction with the research emerging from the transdisciplinary team.

The last action will require the involvement of media skills activists such as Alan Johnson and Bernie Smith in the project. Their task will be twofold: place the housing crisis issue constantly before local and national politicians and the public at large; and train the professional interest group in the art of public relations.

In launching such actions, it is probably impossible to predict the outcomes. But the journey must begin.

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Glossary

Definitions of categories in Table 2

1.	**The human factor: Housing affordability as a human right** **Definition:** The UDHR states that "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including housing and medical care" (article 25) (UNGA, 1949).
2.	**Political, economic and environmental factors** 2.1 Political factors including legislation **Definition:** Urban planning is usually defined as the implementation of policy-makers' decisions; "planners in politics" refers to the activities of planners with a political awareness about policy-making; "politics in planning" refers to the intervention of politics in management; and 'politicians in planning' refers to the politician's involvement in planning processes, motivated by political reward. Many actors participate in the urban planning process: planners, bureaucrats, politicians, entrepreneurs, as well as the general public. (Auerbach, 2012, p. 49)
	2.2 Planning, land supply, zoning regulations **Definition:** The "urban planning system" is defined as the statutory and governance frameworks that incorporate decisions by councils, central government and the private sector about urban spaces. The New Zealand urban planning system is predominantly guided by three pieces of legislation: The Local Government Act 2002 (LGA) The Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) (currently under review) The Land Transport Management Act 2003 (LTMA)

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Assessing the Labour Government's new procurement approach through a Māori economic justice perspective

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: Social procurement—the intentional generation of social value through an organisation's procurement and commissioning processes—is being adopted globally and in Aotearoa New Zealand as progressive social policy. Some of the issues that lie behind calls for economic justice, such as economic opportunity, rights for vulnerable workers, and unemployment, may be addressed through social procurement. While Māori may also benefit from this, there are other factors that should be considered from a Te Tiriti perspective.

METHOD: In this research brief, we outline the context behind the government's current initiatives, drawing on policy and research literature as part of a scoping study aimed at developing a Te Tiriti approach to social procurement.

CONCLUSION: We conclude by noting the opportunities for economic justice for Māori, but also some of the caveats drawn from international and Aotearoa New Zealand literature.

Keywords: Economic justice; social procurement; Māori; Te Tiriti

The New Zealand government is currently touting social procurement—that is, the intentional generation of social value through procurement and commissioning processes (Furneaux & Barraket, 2014; Hurt-Suwan & Mahler, 2020)—as a tool of economic justice, particularly for Māori (Nash & Jackson, 2020). Issues central to economic justice include rights in the workplace, economic opportunity, rights for vulnerable workers, and initiatives that assist or alleviate those who are unemployed, under-employed, never employed or precariously employed (Simmons, 2017).

All organisations procure goods and services with rules and processes around how this occurs (Wisner et al., 2012). In late 2020, the Government set a target that five percent of public sector contracts should be awarded to Māori, with Te Puni Kōkiri trialling approaches over 2021 as to how this might be best achieved (Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment [MBIE], 2020b). The government has obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi to uphold and give effect to the principles of partnership, participation and protection (Hudson & Russell, 2009), obligations that include economic development (Greig, 2010). From an economic partnership, participation and protection perspective, the government might be said to have failed in upholding these principles given that Māori

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make up 12% of New Zealand's labour force, yet Māori are unemployed (23%) or underemployed (22.8%) (MBIE, 2020a). There are higher proportions of Māori in lower-skilled occupations and industries that are vulnerable to technological changes and economic downturns (MBIE, 2017b). This situation has an intergenerational impact, with Māori children more likely to live in households with lower income or increased material hardship (Statistics New Zealand, 2020).

Hence, social procurement initiatives are interventions aimed at addressing a number of issues that are core to economic justice. However, while government aspirations are high, many changes will need to occur across both the procuring and procuree organisations before social procurement can facilitate economic justice. In this research brief, we review the context that lies behind the government's social procurement initiatives and outline some of the enablers and barriers to achievement, particularly for Māori. We also briefly report on initial findings from interviews with 10 procurement specialists as part of an exploratory study to understand social procurement in terms of Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Short, 2021). Some implications for social work practice are discussed at the end.

What is social procurement?

The notion of using purchasing power to create additional value is central to social procurement and is being adopted as progressive social policy in Aotearoa New Zealand. Social procurement is the intentional creation of social benefit through purchasing of assets and services outside of typical requirements (Burkett, 2010; Collins, 2006; Furneaux & Barraket, 2014). In Aotearoa New Zealand, both central and local government procurement falls into a two-tier system: contracts under $100,000 and those above. Those contracts that are valued $100,000 or more are listed on the Government Electronic Tender Service (GETS) where all registered business can access and apply to fulfil it. To tender for a contract, suppliers must indicate in a written document or *bid* how they can meet and deliver the contract obligations. These bids are then assessed and evaluated by the organisation that listed them to determine who is awarded the contract. Contracts valued less than $100,000 are left for procurement staff to find an appropriate number of quotes from businesses they have existing relationships with, or who are found during market research. These quotes are then compared and evaluated so the contract can be awarded (MBIE, n.d.-a).

A traditional approach sees suppliers evaluated on the price, quality and delivery of goods or services (Lysons & Farrington, 2006; Wisner et al., 2012). Other criteria may include quality and process control, continuous improvement, facility environment, customer relationships, delivery, inventory and warehousing, ordering, financial conditions and certification (Simpson et al., 2002). However, creating social value using procurement processes and purchasing power is different from traditional procurement practices. In other words, the focus is not only on the good or service, its price point and the relationship with the supplier, but also on external considerations such as addressing social requirements like precarious employment where there are low wages, job insecurity and lack of rights and protections (Kreshpaj et al., 2020).

In the public sector, there is a heavily regulated competitive bidding system for contracts. This ensures public transparency with free entry of qualified bidders and explicit, objective selection criteria (Bajari et al., 2009; Tadelis, 2012). In comparison, the private sector has flexibility and can utilise mechanisms other than auctions to select suppliers and the criteria by which bids are judged. This can create an environment in which existing suppliers may be given preference and the judgement of bidding becomes more subjective. However, both

public and private organisations can leverage their purchasing power and procurement pathways to create positive social, environmental, and economic outcomes (Mupanemunda, 2019). These benefits can be direct, such as when an organisation in a targeted group receives direct financial benefit, and indirect, *spillover* benefits such as increased whānau wellbeing, cultural connection, or community employment.

Entities can create social value when they can influence the procurement processes described earlier in ways that generate positive social outcomes, such as inclusion and empowerment of targeted groups in the supply chain and/or the supplier's workforce (see Box 1 for example). The procuring organisation can integrate specific outcomes within the planning and evaluation stages of procurement by adding criteria such as *environmental sustainability* or *social good initiative*. However, as our discussions with procurement specialists reveal, this is not standard industry practice unless it is considered specifically relevant to any given project or purchase, and so may be challenging to implement.

What is the opportunity for Māori through social procurement?

The government spends an estimated $41 billion annually on the procurement of goods and services (MBIE, 2017, p. 9), with expenditure guided by the *Progressive Procurement Policy* (MBIE, 2020b). In late 2020, the government announced that at least 5% of contracts were expected to be awarded to Māori businesses, defined

Box 1: Poverty Alleviation and Social Procurement. 2015 Pan AM Games, Canada

Australia is not alone in implementing Indigenous social procurement policies. Here we outline a successful example of social procurement in Canada. From this, there are lessons for Aotearoa New Zealand from a poverty alleviation perspective.

In 2012, the Toronto City Council unanimously decided that procurement activities should also provide social value during the preparation and execution of the 2015 Pan Am games (Toronto City Council, 2016). Event organisers were intent on using social procurement policy as a means to alleviate systemic poverty through increasing the employment, apprenticeship, and training opportunities for identified groups.

However, the desire to engage with minority-owned businesses was constrained by the need for contracts to be financially competitive, which can be difficult for a minority-owned business as minority businesses are on average, smaller. To mitigate this issue, a points system was developed to assess bids in relation to social objective and minority ownership (Kimel, 2015).

Contracts of $7.3 million (8% of total value of contracts) were awarded to 226 businesses (20% of total suppliers) including those owned by women, visible minorities, aboriginals, persons with disabilities and LGBT for procurement of goods and services such as food and merchandise (Toronto2015, 2015).

Key learnings from this project are that a points-based system favouring minority, and including Indigenous businesses, can still meet the conditions of an open market context. However, the other main learning is that the majority of expenditure was in areas that small businesses were non-competitive, such as construction. Hence, relying on "one-off" social procurement as a poverty alleviation method is unlikely to meet such a broader objective.

as having at least 50% Māori ownership or being classified as a Māori Authority by the Inland Revenue Department. This approach is largely inspired by Australian initiatives, with a claim that for every dollar of indigenous procurement there was a $4.41 indirect benefit of economic and social value that includes connection to culture, training of employees, pride, and reinvestment in the community (Supply Nation, 2018). Comparative analysis of non-Indigenous suppliers has not been undertaken or is not readily available.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, the policy aims to assist economic recovery in the wake of Covid-19 and act as a tool to improve cash flow and diversify customers for Māori businesses to improve the resilience of the Māori economy (Nash & Jackson, 2020). The policy applies to all government agencies including the Police and Defence Forces and Crown Research Institutes that are required to report progress towards the target (MBIE, 2020b).

As part of the government's overall 2019 reforms of the procurement "Rules of Sourcing," there is now a clause to acknowledge "the pre-eminence of Te Tiriti o Waitangi…to provide[s] flexibility for the Government to implement domestic policies in relation to Māori, including in *fulfilment of the Crown's obligations under the Treaty* [emphasis added]". This enables government agencies to "accord favourable treatment to Māori, provided that such measures are not used as a means of arbitrary or unjustified discrimination or as a disguised restriction on trade in goods, trade in services and investment" (MBIE, 2019, p. 6).

From a practical perspective, what does "accord favourable treatment to Māori" mean? Within the Rules of Sourcing document, an example is given when a procuring agency wishes to contract for goods or services below a threshold of $100,000. In such cases, the agency "should consider if there is a capable Aotearoa New Zealand business, including Māori businesses, Pasifika businesses and social enterprises that could fulfil the contract opportunity". This is in line with the Government's desire to support local small and regional businesses (MBIE, n.d.-b). This new approach is being spearheaded through Te Kupenga Hao Pāuaua, a new team at Te Puni Kōkiri (TPK). In particular, support for small Māori businesses or organisations is being directed to services such as cleaning, catering, consultancy and design (TPK, 2021), areas identified by the government as having the most potential for small business economic outcomes. A number of iwi and Māori collectives have been organising themselves to win such contracts (see, for example, Te Matarau A Māui, n.d.; Trust Tairāwhiti, 2020).

However, what about contracts above $100,000? In such cases, because Aotearoa New Zealand has signed a number of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) that allow for international bidders, procuring agencies need to be explicit about why they would prefer a Māori supplier. Aotearoa New Zealand has a number of FTAs that outline how countries treat each other when doing business together, including importing and exporting goods or services and investing. While reducing tariffs and encouraging trade are main features, FTAs also allow foreign organisations to compete for government tenders for goods and services on a non-discriminatory basis in each other's markets (Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade [MFAT], n.d.). There are *carve outs* in these international agreements to acknowledge Te Tiriti obligations to, for example, uphold traditional knowledge and cultural expressions in intellectual property, protect indigenous plant species, and implement policies that benefit Māori without being obliged to offer equivalent treatment to other persons (MFAT, n.d.). Current procurement rules state that tenders for construction projects over $10 million, and for goods and services to central government entities over $260,000, and other government groups such as Defence over $800,000, are required to be open to international bidders. Benefitting Māori without being obliged to offer equivalent treatment to others requires

an agency to consult with the Trade Law Unit at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade to ensure adherence to these international agreements.

Currently, it is unclear what such a tender process might look like and the circumstances under which this might occur. It is also unclear what legal complications this might encounter in relation to Aotearoa New Zealand's FTAs (Kawharu, 2016). Speculatively, and in the spirit of the Tiriti partnership and a tribal authority's right to self-determined economic development, large *favourable* procurement contracts might become part of a prospective Te Tiriti o Waitangi settlement at local, or even national, levels. However, this remains an unexplored avenue. In the meantime, as the Canadian case study indicates, the ability of small- and medium-sized businesses to be competitive in large tenders is limited.

One way that an agency can ensure broader social considerations are fulfilled in larger contracts is by incorporating particular requirements when considering and awarding tenders. Social value can be achieved, not only in contracting a minority vendor, but also by requiring that in large contracts, targeted groups are offered employment, training opportunities, health benefits, wage increases or other benefits that lie outside of what is legally required. Such a shift away from "standard" employment requirements can give opportunities to targeted groups, particularly those who are unemployed, under-employed, or precariously employed (Troje & Andersson, 2020; Troje & Kadefors, 2018). For example, Hurt-Suwan and Mahler (2020) found that social procurement can reduce precarious employment in the Aotearoa New Zealand construction industry by improving the skills and capabilities of employees.

Māori values and procurement decision-making

While poverty alleviation and improved economic prosperity are undoubtedly key drivers of social procurement, a Māori perspective offers additional factors that require consideration. The "Government Procurement Charter" outlines expectations as to how procurement activities are to achieve public value (MBIE, 2021). Value is defined as good quality (effective and efficient), outcomes (economic, environmental, cultural, and social), and price (upfront and ongoing). As our brief overview of traditional, Eurocentric procurement practices explained, typical assessment metrics have been around cost, experience, or quality. How, then, can the new expectations, particularly around economic, environmental, cultural, and social outcomes, be aligned to Māori expectations of success?

As part of an exploratory study into Te Tiriti based social procurement, 10 procurement specialists were interviewed about their experience of and suggestions for implementing and achieving the new Te Tiriti expectations. Our key findings showed that, while the procurement specialists recognised Te Tiriti obligations, many were uncertain as to how to implement them. Within the tender construction process itself, some practitioners identified the planning phase as an area where Te Tiriti clauses might be included. This phase consists of outlining the objectives and expectations of a purchase/contract because a key component of this phase is determining the criteria against which a tender is assessed to meet the desired outcomes. The informants also recognised that there was a complex mix of government, professional procurement networks, stakeholders, and intermediaries or those who broker relationships, that are involved in establishing procurement processes and values, meaning any number of groups may have influence over procurement processes.

This complexity and uncertainty in relation to the actual process of preparing for, awarding, and then monitoring a tender, suggests that there is still a long way to go to achieve the intent of the new

procurement rules. From an Indigenous perspective, Australian research suggests that Indigenous procurement frameworks are still rare (Denny-Smith et al., 2020). Indigenous cultural knowledge and values are not necessarily transferable between indigenous groups suggesting there is no *one* procurement approach at the organisational level. Given the changes to social procurement policy are still very new, frameworks that might guide procurement from a Māori perspective have yet to be developed. For example, how might te reo Māori, cultural concepts and values such as *mana*, *whakapapa* and *manaakitanga* (Came et al., 2020) be integrated into a Tiriti-focussed procurement framework? Māori control and ownership is guaranteed in Te Tiriti (Moewaka Barnes, 2009), but seemingly constrained within even the current new procurement rules. Moreover, there may be unintended consequences. For example, social procurement should not become a "double-tax" on Māori organisations to shift problems such as under-employment or unemployment away from government or corporate responsibility and on to Māori organisations (Cutcher et al., 2020).

Conclusion

Throughout the world, social procurement is being used as a means to benefit marginalised groups, including Indigenous communities with a focus on the creation of social value by altering the *requirements for* and *outcomes of* mainstream procurement practices (Mccrudden, 2004; McNeill, 2015; Howells et al., 2020; Loosemore, 2016). As we have shown, opportunities for Māori through the new Te Tiriti procurement clause appears to offer some opportunity in relation to contracts under $100,000. However, as we have also shown, Māori-owned ventures, like other New Zealand organisations, have to compete in an international environment when it comes to larger contracts.

This raises the question of whether there is a level-playing field. Self-determined Māori economic development has been held back due to failure to respect and honour Te Tiriti, viewed by some as a deliberate "dismembering" of the Māori economy (Henare et al., 2014; Pool, 2015, p. 253) and the promise of a quality of life as determined by Māori. While there is the ability to insert clauses into larger contracts to meet certain targets—such as employment and training of under-represented groups—this does not get away from the fact that, in such cases, Māori are reliant on third parties to "do the right thing," that is, there is a lack of Māori control, guaranteed under Te Tiriti. Moreover, while procurement practitioners want to enable Te Tiriti obligations, the practical mechanisms, broader networks, training, and capabilities to execute this are still in their infancy. Māori-oriented concepts and practices that might feed into these process—such as *mana*, *whakapapa* and *manaakitanga*—are not yet apparent.

As a mechanism for economic justice, social procurement has merit; hence there has been an enthusiastic response from Māori. In response to this, social work providers should consider the extent to which social procurement might fit into their operations. At the individual and organisational levels, social workers will need to understand the government's procurement approach in order to identify under what circumstances it might be a pathway for particular individuals or groups. This might involve developing relationships with Māori collectives, whether iwi, hapū or private sector, to identify capability training for procurement tendering. There is also a case for cross-government co-ordination, at both central and local levels, to identify which types of tenders have the potential to provide social and cultural benefits to Māori as well as economic benefits such as employment. Finally, developing metrics of success will also be necessary, particularly metrics that Māori value. However, as international research has shown, there are also caveats, with the need for ongoing and mindful research in this area, particularly as it intersects with social work practice.

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE
QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

Intersections of immigration law and family violence: Exploring barriers for ethnic migrant and refugee background women

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: Action on family violence[1] remains a policy priority for the New Zealand government. Accordingly, this article explores the Immigration New Zealand's Victims of Family Violence (VFV) visa. Specifically, it explores possible barriers preventing MELAA[2] cultural groups from utilizing the VFV visa.

APPROACH: The discussion is based on administrative immigration data, gathered by Immigration New Zealand (INZ), on applicants for VFV visas between July 2010 and March 2021.

FINDINGS: Over the last 10 years, INZ received 1,947 applications for the VFV Visa. People of Asian (40%) and Pacific (38%) backgrounds made most of these applications, with India, Fiji, China, the Philippines, and Tonga making up the top five source countries. MELAA communities made only 11% of the total VFV visa applications. Applicants from South Africa, Brazil, Iran, Nigeria, and Argentina made up the top five source MELAA countries. Analyses showed that MELAA applications were mostly work-type visas.

IMPLICATIONS: Data presented shows that the VFV visa is still underutilised within these communities. Possible reasons for these notable outcomes are explored in this article, with suggestions for remediating strategies for barriers preventing MELAA communities from utilising the VFV visa. This article concludes that more research is required to gain an in-depth understanding of the specific cultural contexts within which these women engage with this visa.

Keywords: Family violence and immigration policy; ethnic women and domestic violence; immigration and social work

Family violence in Aotearoa New Zealand: The case of migrant and refugee-background women

The high prevalence of domestic violence or, more inclusively, family violence in Aotearoa New Zealand, is now well established. Family violence, as defined in the Family Violence Act 2018, recognises various forms of abuse and coercion that are part of a pattern of behaviour and that causes cumulative harm. These include physical, sexual, and psychological abuse, coercion, or control. While there

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are men harmed in domestic violence situations, the overwhelming burden is borne by women (Fanslow & Robinson, 2011). Women from across cultures, socio-economic backgrounds, and relationship circumstances (both heterosexual and homosexual relationships) experience domestic violence regularly (Swarbrick, 2018). At least one in three women in Aotearoa New Zealand has experienced forms of sexual and/or physical violence in their lifetime (Fanslow & Robinson, 2011). Statistics from many sources, collated by the New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse, show that the number of deaths caused by family violence has increased over the years. The majority of these are mostly perpetrated by men against women (New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse, 2017). The number of crisis calls received by women's refuges across the country has also increased over the years, as well as the number of women accessing community advocacy services and/or staying in safe houses (Shakti Community Council Inc., 2011). However, these statistics do not present the full picture of domestic violence in Aotearoa New Zealand. Domestic violence remains an under-reported, and under-investigated, crime for various and complex reasons (Fanslow & Robinson, 2004). There are extensive health and developmental consequences, with both short and long-term negative impacts, that stem from experiences of domestic violence (Fanslow & Robinson, 2011). Consequently, there is an increasing demand for effective responses at micro and macro levels, through appropriate intervention programmes and legislation (Levine & Benkert, 2011). While women from across backgrounds and statuses may have similar experiences of domestic violence, research shows that women of migrant and refugee backgrounds have unique and distinct experiences. This is mainly because the types and characteristics of family violence in these communities are particular to specific circumstances linked to the processes of immigration, resettlement, and integration in host communities. These include: immigration-law-related abuse; violence perpetrated and supported by multiple perpetrators which can be transnational; and there may be extant cultural values and practices that hinder help-seeking in situations of domestic violence (Simon-Kumar, 2019). These factors have been found to worsen migrant women's already vulnerable position in domestic violence situations (Kapur et al., 2017; Menjívar & Salcido, 2002).

Globally, violence against women has been a subject of debate. Accordingly, most countries have drafted specific laws and national policies and/or ratified certain international conventions in seeking to prevent, eradicate, and punish violence against women. A study investigating domestic violence in many countries found that, of the 173 countries covered, 127 countries passed specific domestic violence laws. Countries that had not passed specific laws were found to still offer some form of increased protection for people experiencing domestic violence. However, the majority of these legislative protections were found to be incomplete or weak in implementation (Sifaki, 2017). In Aotearoa New Zealand, the Family Violence Act 2018, a revision of the Domestic Violence Act 1995, exists for this protective purpose. Family violence is contextually defined in this Act (Swarbrick, 2018). The effectiveness of these laws and policies should be measured by their ability to address important factors associated with family violence against women, and reduce personal and social consequences of domestic violence (Dugan, 2003; Sifaki, 2017).

Demographically, Aotearoa New Zealand is a multicultural society. The 2013 and 2018 population census identified at least 213 ethnic groups living in New Zealand. This is evidence that ethnic diversity is now an inevitable part of our society and should be considered in addressing family violence. Ethnic populations, as defined by the Ministry of Ethnic Communities and

the New Zealand government (to include ethnicities from Asia, Africa, Continental Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East), represent almost 20% of the country's total population. The majority of people from these communities (93%) were born overseas, and only 7% were born in Aotearoa New Zealand (Ministry for Ethnic Communities, 2020). Many reports and much research conclude that research on family violence among ethnic communities living in New Zealand, as a *population group* is limited (Rahmanipour et al., 2019). This dearth of research has also been noted in other countries (Menjívar & Salcido, 2002). Accordingly, no official figures show the overall prevalence of family violence in these communities. However, a few studies have provided some useful estimates within specific ethnic communities (e.g., Simon-Kumar, 2019). Additionally, various community advocacy groups working with migrant and refugee-background women have highlighted the frequency and negative wellbeing impacts of domestic violence among these groups (Mayeda & Vijaykumar, 2015; Simon-Kumar, 2019).

Family violence in Aotearoa New Zealand: Immigration law-related risk factors

In addition to the Family Violence Act (2018) and several international legal instruments ratified by Aotearoa New Zealand that relate to preventing violence against women, the country has a specific legislative and policy framework for recent migrants experiencing family violence (Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment [MBIE], 2019). This is the Victims of Family Violence (VFV) policy visa, which uses the same definition of family violence as found in the Family Violence Act. The main purpose of the VFV visa is to provide people experiencing family violence, in most cases women, with visa status separate from their ex-partners'. Before 2002, women sponsored by their partners were not able to leave the relationship until after a two-year probation period (Burman & Chantler, 2005). For instance, some women who decided to leave violent relationships after years of abuse subsequently became illegal under immigration law (Mayeda & Vijaykumar, 2015)—women were not able to leave violent relationships because of their visa conditions (Harper, 2012). The policy particularly catered for women living with abusive partners, and not yet residents but plan to apply for residency based on that relationship. Their situation made them vulnerable to their partner's control and abuse, with threats to report them to Immigration New Zealand (INZ) or the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) (The New Zealand Psychological Society, 2015).

Migrants experiencing family violence can be granted temporary work visas and a resident visa under the VFV visa policy, upon meeting certain requirements. These include providing evidence and proof that the person applying for this visa was in a relationship with an Aotearoa New Zealand citizen or resident; that they had planned to apply for a residence visa based on this relationship; the relationship has now ended because of family violence; and that the applicant now need to work to support themselves. Further evidence that the applicant is unable to return to their country of origin, because of financial incapability or social stigma, is required if they choose to apply for a residence class visa. A temporary work visa can be granted and is valid for six months, with the possibility of this being extended to nine months if the applicant applies for a residence visa (New Zealand Immigration, 2018; MBIE, 2019). In a later section, the author will return to discuss the link between the low application numbers for VFV visas to the challenges in meeting these requirements and providing evidence acceptable to INZ.

The VFV visa policy is timely and aligns with findings from literature and research, which have established

that immigration legal status increases women's vulnerability to family violence (Harzig, 2003; Kapur et al., 2017). Research emerging from countries with comparable legislative and policy frameworks for family violence to Aotearoa New Zealand, including Australia, Canada, and the USA, shows that visa status is a major risk factor in family violence situations. Because of the gendered nature of immigration, women are mostly the victims because their legal status in the country is often tied to their partner's visa (Erez et al., 2009). In New Zealand, it has been observed that women in a probation visa period and/or on temporary visas are the most at risk of family violence (Simon-Kumar, 2019). Generally, the risk of family violence increases if the woman relies on their abusive partner for sponsorship. The immigration policy was amended to protect women caught in such situations.

A review of VFV visa administrative data between July 2010 and March 2021

INZ gathers administration data on VFV visa applications. This data is available to the public through the Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment (MBIE) website. The "Visa Flows" sub-section of the migration datasets provides data on how migrants move in and out of Visa Categories in New Zealand (MBIE, 2021).

Method of generating data from datasets

The following steps were taken to explore the data set for this article. The data sets of interest were selected (Flows: "W1 Work Decisions" and "R1 Residence Decisions," respectively); the period was set to "Calendar Year"; two variables of interest were selected, including "Application Criteria" and "Decision Type"; and finally, additional filters added, including "Nationality" and "Application Criteria – Victims of Domestic Violence." These steps generated data showing numbers of applicants for VFV visas between July 2010 and March 2021, by nationality and the decision outcomes (Approved or Declined) for the number of visa applications. The full data were downloaded as comma-separated values (CSV) files for further analysis. These are reported below. For further analysis the data were grouped according to "regions," closely following Statistics New Zealand's official "Ethnic" (termed Region in this article) categories.

Table 1 shows the decision outcomes for the number of VFV visa applications over the last 10 years (July 2010 to March 2021) (MBIE, 2021).

Table 1. Decision Outcomes for VFV Visa Applications 2010–2021

Region	Type of Application		Total Applications
	Work Visa	*Residence visa*	
Asia (ALL) **786 Applications**	**540 Applications** (A: 480; D: 60)	**246 Applications** (A: 189; D: 57)	669 Approved 117 Declined
Pacific (ALL) **732 Applications**	**462 Applications** (A: 408; D: 54)	**270 Applications** (A: 198; D: 72)	606 Approved 126 Declined
MELAA (ALL) **222 Applications**	**141 Applications** (A: 126; D: 15)	**81 Applications** (A: 54; D: 27)	180 Approved 42 Declined
Europe (ALL) **207 Applications**	**138 Applications** (A: 129; D: 9)	**69 Applications** (A: 30; D: 39)	159 Approved 48 Declined
Total = 1947	**1281 Applications**	**666 Applications**	**A: 1614; D:333**

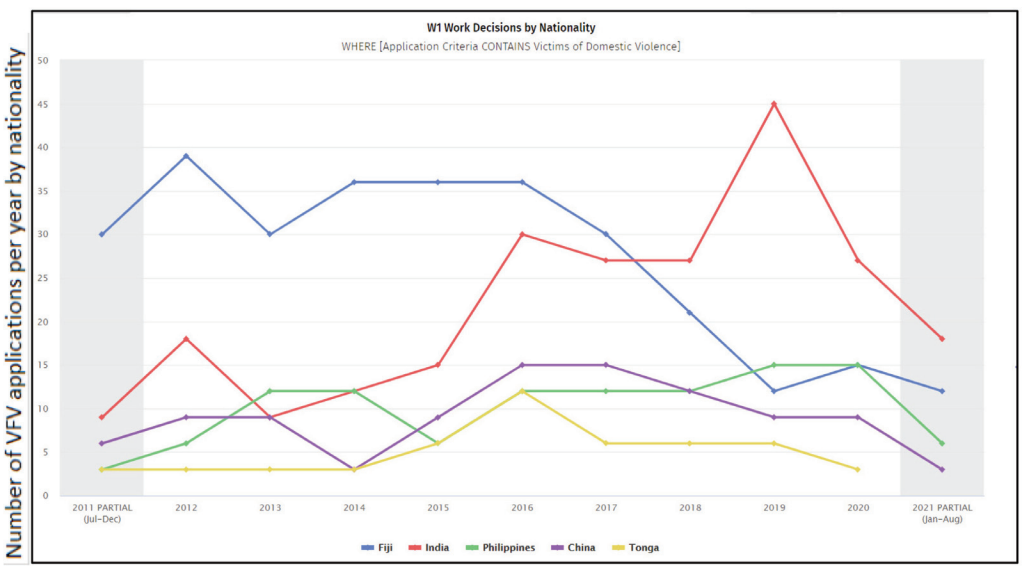
The largest group of applicants were from Asia (40%), and the Pacific (38%) regions. Applicants from MELAA and Europe regions made up only 11% of the applications, respectively. Most of the applications were for temporary work visas (66%), and the remaining were residence visas (34%). With an additional requirement of proof of inability to return to the country of origin because of financial incapacity and social stigma, it could be argued that temporary work visas would logically make up the majority of the VFV visas applications. Generally, the approval rates were high for both visa types with 83% approved decision outcomes and only 17% declined decision outcomes.

Figure 1 shows the VFV work visa application over the last 10 years by nationality. India and Fiji are among the top source countries for a VFV work visa with China, the Philippines, and Tonga. The pattern is also reflected for the VFV residence visas. Generally, research supports the fact that applicant countries for INZ's VFV visa reflect those countries with high prevalence of family violence—India, China, the Philippines, Fiji, and Tonga remain within Aotearoa New Zealand's top source countries of applicants for the last 10 years.

A total of 222 applications (11%) were made by people from the MELAA regions, with 64% of these being work visa applications and 36% residence visa applications. Table 2 shows the decision outcomes for the number of VFV visa applications from the MELAA region over the last 10 years (Jul 2010 to March 2021) (MBIE, 2021).

Applicants from Africa (43%) and Latin America (38%) made up the majority of VFV visa applications from the MELAA region. Only 19% of the applications were made by people from the Middle East. The following VFV visa applications by nationality further shows that South Africa and Brazil are among the top source countries for a VFV work visa with Iran, Nigeria, and Argentina. As shown in Figure 2, the pattern is also reflected for the VFV residence visa applications from this region.

Figure 1 VFV Work Visa Applications by Nationality—Top Five Countries.



Note: Reproduced from INZ administrative data sourced from https://mbienz.shinyapps.io/migration_data_explorer/# accessed 6 June 2021.

Table 2. Decision Outcomes for VFV Visa Applications—MELAA Regions

Region N=222	Type of Application		Total Applications
	Work Visa	*Residence visa*	
Africa 96 (43%)	**51** (A:45 D:6)	**45** (A:30 D:15)	75 Approved 21 Declined
Latin America 84 (38%)	**57** (A:51 D:6)	**27** (A:15 D:12)	66 Approved 18 Declined
Middle East 42 (19%)	**33** (A:30 D:3)	**9** (A:9 D:0)	39 Approved 3 Declined

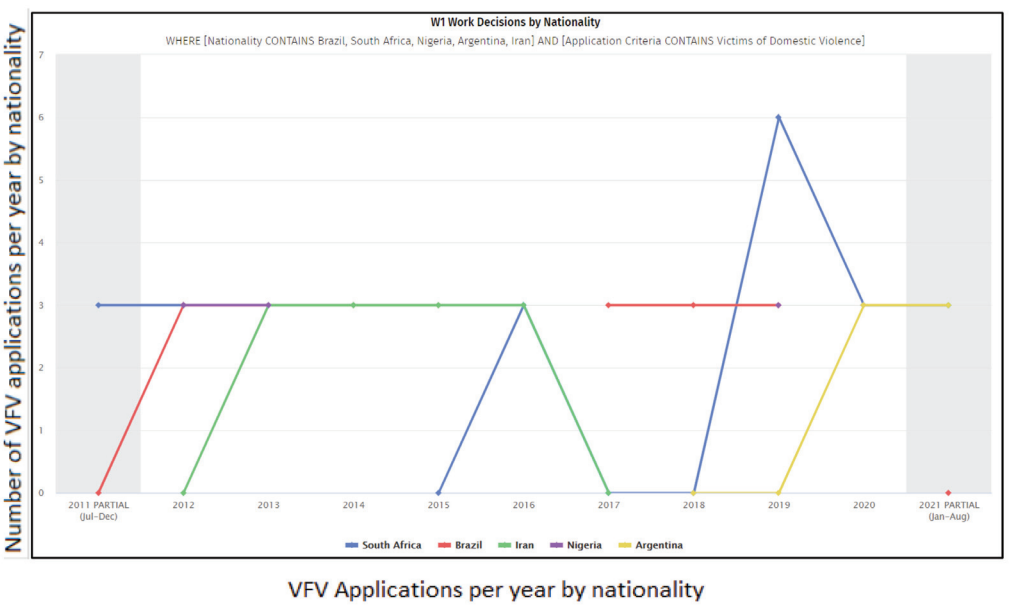
As shown in Table 3, the number of applications for the VFV visa from MELAA region countries is low compared to those of the overall top five countries (India, China, the Philippines, Fiji, and Tonga) (MBIE, 2021).

These administrative data reported so far show that, generally, the applications rates for the VFV visas are far lower than incidence of abuse (Simon-Kumar, 2019), with only a total of 1947 applications made between July 2010 and March 2021.

This number is even lower for MELAA communities, with only 222 (11%) of the total applications made by people from this region.

This rate of application by people from MELAA communities is disproportionate to the population share of MELAA people living in Aotearoa New Zealand. According to the Ministry of Ethnic Communities (2021), nearly 3% (120,000 people) of the New Zealand population are from these communities. A comparison of the

Figure 2 VFV Work Visa Applications by Nationality—Top Five MELAA Countries.



Note: Reproduced from INZ administrative data sourced from https://mbienz.shinyapps.io/migration_data_explorer/# accessed 6 June 2021.

Table 3. Decision Outcomes for VFV Visa Applications by Nationality—Top Five Overall Source Countries Compared with Top Five Source MELAA Countries

Top 5 VFV visa source countries	Type of Application		To 5 VFV visa source MELAA countries	Type of Application	
	Work Visa	*Residence visa*		*Work Visa*	*Residence visa*
Fiji (540)	354	186	**South Africa (48)**	21	27
India (345)	246	99	**Brazil (42)**	30	12
Philippines (150)	108	42	**Iran (15)**	12	3
China (135)	87	48	**Nigeria (12)**	6	6
Tonga (111)	63	48	**Argentina (12)**	9	3

VFV visa application rates (a total of 222 applications) and the population share of this group (120,000) may, logically, suggest that there is an over-representation in the VFV applicants from MELAA populations. Conversely, reports by various community-based agencies and organizations show that family violence is frequent and with negative (often severe) impacts in these communities (MBIE, 2019; Simon-Kumar, 2019). International studies show that ethnic communities, including MELAA people, have a comparatively lower inclination to report family violence (Mayeda & Vijaykumar, 2015). Nair (2017), discussing help-seeking patterns in situations of family violence, observes that ethnic women often only seek help when there are severe physical and mental health impacts. Even then, many remain reluctant to formally disclose/report family violence experiences. Accordingly, the under-utilisation of the VFV visa is by no means a reflection of the lack of family violence experienced in these communities.

In theory, the application trends reported support research that shows that applicant countries for the VFV visa reflect those countries that have high occurrences of family violence (MBIE, 2019). In the case of ethnic communities, this is often further linked to the prevalence of violence in their countries of origin (Nair, 2017). This is somewhat verifiable. Data from across numerous international surveys on violence against women, for instance, shows a relatively high lifetime prevalence of domestic violence in the top five VFV visa source MELAA countries (South Africa, Brazil, Iran, Nigeria, and Argentina) (Kendall, 2020; World Health Organisation, 2021). While there are no bilateral, comparative studies (between each of these countries and Aotearoa New Zealand) extant international and national studies have found that the nature and characteristics of family violence change significantly because of the act and process of immigration (Simon-Kumar, 2019). Somasekhar (2016) even argued that factors unique to immigration make ethnic women even more vulnerable to family violence in host countries as compared to women in their countries of origin. The process of immigration can become an instigator for family violence (MBIE, 2019). For instance, people bring their culture with them during the process of immigration. At the same time, they leave behind some practices and resources that may support them during adversity. Some of these

changes have implications for help-seeking behaviours, along with reporting (Nair, 2017). Accordingly, the under-utilisation of the VFV visa postulated in the data reported may reflect immigration-related factors such as fear of isolation and shame from and towards their communities that may be linked to reporting family violence (Simon-Kumar, 2018). Overall, the data trends indicate possible barriers to seeking and obtaining the Victims of Family Violence visa.

Discussion: Some barriers and remediating strategies

Overall, 66% of the VFV visa applications were for the temporary work type visa. This suggests that finance is a factor in these abusive relationships and a reason for people leaving and seeking their visa status separate from their ex-partners. Proof that the person now needs to work to support themselves is one of the main requirements for this type of visa application. It is now established that financial incapability is a risk factor in situations of violent relationships, and especially if the person is dependent on the abuser for financial support. The threat to withdraw financial support is often a weapon used by the abuser. Lack of employment or underemployment is associated with men's perpetration of domestic violence (Nair, 2017). While this is not specific to migrant women, migration-specific factors such as visa restrictions which do not allow work rights and benefits assistance increase these women's vulnerability in such situations (Levine & Benkert, 2011).

According to the perceptions of some non-governmental organisations (NGOs) which have assisted women with VFV visa applications, the process is time-consuming and complex and, because of this, often has financial implications for the applicant (MBIE, 2019). For instance, one of the acceptable forms of evidence that the relationship has now ended because of family violence is the final Protection Order against the perpetrator. This is in theory cost-free. In practice, however, many applicants will require the assistance of a lawyer to apply. Yet legal aid may only be available for people eligible for a benefit or on a low income. Otherwise, the cost is met by the applicant (MBIE, 2019). This then becomes a barrier for women without any rights to work and/or receive benefit assistance (Dew, 2017). In addition, other acceptable forms of evidence such as police and medical checks also cost money.

Women who successfully apply for a VFV work visa are granted an Interim Visa during processing. However, this does not grant their holders work rights. This is especially problematic because applicants are not eligible for benefits assistance during this time when their visa application is being processed. An automatic process of varying visa conditions to allow work rights, for Interim Visa holders, has been proposed by some NGOs to remedy this barrier (MBIE, 2019).

The relatively low number of residence-type visa applications, only 34% of the total VFV visa applications, suggests additional barriers exist to obtaining the VFV visa. The temporary work visa is only valid for 6 months. This can be extended, to 9 months, if the applicant applies for the residence type visa. The additional requirement for this visa type is evidence of inability to return to the country of origin owing to financial incapability or social stigma. The low numbers of applications reflect, among other factors, the difficulties in meeting VFV visa requirements. One of the most problematic aspects, highlighted by some NGOs working with women in such situations, is the main requirement that the relationship is, or was, with a partner who is a resident or citizen of Aotearoa New Zealand. Yet existing research now shows that the majority of such violence is perpetrated by partners holding temporary visas. Women in such situations are ineligible for VFV visas, even when they would face significant hardship in their home country (Burman

& Chantler, 2005; Simon-Kumar, 2018). The perpetrator can also take advantage of the situation this requirement creates, whereby their immigration status determines the immigration options available for the woman. For instance, the perpetrator, even though eligible to apply for residence in Aotearoa New Zealand, prefers to remain on a temporary visa to keep the woman dependent on them. Perpetrators on long-term temporary visas with high-paid employment and already eligible for other publicly funded services may see no need for the other benefits that residence offers and/or simply use this as a power tool. Rightly, the determining factor for the immigration status of a woman in such a situation should not be a partnership with an Aotearoa New Zealand citizen or resident but their inability to return to their home country. Additionally, as suggested by some NGOs, at the very least women whose abusers were on long-term temporary visas should be automatically eligible for VFV visas (MBIE, 2019).

Conclusion

The experiences of family violence among migrant and refugee-background women are unique and distinct. This is mainly because the types and characteristics of family violence in these communities are linked to specific circumstances created by the processes of immigration, resettlement, and integration in host communities. Immigration law-related abuse is explored, highlighting that existing legislation and policy may create situations that increase women's vulnerability in abusive relationships by inadvertently making them dependent on the abuser. Women experiencing violence, and who are dependent on the immigration status of their abusive partner, may find it difficult to leave abusive relationships for several reasons, including fear of losing financial support and legal status in the country. The VFV visa is a good initiative by Immigration New Zealand, as a macro-level approach of removing the perpetrator's power to manipulate the women using their immigration status.

INZ administrative data on VFV visa applications made between July 2010 and March 2021 shows a low number of applications overall, and specifically from MELAA communities. This is an indication that, within these communities, the VFV visa type is still underutilised. Barriers explored in this article include the difficulties in meeting some of the main requirements and/or providing proof to successfully lodge an application and obtain a VFV visa. The complexity of the application process and associated financial implications form a major barrier. Additionally, by and large, the VFV visa policy still creates situations where the perpetrators' immigration status determines the immigration options available for the person experiencing family violence. Practical and accessible ways of "variation of conditions" to allow women work rights when experiencing violence and/or applying for this visa even if the perpetrator is on a temporary visa are recommended.

A more thorough conceptualisation of migrant women's perceptions on the VFV visa policy, specifically views of women who have successfully or unsuccessfully obtained these visas, could help identify and remediate further barriers to the utilisation of this visa. Further research is required with these women to establish how these barriers might be impacting VFV applications within their specific cultural contexts.

Notes

1 The terms *family violence* and *domestic violence* are used interchangeably in this article.

2 MEELA is an official standard classification used by Statistics New Zealand to group people of Middle Eastern/Latin America/African ethnic groups. http://archive.stats.govt.nz/methods/research-papers/topss/comp-ethnic-admin-data-census/classification-of-ethnicity.aspx#gsc.tab=0

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

MIXED METHODS RESEARCH

Community resilience demonstrated through a Te Ao Māori (Ngāti Manawa) lens: The Rāhui

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: This research project is associated with a small rural community utilising the Te Ao Māori (Ngāti Manawa) understanding of Rāhui, as a means of decreasing the possibility of negative impacts for their mostly Māori population, during the Covid-19 pandemic that was experienced in March 2020 in Aotearoa New Zealand. Rāhui is a conservation measure shrouded in tapu designed to limit, restrict or prevent access to the natural environment. For example, Te Wao Tapu nui a Tāne protecting in the process the mauri of our rivers, lakes, streams following a mishap or misfortune such as a drowning. Equally as important, Rāhui was used as a proactive means of conservation.

METHOD: Using mixed methods, this study highlights both positive and challenging experiences in the statistical and thematic analysis that may inform future public health planning for the inevitable and ongoing effects of pandemic responses in Aotearoa New Zealand which are potentially transportable beyond Aotearoa New Zealand.

IMPLICATIONS: This research identified how Ngāti Manawa of Murupara, utilised Rāhui as a mechanism of resilience in order to keep local residents thriving and healthy during and after the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown by setting up checkpoints on the borders of their rohe, and restricting the vehicle and human traffic into Murupara. Support for the Rāhui was significant from five hapū leaders and from the community survey illuminating a sense of safety that the checkpoints offered to a vulnerable and mostly Māori rural community.

Keywords: Murupara Ngāti Manawa; pandemic response; tikanga; rāhui; checkpoints; Covid-19

Health outcomes for Māori during three, historical, nationwide pandemics that include the Spanish Flu in 1918, the Influenza A (H2N2) pandemic in 1957, and the Influenza A (H1N1) pandemic in 2009 bring to light ethnic inequalities associated with significant loss for Māori in terms of long-term declining health, and high mortality rates (Summers et al., 2018). The public health response displayed several strategies and frameworks that were developed to monitor, coordinate and respond to pandemics. This research will focus on the relevance of Rāhui as a process that can protect Māori through a tikanga (cultural) understanding of protection or restrictions during the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic in New Zealand. The purpose of Rāhui for the Māori population is to protect all things living and all things unseen (Mead, 2003). Rāhui can be adopted and adapted to any given situation such as, but not limited to, a nationwide

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pandemic event. Rāhui is recognised in legislation in fisheries and environmental protection. However, Rāhui after death by drowning is associated with avoiding personal, physical or spiritual contamination resulting from eating seafood from an area made tapu by the death and is associated with restricting access to these areas. This understanding has no legislative backing but is often adhered to by the general public (McCormack, 2011).

McCormack (2011) describes the relevance of Rāhui for Māori as protection of all elements pertaining to health such as, but not limited to, mental, spiritual, physical or emotional health. Furthermore, it is not just for land and water restrictions, but is also to help contain and aid in the elimination of elements of sickness, disease and infection. There is a lack of understanding from many legislators over the interpretation of Rāhui or an unwillingness to acknowledge and create a legal form of Rāhui that accurately depicts the practices and origins of Rāhui. Consequently, Maxwell and Penetito's (2007) view of Rāhui illustrates that traditional practices of Rāhui are adapting to modern times, resulting in the different ways of enforcing and the lifting of Rāhui.

Whaanga and Wehi (2017) advocate that legislation should now examine Rāhui from a different point of view and not simply as a temporary conservational restriction, but as Kaitiakitanga (guardianship), and Rangatiratanga (autonomy) that forms protection over people. During the 2020 Covid-19, level-four lockdown period, the small community of Murupara enacted traditional Rāhui where they restricted the flow of access of people and products to and from the community with a checkpoint system that provided data for tracking and tracing the movements of people in and around the area.

Murupara is located in the Bay of Plenty with a population of 1,815 residents and is surrounded by two major rivers, the mighty Rangitaiki river and the Whirinaki river. A total of 46% of the residents are one-parent families and the median income is $17,100 per annum. Some 10% of the population is aged 65 years and over with 31% aged under 15 years (Statistics NZ, 2018).

A community checkpoint was utilised on the borders of Murupara as a way to provide information and advice to people travelling throughout the area but did not have any legal standing in making people leave the area.

Methodology

> Murupara is named after Murupara a taniwha [a very large eel] our Kaitiaki who inhabited the Rangitaiki river from Kiorenui to an area below the old bridge, where her ana (cave) is. Therefore, it follows that we seek to emulate Murupara our taniwha as Kaitiaki for all in our rohe [Carers/ Protectors/ Preservers]. Kaitiaki is our status thus our obligation to act accordingly. We are also Te Mana Motuhake the inherited permanent unique authority that we discharged in our respective tribal rohe over every aspect of our lives, our physical intellectual, and spiritual well-being. Karakia, a powerful tool exercised to ensure the preservation of our individual tapu and mana. (HL4, 2020)

This research affirms Te Ao Māori (Ngāti Manawa) as privileged knowledge and therefore legitimate authority associated with the Rāhui that was placed on Murupara and the surrounding districts during the 2020 level 4 lockdown as a response to the Covid-19 virus that overwhelmed the world.

(Research approval granted by the Toi Ohomai Research Committee 12/11/20: Reference number 200071).

Aim of the research

The purpose of this mixed-method research was to highlight how the understanding of

Rāhui supported the Murupara community: 1. To feel safe during the uncertainty of the level 4 lockdown period due to the Covid-19 pandemic; 2. Whether the understanding of Rāhui supported the community's understanding of the need to adhere to the conditions of staying at home and social distancing; and 3. If another Rāhui would be supported if another pandemic visits the shore of our country.

Method

This research project collected information from two sectors of the community that included interviewing five Ngāti Manawa Iwi hapū leaders face to face and conducting an online survey in the community of Murupara through the local community Facebook page.

The hapū leaders of the Ngāti Manawa Iwi

Five hapū leaders were interviewed about their perspective of the Rāhui in the local community through face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with a general set of questions. These perspectives included learnings that came from the Rāhui and what the community will take going forward to the next pandemic. Questions for the hapū leaders included capturing their understanding of Rāhui through a Te Ao Māori (Ngāti Manawa) perspective and how this supported their understanding of the level 4 lockdown in Aotearoa New Zealand. Other questions included whether Rāhui supported their sense of safety for themselves and their whānau and if they could identify both positive and negative aspects of the Rāhui.

Online survey

An online community survey asked residents of Murupara how informed they felt about the pandemic Covid-19 response and the resultant level 4 lockdown. Furthermore, they were asked if they understood the meaning of the Rāhui placed in Murupara and if they were supportive of this happening again in the future as a response to another pandemic.

Analysis

The individual interviews with hapū leaders were transcribed word for word and both researchers thematically analysed the kōrero (discussion). A summary of themes from individual interviews was provided to the hapū leaders and their permission was gained to have them released for analysis. Themes within the data identified how members of the community evaluated their safety both from a personal and community understanding when threatened by the Covid-19 virus.

Analysis of the transcript data was guided by the process of latent thematic analysis through interpretation. Latent thematic analysis takes the position of identification or examination of the underlying assumptions and patterns that are associated with the semantic content of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This included common language or concepts that were decoded within and across the interview data. The collated themes and a draft of the report were circulated to the individual interviewees for their discussion and approval prior to submitting the report.

The data from the community survey was assessed from both numerical and percentage perspectives and the personal comments were themed by latent thematic analysis. The results for the community survey are discussed after the interpreted one-on-one interviews for this article.

Results

One-on-one hapū leader interviews.

Five hapū leaders were interviewed and were assigned a moniker such as H1 or H2 etc., to identify their responses.

Six themes were identified throughout the transcripts of the one-on-one

interviews and included understanding; karakia; whakawhanaungatanga; safety; support; communication and community relationships.

Themes

Understanding

> The Rāhui helped me have a better understanding of what lockdown means, it helped many whānau understand the severity of the Covid-19 disease and the nationwide response. (HL1, 2020)

There were several preliminary lessons to understand the effectiveness of the New Zealand government pandemic response, which was the four-level alert system that was introduced during the Covid-19 worldwide pandemic (Cave & Solomon, 2020). Having an informed public was imperative to the effectiveness of the New Zealand government's response plan. The response was proactive, evidenced-based and communication was highly effective ensuring the public had a logical and clear understanding of the Covid-19 pandemic (Wilson, 2020). The country's response to the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in low levels of population disease, and to some degree the elimination of Covid-19 (Ministry of Health [MoH], 2020). The Māori response in rural communities that placed Rāhui on their borders would have some accountability to the country's overall result, specifically to their community by having low to no confirmed cases in their community. It helped community members understand the characteristics of Covid-19, by understanding transmission sources, and how to take action to protect themselves and their whānau. Through the rural community responses, the Ministry of Health understood that there needed to be an updated Covid-19 response plan that was specific to Māori health and wellbeing that collaborated with Māori leadership to achieve Māori health equity (MoH, 2020).

Māori iwi and hapū leaders around the country interpreted and understood the government response as placing a Rāhui on the country. In this instance, emerging problems were identified faster by local community members than council members (HL4, 2020). This was due to the fact community members were local and on hand to monitor the needs of the community. Additionally, many community members also perceived the nationwide situation of level 4 lockdown as a practice of Rāhui.

The New Zealand government placed a four-level lockdown right across our country and this was understood from a Te Ao Māori perspective and interpreted as a Rāhui (HL5, 2020). Rāhui helped Māori understand the severity of the lockdown and Covid-19, by linking the inequitable mortality and morbidity of Māori in past influenza pandemics, and how it is evident that these inequities continue today for most community outbreak diseases (Dong, Du & Gardener, 2020). The Rāhui was a Te Ao Māori response to prevent Covid-19 disparities and minimise transit and prevent a community outbreak in a Māori community. This captured and established a better understanding for what the New Zealand government sought to achieve with the lockdown (HL2, 2020).

The practice of Rāhui during the lockdown and Māori being able to relate the response with traditional Māori practices such as the Rāhui is an educational tool for the younger generation. Through the government officials not preventing Māori erecting their checkpoints and by working in partnership with Māori has helped in the efforts to protect Māori tikanga from the ongoing threat of Covid-19 on the Māori culture (Parahi, 2020). Many in the new generation believed Rāhui was for drownings and for conservation measures only however, Covid-19 showed that Rāhui is not just for those purposes. The Ngāti Manawa Rāhui proved that Rāhui can be used to protect living people alongside the purpose of preservation and restoration. These are the teachings and cultural knowledge that the future generation need to acquire (HL4, 2020).

Karakia

> The karakia is important when placing the Rāhui, karakia needs to be done. Karakia enables the protection method. We performed the karakia even though we were vulnerable, it was our job and we done it. (HL4, 2020)

Karakia, in its true essence, is providing protection and offering spiritual guidance and in its most visible form can be used for the many cultural events Māori are involved in such as tangihanga, meetings and unveilings. Moreover, karakia are also used for life aspects such as safe traveling to and from unknown or known locations, for illness or disease, and sunrise or sunset (Otago University, 2020). The survival of Māori and their culture relies heavily on tupuna and their teachings of tikanga, te reo, kawa, and karakia. Te Ao Māori and the world of karakia have evolved throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Many New Zealanders across the country took comfort in online karakia, as this was focused on offering a sense of protection and safety associated with the power produced through karakia (Hurihanganui, 2020). Karakia was provided at many borders, for example the most recent lockdown in the Auckland-Waikato region where volunteers of Māori descent provided morning and evening karakia with the focus of protection and safety for travellers (Earley, 2020). Karakia is often utilised in myriad situations and has been redefined as adaptable and flexible during lockdown and according to one hapū leader, it needs to be practised more so future generations can pass their knowledge of karakia on to the next generation (HL2, 2020).

Karakia and Rāhui work in a partnership. When a person performs a karakia, even for themselves, for example when someone travels, sleeps, or when performing an action of any sort, you karakia and in some way you are placing a Rāhui on yourself, therefore restricting and preventing any harm toward yourself (HL1, 2020). Karakia is an essential part of Rāhui. Without the correct karakia and without the correct rituals for Rāhui, the karakia and Rāhui will be perceived as not providing full protection. Karakia for Rāhui is usually performed by an elder of rank, in most situations, a Tohunga (cultural leader). During Covid-19, kaumātua and kuia (hapū leaders/elders) in Murupara were a population that was the most vulnerable, however, they upheld their duty and performed the Rāhui ritual and karakia as it was their job, "and they done it" (HL4, 2020). Rāhui that were placed in rural and remote areas preferred checkpoints to continue during level two and level three; however, due to most volunteers being able to return to work, checkpoint volunteer numbers declined therefore checkpoints were no longer resourced to continue (Johnsen, 2020b). Karakia was again performed to lift the Rāhui just as karakia was performed to place the Rāhui showing the importance karakia is to the effectiveness of Rāhui (HL4, 2020).

Mana whenua (indigenous people) placing Rāhui on the Ngāti Manawa area allowed hapū members ownership of the Rāhui, ownership of the checkpoints and a responsibility to protect the vulnerable members of Murupara and surrounding communities including kaumātua, kuia and tamariki of the Ngāti Manawa iwi (HL3, 2020). Giving Māori ownership, responsibility and authority enables Māori to be accountable for their actions. There were many Māori living across the country that were not as resilient as others, for Murupara allowing the Rāhui to proceed was a gesture of giving hapū leaders and community members mana whenua a sharing of the responsibility of protecting the iwi and community (HL4, 2020). Karakia strengthens the ties between Māori and tikanga as these are all aspects of mana whenua, authority, responsibility and accountability, by Māori, for Māori (Waititi, 2020).

Whakawhanaungatanga

> There was a lot of aroha with whānau, community members, hapū and iwi members throughout the Rāhui in several ways. There was ample respect

> and caring for one another was evident during the Rāhui. It brought a whole lot of people together this is including, other hapū and iwi. (HL3, 2020)

Whānau health and wellbeing in Te Ao Māori comes in many shapes and forms to ensure Māori are grounded and connected. The observation of whakawhanaungatanga for community members and from community members for each other was highlighted in these extraordinary times. The need to adapt to change for Māori was a challenge during the Covid-19 pandemic and was associated with the tikanga and kawa of tangihanga, greetings and gatherings. This particularly linked to social distancing rules and a restriction around numbers of people who could gather in one place at the same time. However, Māori adapted to the change quickly (Parahi, 2020).

Cultural adaption occurred in many ways for Māori, where Māori needed to change their tikanga for caring, sharing and showing aroha. Iwi across the country developed pandemic plans that adapted to the nationwide response plan and whakawhanaungatanga took the form of cooking food for vulnerable whānau, delivering essential items to the elderly which, in turn, created and built relationships (Scanlon, 2020).

The Ngāti Manawa Rāhui enabled many relationships to develop and helped the Rāhui to progress well, because without positive relationships and a common goal it would have been more difficult to support the community to be safe. There were people in the Murupara area that did not know any other residents who worked on the checkpoints and from there built a relationship with others. These people are now lifelong friends (HL2, 2020).

There were multiple facets of people working on the checkpoints. Many were small business owners, social workers, forestry workers, labourers, teachers, hospitality workers, retail and emergency service employees. These are the people that decided to adapt to the new rules and regulations of the nation, these are the people that utilised whanaungatanga to keep Murupara safe and Covid-19 free (HL3,2020).

There were local gang members working on the checkpoints in Murupara and some were from rival gangs that put their gang-related issues aside to unite against the threat of Covid-19. It did not matter metaphorically what colour they represented, it was about caring for and protecting the residents of Murupara and the wider communities. There are relationships that are ongoing to this current day that were formed during the Rāhui and that is true whakawhanungatanga. Gang members interviewed by the on-line news service Newsroom across the country, discussed the impact of a united effort which was needed to ensure the community and community members were protected, with some commenting that they were volunteering for their family and to protect Māori communities from contamination (Peters, 2020).

The New Zealand police were also in partnership with the Ngāti Manawa Rāhui. The Rāhui team reported daily information to the local Murupara police officer and when there was trouble on the checkpoints, the volunteers were able to call the officer so he could address the issue. It could be argued that the New Zealand police were lacking in resources and were not capable of sending additional officers to rural areas to ensure protection and most rural areas were assigned only one police officer during Covid-19 level 4 lockdown (Boyle, 2020). The support from the New Zealand police was appreciated and the officer assigned to Murupara was in full support of the Rāhui and checkpoints as long as the volunteers worked to the rules and regulations that were stipulated by him and the checkpoint organisers (HL4, 2020). Although the police liaison person for Murupara was asked to be part of this research, he respectfully declined. It may be that this aspect of any future

Rāhui can be nurtured and strengthened as a resource for this community.

Safety

> There is a territorial aspect of Rāhui through karakia and chanting which dates back a few generations, it is a historical form of placing a Rāhui on yourself to keep yourself safe, another form of protection and safety. Protection from the unseen enemy, I had feelings of relief when the Rāhui was placed. (HL1, 2020)

As of May 2021, Covid-19 has killed at least 3.45 million people worldwide with numbers continuing to surge upwards (WHO, 2020). The understanding associated with the need to preserve, protect through restrictions is historically embedded in the collective memory of communities that were impacted by previous pandemics in Aotearoa (Summers et al., 2018). The Murupara community and Ngāti Manawa Iwi were extremely vulnerable to Covid-19 due to their rural location, lack of resources, limited health providers and having 10% of the population considered elderly that, according to the World Health Organisation (2020) were most at risk of dying from Covid-19 due to existing co-morbid health issues often associated with being elderly. The purpose of the Rāhui was to restrict access in and out of Murupara by setting up checkpoints and implement a track and trace system of people and their movements in and around the area in March 2020. Furthermore, the Rāhui focused on protecting the vulnerable including kuia, kaumatua, and children from an unseen threat that still at that time was little understood, from an enemy that was not visible, that had no feeling or sound, allowing community members to feel safe and protected. Moreover, the purpose of the Rāhui, according to hapū leaders, was to safeguard the local population and to preserve, maintain and save the resources in the Ngāti Manawa area such as water, natural rongoa, and food.

Support

> There was a lot of support coming from all over the motu, from the top of the North Island to the bottom. Iwi from all over Aotearoa were talking about our Rāhui and how they were in full support of it. We had the support of the New Zealand Police, we reported daily happenings to him [Police Liaison] on a daily basis. (HL5, 2020)

It is recorded that Aotearoa New Zealand rural towns have higher rates of chronic diseases, higher Māori populations, more elderly and poor access to health providers (MoH, 2020). The MoH were slow in providing information to health providers of the exact locations of confirmed cases, which made it harder for rural communities to plan for a community outbreak (Parahi, 2020).

Murupara is a rural township that is in the Whakatāne district council catchment. The speed at which the council moved in response to the Covid-19 pandemic was far too slow for many iwi members (HL1, 2020). Furthermore, the community were not informed on a community response plan—nor was one enforced. Additionally, this created a sense of disempowerment for community members and created ill feeling toward the district council. The tactical nature of the council response to the nationwide lockdown meant that the outcome community members sought were not achieved, therefore Ngāti Manawa iwi members and hapū leaders enforced a strategy of their own with an iwi response, and placed the Rāhui (HL4, 2020). Moreover, many in the Murupara community, iwi and hapū were in full support of the Rāhui. Support was demonstrated in various ways that included donating money (koha) to purchase resources like road cones, torches and safety equipment for checkpoint volunteers.

Appreciation for the 50 volunteers who worked a 24-hour rostered schedule on two checkpoints in the Murupara Ngāti Manawa

area was displayed in many forms including community members thanking volunteers verbally and providing a community appreciation dinner at a local marae (HL4, 2020). There was ample support shown by small local business owners who have been, and are still, experiencing financial strain due to the economic decline during the pandemic. They supported the placing of the Rāhui through volunteering or by koha of food or money (HL3, 2020).

The public needed to come together to triumph over the Covid-19 pandemic (Duncan, 2020). Furthermore, the unity that was present (and is still present to this current day) is beyond measure, not only in the Ngāti Manawa region, but across the country. Collectively, the unifying movement from Māori and their checkpoints in small rural communities helped defend the lockdown measures that would otherwise have not been supported by many Māori as it was a sacrifice of their personal freedom, their kawa and their tikanga. However, there remain significant areas of improvement for the support of Māori response plans associated with the ongoing issues, that remain important, caused by Covid-19 on Māori communities (HL3, 2020). Māori need the ongoing support for Māori initiatives such as Rāhui and Māori need to assert a perspective of equity that needs to be applied to all facets of nationwide pandemic response planning (Johnsen, 2020a).

Communication and community relationships

> There was an aspect of the Rāhui that was well utilised, keeping the communication lines open, helped ease people's worries, posting daily information was the key to keeping community members worry free. Educating travellers at the checkpoint worked. Communication between surrounding hapū and iwi encouraged positive relationships. (HL2, 2020)

Aotearoa New Zealand's experience with the Covid-19 virus in terms of mortality rates was comparatively less that other countries across the globe (WHO, 2020). Aotearoa New Zealand's government acted early and decisively through effectively communicating with the nation and it could be argued that the emergency management response plan set by the government could be adapted and adopted by other countries (Fifield, 2020). The national response plan displayed well communicated policies and demonstrated accountability for this plan through an Epidemic Response Committee that developed and introduced the four-level alert system for the pandemic (New Zealand Government, 2020).

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern placed restrictions on the entire country and the rules and regulations of the restrictions were equivalent to the rules and regulations of the Rāhui (HL5, 2020). The importance of effective communication regarding risk is ensuring all community members understand the information that has been provided. The daily briefings from the government on their goals and their obligation to reduce the spread of Covid-19 were presented exceptionally well. Alongside public and private initiatives to assist the government's efforts to contain the virus, collaborative communication proved to be beneficial for small, rural communities (Wilson, 2020).

The Ngāti Manawa hapū leaders sought input from interested community members to put restrictions on the movements of people in the area by firstly advertising on a Murupara community page via social media. Meetings that adhered to social distancing were held at Kanirangi Park and the iwi response plan for Ngāti Manawa was developed. A Rāhui was placed on Murupara that would take the form of checkpoints on all roads into Murupara. The iwi adopted the Prime Minister's nationwide response plan and reiterated the rules and regulations for the restrictions through an iwi Rāhui (HL5, 2020).

The core principles of communication during lockdown level 4 and the Ngāti Manawa

Rāhui were to educate travellers stopped at the checkpoints on the vulnerability of Murupara and to explain the role of the iwi response. On some occasions checkpoint volunteers needed to explain why the action of the Rāhui needed to be taken and the urgency of the action. The role of the volunteers was crucial during the Rāhui as they provided an "on the ground" role conveying information between government agencies and the community, thereby keeping the communication lines open and flowing. The Rāhui volunteers created a sense of trust with the wider community because they helped explain to travellers and non-travellers changes that were happening nationwide, sometimes on a daily basis.

A good flow of communication allowed the community to feel included and informed, supported iwi autonomy and created trust, partnerships and collaboration between surrounding iwi and communities (HL2, 2020). Working on the checkpoints was voluntary and there were essential workers who would work at their paid jobs, then volunteer on rostered checkpoints (HL3, 2020). The teams working on the checkpoints recorded and collated daily data of travellers and these data were published on the local Murupara community page.

This created some tensions and mixed emotions of anger and empathy when community members realised that there were travellers coming from different regions of New Zealand to utilise Murupara resources including those items that were becoming scarce in other towns. It can be argued that panic buying caused valued resources to become scarce. The community survey demonstrated this through comments about needing more support from the government and support for other people in Murupara who were not Ngāti Manawa.

Online community survey

A total of 71 people responded to the community survey that was conducted through Manawa FM in November 2020; 63 were current residents. Four non-residents responded as well and four people who were staying in the area over the time the Rāhui was set. Non-residents have not been included in the data.

For the purpose of this report, the community survey was to assess the feeling of safety and preparedness of the community members to comply with the understanding of Rāhui. Only three (4.8%) of the residents surveyed did not feel well informed about the community Rāhui and identified it did not support their feeling of safety during the pandemic. This denotes that sixty (95.2%) felt well informed about the Rāhui and this knowledge increased their sense of safety. A total of 62 (98.4 %) of the residents indicated that they understood what the Rāhui meant with only one (1.6%) indicating they had no understanding of Rāhui. Sixty-one (96.8%) of the residents indicated that they would support Rāhui in the future as a response to another pandemic, leaving two (3.2%) indicating they would not support any future Rāhui in Murupara. This suggests that one (1.6%) of those surveyed understood Rāhui but did not support its implementation.

Written responses from the community survey highlighted common themes indicated in the hapū leaders kōrero linked to the Rāhui supporting a sense of safety:

> I support the Rāhui whole heartedly. It needs to be in legislation.
>
> When you see rival gangs for instance come together not as a gang but as a group to help keep us all safe speaks volumes on its own.
>
> Thank you all to the Whānau who put themselves on the front line to serve and protect our people.

Diverse members of the community including those from rival local gang members engaged in serving the community emphasising them as a significant and locally available resource in

a time of need. People came together and worked together. Friendships and respect were built and stereotypes were challenged culminating in the reduction of possible harm to a vulnerable community. This was important in terms of the suggestion from the survey that linked Mana Motuhake for the community of Murupara and need for local solutions to adversity. It could be argued that this is associated with a strengths-based understanding of community resilience and capacity for Māori organisations, and their ability to organise a response to the pandemic (McMeeking & Savage, 2020). Moreover, the Māori mobilisation, self-responsibility and the practice of localised self-determination has been described as pivotal in the positive outcome for Māori health during the pandemic.

Some challenges were identified in the comments in the community survey. One comment in the survey asked that local gang members who could be identified by wearing their gang regalia on the checkpoints, refrain from doing so. Counter-arguments were presented in the survey that discussed the local gang members as simply being a group and that they need to be reframed as members of a community and in service of that community.

The comments from the survey discussed the gratitude of a community for the volunteers who provided a sense of safety for many. A strong sense of understanding of what Rāhui means was evident in the survey underpinning the discussion of protection and prevention being the key aspects of maintaining the checkpoints in and out of Murupara and supporting a sense of safety. The survey responses were strongly in favour of supporting Rāhui in any future pandemic or the need to protect this rural community and compare with the discussion from hapū leaders in supporting the local population who were at most risk in this pandemic by championing more autonomy and authority for Māori in regard to self-determination—and striving to understand the relevance of Māori knowledge in terms of Rāhui. It is argued by the researchers that one of the key outcomes for this pandemic has been the coming together of a community, and this was described as "people coming out of the woodwork" developing connections, friendships and building a sense of community (HL3, 2020). This aspect of the Covid-19 response in Murupara creates an immeasurable nuance of a willingness to come together in a time of need, and in a collective understanding that links intrinsically to a Te Ao Māori understanding that cements this idea of preservation, protection from a deep understanding of knowing of what to do.

Strengths and issues of this research

This research has been conducted by a social work student who has lived in Murupara all of her life. She is an active and up-and-coming leader of her community. This relationship facilitated the engagement of the hapū leaders in open and honest kōrero that would not have happened had the researcher been an outsider. She also had insider knowledge of the Rāhui (Ngati Manawa). Another strength was the in-depth interviews with five hapū leaders who were able to provide insight of their rohe and their collective responsibility of Te Mana Motuhake as an inherited authority. Their willingness to share their kōrero has ensured the legitimacy and relevance of the information.

The community survey had 63 respondents who identified themselves as residents of Murupara out of a population of approximately 1,815 (Stats NZ, 2018). Although this is a small number of respondents, it has to be remembered that Murupara has a young population, with almost one third of residents below the age of 15. Furthermore, approximately half of the residential households do not have internet access, which may have restricted access to the survey.

Nevertheless, the findings do provide a snapshot of the feeling of the community of Murupara. While findings cannot be generalised widely across communities in Aotearoa New Zealand, the thoughts and feelings of Murupara residents are likely similar to those of people living in similar small, rural communities with a high percentage of the population being Māori.

Conclusion

The authors of this project would argue that the themes of understanding, karakia and whakawhanungatanga are closely linked to a Te Ao Māori world view.

Understanding relates to knowledge about Rāhui and its uses both in historical and contemporary times and reaches back into the collective memory of Ngāti Manawa to access a way of knowing how Rāhui can support the iwi to remain safe. Karakia relates to the process of placing a Rāhui and consolidates the spiritual nuance that accompanies Rāhui. Whakawhanungatanga is associated with the sense of community and aroha that metaphorically added another layer of keeping whānau both physically and spiritually safe during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Decisive action was the key to preventing possible aversive impacts of the deadly Covid-19 pandemic for New Zealand that could be attributed to the swift intervention from the governing Labour Party and its leader. However, it was the decisive action and support of many people coming together in this small, rural town that complemented this action by utilising their own resources and embedded community historical knowledge. This research highlights strong support for the Rāhui placed in Murupara by those interviewed one on one, and those who engaged in the online survey.

Rāhui as a key component of any pandemic response plan and is fundamental in terms of compliance for Māori through this deep understanding of the need to prevent and protect communities from an unseen enemy. Furthermore, Rāhui highlights the ability and flexibility of Māori to mobilise quickly and efficiently in a short period of time. This crucial aspect of setting up checkpoints supported a grateful community to feel safe and secure. The checkpoints provided effective communication about the community to travellers, and an added layer of safety through a track and trace system of who visited the area. Relationships were built where none had existed, and residents of Murupara were supported with information, food and friendship through a sense of service to each other in this small community. This included members of the community who live on the fringes of what is considered the social normative. Various groups came together, and each person was valued equally as a defender of those vulnerable to the complications of Covid-19 within the district.

Additionally, the Rāhui in Murupara demonstrates a sense of bravery associated with those community members who put their own health at risk to place the Rāhui in service of their loved ones and all of those people who reside or who stayed in the area over the lockdown period. The collective memory of Ngāti Manawa meant that they knew the Rāhui they placed in Murupara would work, however the correct protocols had to be enacted for the Rāhui to be placed.

Recommendations

This research informs the MoH and local authorities of the need to engage with kaumatua and see them as a valuable resource for the mobilisation of local community resources in a time where they, as governing bodies, cannot provide them adequately or quickly for vulnerable populations. The Rāhui placed in Murupara, March 23, 2020, is a legitimate and very accessible concept that is deeply rooted in Te Ao Māori (Ngāti Manawa) knowledge and highlights its validity going forward. This links to the simplicity of its concept that is

widely understood and accepted by Māori and supports Rāhui as a viable policy that can be made lawful as part of the country's national response to the inevitability of future pandemics.

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Asians in Aotearoa New Zealand:
A population of interest for social work

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ABSTRACT

Aotearoa New Zealand is a country where cultural differences are widespread and longstanding. The Treaty of Waitangi laid the foundation for an inclusive society where citizens' full participation is granted. Nevertheless, a number of Asians seem to have limited access to the benefits of an inclusive society, with great concerns over social isolation and marginalisation. This requires social workers attend to Asians' life challenges, justified by key principles of human rights and social justice; yet a paucity of training exists in social work education, limiting their ability to work with this population. More training is necessary in the social work curriculum through which social workers enhance cultural competence, with relevant knowledge and skills, in relation to working with Asians in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Keywords: Asians; cultural competence; social work education

Last summer, I visited the Chinese Settlement in Arrowtown where I found a plate at the front stating "Chinese gold miners – Invited but Unwelcome." I believe this brief sentence well captures society's reception towards them historically. On the way back to my hotel, I felt saddened by the fact that the current society's reception towards Asians has not much changed, or perhaps has been worsened since ethnic divisions at this time seem to have only intensified (Weld & Appleton, 2008). This article is based on my reflections upon teaching social work students who rarely have direct interactions with Asians, and subsequently do not have an opportunity to learn about their life challenges.

As a scholar in immigration studies, I acknowledge that one of noticeable outcomes of globalisation is the age of immigration (Castles & Miller, 2009), with resultant increased ethnic diversity in modern societies. Aotearoa New Zealand is not exempt from this global phenomenon, in that a quarter of its residents were born overseas in 2018 (Statistics New Zealand, n.d.), and this demographic change has transformed citizens' every interaction as well as the reality social workers encounter on a daily basis.

Currently, social workers inevitably engage with people who have different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, including their colleagues. Indeed, many social workers already work for social services where the programmes primarily target specific ethnic groups' life challenges. In this sense, as an educator in social work, I emphasise the need for training to explore and understand the wide range of issues involved in working with Asians. This position is echoed by the practice standards of both the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW, 2018) and the Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB, 2016) which requests its members to work inclusively and respectfully with different ethnic and cultural groups. Having said that, this article questions "Where can social workers learn or obtain the relevant knowledge and skills?"

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While social workers work with "ethnically and linguistically diverse communities" (Goh, 2019, p. 48), I am concerned that the lack of training related to Asians' life challenges may limit their capacity to comply with the practice standards described earlier. A paucity of training appears in the social work curriculum for social workers to be exposed to and understand Asians' narratives, despite Asians comprising 15.1% of the total population in 2018 (Statistics New Zealand, n.d.). For example, although there are cultural courses pertaining to biculturalism and the Pacific model, no tertiary education institutes (TEIs) currently offer training programmes specifically related to working with Asians in New Zealand. At best, some of their courses contain multicultural discourses, but lack a focus on Asians' experiences in New Zealand (Massey University, n.d.; The University of Auckland, n.d.). Training where social workers learn the characteristics of Asians in historical and social arrangements, while critically considering their position in society, is a necessity in social work education.

Understanding Asians within the immigration context

Immigration has been an integral part of Aotearoa New Zealand society since 1840 when Māori signed the Treaty of Waitangi. Since then, British setters have been the main source of immigrants as the then government wished to entrench the interests of British imperialism (Bedford et al., 2010). Accordingly, numbers of Asians were historically kept low by all possible legislative means, including a poll tax on Chinese immigrants (1881–1914) (King, 2003) and the Old Age Pension Act 1898 which denied Chinese or other Asiatics' access to pensions (Te Ara, n.d.).

Having said that, although the first numbers of Chinese miners arrived in this country a few years after the British settlers, the presence of Asians was broadly invisible in society (Hoadley, 2003), remaining under 1% of the total population until the 1990s (Jackson & McRobie, 2005), and being forced to maintain a sojourner community (McKinnon, 1996). As such, the legacy of the colonisation has resulted in a dominant culture of whiteness in Aotearoa New Zealand society (Chenoweth & McAuliffe, 2021) where many Asians experience a wide range of inequality, compounded by discrimination and racism, in relation to the majority-minority cultures. According to the Social Report in 2016, Asians were identified as the most discriminated against group in New Zealand society (Ministry of Social Development, 2016).

The dominance of British settlers lasted until changes to immigration laws ensued in the 1980s which abolished racial preference (Cheyne et al., 2008). Since then, society has witnessed such a massive inflow of Asians that, currently, 707,598 Asians reside throughout New Zealand in 2018 (Statistics New Zealand, n.d.) boosting the Asian population from less than 1% of the total population in the early 1980s to 15.1% of the total population today. In this sense, I refer to the majority of Asians as immigrants, though I acknowledge their presence in Aotearoa New Zealand since the early 1800s (King, 2003) as well as the existence of Asians entering Aotearoa New Zealand as refugees (Kim & Cooper, 2021). Currently, Chinese (231,387) is the largest Asian ethnic group, followed by Indian (221,916), Filipino (72,612) and Korean (30,792) (Statistics New Zealand, n.d.).

Meanwhile, it should be noted that categorising all Asians as one group is almost impossible and problematic due to their greater diverse variations (Ho, 2015). "Asians" are people from a vast region that contains over 60% of the world's population, east of (and including) Afghanistan, and south of (and including) China (Ministry of Health, 2006). Each Asian ethnic group has their own unique cultural and linguistic background, education and socio-economic status. Additionally, a number of Asians in Aotearoa New Zealand are refugees who fled from South-East Asian countries

such as Cambodia and Vietnam during the 1970s and, more recently, Afghanistan and Myanmar. Since they are people who are forcibly pushed into an alien environment (Ward et al., 2001), their experiences inevitably differ from those Asians who have relocated voluntarily for long-term resettlement. Significant differences exist within the Asian community itself; that is to say, there are "multiple dimensions of difference within Aotearoa New Zealand's Asian communities" (Ho, 2015, p. 97).

Nevertheless, while recognising their different demographic characteristics, cultures, and languages, I suggest social workers begin to examine Asians' life challenges in the context of immigration. Since the majority of them in Aotearoa New Zealand today have lived here for less than three decades, Asians, regardless of their status of entry, have settlement issues in common. In other words, whether they are immigrants or refugees, Asians have to re-establish their lives in contexts with dramatically different social and cultural attributes (Kim & Hocking, 2016). This would be a starting point where social workers could obtain foundational knowledge with which they can later understand the characteristics of each Asian ethnic group separately. Despite their different statuses of entry, skills and life situations, there are replicated reports that the experience Asians collectively share is of struggling to re-build their lives with an ethnic minority status. Understanding of Asians' life issues within this framework will be a pathway for social workers in relation to obtaining and improving their cultural competence in working with this population.

For many Asians, settling in a foreign country involves a profound non-normative life transition in which they strive to navigate in two cultural spaces. It is a stress-inducing process requiring extensive adaptation, influenced by a number of factors at both the social and individual levels. Asians, regardless of their status of entry, have to adapt to new and often alien surroundings (Lee & Keown, 2018). Their ethnic minority status in society brings myriad acculturative stressors such as loss of cultural norms, language, religious customs and social support systems (Levitt et al., 2005), while their status as new arrivals results in a strong attachment to their own culture (Choi & Thomas, 2009). From this perspective, a process of settlement includes conflict, alienation, and loss (Pepworth & Nash, 2009) and, as a result, their potential is underestimated, which may limit their participation in civic society (Kim, 2021).

Of particular note, Asians' stories of settlement exist in social contexts (Kim & Hocking, 2016). The stresses of life transition to the host society are all magnified when they encounter a prejudiced social reception (Abbott et al., 2000), while being forced to carry a sense of otherness in society (Ho, 2015). The historically embedded ethnic inequality has been perpetuated by ethnically biased social policy (Cheyne et al., 2008) whereby Asians' membership is continually denied in society (Ng, 2017). This inequality can be witnessed today in the Covid-19 pandemic, when many Asians report Covid-fuelled discrimination and racism (Nielsen, 2021), while race pay inequity persists (Anthony, 2015) and Asians' membership as citizens continues to be judged by the attitudes of the host society (Kim, 2021).

From my reflections in teaching social work students, some found this point to be exaggerated, in particular for those who believe in this country's carefully constructed racial harmony (Duncan, 2007), questioning whether it is the case that all Asians are in despair. Of course, the answer to this, is no. I do not deny that there are numerous cases of successful Asians in certain areas of social settings such as health, education, and employment. Such cases could arguably even include the author who has an Asian immigrant background. I do appreciate societal efforts towards Asians' success and the fact that more New Zealanders are beginning to perceive Asians' positive contribution to the

society (Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), 2015). However, what I emphasise in this article is that it is equally important to note that, despite societal efforts to enhance Asians' participation in society, the history of anti-Asian racism still remains in Aotearoa New Zealand (Cheyne et al., 2008), resulting in formidable barriers for many Asians to obtain equal citizenship (Ng, 2017). Many Asians' stories of loss often become stories of despair when they face unwelcoming attitudes from the receiving society, and this experience undermines their perception of identity and well-being.

Asians in social work education

For Asians, their ethnic minority status often confines their involvement in the host community, leading to their high levels of social isolation and economic marginalisation (Ho, 2015; Kim & Hocking, 2016; Lee & Keown, 2018). Such disruption potentially devalues their sense of self, as a person's sense of self emerges largely as a result of his/her everyday experiences (Wilcock & Hocking, 2015), and given that health is created by a person's daily experiences (WHO, 2001), increasing numbers of Asians are at a higher risk of diverse health problems—in particular mental health problems such as anxiety and depression (Kim et al., 2010).

Based on this concern, I postulate that Asians should be defined as a population of interest for social work in Aotearoa New Zealand; this is justified by key principles of human rights and social justice (Chenoweth & McAuliffe, 2021). Since it professionally emerged in the 19th century, social work has always worked with profoundly vulnerable populations, which are overwhelmed by oppressive lives and by circumstances they are powerless to control (Doel, 2012). In this sense, the scope of social work in Aotearoa New Zealand must grow to embrace the Asian population, and this requires social workers to improve cultural competence including their tolerance for differences, their understanding of various cultural norms, and their ability to cross-culturally communicate (Abrams & Gibson, 2007).

Educators in social work have a responsibility to provide a sound educational opportunity through which social workers obtain the required knowledge and skills for their practice. To work with Asians, relevant knowledge and skills include the history of immigration, institutional racism and its impact on people, the acculturation model, theories underpinned by anti-racism and social justice, and cross-cultural skills for culturally appropriate and sensitive assessments and interventions. Social work is a profession which exercises judgement in the face of complex and competing interests and claims. To that end, curriculum content on working with Asians is required where social workers understand ways of conceptualising differences while critically reflecting on their position in society, and this effort aligns with TEIs' commitments to having programmes in which social workers learn how to work with different ethnic and cultural groups in line with the practice standards of both the ANZASW and the SWRB.

Conclusion

This viewpoint is a reflection of my experience as a scholar in immigration studies, educator in social work and practitioner working with Asians. Despite their significant proportion in society, Asians are invisible (Kim & Hocking, 2016) and powerless in society (Nielsen, 2021). Just as in the 1800s, it seems that most Asians are invited to this country but unwelcomed by the host society. Asians are one of vulnerable populations in Aotearoa New Zealand who deserve social workers' attention in addressing their life challenges. This inevitably requires educators in social work to prepare training in which social workers learn how to effectively engage with Asians, in order for social workers to be able to meet their legal and ethical duties.

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Disrupting Family Group Conference practice in Aotearoa New Zealand: A learning project

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ABSTRACT

Participation in, or facilitation of, Family Group Conferences (FGCs) and *hui-ā-whānau* (family meetings) are key social work practice activities in Aotearoa New Zealand. Social work students are expected to graduate with the cultural competence necessary to work ethically with *whānau Māori* according to the bicultural practice principles of *Te Tiriti ō Waitangi*. This competence includes skills in the facilitation of joint decision making, shared responsibility and the use of *Māori* engagement principles, all of which are fundamental to the traditional and professional practice of *hui* (meetings).

We argue that, for social work students to enter the profession with the ability to work effectively in a statutory setting, and with whānau *Māori,* learning must go beyond the processes of the FGC as set out in the Oranga Tamariki Act (1989)—originally the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act, 1989—and embrace the historical and cultural intent of this practice. It must encourage students to be mindful of their cultural selves in the process and to reflect on the tensions arising from how the FGC sits within a statutory, managerial, and neoliberal policy framework. This article applies concepts of Māori and Western pedagogy to a learning strategy developed by the authors over a period of four years. The Reality FGC Project began as a way of assisting students to develop skills and apply theory to practice, and unexpectedly became an opportunity to reflexively and iteratively consider the role of social work education in re-thinking FGC practice in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Keywords: Family Group Conference; social work education; interprofessional education; integrated learning; critical reflection; Pūao-te-Āta-tū

> Ngā hiahia kia tītiro ki te tīmatatanga, a, ka kite ai tātou te mutunga
>
> (You must understand the beginning if you wish to see the end)

AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND SOCIAL WORK *33(4)*, 82–88.

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Introducing the authors

Raewyn Nordstrom facilitated the first Family Group Conference (FGC) in Aotearoa New Zealand after the Oranga Tamariki Act (formerly the Children Young Persons and Their Families Act) was passed in 1989 and continued in her role as FGC coordinator in Kirikiriroa (Hamilton), Aotearoa New Zealand until she retired in 2019. The considers herself a Native Disruptor of Ngāti Hine, Rongomaiwahine, Ngāti Whakaue and Tainui descent.

Deb Stanfield is a social worker with child protection, social work education and supervision experience in Aotearoa New Zealand. Nō Yorkshire ōku mātua. Nō

Montréal, Canada ahau. E noho ana mātou ko tōku whānau ki Te Kawa.

This article refers to a recorded conversation between the authors, in which Raewyn, who facilitated the first FGC in Aotearoa (and in the world), reflects on 30 years of coordinating FGCs (available via podcast).

The aim of this article is to describe an FGC learning project created for social work students in Aotearoa New Zealand, and to rationalise it using Māori and Western concepts of adult learning and Ako (higher learning). The FGC is an intervention enshrined in New Zealand's child protection legislation, the Oranga Tamariki Act (1989)—hereafter OT Act—and designed to ensure shared decision making and responsibility on behalf of mokopuna (child/children) and rangatahi (young people). The Reality FGC project, which involves students in a simulated FGC (using role play), provides opportunity for them to prepare for the experience, to actively engage in it, and then to critically reflect on it. It is argued that learning about the FGC in this context serves to develop critical practice skills, and to reinforce the "spirit" of the FGC as inspired by *Pūao-te-Āta-tū* (1986) and subsequently intended by the OT Act (1989).

We reference a podcast created by the authors in which Raewyn, who facilitated the first FGC in Aotearoa and, in fact, the world, remembers the important development of Pūao-te-Āta-tū (1986), and the golden promise of the early days. The intention of the podcast was to contribute to the archives an historical account of the FGC.

Background—the FGC

The FGC is promoted as a whānau-led, decision-making forum inspired by the concept of *whānau rangatiratanga* (whānau decision-making and voice) and reflecting traditional Māori whānau problem-solving methods. It was formally incorporated in the OT Act (1989) as a direct response to the recommendations of Pūao-te-Āta-tū (Day Break) released in 1988 by the Ministerial Advisory Committee on a Māori Perspective (Department of Social Welfare). This document provided evidence that the then Department of Social Welfare was institutionally racist, and solutions were put forward to change this, including that Māori be actively and meaningfully involved in decision making about their *mokopuna* and *rangatahi*. The Pūao-te-Āta-tū Report (1986) is generally accepted in Aotearoa New Zealand as pivotal to the re-visioning of social work for Māori social workers, and for social work with whānau Māori (Hollis-English, 2012).

The FGC is a hui (meeting) with the legal mandate of planning for the safety of children and young people who are at risk of abuse, and involves family, whānau, and professionals who have a relationship with the child or young person. Social workers, the police, or any other organisation with concerns about the safety of mokopuna or rangatahi (deemed in need of "care and protection") can make a referral for an FGC under any of the grounds contained in s14(1) of the OT Act (1989). These grounds include concerns about child physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse, and neglect. There are also FGCs held related to youth justice processes, which have the additional focus of attending to what is behind the young person's offending, how they can take responsibility for this offending and how reparation can be made to the victim. Although the FGC was formalised in the OT Act 1989, it is recognised that social workers applied informal methods of whānau resolution and decision-making long before this (Hyslop, in press).

It is a commonly accepted in Aotearoa New Zealand that the original intent of the FGC has become eroded in a neoliberal, largely managerial social service environment to the detriment of children and families in Aotearoa New Zealand (Hyslop, in press; Moyle, 2014; Moyle & Tauri, 2016; Sharples, 2008; Tauri, 2015). There is a problematic tension between the family support and

child protection mandates of the FGC process (Connolly, 2006).

> The purpose of the FGC is to give family opportunity to propose a plan for the safety of children, however the authority for these plans remains with the statutory social worker, and the judicial system. However, it is preferred that issues are resolved informally without resorting to a more formal FGC. FGCs were reported as being oppressive and predetermined, rather than empowering, processes (Hyslop, in press, p. 169).

Raewyn convened more than 3500 FGCs over thirty years and can recall many of the whānau by name and outcome. In our podcast conversation (Nordstrom & Stanfield, 2019), she remembers a challenge from a *kaumatua* (respected elder) about the notion of whānau decision making, and how she, in turn, challenged managers to support ideas brought forward by whānau and families. Raewyn comments on the challenges for *wahine Māori* (Māori women) in this role and the "creative native disrupting" skills needed to assert the rights and needs of mokopuna and whānau. Her stories also highlight her role in providing consistency for whānau and her colleagues over the many social, legislative, policy and management changes of the last three decades.

Context and rationale

The course relevant to this project began as a child protection elective, designed for a range of social and health care students (social work, counselling, nursing, midwifery), and partly in response to directives of the *White Paper for Vulnerable Children* (Ministry for Social Development, 2012), mandating that all professionals working with children develop child protection knowledge and skills. The course included basic information about child abuse, child protection frameworks, and supported development of practice skills, including collaborative working, group facilitation and conflict-resolution skills. It was envisaged that, by using an inter-professional education approach, students would gain skills in working collaboratively.

It was also expected that by using reflective practice methods, including the transformational *Takepū*-principled approach to learning (Pohatu, 2013), students would be attentive and responsive to their own world views, cultural perspectives, and personal experiences relevant to child abuse. They would develop the ability to think critically, to "read one's world more deeply and ask meaningful 'why' questions" (Akhter & Leonard, 2014, p. 95). Ngā takepū is one part of the wider *kaupapa wānanga* framework accompanied by *ngā ūara* (values) and *ngā huangā* (attributes) (Pohatu, 2011).

Regardless of the context of their work, social workers and other human service professionals are frequently involved as professional members of FGCs; it can be a complex process, often emotionally fraught, and its success depends on a high level of professional skill and understanding. It is the shared opinion of the authors that there is specific value in introducing students to the FGC; it provides a non-threatening insight into its history, including the role of colonisation, structure and process, an opportunity to explore the myths and politics surrounding it, and the development of the necessary practice skills.

Learning principles

Recent Aotearoa New Zealand literature about social work education incorporates key adult learning principles, specifically those of experiential learning (Marlowe et al., 2015), integrated learning (Gibbons & Gray, 2002), reflective learning (Adamson, 2011; Tsuruda & Shepherd, 2016), and Takepū-principled learning (Pohatu, 2013), all of which support development of reflective and critical practice, or *whaiwakaaro*, a professional competency requirement (Social Workers Registration Board [SWRB], 2015).

These approaches are sourced primarily from indigenous, constructivist and humanistic learning theories; for example, the "communities of practice" situated learning concept (Wenger, 2006), reflective learning (Schön, 1987), transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991), and critical reflection (Brookfield, 2009).

The Takepū (principles) framework (Pohatu, 2011, 2013), provides what the author refers to as "signposts" to guide critical reflection, which aspires to transformational learning. It supports students to develop awareness of who they are, to become closer to their cultural and spiritual principles and identities. There is recognised value in sharing stories and engaging in dialogue which develops awareness of multiple contexts and dismantles assumptions. There is particular focus on the various outcomes of historical processes, for example colonisation (Akhter, 2015).

Stewart (2013) provides practical applications of a variety of adult learning theories to classroom activities. For example, social and situated learning such as that proposed by Lave and Wenger (1991), "emphasize the value of social interaction in expanding understandings and transferring learning across contexts... providing opportunity to apply learning from the closed world of the campus to the real world" (Stewart, 2013, p. 14). This theory supports how the Reality FGC experience influences learning, suggesting that it assists students to become active participants in their potential communities of practice, to overcome barriers to belonging in that community, and to begin developing an identity in that community. Although the students are role playing a simulated scenario, they are engaging on location with practitioners, and experience the nervousness, excitement, and performance anxiety not dissimilar to the "real thing." The purpose of this is, as Lave and Wenger said, "not to learn *from* talk but to learn *to* talk" (cited in Stewart, 2013, p. 14).

It is accepted in the field of social work education that practical/practicum experiences are pivotal in assisting students to integrate theory with practice (Marlowe et al., 2015). This experiential mode of learning offers opportunity to develop deeper reflective awareness because of challenges to beliefs, hegemonic assumptions and perceptions that come about when faced with professional tensions and dilemmas. The Reality FGC activity offers a "field-like" experience in a snapshot which can then be actively reflected upon as a group in a classroom setting and/or immediately reflected upon personally in an online environment. It essentially provides a *practice* upon which students can reflect, which is a challenge in tertiary settings, and which enables reflective learning to be supported by the tutor. "Schön argued for a step beyond simply matching classroom problems to textbook theories; the practitioner is required to call heavily on professional experience to construct solutions on-demand to unique situations" (Stewart, 2013, p. 16).

And lastly, social work education incorporates ideas of integrated learning, where "the role of the teacher as facilitator is to assist learners to make links between different kinds of experience and to make connections between areas of knowledge" (Gibbons & Gray, 2002, p. 532). The FGC is underpinned by theoretical, cultural, and historical knowledge, and drawing links between these areas of knowledge, while experiencing the FGC process results in a more powerful, integrated learning experience. It is acknowledged that the emotional and relational aspects of experience can create barriers to gaining new knowledge or can distort meaning. An educator using an integrated approach would take the opportunity to "challenge interpretations of experience and to foster this process in the group environment" (Gibbons & Gray, 2002, p. 532).

In summary, this project is an experiential learning activity that relies on student

participation in a simulated activity, draws on community resources and knowledge, links experienced practitioner knowledge with student learning and provides a realistic social work environment and scenario within which to learn practical and reflective skills. The opportunity offered to students parallels, as closely as possible, that which they will experience in practice. A combination of learning theories is employed to maximise potential learning that can come of the opportunity, in this case the Reality FGC.

The learning partnership

The Reality FGC is supported by a partnership between *Tangata Whenua* (Māori) and *Tangata Tiriti* (non-Māori) practitioners. It was the authors' hope and intention for students to witness a professional relationship that mirrors bicultural or Treaty-based best practice—that of respect and trust built over time—prior to the commencement of the project. The relationship between professional and community tertiary educators also offers opportunity for community-building and professional development (Gibbons & Gray, 2002).

The practitioner and the educator hold distinct roles in this collaboration. The practitioner manages the practice experience by actively convening an FGC in a way that most closely resembles their everyday work. The educator provides the background knowledge, sets up a reflective environment, and acts as an observer throughout the conference, collecting points of potential learning, and ensuring the well-being of participants. Both practitioner and educator prepare for the conference together, including the development and refinement of a case study to best reflect situations common to current, local practice, paying attention to the cultural and ethical factors related to this, and which is most conducive to the unique learning needs of the group.

For example, the practitioner suggests which family members should be present, which professionals might attend, and what support might be needed for vulnerable family members. Prior to the conference, the practitioner arranges for the family groups to be met with separately to prepare them for the conference. This includes assisting the students to assume their roles, understand their rights, express how they, as whānau, may be feeling and subsequently behaving, and to ensure all members feel safe and supported (Nordstrom & Stanfield, 2019). This practice parallels the type of preparation conducted alongside whānau.

Meanwhile, the educator has facilitated learning about the cultural history of the family group conference, its intention, its place in legislation and the challenges inherent in its practice. A reflective and critical learning environment is established, as described earlier in this article, with the aim of enabling students to think deeply, to focus on who they are (*Ko wai au?*), to examine assumptions and power dynamics. A podcast created by the authors, which offers both an example of a reflective conversation and a recorded history of the FGC, adds to this *kete* (basket) of teaching resources (Nordstrom & Stanfield, 2019).

Reality FGC conferences have so far been held in the offices of Oranga Tamariki. Although in practice whānau are typically offered a choice of venue (for example, on Marae, community houses, homes, or church settings), this has been a practical choice for student learning given proximity to the campus and availability of space for large numbers of students. The suitability of the venue is an ongoing conversation, mirroring that which occurs in practice, and is another example of the parallels between social work practice and social work education which the students can be involved in and learn from.

The FGC coordinator/practitioner creates a group environment that follows principles of *tikanga* (Māori customary practices) and *whakawhanaungatanga* (the process of establishing relationships). They

communicate the need for unconditional respect. As Raewyn says in the podcast, regardless of who we are or what we've done, "We are all equal, there is no hierarchy, no one is more or less important" (Nordstrom & Stanfield, 2019). Clear ground rules about behaviour are laid, the emotions and difficulties of participating in the process are acknowledged, and skills are used to ensure everyone has an opportunity to speak and be heard. The practitioner respectfully and firmly manages behaviour that breaks tikanga and uses appropriate cultural skills to engage and support whānau, ensuring a sense of belonging and trust. They maintain a key focus on mokopuna as central to the hui, and are clear with those students, especially those playing the professional roles that they speak *to* family rather than *about* them. The plan developed from the conference is clear and "smart," and connected to the wishes, capacity and rights of whānau.

After the FGC is held, the educator provides a reflective space to recall the experience of the FGC, to understand more deeply the emotions felt, to make sense of what unfolded. Students are assisted to contextualise the experience within the social work skills, principles, practice and structural issues, and the history of colonisation introduced prior to the event. Reflection and dialogue prompt thinking about belief systems, self-awareness, and healing, thereby creating opportunity for mindsets to be transformed (Akhter, 2016).

Summary

This article has described the Reality FGC project and considered it in the context of adult and higher learning principles, and flexible learning approaches. Practical applications of Ngā Takepū and humanistic theories of student learning (which include reflection and transformative learning) emphasise developing skills in "meta-cognition," support for self-directed learning and a critical awareness of the multiple ways people experience the world.

The practical application of situated learning includes "developing organizational awareness by providing opportunities for peripheral forms of engagement with professional communities" (Stewart, 2013, pp. 14). This is a feature of the Reality FGC project and can be further developed by incorporating other applications suggested within this learning theory. For example, the use of *wānanga ipurangi* (online collaborative tools) that includes practitioners, has the potential to increase the learning and community building opportunities for social work students.

Finally, although there is international research about FGCs (and their relationship to the restorative justice movement) (Connolly, 2006), there is little research on the effectiveness of FGCs in Aotearoa (Kanyi, 2013). There has been robust criticism of FGC delivery in Aotearoa New Zealand, their effectiveness, and their purpose:

> Family group conferencing in our court has gone a bit astray, too many lawyers and such involved. They have lost the plot from where we had it, where it is just community and people talking to each other in a Māori format. Very easy, very simple! It works because we cannot talk past each other. We are there identifying what needs to be done. (Sharples, 2008, p. 51)

There is ongoing, widespread condemnation of child protection and youth justice services in Aotearoa with several government-led and independent practice reviews over the last three years, and the key messages of Pūao-te-Āta-tū continue to be referenced in this space (Boulton et al., 2020). Students must be connected to this analysis, be supported to envision a role for themselves in responding to it, and to find ways of promoting genuine trust in whānau decision-making and autonomy.

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Pride and shame in child and family protection: Emotions and the search for humane practice

Matthew Gibson
Policy Press, Great Britain, 2019
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Have you ever wondered what it's like to work in child and family social work? Have you ever considered what feelings and emotions the social worker and families experience while being part of this journey? As a supervisor of social workers, are you needing to gain a deeper understanding of your supervisee's experience in their chosen fields? As a provider of social services, have you ever considered how the very structure of your service may influence feelings of pride and shame amongst your employers? If your answer is yes to any of these questions, this is the book for you!

Initially, it was the book's title that really caught my eye. Such emotive words as *pride* and *shame* stirred my interest. Words that have always resonated with me at a personal level in my search to understand humanity and professionally as a social worker and supervisor in striving to provide and encourage therapeutic supervision that acknowledges the role emotion plays in our practice. As a health social worker of several years, with my major experiences being mental health, child and family protection issues are a smaller part of my practice. As a supervisor, I am now witnessing the impact of this subject via supervisees who share their journeys in child and family social work and so my interest on the subject has been further sparked.

If you are a social worker or a supervisor, the book not only encourages reflection but almost demands it! Thoughts drop into place, align and provide understanding and clarity and, in fact, a wider connection occurs as you realise just how big a role pride and shame play as a culture, within the wider environment of workplaces and indeed as a country which continues to experience the aftermath of the Treaty of Waitangi journey. Its timing could not be more appropriate either, as New Zealand's largest child and family protection agency comes under public scrutiny and we begin to hear the stories of those working within this very organisation.

Matthew Gibson is a social work academic in the Department of Social Policy and Social Work at the University of Birmingham, England. His research interests relate to emotions and professional practice, and particularly, the emotions of pride and shame. Dr Gibson undertook a study on pride and shame in child and family social work and this book is based on his research and is thorough and informative. The book is throroughly referenced, evidenced and well written. I appreciated the visual representations and the case studies included in the book to solidify the meaning of what I was reading.

For me, the book forced me to consider, in more depth, the many different aspects of the issues social workers encounter in this field. As a social worker, I had often experienced the feeling that there was not enough time to adequately do my job and the pressure I sensed that administrative tasks were more important than the therapeutic and practical support I could provide to a family, for example. Gibson speaks of the same concerns after hearing similar stories from the social workers who were interviewed. Furthermore, prioritisation being given to

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written reports to provide to senior staff so that they could be praised for a job well done, for example, and generally having to be engaged in tasks which left them feeling less empathy for the family, less client focused and literally developing an attitude of indifference toward the family—and this is just a snippet of what the book offers!

What a struggle of emotion for the social worker to have to process! It is no wonder feelings of shame occur!

This book further affirmed my belief of the importance of having quality senior management personnel who understand the role that shame and pride play in social work, who support practitoners in decision making and guide them through the many possible potholes that are best avoided during their journey as a developing social worker and throughout their career. The author discusses an example regarding a new service being introduced in an agency. Work was divided and allocated to individuals and the expectation set that individuals would be held to account if the work was not completed and to an expected standard. The team lead/supervisor explains that within a month, they were flooded with referrals the team struggled to meet. The team lead viewed this as a direct result of the new service. Senior management did not and, in fact, viewed it as the team lead "not being on top of it or equal to the task." Feelings of incompetence, shaming of and panic by workers were noted and transferred down the line to workers below. These workers were subjected to a myriad of emotions and a double layer of shame as a result.

The author sums the book's content up well when he speaks about the role self-conscious emotions play in the organisational mahi/work of the interviewed social workers. He speaks of the resistance they experience in responding to organisational expectations by working their way through and regulating their emotions before reacting to the demands and expectations often placed on them. Furthermore, Gibson speaks about the social workers' need to consider whether their reaction is based on past experience/s and fear of further guilt or shame for what they may have done or who they were. Also, how these experiences can make the profession undesirable. It is obvious, the book covers a lot about a juicy and interesting subject!

If you hadn't already pondered the role pride and shame play in understanding this important mahi/work before picking this book up, you will very quickly understand the incredible need for humane practice in this field. If you have been a social worker who has been working hard, do yourself a favour and grab a copy of this book. Pour yourself a pot of tea, gather your favourite snacks, get sorted in your comfy chair and simply begin to read it. I would find it hard to believe you will not be left with a feeling of understanding, empathy, perhaps sadness, enlightenment and an overwhelming desire to get out there and support your fellow social workers with some simple kindness and a deeper understanding.

Reviewed by **Dalice Pinnell**, Social worker and external supervisor Sup4theSoul

Dissenting social work: Critical theory, resistance and pandemic

Paul Michael Garrett
Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2021
ISBN 978-0-367-90370-1, pp.276, Paperback, NZD85

Paul Michael Garrett has been a favourite author of mine since I was struggling with theorising my PhD findings. His series of articles encouraging social workers to engage with critical social theorists (see, for example, Garrett, 2007, 2020) helped me enormously to develop my understanding of social work's relationship with higher education and how that has impacted on professional identity in Aotearoa New Zealand (Beddoe, 2013, 2017). As an educator, Garrett's work is often where I go first when looking for a helpful chapter to support students to make the connections between social work and critical theory.

Garrett is an academic in the School of Political Science and Sociology at the National University of Ireland, Galway. Garrett has a significant body of work and this is his latest book—coming after his second edition of *Social Work and Social Theory* (Garrett, 2018a). In this 2021 publication, Garrett tackles some major challenges of our time and argues for social work solidarity and thoughtful activism.

Dissenting social work has a wide scope. Garret discusses the central ideas of a dissenting social work with reference to major issues of the day: Black Lives Matter, surveillance capitalism, migration, colonisation and racism. These compelling areas of focus are explored in relation to a central argument that social work must have a dissenting voice. In Garrett's words, this book "contests the idea that educators and practitioners ought to serve as mere handmaidens or functional auxiliaries of capitalism and the institutional orders that it requires" (p. 4).

Garrett sets out his argument in the first chapter, developed though an insightful consideration of what dissent *is*. First, he clarifies that all dissent (as oppositional practice) should not be "fetishised or unequivocally supported and valorised" (p. 7). In Aotearoa New Zealand social work, we have a recent example where social workers who were very strongly opposed to Covid-19 vaccine mandates levelled the accusation that pro-mandate colleagues were erroneously supporting a breach of their human rights, suggesting that the consequences of vaccine mandates for those who refuse made them dictatorial and tyrannical. This reflects a rejection of a collectivist response to a community crisis. Similarly, Garrett's position would frame free speech when some of its advocates demand the individual right to utter hate speech as a fetishisation of a human right. What matters in dissent is the outcome. Whose voice is heard, whose is silenced? Whose personal choice is valued and whose is to be removed, and to what end? Who is harmed by free speech without limits? Garrett argues that our social work principles, set in the IFSW definition, should guide us.

Garrett also points out that dissent and social critique in general can be appropriated and diluted, or as he elegantly puts it "slyly abducted" (p. 7). His earlier book, *Welfare Words,* is full of excellent examples of this linguistic appropriation (Garrett, 2018b). There are wonderful examples for students of social policy when words such

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as "resilience" and "sustainability" have left their more nuanced origins and come out of the mouths of chief executives and "human assets" managers as they set about restructuring their organisations.

The positionality of the dissenter must also be taken into account. We may, for example, take for granted particular meanings given to rights that may not be perceived as universal from cultural perspectives other than our own. In choosing to push back against unjust practices across social work we have hugely varied access to power, resources, and a platform for our views. It takes time and energy to create a platform. Garrett calls for social work dissent to be organised and collectivist in nature rather than seen as an individual action. And in the kind of micromanaged, surveilled workplaces so many of us work in right now, solidarity is important.

The main body of the book comprises 10 chapters that focus on the ideas of a particular social theorist as a source of material for exploration of what dissent might encompass. Marx, Foucault, Zuboff, Ranciere, Wacquant, Arendt, Levinas, Fanon and Gramsci are included. For brevity, I have selected three chapters to discuss in this review.

In Chapter 2, Garrett returns to Marx for his critique of capitalist society and the critical ethical stance of looking at what may be concealed below the surface of social systems. Marxist analysis, Garrett argues, provides a critical foundation for dissenting social work and its lens can be applied to an analysis of the work of social work. Social work, like other professions, has become increasingly "proletarianised and subjected to labour processes which are more pressurised, routinised, surveilled and increasingly vulnerable to incessant demands for output data" (p. 47). In many other ways, social workers share many of the features of life in neoliberal capitalist countries. Short-term contracts, shrinking budgets, creeping privatisation and the relentless cruelty of austerity measures where, simultaneously, the mega rich extract huge profits while those at their mercy struggle for living wages and decent housing. Marxist analyses call for social work solidarity with other workers and progressive movements. In this chapter, Garrett returns to well established tenets of radical social work but considers these in the light of current socio-political trends.

The theme of surveillance appears in Chapter 4, which explores the work of Shoshanna Zuboff on surveillance capitalism. Essentially, the focus of this work is on the massive scale extraction of profits available to the big tech giants through tracking human activity (likes, clicks, friends, interactions, movements, consumption and so forth) and the extent to which this invades human privacy. As he does throughout this book, Garrett notes the contradictions that emerge during the current pandemic. Social work has, to large extent, embraced technology during the periods of lockdown because of its enabling features. Relationships and services could be sustained through video conferencing, smartphone apps. Telehealth has received an unprecedented boost. I have recently reviewed a number of articles that report research about adoption and innovation of technology in social work practice over the last 20 months. Technologies enable us, as citizens and workers, to stay connected, employers have embraced "work from home" and cheerfully noted the savings as we home workers pay for our own utilities, wifi and coffee! The dark side of this of course is that we have become dangerously reliant on these large private corporations, who hold a massive amount of personal information about us, and who, furthermore, pay minimal tax. These factors coalesce in a complex web of systems representing an enormous transfer of public resources into the pockets of a handful of mega-rich people along with embedding significant dependence on the organisations we rely on, and interact with, every day.

Most significantly for social work, the misuse of big data in surveillance of clients and

families is a potent threat. For a recent local example of this concern, Ballantyne (2021) has explored the policy proposals associated with the White Paper for Vulnerable Children. He focused his study on plans to create a digital information system called the Vulnerable Kids' Information System in Aotearoa New Zealand. This was a plan to test and trial a predictive risk modelling tool based on an algorithm that would generate a risk score for all new-born children in Aotearoa New Zealand, that would be used to target interventions which, in theory, would prevent harm to *at-risk* children before it occurred. For further exploration of this phenomenon in three countries (including Aotearoa New Zealand) see also Jørgensen et al. (2021). This is a big chapter that traverses many major concerns with technology and embeds a critical perspective focused on interrogating contradictions. "We need to figure out how the technology is being used to either entrench or potentially erode class power" (p. 96). Keen social work readers might want to turn to *Automating Inequality: How High-tech Tools Profile, Police, and Punish the Poor* (Eubanks, 2017) to develop their understanding of how technology can be appropriated by the state to surveil people in poverty.

Last, but not least, in this very selective review, the contribution of Frantz Fanon is examined in Chapter 9. Fanon was a Black psychiatrist, writer and activist, born in Martinique but who undertook much of his work in north Africa. Garrett argues that Fanon is important, primarily due to the current global challenges of resurgent fascism and ongoing efforts at decolonisation. Garrett notes that Fanon does not feature in social work literature very frequently but can be helpful to dissenting social workers. Fanon's work on racism and his depiction of the violence done both physically and psychologically to people subjected to it underscores the Black Lives Matter movement and calls on us to challenge the appalling loss of Black lives in deaths caused by the functionaries of powerful institutions of white supremacy. Garrett asserts the ongoing relevance of Fanon's work to the profession's drive to address our complicity with colonialism and support the decolonisation project. Fanon's professional work engages deeply with critical reflection that feels remarkably contemporary and will resonate with those working with historical trauma. Many social workers in Aotearoa will find this chapter an excellent introduction to the work of Fanon, enabling a deeper understanding of the dynamics of racism and capitalist extraction over place and time.

Aotearoa New Zealand readers will find much of value in this challenging text. If I have one point of critique it is that, at times, Garrett tries to do too much and cover off too many complex issues. Taken as a whole, though, it will provide a curious student with a helpful journey through critical theoretical perspectives with insightful links to our current world in flux.

I am pleased to recommend this book as an excellent resource for social work students at all levels, and for practitioners who still enjoy reading social work theory! For postgraduate students and researchers, Garrett always impeccably references both theoretical works and scholarly research and offers a rich resource for those seeking to make connections from sociological theory to social work in our current climate.

Finally, for those readers who want to listen to Garrett in conversation with Ian Hyslop about dissenting social work, check out the Reimagining Social Work podcast (Hyslop, 2021).

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