Radical Social Work practice: What are the barriers that block social workers from practising radically?

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Contents

Abstract

Radical social work can trace its roots back to the beginning of the 20th century, but it exploded onto the social work consciousness with a vengeance in the 1970's. Radical social work was seen by many as the panacea to the prevailing mindset of individualising issues as opposed to viewing them within the context of broader societal ills. Over the last 40 years, with the onset of neoliberalism, radical social work has seen quite a steep decline; so much so that it is not widely practiced amongst most social work professionals. This research picks up that point and asks: What are the barriers that block practitioners from practicing radically in Aotearoa New Zealand?

Using a qualitative methodological approach, 16 semi-structured face to face or phone interviews were conducted and transcribed. Through a thematic analysis of the data, key barriers to radical social work practice were identified. It was found social work education, contemporary social service funding regimes and high workload were the main barriers to practising radically in Aotearoa New Zealand. Results reveal that the benefits of practising radically included an increase in practitioner wellbeing and practice authenticity, the reclamation of social justice and human rights principles in Aotearoa New Zealand social work praxis and societal change at the systemic and structural levels. The risks of not practising radically meant further entrenching the neoliberal status quo of individualising the issues, being unable to create real systemic change and cementing the structural inequalities prevalent in today's society.

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To my youngest children, who patiently played around me while I read journals and to my older children, who endured holidays being surrounded by textbooks having to discuss theories and notions of 'worker alienation'. I hope through this process you see that it is never too late to advance one's education.

And to all of us who self-identify as radical social workers I say:

Hasta la victoria siempre

Introduction

The genesis and motivation for my interest in pursuing a thesis on the barriers that prevent social workers from practising radically in Aotearoa New Zealand originated when I was employed by a small rural Non-Government Organisation (NGO). Attached to a food bank, my client base was predominantly young families unable to afford enough food to sustain themselves during the week.

I realised the need to supplement their grocery items with visits to the food bank increased during the winter months. They visited the food bank because their meagre earnings were, in large part, going towards high heating bills. In parallel to this, I was also aware that at that time, property owners in Aotearoa New Zealand were not bound by legislation to appropriately insulate their rental investments, which would have allowed the tenants to live comfortably and not have to continually spend their money on heating. The very people having to visit the food bank had to make daily decisions between spending their finances on heating, warm clothes, food or medical bills, which inevitably stemmed from, in part, inadequately insulated and damp dwellings.

I was incensed and realised that many of my clients were let down by policy failure. The family and I could work together to alleviate the surface issues, however unless the structural and policy based elements were explored, challenged and changed they may be visiting the food bank again. As Cardenas (2017) contends, “the

problem does not start with the individual when they walk through your agency door; it is rather the manifestation of multiple system failures that such a person has experienced through life" (p. 56). There had to be another way and it was then that I realised my days of working solely at the individual level were over and I discovered my passion for radical social work practice, a practice that engages at the structural level and is wrapped in a framework of social justice and human rights.

I had three questions:

- Does radical social work practice exist in Aotearoa New Zealand?
- Are there contemporary social workers in Aotearoa New Zealand who self-identify as radical social work practitioners and practice radical social work?
- What were the barriers that block social workers from practicing radically in Aotearoa New Zealand?

Being able to clearly understand and articulate the barriers that exist to practicing radically is essential for the profession, the social worker, society at large and ultimately the individual in need of the services.

The objective of this research was to uncover, through the voices of self-proclaimed radical social work practitioners, what those uniquely Aotearoa New Zealand barriers were and by default opening up avenues for further research and action to dismantle

those barriers. This would be achieved by asking: what are the barriers that block social workers from practising radically?

The overall structure of the thesis follows traditional lines. The literature review, while extensive, has a clear focus on neoliberalism and the neoliberal processes that have played such a large part in social work practice in the world, including Aotearoa New Zealand. The theory section introduces Marx's theory of alienation, Gramsci's theory of hegemony and Thompson's atrophied moral cognition as ways to potentially understand the theoretical mechanisms in play. This section is then followed by the methodology and method chapter explaining how a rich seam of findings was extracted. The key findings are then discussed and recommendations were laid open for potential future research opportunities.

Literature Review

Defining Radical Social Work

To understand the barriers Aotearoa New Zealand social workers face in being able to practice radically, a definition of radical social work is warranted. The definition and other literature are confined to English writing countries; predominantly the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Australia and New Zealand. Radical social work incorporates concepts identified as socialist, structural, feminist and anti-racist (Fraser et al., 2017). Radical social work, also called the "tenacious use of critical analysis of historical events and their impact on vulnerable populations" (Cardenas, 2017, p. 55), is seen as supporting the moves away from the status quo (Hearn, 1982) and stresses that any worthwhile practice should always involve some form of political response or activity (Ioakimidis, 2016). Radical social work specifically makes the link between the individual issue and the structures surrounding them that ties the client to the present (Fook, 1993), while clearly "understanding the position of the oppressed in the context of the social and economic structures" (Bailey & Brake, 1975, p. 9) within which they reside. Radical social work tries to redirect the power imbalance back to the communities (Cannan, 1975) as well as aiming "to combat oppression and proactively work with socially marginalised individuals, groups and communities to promote a more equitable, democratic and ecologically sustainable world" (Morley & Ablett, 2017, pp. 6-7). Radical social work "considers and addresses the structural elements of poverty, deprivation and injustice that function to maintain capitalism" (Rogowski, 2017, p. 98)

and questions the very validity of all forms of social work practice including its own (De Maria, 2017), and understands, in fact, welcomes that animosity, disputes and hostility are necessary and unavoidable (Rees, 2017). Radical social work's purpose is also seen as growing civil society while working within and counter to the state (Moore, 2017).

My definition of radical social work leans towards Fook (1993) definition in terms of viewing it as the practice of critically analysing the links between the individual and the structural forces that maintain the inequalities within society.

History of Radical Social Work

Historically, the appearance of radical social work in the United Kingdom in the 1970s marked a turning point in the individualisation of approaches to client issues (Ferguson, 2016). Although contemporary history shows the 1970s as the decade where radical social work flourished in the UK, the reality is the pioneers of the radical movement could be found in the Victorian era through the likes of Sylvia Pankhurst and the suffragette movement as well as with George Lansbury and Clement Atlee with their opposition to the Poor Laws of the times (Weinstein, 2011). In the United States, "although there were radicals within the social welfare field prior to the 1930s, there were few radical social workers and no radical movements within the social services before the mid-1930s" (Reisch & Andrews, 2002, pp. 7-8). Wagner (1989) suggested the cutbacks experienced through the economic

depressions led to a collective response, with the initial stages of radicalisation in the United States seeing social workers side by side with their clients. Clients and potential clients led the movements of the 1960s, which spurred “young social workers to support protesters and join militant organisations” (Wagner, 1989, p. 267). While they may have been labelled ‘militant organisations’ this is a subjective characterisation depending on whether one was for or against the changes required at the time.

In Australia, the rise of radical social work came on the back of renewed enthusiasm after two decades of a conservative government. At first, radical social work was influenced by Marxist ideas from the UK, United States and within Australia itself. The examination and criticism of social work at the time revolved around its controlling and egotistical nature and the fact that it individualised issues as opposed to viewing them in the broader social context, amongst other things (Pease, 2017). The contemporary “call to radicalise social work is not new” (Briskman, 2017b, p. 133) with Ferguson (2017) arguing radical social work never really disappeared but was swept aside by the incoming neoliberal ideology conceived in 1980. It is this ideology that ironically is one of the reasons that radical social work is re-emerging. There is a deep-rooted and burgeoning discontent with the way in which neoliberalism has changed social work practice and coupled with a plethora of new social movements, including the impacts of the global financial crisis of 2008, has heightened resistance (Ferguson, 2016).

However, with the re-emergence, there is also a call to change the strategies of the past. Papadopoulos (2017) declared that radical social work strategies of the past "have become as impotent as the state in the face of the new social formations produced by globalized social relationships" (p. 46). With that said, social workers need to clearly understand the new "socio-political context" that contemporary social work practitioners and educators find themselves in or radical social work is destined to fail again (Papadopoulos, 2017). Carey and Foster (2011) suggested radical social work needs to change from an overly academic paradigm to one that offers practitioners tangible strategies that can be applied to frontline practice with a direct link from radical thought to radical praxis, with theory and practice growing and emerging together (Leonard, 1975). Pearson (1975) called it giving "practical expression to its ideological prescriptions" (p. 17). All the while understanding that even though radical praxis may hold the best hope, it is not the panacea for all the issues and to believe it is, is highly questionable (Clarke, 1976).

Neoliberal Ideology and Social Work

To understand the current social and political landscape of social work, one must understand the globalisation of neoliberal welfare approaches that have been adopted in several western countries in the last 30 years including Aotearoa New Zealand (Wallace & Pease, 2011). In clearly understanding the new context, radical social work has a great opportunity to play a leadership role in the social service sector in creating strategies that link and combat the structural issues to the individual experience (Morley & Ablett, 2016). Lorenz (2005) argued that the

changes are not merely changes to social policy but a reorganising of “social relationships and attempt to model them on neo-liberal ideas” (p. 93).

The characteristics of neoliberal welfare policies include a narrowing of welfare eligibility criteria, means testing and the transference of financial burden to the individual (George & Wolding, 2003). Neoliberal welfare policies promote austerity surrounding welfare spending (Findlay & McCormack, 2005) and strive “for unquestioned acceptance of the superior wisdom of the private sector” (Harris, 2014, p. 7). This movement has created a convergence of private over not-for-profit and individual projects as opposed to operating cost funding, resulting in organisations finding it harder to stay true to their core values (Baines, 2010). The lack of funding does not cover overheads and therefore creates greater competition amongst the not-for-profit sector for the elusive funding dollar (Baines, 2010), thereby giving a greater chance for lower wages and a reduction in trade union membership (Whitfield, 2012) eroding social work’s relative autonomy from neoliberal market forces (Harris, 2014).

Contemporary Funding Regimes

The funding cycles are becoming increasingly shorter and markedly sporadic (Scott, 2003). The financial reporting requirements are significant (Aronson & Smith, 2010), taking energy away from the important client-facing work (Baines et al., 2012) that social workers know really matter (Aronson & Smith, 2010). Funding is more often

than not ‘programme’ targeted; that is, attached to a particular project or program with a specific time attached to that funding cycle (Ng & Sim, 2012). Because the funding is quite specific and targeted there tends to be a significant shift away from the core mission of the organisation (Scott, 2003) as it struggles to adhere to the prescribed outcomes, resulting in “mission drift” (Ng & Sim, 2012, p. 283). As funders are reluctant to fund administration costs that are not directly associated with a particular project (Scott, 2003) this adds increasing financial pressure to organisations already teetering on the brink of insolvency. They evolve into a “series of projects connected to a hollow foundation” (Scott, 2003, p. 14).

Some funding examples that are seen as detrimental to organisations and progressive social work practices are Service Model Prescriptions, Mid-Point Funding and Per Capita Funding Programs (Ng & Sim, 2012). None of these require structural or transformative community change as an outcome requirement to be labelled as a success. They are all individually based and what the business world would call ‘point solutions.’ As the competition for the elusive funding grant grows every year, funders are in a position of power (Frumkin & Andre-Clark, 2000) limiting any significant questioning amongst the organisations in terms of the parameters attached to grants. This dynamic in turn dissipates any notion of autonomy, dissent (Frumkin & Andre-Clark, 2000) and continuity. While clients were requiring programs that empowered them, encouraged community development, increased dignity and greater access to resources (Baines et al., 2014), most organisations found measuring these qualitative notions difficult to quantify within the framework of contemporary funding structures (Baines et al., 2014).

Impact of Neoliberal Processes on Social Work

At its core, neoliberal approaches act to change all it touches into commodities for the sole purpose of making a profit to shareholders (Dominelli, 2010) creating what Bourdieu called “a programme for destroying collective structures which may impede pure market logic” (1998, p. 1). Advocates of neoliberal approaches to social welfare services posit that the individual and family should be solely responsible for their own lives and both the social service sector, as well as the voluntary sector, should be modelled on ‘best practice’ business sector models (Harris, 2014). The introduction of neoliberal thinking into social work introduced concepts such as standardisation, efficiency gains, a decrease in practitioner judgement and an increase in the pace of work (Baines, 2010). The consequence of these trends include the prioritisation of profitability “over and above the quality of care” (Garrett, 2009a, p. 342) and the dominance of recording outcomes, for funding purposes, over rights centred practice (Baines et al., 2012). It is believed that this, in turn, has helped increase inequality in countries such as, but not limited to, Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia (Morley & Ablett, 2017), making it difficult to conceive what a fair and equitable society might look like (Fraser et al., 2017). To get a deeper understanding of the effects of neoliberal processes on social work, one must discuss the three main processes linked with it, namely marketisation, consumerisation and managerialism (Harris, 2014). These three processes are dynamic in nature and grow at different rates depending on the country’s political and social context in which they are operating (Harris, 2014).

Marketisation

The marketisation of social work leads to several negative consequences, including delivering competition for scarce resources thereby playing off one organisation against the other while they have to decide where to cut costs, which then often leads to wages being driven downwards (Harris, 2014). The ‘leaner’ model of social work intervention is more cost effective for both the organisation delivering the service and the funding organisation, although a lot more stressful on the social worker and the client. This model also moves the entry point for intervention from a preventative model to an ‘ambulance at the bottom of the cliff’ (Baines, 2010). The scarcity of resources moves the discussion from one of entitlement to social service resources to a fiscal discussion revolving around a cost-benefit analysis. Marketisation also introduces the domination of contractual relationships forcing organisations to practice in accordance with the conditions attached by the funder thereby having the effect of restraining autonomous practices (Harris, 2014). By bonding the organisation and by association the practitioner into a certain practice model, it may diminish the overall outcome for the client or community. It also moves away from the notion of social services being delivered by the state alone with voluntary and private sector organisations being encouraged to bid for the services being offered to members of the public, who paradoxically are now seen as customers (Harlow, 2004). This promotes a race to the bottom to the lowest bidder. In this instance, larger private sector organisations have a clear advantage over small non-government organisations through being able to absorb operational losses through the process of tendering for contracts on very fine margins. Lastly, the introduction of a market allows the government to have an arm’s length relationship

with any decisions being made and deflect any responsibility to the organisations working with the people (Harris, 2014). Blame for any failure, and there are many examples in New Zealand media over the last 10 years, can be positioned at an individual social worker or organisation totally bypassing the fact that it was a lack of resources, through the overly competitive tendering process and therefore operational cuts that may have caused the failure in the first instance. The rhetoric is that the process of marketisation of the social work sector will make it better for the 'customer' (Carey, 2006).

Consumerisation

In line with the consumer society we live in, neoliberalism turns service users into customers or consumers of a service. Being a consumer invokes thoughts that the individual is free to choose what service they require as they know what is best for them. This again advances the mantra of a 'hands off' state and distances the government even further from the 'choices' the 'individual consumer' makes (Harris, 2014). The key message is that the 'consumer' is turned into this 'all knowing individual' who can pick and choose from a raft of services. Through the process of marketisation, the social services organisation is then brought into line with this new way of thinking as they compete with private organisations to be able to deliver the services needed against a backdrop of austerity cuts (Harris, 2014).

Managerialism

It is widely understood that the private sector offers better and more efficient ways of working. The process of managerialism acts as a conduit bringing those operating models into the social services sector delivering better value for money (Harris, 2014). On the surface of it, the thought that the private sector is more efficient is correct. The scale and depth of the private sector allows it to operate on margins that are unsustainable in traditional social work organisations. Additionally, generally, the private sector can absorb 'losses' which traditional providers are unable to manage. However, social work has never been and should never be about efficiency. The concept of 'value for money' in social work, if indeed it is something that should be considered at any stage anyway, does not necessarily occur during the interaction between the social worker and the client, and most definitely not if the interaction is fleeting and transactional. The concept of 'value for money' would occur post interaction over subsequent years, and it could be argued, to occur over subsequent generations. It is then that effectiveness, a much more appropriate measure than efficiency, of the interaction can be determined. Efficiency should never be mistaken for effectiveness which should have no time parameters to it and, more often than not, is measured by client outcomes.

"Managerialism itself is a reflection of the powerful dominance of market capitalism over the world" (Tsui & Cheung, 2004, p. 437) with its impact best encapsulated with efficiency being the driver and society being viewed as a market of competing interests, uniformity and processes (Tsui & Cheung, 2004). Managerialism "has

transformed administrators into managers charged with the responsibility of introducing the government's corporate strategy in an attempt to deliver services in the most cost-effective and efficient manner, management methods have been borrowed from the private sector" (Harlow, 2004, p. 169). Managerialism looks to achieve better results through the:

1) application of commodification of the services offered (Harris, 2014) therefore reducing the relationship between the social worker and the client to a series of discrete transactional and contractual relationship processes (Harlow, 2004),
2) demanding efficiency gains and achieving these gains through the reduction of funding for services and
3) the requirement for greater authority through instruments such as "the use of 'dashboards' as a means of heightening surveillance of the work of individual social workers and groups of social workers" (Harris, 2014, p. 16).

An example of how the above processes fit into a contemporary social welfare organisation can be best summed up with the Centrelink transformation in Australia (McDonald & Chenoweth, 2009). The reason for the transformation was a desire to increase efficiency and improve the effectiveness of the organisation. In adopting the language of the private sector, it moved from a bureaucracy to a corporation, from clients and beneficiaries to customers all monitored by customer satisfaction procedures (McDonald & Chenoweth, 2009). Using operational targets and strict

processes the state has a far greater say over social work practice (Harlow, 2004) which in turn restricts workers to a “prescribed role that precludes social activism or concern for larger social issues” (Baines, 2010, p. 22). Or as O’Brien (2013) asserted, managerialism’s main feature is “an emphasis on measurable results and outcomes, defined narrowly and measured equally narrowly, with funding linked to those results and outcomes” (p. 55). This in turn negates practitioner autonomy possible in the past (Ferguson & Woodward, 2009). In this context, funding organisations are requiring quantitative outcomes from a qualitative profession. However, it is the loss of the relationship between the social worker and the client that the social worker laments (Baines, 2006). This mirrors Jones (2005) who described the nature of meeting clients has changed with it having become cursory and highly regulated.

Contemporary Social Work Practice under Neoliberalism

According to Dominelli (2010), the effect of globalisation and therefore neoliberalism on social work practice has seen the increase of efficiency drives to deliver the maximum output in a world of dwindling resources as well as a distancing in the relationship between the social worker and the client, resulting in transactional relationships outsourced to private or voluntary organisations. This co-ordination style of social work practice is what Harlow (2004) calls “managerial-technicist” (p.171). There has been an increase in the administrative bureaucracy of the role with Jones (2005) confirming that the amount of time spent on paperwork has risen from 30% in the decade preceding 1980 to 90% in 2005. “The nature of paperwork

had also changed with assessment and case recording becoming reductionist with 'tick box' forms being used" (Postle, 2001, p. 16).

One casualty of neoliberalism is community work practice. Gwilym (2017) noted that community practice has all but disappeared in the United Kingdom within the statutory sector, which combined with managerialism, has left social workers disillusioned with community work. Social workers are finding it harder to "retain their commitment to working with the 'social', as well as the individual'" (Ferguson & Woodward, 2009, p. 35). Dillon (2017) asserted the loss of community work, along with research and policy, has left the profession "less broadly skilled, less critically reflective and arguably co-opted into the parochial neoliberal agenda" (p. 19). The need to meet targets means that social work's autonomy relished prior to the imposition of neoliberal policies and its increased focus on fiscal efficiency, has essentially disappeared with the practice being dictated through government policy and prescribed via local management (Harlow, 2004). As a consequence, managers are increasingly perceived as the crucial professionals in a social service organisation, rather than the frontline workers (Tsui & Cheung, 2004). The decrease in professional autonomy often includes 'client entry' guidelines, case by case monitoring and extremely tight timeframes (McDonald & Chenoweth, 2009) with "constant pressure to discharge clients" (Darroch, 2017, p. 73). These shifts have led to an increase in top down social work practice and a devaluing of the skills that a social worker brings to the table. Even though social workers understand the "relationship between structural forces and the experiences of the client" (Darroch,

2017, p. 70) there are limited possibilities to challenge the domination of neoliberal processes on social work practice (Wallace & Pease, 2011).

Postle's study on the impact of the NHS and Community Care Act 1990 on social work practice found, among other things, a shift in titles, from 'social worker' to 'care manager'(Postle, 2001, p. 13). The issues affecting care managers are similar to issues already documented a drive for efficiency, an increase in procedures, constant change through restructuring and procedural changes and a restriction of resources, which means a more distant style of management (Postle, 2001). The role of care manager diminishes the role of the professional practitioner to an administrator of needs assessments (Carey, 2008) leaving them "struggling to retain elements of what they understand to be 'social work' in their practice" (Postle, 2001, p. 13). The time poor aspect of the role sees them performing only a hasty assessment of the real need prior to outsourcing the need out to a service (Postle, 2001). "The demands on time in terms of sheer numbers means that a large percentage of the social work element has been jettisoned" (Postle, 2001, p. 20). This meant spending "limited time with 'clients' and informal carers, and rarely applied 'social work' roles linked to advocacy, counselling or group work" (Carey, 2008, p. 342).

All of these pressures have led to excessive workload, which has been identified as leading to burnout, emotional exhaustion (McFadden et al., 2018; Yürür & Sarikaya, 2012), low job satisfaction (Cole et al., 2004; Kadushin & Kulys, 1995) and, in

Aotearoa New Zealand, a potential barrier to engaging whānau in a culturally appropriate way (RNZ, 2020). Budget cuts, a common scenario in any social service setting, have a direct effect on workload issues. With less money to spend on hiring staff, the workload is dispersed amongst fewer social workers exacerbating the workload issues, increasing burnout and rates of low satisfaction (Cole et al., 2004). Experts have recognised that "work overload in this occupation may be much more harmful than in any other occupation" (Yürür & Sarikaya, 2012, p. 460). In Aotearoa New Zealand, a 2018 Public Service Association caseload and workload survey, conducted prior to collective bargaining at Oranga Tamariki, noted that excessive workload impacted the time social workers had to spend on their work. This had a direct effect on the quality and depth of their work (PSA, 2018).

High workload increases rates of resignation (Juby & Scannapieco, 2007) and decreases the time spent on what social workers find important, such as being with the children, families or individuals they are tasked to work with (Juby & Scannapieco, 2007; PSA, 2018; Stevens, 2008). To this point, a 2009 workload survey for social workers who are meant to have face to face interaction with clients, found that direct contact with clients accounted for only 25% of their working time (Baginsky et al., 2009). A high workload is a major hurdle to social work practice that is preventative in nature (Cross et al., 2010). Social workers with high workloads also tend to be less responsive to client's needs and have a decreased focus on rehabilitation (Stevens, 2008). All these dynamics point to a significant lack of time frontline social workers have in being able to critically contemplate some of the

issues they are facing and the systemic issues that are contributing to a range of problems their clients experience.

One of the key areas identified to assist with high workloads is having a supportive and capable supervisor. Having a good supervisor helped with positive workload perception (Juby & Scannapieco, 2007; Yürür & Sarikaya, 2012) and a decrease in emotional exhaustion (Yürür & Sarikaya, 2012). Another area that alleviated the issues surrounding workload was the efficacy of the practitioner. The higher the efficacy the lower the perception of high workload (Cole et al., 2004; Juby & Scannapieco, 2007) which ultimately leads to lower burnout rates and higher retention rates of staff. However, while a higher efficacy of a particular social worker may mean that they are more competent at paperwork, more efficient at working with the relevant processes and legislation, it does leave a question as to whether efficacy in terms of high workload equates to effectiveness with clients. While the ultimate goal would be to reduce the caseloads for all social workers (Juby & Scannapieco, 2007) this may not be realistic given the ever increasing complexity of the world that we live in, so the recommendation of access to external supervisors is warranted as more realistic.

While smaller caseloads per social worker would make a difference in workload pressures (Baginsky et al., 2009), it is not as simple as that. Smaller caseloads would mean, amongst other things, that there are more social workers which in turn requires a greater level of funding from governments and other funding engines to

pay for wages. For there to be adequate funding in social services so that it is sufficiently resourced across all facets of the sector, it would require a fundamental shift in how society views the humanities and what priority it gives it over other parts of society.

Values

These various shifts in the social work profession have left some social workers feeling as though they are unable to work in a way that is consistent with their social work values. When workers tried to advocate for clients and delivery systems in a way that was more congruent with their activist or client-centred values, and within a framework of social justice and human rights, they were often disciplined, which created an instant chilling effect for others (Baines, 2010), and an understanding that to continue to advocate would damage career prospects (Darroch, 2017). In Aotearoa New Zealand, “long hours and emotionally demanding work” (Darroch, 2017, p. 52) coupled with poor working conditions and an openly hostile attitude from peers made value laden practice methods unsustainable, if pursued. One example of this is statutory agency managers calling social workers, strong on social justice, “well poisoners” (Darroch, 2017, p. 66) when they wanted to initiate some form of social justice action in particular cases. While these examples are quite specific for Aotearoa New Zealand, there is a paucity of researched examples across globe that match this level of granularity.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, both the association and the regulatory body, have strong social justice foundations. The Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW) Code of Ethics (ANZASW, 2019) is interspersed throughout the entire document, with references to social justice and human rights. The Code of Ethics accepts the Joint Global Definition of Social Work as its own interpretation of social work in Aotearoa New Zealand, which asserts that the "principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work" (ANZASW, 2019, p. 8). The Code of Ethics also expresses quite clearly that social work practitioners in Aotearoa New Zealand are ethically bound to advocate for policies that promote social justice, speak out when they come across social injustice and actively engage in changing socially unjust societal structures (ANZASW, 2019). The Social Work Registration Board's (SWRB) ten core competencies require a social work practitioner in Aotearoa New Zealand to be competent in promoting the "principles of human rights and social and economic justice" (SWRB, 2020, p. 1) and to be competent to "engage in practice which promotes social change" (SWRB, 2020, p. 1). As well as these, the SWRB expects, through its Code of Conduct, social workers in Aotearoa New Zealand to advocate "human, legal and civil rights" (SWRB, 2016, p. 14) for their clients. However, there seems to be a mismatch with what is decreed and what is practised. A four country qualitative study that included Aotearoa New Zealand, of the not-for-profit social services sector, found that documenting outcomes and record statistics was paramount over social justice and advocacy work (Baines et al., 2012) and Baines et al. (2014) affirmed that current practice methods failed to include social justice.

Gallina (2010) suggested that social workers are making practice decisions that find themselves caught between the demands of social work values and ethics and the demands of the 'business' leading to Briskman (2017b) concept of "dual loyalty" (p. 284) and what Gallina (2010) called "dual citizenship" (p. 2). (McDonald & Chenoweth, 2009) noted that in Australia, in the country's largest employer of social workers, there were over 600 social workers who "are drawn into the frontline implementation of welfare reform and are, in the process, confronting and responding to policy initiatives which stand in stark contrast to social work values and practices" (p. 145). In the United States, the changes associated with the implementation of welfare reform in the 1990s through the passage of the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), social workers felt the values of the new welfare-to-work program were incongruent with social work values. As a response, there was nearly a 50% increase in concerns from staff directly attributed to ethical issues associated with the TANF program (Abramovitz, 2005). Because of these changes in practice and the incongruence with the values of social work, practitioners withdraw from therapeutic relationships or go along with the processes instead of challenging them (Lorenz, 2005). Hearn (1982) asserted that the compliance with these shifting values "hinges upon the 'realistic' assessment of what any individual, radical or not, can do, in the light of an analysis that places the causes of many problems at a very broad societal level" (p. 25).

Jones (2005) articulated that the increased pressures among social workers in the United Kingdom, within the local authority sector, led to serious health issues, emotional outburst, personal lives being affected outside of work and leaving the office for an extended period. Aronson and Smith (2010) had similar findings when

they described their participants losing the connections to the commitments and values they had when they first entered the workplace. (Baines et al., 2014) indicated that social workers experienced a loss of self and integrity when being forced to practise in contradiction to their authentic self, something they brought into the profession from university.

Social Work Education

Preston et al. (2014) question whether the job of the educator is to produce 'job ready' social workers who can practice in contemporary social work practice settings or is it to teach future social workers to critique, challenge and assail the current neoliberal framework that social work professionals find themselves in. While there is a distinct dearth of literature discussing education and its impact on radical social work practice in the contemporary social work scene, literature surrounding the effects of neoliberalism on social work education and on its attempts in preventing educational providers promoting critically or structurally focussed social work practice abounds. Social work education is, for neoliberalism, both an opportunity and a risk. It opens up a space for the ideology to be discussed and reproduced and it also creates capacity for concepts, that run counter to its ideology, to be conceived (Hanesworth, 2017).

The largest impact neoliberalism has had on education is the move away from a curricula based on critical structural analysis towards teaching skills that are based on pathologising the individual (Hanesworth, 2017). As social work practice becomes

more engrained in assessment based practice methods, academia is pressed to be more mechanical and less cerebral (Rossiter, 2001). In fact, when discussing critical social work, Weiss-Gal et al. (2014) suggested that education, amongst other things, was the main barrier for critical social work being implemented within social work practice circles.

While social work education focuses on these narrow skills of individualised assessments, it gives employers and state run institutions, and not the academics, influence over the curriculum, which invariably moves away from social works commitment to social justice (Morley et al., 2017). Academics are caught between employers, who demand 'work ready' employees (van Heugten, 2011) and the reality of a contemporary society that requires social workers who can unpick and challenge the plethora of structural inequalities in today's world. The process of neoliberalism has narrowed "the spaces for alternative ways of perceiving and doing social work" (Garrett, 2009a, p. 349). Through this contraction, new social work graduates fit as nicely as possible into the prevailing neoliberal ideology (Garrett, 2009a). The entire social work profession needs to develop effective strategies to repel such an all-encompassing ideology that is threatening to raze it.

Neoliberalism has had the effect of increasing the amount of administration work expected from academics robbing them of time to critically reflect, deprive them of their "academic autonomy and discretion" (Morley et al., 2017, p. 29), leading to a reinforcement of the status quo in social work practice and falling 'straight back into

the lap' of neoliberalism (Morley et al., 2017). To emphasise this point, Rothman (2013) conducted a study in the United States that showed that out of 52 academics, 30 of them reported very low level of support from their departments for macro practice and only one in seven members of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) recording macro practice as their main focus. Reinforcing the notion that structurally focussed practice does not seem to be a focal point of social work curricula and that it seems to flow through to the frontline practitioners in ever increasing numbers. It could be concluded that the impact of such an anti-macro stance on social policy is that any policy creation in this particular environment has a very individual focus and fails to address the structural issues affecting communities thereby perpetuating a perverse cycle of neoliberal reinforcement.

There seems to be an apparent division within social work education circles. Some suggest that the classroom is there to advance theoretical knowledge, and the 'field' the realm where the student is taught social work practice (Hurley & Taiwo, 2019). While Agllias (2010) contended that academia needs to fully understand the realities of contemporary practice to be able to prepare students for any anomalies they may come across, it is at this intersection, when there seems to be limited understanding of the realities of practice, that gaps appear. Clapton et al. (2007) suggest that two reasons for this gap are that models of intervention at the agencies are outdated by more 'up to date' models being taught at university and a plethora of theories confusing social work students when deciding which model fits a case.

There are recommendations in the literature that may help in closing this gap. One recommendation which has some merit is moving away from the ‘single agency’ field practice setting to one where the student is placed in a ‘community’ focussing on social issues. The ‘single agency setting’ has the ability to inadvertently expose students to current entrenched neoliberal processes, while the ‘community’ setting allows both the student and the supervisor to address social issues at a community level (Preston et al., 2014). Another recommendation relates to participatory action research (PAR) processes insofar that it recommends that a social work curriculum is designed with input from service users (Hurley & Taiwo, 2019) giving the curriculum ‘real world’ authenticity and potentially bridging the gap between theory and practice. Clapton et al. (2007) discuss social work schools becoming more involved with social care agencies’ practice standards. While this final recommendation would not immediately bridge the perceived gap between theory and practice, what it may do is stop augmenting agencies currently running practice settings devoid of a social justice base. Fenton (2014) recommended failing social work students who, at the end of their undergraduate years, cannot apply social justice to their practice. This recommendation would starve contemporary social services settings of a workforce that helps in the perpetuation of the neoliberal hegemony.

Aotearoa New Zealand is not immune to these tensions. Questions are being asked as to the readiness of social work graduates to practise (Hay et al., 2017) in such a “highly political and contested” environment (Ballantyne et al., 2017, p. 2). While the perceived gap between theory and practice has been discussed already, in Aotearoa

New Zealand there is currently no evidence to show that this is the case. Beddoe (2014) inquired as to who determines what that knowledge should be and the nature of the knowledge. In essence, what should social work students be taught in Aotearoa New Zealand in preparation for practice?

In Aotearoa New Zealand, through the Enhancing the Readiness to Practice (R2P) of Newly Qualified Social Workers in Aotearoa New Zealand Project (Enhance R2P) (Hay et al., 2017), the project intended "to describe the social work curriculum in Aotearoa New Zealand" (Ballantyne et al., 2017, p. 2). Of the 17 social work schools in New Zealand, 14 institutions took part in the study (82%) which comprised of 19 of the 22 social work programmes (86%) available to students (Ballantyne, Beddoe, et al., 2016b). The taxonomy produced by the Enhance R2P project showed the declared curriculum as opposed to the 'taught' and 'learned' curriculum (Ballantyne et al., 2017). The latter is important, Gilligan (2005) suggested new social work practitioners are not just a product of what they are taught but also how they take that information in so while, for example, 'advocacy' may have been declared on the curriculum for a particular social work school, this may be different to what was actually taught and might also be different to what the student may have learnt.

While the enhance R2P project listed "common topics in the planned curriculum" (Ballantyne, Beddoe, et al., 2016a, p. 11) such as Research, Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Social Policy (Ballantyne, Beddoe, et al., 2016a), to name but three, a more granular level interpretation showed radical social work was identified on five separate

occasions as part of the declared curriculum across five schools of social work. Several practices and terms associated with radical social work, such as social justice, anti-oppressive practice, community work, critical thinking skills and human rights featured prominently across the vast majority of the 14 schools of social work and across both undergraduate and postgraduate level (see Appendix 1) (Ballantyne, Beddoe, Hay, Maidment, Ngan, et al., 2016).

While the literature review, has up until now, listed a vast array of processes and functions that seemingly dispossess practitioners from practicing structurally, there is resistance and social workers are finding ways to push back against the prevailing ideology.

Resistance

Within the face of an all-encompassing ideology, there are practitioners who are resisting whatever professional pressures they consider run “counter to social work’s value base” (Greenslade et al., 2014, p. 428). As the current neoliberal system takes “its toll on the sector” (Baines, 2010, p. 24) the sector is finding a way to fight back. Case Con, the 1970’s UK “organisation and a magazine for ‘revolutionary social work/workers’” (Feldon et al., 2018, p. 107) stated in its manifesto that social workers need to challenge the pathologising of the individual over the structural by organising themselves as a collective sector. This should also include the improvement of services that meet the real needs of the community (Feldon et al., 2018), or as

Briskman (2017b) described, social workers should be subverting the “dominant paradigm” (p. 274).

Acts of resistance include clandestine actions such as ‘looking the other way’ when clients break the law by not notifying the relevant authorities, and instead focussing on the benefits these illegal acts may have on the client (Greenslade et al., 2014). There has also been a call to include the clients’ voice as equal participants in policy creation (Krumer-Nevo, 2008). Following on from this, Blumhardt et al. (2017) suggested that when working with families, practitioners need to think laterally and creatively, really listening to the families, moving away from the prescribed practice methodologies, leaving judgement at the door and letting the actual families decide what outcomes they require. Cynicism, as Carey (2012) expressed, can also “challenge normative practices and consequentially provide better support for users and carers” (p. 129). As Taylor and Bain (2003) have suggested, the presence of cynicism in the workplace indicates that resistance has not disappeared but has developed into something different. Collinson (1994) asserted that social workers use cynicism and scepticism as a shield to protect them from the work and as a coping mechanism or means of survival. If the cynicism is directed to the organisation or the wider structural area and away from the service user, it is seen as positive (Carey, 2012). Ironically, this type of resistance is harder for an organisation to counter as it is difficult to pinpoint and take control of due to its singular nature (Carey, 2012). This type of resistance is also linked to ‘Deviant Social Work’ which may “include attitudes or emotional responses that defy

established or expected professional intuitionally determined conventions" (Carey & Foster, 2011, p. 578).

The expansion of the neoliberal agenda is also associated with an increase in unionised workplaces due to the lack of a participatory approach to practice and practitioners wanting to find ways to counter neoliberal ideology (Baines, 2010). As unions are not funded by the government, this approach allows social workers to be outspoken about issues they are unable to speak about for fear of reprisal (Baines, 2010). The 'withdrawal of labour', which has a direct connection to the rise of union density within workplaces, practitioners have also set about refusing to perform actions they find run counter to the wellbeing of the client (McKendrick & Webb, 2014). The use of language, or more to the point the refusal to use certain words, is also a form of resistance with practitioners moving away from the term 'service user' (Heffernan, 2005) and 'customer' when referring to a client (McDonald & Chenoweth, 2009). Other acts of defiance include spending greater time with clients, exaggerating the needs of the client (Carey & Foster, 2011), implementing smaller more discrete projects under the main project scope (Lovell et al., 2013), confronting middle management and colleagues about practice standards and whistle blowing when confronting egregious breaches within their agencies (Carey & Foster, 2011).

Conversations with several social workers across a variety of sectors point to a need to refocus social work practice towards a more structural basis. Approximately 14% of the New Zealand population are living in poverty (MSD, 2013), with the richest

one per cent of New Zealanders owning one fifth of the country's wealth, and 90 per cent of the population owning less than half (Oxfam, 2017). The rate of bronchiectasis in New Zealand is three times higher than it is in the UK, while the rate of rheumatic fever is 30 times higher due to overcrowding and the poor quality of housing (Laking, 2016). In light of these conditions, many social workers feel compelled to move towards a radical social work practice model but find it almost impossible to do so due to the way they are required to practice. This research will shed some light on what barriers exist for Aotearoa New Zealand social workers in their pursuit of a radical social work practice model.

Theoretical Frameworks

Lysaght (2011) encapsulated perfectly how I came to decide on the theoretical platform grounding this research when she commented that a "researcher's choice of framework is not arbitrary but reflects important personal beliefs and understandings about the nature of knowledge, how it exists (in the metaphysical sense) in relation to the observer, and the possible roles to be adopted, and tools to be employed consequently, by the researcher in his/her work" (p. 572). It is with this in mind and in the context of radical and structural social work practice that I have decided to use several conflict theories as the theoretical platform underpinning this research.

Russell (2017) noted that of the 21 social work students he has supervised in placement over the last three years in New Zealand, only three were familiar with any part of conflict theory. Conflict theories are "theories about society which emphasize that conflicts of interest do exist and humans are in conflict with each other in relation to resources, prestige and power" (Hutchinson & Oltedal, 2014, p. 142). There are three specific theories worth discussing and expanding on.

Theory of Hegemony

Gramsci's theory of hegemony, which he outlined in the *Prison Notebooks*, albeit "fragmented and dispersed throughout his Quaderni del carcere" (Bates, 1975, p. 351), holds as its basic premise that we are not only ruled by force but also by ideas (Bates, 1975). It is these ideas, commonly displayed as common sense (Shahid &

Jha, 2014), defined and disseminated by the state, which create dominance over the population (Germino, 1986) and a general consent by the population at large; a "consent of the led, a consent which is secured by the diffusion and popularisation of the world view of the ruling class" (Bates, 1975, p. 352).

Germino suggested, "hegemony may be defined as the means by which the modern state generates consent without the use or threat of force" (1986, p. 26). The state creates hegemony over the ruled to the extent that it achieves overriding compliance to its own ideas and castigates those that do not 'consent' to the prevailing ideas of the day (Bates, 1975).

If this reasoning were transposed across to the contemporary funding regime, we find that a funder, by way of its required outcomes, generates hegemony over the organisation and therefore the social worker and predisposes both to a certain practice framework.

As Arevalo suggested

> it is by requesting and accepting funding through a funding model that hegemony by the funder over Aotearoa New Zealand social work practice is achieved. I would also suggest that this relationship unintentionally provides a greater level of 'consent' and 'legitimacy' to one practice framework over another, reinforcing dominance by 'approved' practice methods. It is not so

> much who provides the funding, although that is important, but more the conditions attached to each funding stream that may be augmenting the dominance of funder ideology over practice (2018, p. 7).

Any rejection of the prevailing funding ideology is met with discipline in the sense that contracts may be withheld in the next funding cycle. In such a competitive market, with organisations surviving from one contract, or a series of contracts, to the next and this could lead to redundancies or closure.

Another Gramscian idea is the concept of “ideas disseminated as common sense” (Shahid & Jha, 2014, p. 21). The link here is even when social workers and organisations believe the current practice framework is not working in many situations, the acceptance of funding “contributes to people’s subordination by making situations of inequality and oppression appear to them as natural and unchangeable” (Garrett, 2009b, p. 465). Shahid and Jha (2014) state “the feeling that such relationship is not only natural but also just is the core of common sense being the integral component of the hegemonic process” (p. 23).

Atrophied Moral Cognition

Practitioners, at times, find themselves at a fork in the road where they need to decide between social work values and values instilled by the employer. What are the intellectual machinations in play that alleviate some of the angst a practitioner

may feel if they decide to subdue their own value system for the value system of their employer, creating what Taylor calls professional dissonance (2007); a deep disquiet between one's own professional values and the tasks needing to perform as prescribed by the employer.

Examples abound however of aboriginal adoptions in Canada where social workers struggle with the linear nature of government adoption bureaucracy versus the circular nature of cultural adoptions where "sometimes things need to come back to the table" (Burke et al., 2017, p. 306). Dilemmas such as this lead practitioners to develop strategies such as adopting humour over the severity of the situation, commencing fitness regimes to direct the inner disquiet, keeping busy and quickly moving onto the next case so as to not have to focus on the ethical issue at hand (McAuliffe, 2005).

Thompson (2013) may offer an explanation as to what is happening within a social workers psyche through what he calls atrophied moral cognition, which relates to the capacity "for making rational moral judgements for oneself becomes weakened due to the heavy reliance on unified, external value systems and norms that become so predominant within modern societies that individuals become alienated from their own powers of judgement" (p. 302).

Practitioners may find themselves having to decide whether to follow the company's value system or practice the way they desire away from their worksite. What they are ultimately doing though is conceding to the value system of their institution and seconding theirs to the background. What Thompson suggests is that by repeatedly practicing in this way, succumbing to the value system of the organisation, the value system of the individual (in this instance the social workers), becomes increasingly in line with the organisation's and they rely decreasingly on their own. As this happens, their value system withers and over time atrophies leaving them alienated "from the moral problems they might confront in their world" (2013, p. 305) and therefore they start to "cognize the world according to external value schemas that do not allow their participation nor require their activity" (Thompson, 2013, p. 306). This process of atrophy of a practitioner's value system is the very thing a radical social worker fights against on a daily basis. By critically examining and questioning practice behaviours, the degeneration of one's value system may be stopped or at least delayed.

While this may sound outrageous, Carey (2008) sums up this hypothesis when he suggests, quite succinctly, that neoliberal forms of social work practice has penetrated, deliberately and via osmosis, the psyche of contemporary social workers to such an extent that they are unable to view and reflect on different forms of practice other than the ones laid out for them by their organisation or the funding outcomes.

Theory of Alienation

Marx understood alienation as something rooted in the material world. “Alienation meant loss of control, specifically the loss of control over labour” (Cox, 1998, p. 1). Marx saw labour as “a dynamic process by which the labourer shapes and moulds the world he lives in and stimulates himself to create and innovate” (Cox, 1998, p. 2). With that in mind, what happens if the contemporary social worker cannot, or is not allowed, to shape his or her practice to what she or he feels is best for the client or the community? What if social workers can no longer create or innovate a practice best suited to the time and place?

Four Aspects of Alienation

“Marx’s theory of alienation is organised around his fourfold concept of alienated labour” (Schweitzer, 1991, p. 28). The first aspect of *Alienation* surrounds the product of people’s labour, and as such “the product of people’s labour assumes an external existence independent of their will, as an object and a power beyond their control” (Schweitzer, 1991, p. 28). I argue that the contemporary social work practitioner finds her or his practice (labour) an alienated activity as contemporary social work practice is different to what the social worker thought practice was going to be, different to what the social worker has been taught or different to the code of ethics. An example of this is the premature closing of individual cases due to requirements attached to whatever relevant funding model the social worker is working within. The social worker is required to meet a certain number of closed, and

open cases, for a particular month and will be required to close cases to ‘meet the numbers’ even when they know that doing so may have dire consequences for the family or individual. This quantitative driven social work is perceived as efficient and both the social worker and the organisation are rewarded for meeting the targets. I use this example, and other in this thesis, through personal experience as instances where contemporary social services processes forced a departure from what I understood to be social work as a helping profession, and a departure from ethical standards that I believed needed to be upheld.

The second aspect of alienation surrounds the labour process and “the relationship of people to the act of production in the labour process” (Schweitzer, 1991, p. 29). Cox (1998) states one has “no say over the conditions in which we work and how our work is organised, and how it affects us physically and mentally” (p. 4). A clear example of this is the caseload numbers for statutory social workers in Aotearoa New Zealand. As previously mentioned in the literature review, the workload of social workers at Oranga Tamariki had been found to have increased from the year before and had become more complex. This in turn meant that social workers were spending longer hours at work with a detrimental effect on their physical and mental wellbeing (PSA, 2018). While it could be argued that by having a unionised workplace it means that social workers have a ‘say over the conditions’ in which they work, the reality can quite different as was the report of a social worker with a caseload of over 90 children (PSA, 2020) a full two year after the original union report on workload. Practitioners are alienated from the process of their labour and have lost control of how to mitigate the conditions.

The third concept of alienation revolves around one's alienation of their fellow human being namely, "alienated from those who exploit our labour and control the things we produce" (Cox, 1998, p. 5). My thesis contends social work practice and therefore the practitioner is alienated from the employer and the employer's needs, the relevant Code of Ethics and at times, colleagues. As Schweitzer (1991) states, "alienated labour turns people against each other and themselves. It denies or thwarts their natural human capacity for free, spontaneous, self-realising activity this is an assumed part of their essential nature" (p. 29). A contemporary example here surrounds the advocating of housing rights with a housing provider on behalf of an elderly client. The human rights of the client were violated as they were left in substandard conditions leaving them no choice but to vacate the residence. While advocating for the client I was deemed too robust in my interactions and I was advised to issue an apology to the housing provider. This was so that the 'future relationship' with the housing provider could be maintained over and above the client's best interests. I felt alienated from my employer's requirements and the ANZASW Code of Ethics (ANZASW, 2019). Advocating strongly for my client and demanding the issues rectified so that their basic human rights could be restored was a natural part of my radical social work 'nature'. While controlling this side of practice it appeared any future advocacy was being 'chilled'.

The fourth aspect of alienation involves what Marx refers to as 'species being', "our ability to consciously shape the world around us" and as such, contemporary social workers may feel they can no longer shape the profession. As "work bears no relationship to our personal inclinations or our collective interests" (Cox, 1998, p. 5),

so contemporary social work practice bears no relationship to what contemporary social workers think the collective interest should be.

The reason for my interest in this particular theory is captured in Schweitzer's (1991) statement that "the problem of alienation is not confined to the economic domain of activity alone. Alienation is a ubiquitous relational process and social phenomenon which pervades all spheres of human activity" (Schweitzer, 1991, p. 29). As such, I believe alienation, as conceptualized by Marx, may have penetrated into the core of contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand Social Work.

While all of these theories are distinct in their own right, they interweave with one to a theoretical foundation by which social work is practised today. While not directly linear in how it progresses, hegemony is achieved over thoughts and praxis, passed off as common sense and kept in line through a combination of competition for funding and practitioners who practise in line with company values as opposed to social work values. This process then creates professionals who are practising something other than what they thought they would be when first entering the profession of social work.

Methodology and Method

Introduction

This chapter identifies the strategies and methods employed during the research process. The research, qualitative in nature, employed one to one interviews to understand whether there are barriers to practicing radical social work and what those barriers are in Aotearoa New Zealand (the questions can be found in Appendix 2). A thematic analysis of the data was specifically employed to extract key themes from the data.

Aims and Purpose

The aim of the research was to uncover, through the voices of the participants, what barriers exist in preventing them from practising radical social work and for radical social work to take hold in Aotearoa New Zealand. The purpose was to understand what those barriers are and identify strategies that may overcome those barriers.

Research Question

My research question developed from my initial queries in the introduction. Does radical social work practice exist in Aotearoa New Zealand? Are there contemporary social workers in Aotearoa New Zealand who self-identify as radical social work practitioners and practice radical social work? What were the barriers that block social workers from practicing radically in Aotearoa New Zealand? I decided to

assume that there were practitioners such as myself in Aotearoa New Zealand who identified as radical social workers and who were either practising radical social work or were attempting to practice radical social work. My attention then turned to what were the barriers they confronted in their day to day practice.

My research question is “What are the barriers that block social workers from practising radically?” Being able to understand the barriers that exist is essential if radical social work practice is to become a form of practice readily present in contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand social work settings.

Methodology

The research methodology employed in this research was qualitative using thematic analysis because it was important to acquire “analytic categories directly from the data, not from preconceived concepts or hypotheses” (Charmaz, 1996, p. 32), in other words, it was important that the meanings, themes and theories came directly from the data grounded in the voices of the participants, “repositioning the researcher as the author of a reconstruction of experience and meaning” (Mills et al., 2006b).

The inductive nature of the methodology allowed the key themes and issues to develop, all the while following the lead of the data (Charmaz, 1996). With that said it was important to note that no researcher is a “tabula rasa” (Jørgensen, 2001, p.

6397) and that “no qualitative method rests on induction” (Charmaz, 2004, p. 511) alone. The interpretation of the data is, to a certain extent, dependant on “prior interpretative frames, biographies, and interests as well as the research context, their relationships with research participants, concrete field experiences, and modes of generating and recording empirical materials” (Charmaz, 2004, p. 511).

The constructivist approach “denies the existence of an objective reality” (Mills et al., 2006b) and as a self-proclaimed radical social work practitioner I was aware of my subjective position within the research process. By clearly amplifying that position, to the participants and to myself, it compelled me to critically reflect on my latent assumptions and really listen to the participants’ stories (Mills et al., 2006a).

Another important milestone to achieve was the establishment of credibility, that is, the generation of “confidence in the truth value of the findings” (Barusch et al., 2011, p. 12) through qualitative rigour. Credibility was achieved through a combination of processes. Through interviewing and actively listening to the participants, personally transcribing each interview and reading each transcription twice in the process of extracting key themes. This process of rigour, critical analysis and deep reflection, I believe, established credibility.

Methods

Sampling

A purposive sampling method was used to target self-identified radical social workers. While it can be argued that radical social work practitioners are 'hidden' amongst the general social worker population, they were not considered 'hard to reach' so other sampling methods, such as snowball sampling (Faugier & Sargeant, 1997), were investigated and eventually discarded. However, using the participants' "social networks to recruit similar participants" (Sadler et al., 2010, p. 370) was not discouraged.

The sample included registered and non-registered social workers, employed and retired, those who had completed a Bachelor of Social Work, a Master of Social Work and the previously relevant Diplomas in social work. The exact recruitment method is expanded on in more detail below.

Recruitment

Research participants were recruited with the help of the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW) and Social Service Providers Aotearoa (SSPA) who ran advertisements in their online forums. The Public Service Association (PSA) emailed directly all of their social workers in their database and the scope of the research project was advertised on the Social Workers Action

Network (SWAN) Facebook page. The wording of the advertisement can be found in Appendix 3.

The combined approached of advertising through the ANZASW, SSPA, SWAN and the PSA succeeded in attracting 18 research participants who were dispersed across the country. One participant withdrew and one interview recording failed due to a technical fault, leaving 16 participant interviews to transcribe. There was no mention of Iwi affiliations amongst the participants; one omission of the research is that this was not asked about; so there can be no determination made of the cultural makeup of the research participants as this was not the focus of this research.

When each participant made contact to request more information about the research project, they were emailed the Information Sheet (Appendix 4) and the Consent Form (Appendix 5). On confirmation of their participation, they were contacted directly and a suitable time for the interview was organised.

One prospective research participant withdrew from the research on finding out the interview would be conducted online due to geographical distance. The participant preferred a face to face interview. This withdrawal from the research prompted an advisement to all prospective research participants at the outset of my location. They were advised that if they lived outside of the Canterbury region the interview would be conducted online thereby giving them an opportunity to withdraw at the outset.

Data Collection Methods

While interviewing is “the most common form of data collection in qualitative research” (Jamshed, 2014, p. 87) this was not the reason why interviewing was deemed as appropriate. Data was collected via individual semi-structured interviews of duration of between 45 minutes to an hour each. Semi-structured, one on one interviews, as opposed to focus groups and surveys, was deemed more appropriate as it was felt that focus groups did not supply enough anonymity to the participants with surveys being too impersonal and did not allow the back and forth discussions that occur between the researcher and the participant in semi-structured interviews. Focus groups were also discarded as a method of data collection due to the assumed scarcity of radical social work practitioners in any one location, which turned out to be correct

The semi-structured nature of the interview allowed rich and comprehensive answers to the pre-set open-ended questions being asked. While it was felt that to get the best out of the participants the interviews needed to be more informal in nature it was also obvious that it needed to be more than just an unstructured conversation (Longhurst, 2003).

Depending on the geographical location of the participant, the interviews were conducted in person or over the telephone. Both were recorded and the recording was used for the manual transcribing of the interview. In person interviewing would have been preferable however a lack of time and funds constrained this endeavour (Opdenakker, 2006). The face to face interviews, synchronous in time and place and

the telephone interviews, synchronous in time while asynchronous in place (Opdenakker, 2006) had a number of advantages and disadvantages.

(Opdenakker, 2006) identified advantages and disadvantages in both mediums which were found to be true to this research. The advantages and disadvantages of 'in person' interviewing was:

- The social cues were easily picked up and the answers to the questions felt instinctive, however, the latter did add added pressure insofar that more concentration was needed to stay in the moment and stay with the participants thought processes
- The use of the recorder meant that note taking, at times, was lacking and when it came time to transcribing the subtleties of the conversation may have been lost (Opdenakker, 2006)

The advantages and disadvantages of telephone interviewing were:

- The research had "extended access to participants" (Opdenakker, 2006, p. 4) which meant that if there was any deviation to the time of the interview access to the participant was re-established quite quickly with minimum barriers
- The lack of social cues during telephone interviews was evident when compared to 'in person' interviews. While this did not cause issues it did

mean that more concentration was needed to 'listen to' intonation and tone rather than substance (Opdenakker, 2006)

Each interview was transcribed manually onto Microsoft Word. Transcribing of the first interview commenced immediately which meant that there was a process of both scribing and interviewing occurring simultaneously. This allowed, at least at the beginning, a way in which the previous interview elicited different themes and messages that were "used to direct the next interview and observations" (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 6).

Data Analysis

A thematic analysis method was employed to analyse the data, as it was important to identify patterns within the data collected (Williamson et al., 2018) and use these patterns or "themes to address the research or say something about an issue" (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017, p. 3353). The analysis of the data collected can be viewed as broadly following the framework provided by (Braun & Clarke, 2006) of familiarising oneself with the data, searching for, reviewing and defining the themes and concluding with completing the end report (Braun & Clarke, 2006, pp. 16-23).

In phase one, the process of familiarising oneself with the data, occurred with the concurrent method of scribing and interviewing and was the first level of analysis. This is in line with common thoughts on qualitative data analysis which says "that

analysis must not be left until all the data are collected" (Williamson et al., 2018, p. 454). The manual scribing of the interview allowed an immersion into the data and a level of analysis that would not have been possible if I was to use a commercial software product to scribe the interview itself.

Phase two of the analysis occurred when each answer to every question from every participant was analysed and key phrases were extracted and stored in an excel spreadsheet. The process was repeated for each of the participants' answers to that particular question two times to ensure all relevant phrases were extracted. Each of these phrases were then analysed again for key themes and these were then collated, grouped together and became the foundation for the findings. The approach to the extraction of key themes was a semantic approach, that is, the themes were identified "within the explicit or surface meanings of the data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 13).

Phase three and four of the analysis, reviewing and defining the themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006), occurred once all the answers to a particular question were analysed for key themes. The extracted themes were then grouped on the basis of similarity. It became clear during this process which were the main themes of the extracted data and which themes were 'outliers'. The key themes extracted were then used as the subheadings for key findings in the Findings chapter.

Ethical Considerations

As a member of the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers, ethics and responsibility to individuals played a large role in how the research was conducted. By moving away from pathologising the individual in critiquing the structural processes, radical social work elicits some risk to the individual practitioner particularly if the organisation they are employed by does not look at this form of practice favourably.

Due to this risk, confidentiality was one of the primary concerns in this research. The confidentiality of the participating social workers was protected by being careful to ensure they could not be recognised by readers. Pseudonyms were used and the use of other personal identifiers such as practice settings and their geographic location were avoided.

There was some initial discussion regarding potential negative outcomes for me with my academic supervisors because of this research. However, as a self-identified radical social worker critiquing and challenging the structural processes as part of my ongoing day to day role, I did not feel there would be any negative repercussions for myself conducting this research.

A Low Risk Notification was submitted to the Massey University Human Ethics Committee and an acceptance letter was received dated 5 February 2019 under Ethics Notification Number: 4000020452 (Appendix 6).

Locating Self in the Research

I am aware of my personal leaning towards activism and my strong social justice and human rights values. Because of this, while operating the interviews in a way that was quite conversational, I made sure that I allowed participants to steer the conversation in the direction they wanted and keeping to the core of the question. In short, I was very cognisant not to allow my strong activist biases to infiltrate the discussion. I shared my genuine curiosity in how participants related to the research question.

Limitations of Research

There are approximately 8000 social workers in Aotearoa New Zealand. The number of participants in this research is too small to be able to generalise the findings regarding practice methodology across the entirety of the profession. On reflection, while the research methodology and methods were the correct path to take, the interview questions, while eliciting rich data missed some key avenues to pursue in regards to specific acts of resistance that particular participants may have taken over the years. While this is potentially an avenue for further research, it could also have

added some greater context and breadth to the findings. With that said, the process was rigorous, the research process was not biased or prejudiced and it has provided an in-depth analysis of what this particular cohort, small as it may be, shared regarding radical social work.

Findings

Theme one: There is not one definition of radical social work

When embarking on this research it was important to obtain a definition, or a range of definitions, of radical social work from the available literature. Understanding how scholars defined radical social work gave me a base by which to then build from and create a fuller picture of what radical social work is, both as a worldview, theory and a specific way of practising social work.

The same can be said as to why it was important to start with an understanding of how Aotearoa New Zealand social workers defined radical social work. Hence, I aimed to understand whether the participants concurred with or diverged from the definitions in the literature and whether there were differences in definition between the research participants.

Jane, who works in the education sector, noted that radical social work rejects the notion of pathologising the individual and in return looks at assailing the structural inequalities so prevalent in our society today.

> *it's about dealing with the causal or structural inequalities that we see around us as opposed to dealing with the more individualised stuff that a casework model tends to be about (Jane, interview, 21 May 2019).*

David, who also works in the education sector, noted that radical social work is aware of and responsive to the structural causes of oppression. This includes but is not limited to capitalism and racism. David said it is about being willing to

> *where possible, try to take action to address the structural causes of those issues (David, interview, 14 May 2019).*

Keeping in line with participants who work in the education sector, Roger supported his colleagues' view in that societal problems and the issues that social workers address in all fields of social work are

> *primarily caused by structures of society, systemic factors a social and economic system to benefit the rich at the expense of the poor (Roger interview, 3 June 2019).*

Moving away from the classroom and into the field, although very much in line with previous comments, Evelyn, a social worker who works in a community development

role, suggested that radical social work practices are at the crossroads of the private and the public, straddling the two dimensions and by definition being a conduit between both worlds.

Kerstin, a family social worker working for an NGO, noted that radical social work, while understanding there are individual, family and community issues that need to be addressed, also challenges the systemic structures that

> *often cause oppression and marginalisation for the families that we are trying to assist (Kerstin, interview, 12 June 2019).*

The traversing of similar definitions of radical social work in Aotearoa New Zealand, by participants from the world of academia to participants who are field practitioners, is hopeful. This connection seems to show congruence between academia and field practice in Aotearoa New Zealand, on a theoretical basis at least and therefore would seem to suggest an easier pathway, from the classroom to the field, for social workers who want to practice radically.

Mary, a family social worker working for an NGO, said that to practice radical social work was to have

a really broad social justice practice focus and be mindful of human rights (Mary, interview, 15 May 2019).

The participants did not deviate from the definition of radical social work in the literature. The apparent linkage between academia and practice in terms of a similar definition was a notable difference from the literature review and may suggest that New Zealand social work practitioners have a sound practical understanding of radical social work.

Theme two: Being a radical social worker

Another theme that emerged was participants' awareness of radical social work in their practice. I was curious to understand when the participants became aware of radical social work and whether it was in line with the literature. Did they come into the profession with this knowledge, was it taught to the participants during their university studies, did they become aware of it during their working life or was it a mixture of all or something else?

Five participants became aware of radical social work while attending university in their undergraduate and post-graduate studies. David, who self identifies as a radical, became aware of radical social work early in his studies and started to wrestle with the concept in the third and fourth year of his undergraduate social work degree.

Roger became aware of radical social work in his postgraduate studies, and although it was not a main theme, it was discussed as a theoretical framework on which to base social work practice. Roger said

> *It was really when I did my postgrad diploma at xxx in the early 90's. I guess I've always had a political interest. Yeah, in the 90's I did the xxx diploma and I wouldn't say that radical social work was the dominant theme of the program, but it was certainly there as one of the theoretical basis we covered. Bailey and Brake and those guys (Roger, interview, 3 June 2019).*

Alina, a community social worker, noted she had been made aware of it in both her undergraduate and postgraduate studies and then took that knowledge into her working life. She remarked she had

> *always been aware of it, in my studies, my undergraduate studies, and then when I was working for a service that got swallowed up by another service (Alina, interview, 27 June 2019).*

An interesting finding, that five participants had noted, was that in hindsight they have always identified with radical social work or at least they were aware of the connection between the personal problems within the context of a larger system.

Their practice, in whatever sector or profession they were in at the time, was structurally based and saw the connection between the person, their environment and political structures. This may mean that, for some people, being radical is something that you bring into a profession thereby marrying your personal (and political) inclination with your profession of choice.

Sasha, who works in private practice, commented

> *I think I've always done it without even realising I'm doing it. And I think I have done it for most of my life and in all of the professions that I have been in (Sasha, interview, 4 July 2019).*

Kerstin has always identified with it and chose careers that suited this mindset. Kerstin attributes this as to the reason she chose to be a social worker. She said

> *It's part of why I went into social work, because my background is in international development and community development I was already aware*

of some similar theoretical frameworks around being radical in those fields, and I just naturally applied it over to social work - Yeah, so it's always been there, I can't tell you this is what happened and why, but it's part of me going into social work (Kerstin, interview, 12 June 2019).

Other participants took this question to another level by implying that if you are a social worker you are radical, or at least be radical by association.

Veronica, who works in the health sector, could not separate the practice of radical social work from being a social worker as she saw the two being intertwined. "You could not be a social worker without practising radically", she said. For her, radical social work was never a separate entity and it was always part of being a social worker practising social work in Aotearoa New Zealand. She commented

When did I become aware of it as a separate entity, probably never because it's always been part of it. I have been aware that in the 70's the term was coined (Veronica, interview, 8 June 2019).

Evelyn further emphasised Veronica's position that, for her, being a social worker means that one practices radically, structurally and at the systemic level. She said that she

had no idea that you could think of yourself as a social worker and not be concerned about wanting to influence systems at all levels. Yeah, but I did quite a bit of reflecting after a job experience, I found it really difficult and one of the things I realised was: oh, I am radical (Evelyn, interview, 21 June 2019)!

The participants fell into three distinctive groups. One group of participants became aware of radical social work during their undergraduate and postgraduate university studies showing that, in at least some tertiary institutions, radical social work was still part of the curriculum and had not been swept aside by the prevailing international ideology of neoliberalism.

Another set of participants had always identified with the concepts of radical social work and brought that orientation into their professional lives no matter the profession. While others, more in line with this latter group, stated quite robustly, that to be a social worker meant that you should, by default, practice at the systemic level. It would have been preferable, with the last two groups to have been able to have an in-depth investigation as to what motivated these beliefs however that was beyond the scope of this research. In saying that, what this may mean is that there were certain contributions during their life that assisted them in being able to think structurally and in line with the ethos of radical social work.

Theme three: Lack of discourse about radical social work

Combined with the preceding question and comments, the participants presented perspectives that suggested radical social work, both in theory and practice, had not made the breakthrough some would have hoped for. While the literature presented radical social work as making a comeback internationally, the reality in Aotearoa New Zealand seemed to be less prosperous.

Nine participants said they would be surprised if the majority of social workers knew what the term radical social work meant let alone what the practice entailed. David said

> *I would be surprised if even 10 per cent of social workers had a good grasp of what radical social work was (David, interview, 14 May 2019).*

Evelyn, in nearly two decades, had never heard it mentioned and Veronica said it was not something she thought social workers were actively discussing. Veronica said

> *I don't think it is by name. It is something apart. I don't think it is a topic of conversation. And why would that be (Veronica, interview, 8 June 2019)?*

Taking up that question, Mary, who works for an NGO in their child and family team, believes the reason is because it is not taught in the university system although she did admit she was basing her assumption on her experience of one university in Aotearoa New Zealand. Carey does add some substance to this argument having noted that

> *It's definitely not something, you know, I did a four year degree and I never heard it mentioned once (Carey, interview, 27 June 2019).*

James, who sees himself as a social service consultant, advances slightly further along this same argument by suggesting that the devaluation of community work and a lack of radical social work knowledge amongst the teaching staff combined to create a vacuum of knowledge surrounding radical social work. He said

> *Since xxx has devalued community work and since the other university programmes have influenced by preparing people for occupation and because people that are tutoring in those situations don't have this as a theoretical base and don't have the experience in it, we don't have the personnel (James, interview, 27 May 2019).*

While the majority of participants believed that radical social work was not well known amongst social workers, other responses suggested a more nuanced view than a blanket ‘no’ to this question.

David suggested that while social work education in Aotearoa New Zealand taught social workers how to critically analyse, social work education in Aotearoa New Zealand was not radical social work education per se. He went on to say that while radical social work may not be mentioned, several of the building blocks that comprise aspects of radical social work were probably taught. He said

> *I think social work education is very much focused on teaching social workers to be critical, to understand issues in a critical way, but I don’t think social work education is clearly radical social work education. I think many of the things I would associate with radical social work were probably put under things like the Treaty of Waitangi or knowing about poverty (David, interview, 14 May 2019).*

Adding to this more subtle understanding, Louise noted that, while speaking with other social workers, they may not have had an understanding of radical social work, but they did understand that their practice should be based on social justice and human rights and therefore had a good understanding of the core building blocks of radical social work. She commented

> *I do think that most social workers will understand the duty they have to base their work on the principles of our, you know, they're in our code of ethics, social justice, human rights. So as soon as I start talking to a social worker they may not specifically think they're radical or even aspire to that, once I talk about those they're right on board (Louise, interview, 18 May 2019).*

Gemma, who is a social worker in a hospital setting, seemed to support this when she said

> *I know a few social workers at work who think and feel the same way but have no idea about what it's called, but who are really active in the really big structural issues and are really keen to connect on it. I mean really hungry to connect on it (Gemma, interview, 1 June 2019).*

The findings appeared to show that, while radical social work may not be well known amongst social workers in Aotearoa New Zealand, the core tenets that are the key units of radical social work are known. Kerstin and Kris summed it up perfectly when they concluded that

> *I think if you were to ask someone in those words what is radical social work I think many social workers wouldn't be able to give a definition of what that*

means. And they wouldn't necessarily be able to apply that to their current practice as social workers (Kerstin, interview, 12 June 2019).

I believe social workers assume they are radical because they are social workers but I think we have some difficulty speaking about what it is that we do. So the poverty of our language is actually part of the problem we face (Kris, interview, 12 June 2019).

Participants expressed amazement if the bulk of social workers in Aotearoa New Zealand knew what radical social work was. The reasons some gave to this may be that radical social work, as a standalone subject, is not a large part of the contemporary social work curriculum. This is evidenced in Appendix 1 that shows radical social work practice declared on 5 instances on a curriculum across 14 social work schools; this is less than half the occasion's faith-based practice appeared (Ballantyne, Beddoe, Hay, Maidment, Ngan, et al., 2016).

Theme four: Challenges of practising radically

This question was attempting to gauge the level of active radical social work practice in contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand social work setting. While some found it difficult to practice radically at the place of work, some were able to get over this obstacle by promoting their radical practice after hours through trade union work,

refugee advocacy, involvement in anti-racism networks, climate change action and writing submissions on selected pieces of legislation.

Mary found it difficult to work radically in the role she was currently in. She stated she would perform small pieces of resistance against processes she deemed were not helping the client. One dilemma she did find herself in was that if she were to follow her employment obligations she would invariably be breaking some aspects of the Social Work Code of Ethics; on the other hand, if she were to practice radically, and in doing so follow the Social Work Code of Ethics, she felt she would be breaking certain aspects of her employment contract. An example of this was requiring to have, at times, quite confronting and sensitive conversations with young people without the space to build rapport or be able to follow up on their wellbeing. The process Mary was engaged in was coercive, that is to say, if they did not answer her questions they would not receive the outcome they required or wanted, this was in the context of her being a total stranger, asking very personal questions in a short period of time. She did push back to ensure she could refer the young people on to another service, something she was initially not encouraged to do. She said

> *It's a really tough space to be in. So, I kind of work around it by telling myself rather I do this job than someone who does practice defensively. You know what I mean, someone who just sticks to the job, sticks to what the funder requires. Rather I do it and I do push back and that's one thing (Mary, interview, 15 May 2019).*

Another participant who found it difficult to practice radically in her role was Kerstin. In the example she gave, she said she was barred from exposing a landlord to the media by her employer. The landlord in question had recently evicted a mother and new-born baby from an apartment simply because the landlord found the eviction to be a more acceptable solution than carpeting the home and installing curtains. Kerstin said her manager stopped her from approaching the media due to the fact that

> *we're funded by the ministry, and it could, even if you did it anonymously it could somehow link back and it could put the client at risk. And really, she was talking about putting us at risk (Kerstin, interview, 12 June 2019).*

Kerstin went onto say

> *this is an example of what I would call very low-key radical stuff. C'mon, it's just an article telling the truth about what is going on in our society. But even that I couldn't, and I've just had to respect that (Kerstin, interview, 12 June 2019).*

Using the Fourth Estate, journalism and the media, is just one of the avenues that social workers who see a structural connection to oppression may explore to expose social injustices. When this is taken away because of the perceived threat of losing

ongoing funding, it leaves the social worker and inevitably the client in a worse position and in turn can block a social worker from doing their jobs creatively and effectively.

Both Gemma and Jane have routinely kept any systemic or structural social work practice away from their paid employment. Gemma, while she felt supported to work on some ‘green’ initiatives during her work time, found that she did not have the time during the day to work on the more structural aspects of social work practice. Jane said that, while she normally did not combine radical social work practice into her work, she was

> *Changing that because it is important to talk about it inside of work so I am trying to be a lot more deliberate to bring my outside work in (Jane*, *interview, 21 May 2019).*

Carey was, in contrast to all of them, able to practice radical social work where she is currently employed. She credits this to the fact that she is the only social worker at the NGO she works at. She noted

> *I am the only social worker and I am leading the practice side of things in our organisations and on how we work with families and young people (Carey, interview, 27 June 2019).*

This appeared to give Carey a level of freedom that the other social workers do not have in connection to practice models, relationships with clients, partners and funders. She seemed to be suggesting that she is able to control the narrative surrounding the modes of practice she employs, the programmes she delivers to clients and by default the conversations with the relevant funding organisations.

Moving away from front line social work practitioners and into the realm of social work educators, both David and Roger expressed more freedom to practice radically than the bulk of their front-line peers.

David noted that writing journals and articles in relation to radical practice is a form of radical social work practice and that educators have more time to do so than their front-line peers. He added that if front line practitioners had the time to write, the literature would look dissimilar to what academics are currently producing. He declared

> *I see teaching as a very unique kind of space where educators can do stuff that practitioners can't which is why so much social work literature focuses on very radical stuff. If it was written by people in the field and if they had time to write I think we'd get very different literature so I think there is a bit of an ivory tower thing going on (David, interview, 14 May 2019).*

Roger used his past role in conjunction with his teaching as a way of introducing social work students to radical social work theory and practice. He commented:

> *I would say I have been trying to practice in a radical way now in terms of the context of what I teach. I was a placement coordinator for a while, placing a number of students in places like Auckland Action Against Poverty. It is probably the most radical social work organisation in the country, but also in MP electoral offices where they were certainly looking at that sort of political level. There certainly has not been any resistance in my team or from my employer (Roger, interview, 3 June 2019).*

Most participants found it difficult to practice radical social work. The reasons were they either felt impeded by their employer, were constrained by their contractual obligations or they just did not have the time to do so during their normal working day.

There seemed to be more freedom to practice radically in the education space, and also when the social worker was the person leading the practice. This allowed Carey to determine the social work practice philosophy the organisation employed with their clients.

It would appear, left to their own devices, these participants would have been content to practice radical social work and would find doing so more in line with how they perceived they should be practising and the social work Code of Ethics. What the participants have described creates a tension due to the unauthentic way they have to be within their workplace. While this dovetails into the next section of chapter, it is worth making the connection that when a participant leads the practice setting, they automatically installed radical practice as the default framework by which to work with clients.

Theme five: Benefits of practising radically

The findings in this section are divided into the benefits of practising radical social work to the individual participant, the profession and the society. Authenticity and a greater sense of wellbeing is a large part of the benefits to individual practitioners. Aligning the core values of social justice and human rights, coupled with change at the systemic level are the benefits associated to the profession and society respectively.

To the social worker

Most of the participants commented that the personal benefits of practising radical social work went beyond their ‘everyday notion’ of job satisfaction. For the

participants, being able to practice radical social work embodied their own value systems and fed their professional souls.

It allowed Louise to practice authentically, she said

> *practice authentically, it is true to my belief systems. So I can't live I can't feel free. So it means that I can practice authentically and survive (Louise, interview, 18 May 2019).*

In much the same way, Roger commented that for him the benefits of practising radical social work were

> *being able to work and practise in a way that actually does embody and fulfil my highest ideals in my strongest values (Roger, interview, 3 June 2019).*

Jane, Carey and Evelyn brought an embodied dimension to what it meant to them to be able to practice radical social work. Jane said

> *Personally, it means that my personal values align with professional values which is much more healthy in the sense that it energises me, it feels that*

what I am doing is congruent with my own values so it's really important (Jane, interview, 21 May 2019).

When Evelyn was able to practise radical social work, her overall wellbeing increased as opposed to when she could not. She commented

I think for me, practising radically means I can bring my whole self and my whole training to my work. So for me, it is about having integrity which is actually huge to my wellbeing. I find that when I practise outside of my integrity, even if it's professional even if there is a way to tick all of the ethics kind of boxes, that actually if I am not able to do what I think needs doing then I don't stay well (Evelyn, interview, 12 June 2019).

Carey noted that it felt instinctively right to practise radical social work when she was working with clients; she said it promoted a sense of

wellbeing and the ability to stay in the profession, knowing that you're not going against the way that you see is the right way to work with people. So, therefore, you're not, stress is less actually. You feel really proud of the work you're doing, and it just feels right, it feels good to do it (Carey, interview, 29 June 2019).

Gemma and Kerstin said that to practise radical social work was congruent with the way they wanted to practise, was exciting and enabled them to do the role they were educated for. Gemma noted

> *to me, it's super exciting and keeps me alive on the inside because it's the really big conceptual stuff that really, I don't know, that's juicy, that's exciting (Gemma, interview, 1 June 2019).*

To the profession

For several participants, the benefits to the profession of practising radical social work revolved around aligning the values of social justice and human rights, endemic to both radical social work and the ANZASW Code of Ethics ANZASW (2019). Some suggested the profession had either completely abandoned these values or had forgotten about them and had to be reminded.

Louise noted that as radical social work was grounded in human rights principles it would help the profession keep social justice and human rights at the centre of its work. She noted it would assist

with informing the practice and keeping that practice human rights centred. Which then minimises the risk of us doing damage which we are seeing all through the media at the moment (Louise, interview, 18 May 2019).

Jane argued that the profession has a clear obligation through its own code of ethics to have social justice and human rights at the core of our practice. She said

On a professional level, we have a very clear mandate through the global definition and through our own code of ethics to have social justice at the centre of things and be using human rights frameworks to frame up our work and bicultural frameworks to frame up our work with tangata whenua (Jane, interview, 21 May 2019).

Kerstin made it clear that the benefits to the profession of practising radical social work is the re-emergence of social justice and all that it brings with it. She stressed that

if we actually enacted what our definition is, which is to create social justice, which is to create equality, which is to address oppression, these things are all in that international definition; then we would be doing our job and we will be living out our values and we're currently not doing that. And that is a huge

disgrace to our profession. It is, it's an absolute disgrace to social workers (Kerstin, interview, 12 June 2019).

For Gemma and Lisa, the benefits of practising radical social work to the profession centred on improving the profession. Not only for the benefit of the profession but also for the benefit of our most vulnerable.

Lisa, a volunteer advocate, contended that currently, while the profession wanted successful outcomes

We're not being successful. There are still children dying, there are still children being separated from their families unnecessarily (Lisa, interview, 1 June 2019).

Gemma claimed that a benefit to the profession would be that radical social work questioned the status quo, she said

I think it's really easy to get stuck in the status quo and we just continue as we always have without really pushing forward and become stagnant if there isn't some really big discussion that's happening around why we're doing what we're doing (Gemma, interview, 1 June 2019).

To society

Participants noted that the benefits to society of practising radical social work were that it enabled change at a broader, structural and systemic level.

David said that radical social work, as part of a larger set of processes, would benefit society by adding to the

> *broader struggles against oppressive structures and so radical social work as a concept I think could be incredibly powerful as one part of a bigger picture (David, interview, 14 May 2019).*

In kind, Jane declared

> *I think we can keep on sticking little band aids on things forever but actually, the real change needs to come at structural level so if I can be part of that I'm really happy (Jane*, interview, 21 May 2019*).*

Alina suggested that the benefits to society of radical social work may be that it would allow a more equitable society. A society working towards alleviating the statistics of

> *1 in 7 families and children live in poverty. So, the suicide rates might drop, and people feel more supported and accepted (Alina, interview, 27 June 2019).*

According to the participants, there were clear benefits of practising radical social work; to themselves, the profession and society at large. They said the benefits were extensive and it seemed as though there was an increase in personal wellbeing. Some also suggested that by practising radical social work meant they practised authentically, that is, congruent to their belief and values system. There appeared to be a benefit to the profession in terms of reinserting social justice and human rights principles with social work practice in Aotearoa New Zealand, something that some participants felt was lacking in contemporary praxis. Participants felt the benefit to society was that radical social work practice created change at the systemic and structural levels.

Theme six: Barriers to a competent and supportive radical practice

While the participants noted several barriers preventing them from practising radical social work, by far the three most prevalent barriers, as identified by the participants were education, funding and workload.

Education

The participants expressed that the most prevalent barrier to practising radical social work was education. The findings in this category, overall, can be confined to two main views, one from the viewpoint of the former student and one from the viewpoint of the educator.

Mary commented she was not taught it during her undergraduate, and she questioned why social workers were not practising in this manner as she felt radical social work should be the practice of choice. Mary said

> *it's quite significant that I wasn't aware of it when I was doing my Bachelors of Social Work, speaks volumes I think, you know, about the fact that all of those things that I have just mentioned, you know, challenging social injustice, structures, politicising, all of that wasn't a focus of the Bachelors. Why are people not practising this, why are people not doing it. This is what social work is (Mary, interview, 15 May 2019)!*

Jane, while an educator herself, spoke from the viewpoint of her time in the classroom, she said that apart from the possibility of one lecturer mentioning it, radical social work was not a dominant theme running through her postgraduate social work education. Jane noted

> *I don't think they came out very much in my social work education which was a 2 year Masters at xxx. I really can't recall too much discussion about radical approaches at that point although we definitely read some Dominelli and we definitely read some Jan Fook. So possibly we had one lecturer actually looking back who exposed us to those ideas but it wasn't a strong theme running through our course in any way (Jane, interview, 21 May 2019).*

Louise suggested that universities were not doing enough to teach students about radical social work and in fact, she felt they had an obligation to do that. Louise said

> *I also strongly believe that our universities need to do heaps more to produce candidates that understand, not only understand, but have some skills in radical social work. I mean I'd love it if they had as part of an assessment go join a community group that's doing some action around housing or action around P and actually do a project on it and feel what it's like to be on the frontline making some noise (Louise, interview, 18 May 2019).*

David, an educator himself, suggested that Aotearoa New Zealand social work education institutions teach their students to be social work practitioners that would be able to slot into a contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand social work workplace setting and not to be effective political radicals.

David inferred they do this because the Social Work Registration Board, while auditing the university's curriculum, wants to see a curriculum that will deliver social workers that are ready to deliver contemporary services to clients. He declared

> *In terms of teaching social work, what is the purpose of social work education? Is it to teach professionals who are able to go out to the workforce as it currently is and deliver services to clients? I strongly believe that is what the SWRB expects of social work courses and I am of the opinion when the social work registration board audits courses as they do on a regular basis those are the core things they are looking for. Are you teaching safe competent professionals who can go out into the workforce to deliver services? When they audit a course what are they looking for, is the course teaching these students how to be effective political radicals? No way in hell would they be looking for that as a core skill of social work education courses (David, interview, 14 May 2019)!*

While David seemed to infer some pressure from the regulatory body, in terms of what social work departments teach; Roger, also an educator, indicated that this pressure translated into tension insofar as what the educator taught their students. Roger said

> *I think there is a tension in the sense that on one hand in social work education we do have a responsibility to teach what is needed for people to get jobs and to work in jobs, and do work that is important. Equally that we have a vital imperative to teach the values of our profession rather than teaching what OT wants or any particular social work employer wants. Yep, that's the tension we have to work with in education (Roger, interview, 3 June 2019).*

James in a similar vein to David and Roger noted that external pressures were to blame for social work education being a barrier to radical social work practice. However, he said the pressure was not solely borne by social work but across all facets of society.

> *I think there was increased pressure from Government departments, in particular, to get people to work in Government departments. I think there's been an increasing desire for the Government to do that across all sectors of society (James, interview, 27 May 2019).*

The findings suggest that radical social work is not taught within Aotearoa New Zealand schools of social work at the level that the participants want it to be taught. While the view point of the 'student' expressed dismay and at times frustration as to why this was the case, the 'educator' was more explicit is suggesting that outside

forces created a tension to deliver to social work practitioners ready to dovetail directly into contemporary practice as opposed to ‘radicals’ who were ready to challenge the status quo. Unless this barrier is overcome, these dilemmas will continue to surface and contemporary social work practice will remain as it is.

Funding

Funding, that is, the parameters associated with funding grants, the timeframes associated with funding cycles and the potential ‘chilling effect’ of speaking out against funders was seen as the second most common barrier to practising radical social work.

Louise suggested the current funding regime created a real tension within the practice space and determined the style of practice and the processes a social worker followed. Louise questioned how it was possible to build affinity with a client while at the same time meet the requirements imposed on a social worker. Louise questioned how a social worker would

> *hold that space and how do they protect the whanau from all the tick boxing that is pushed on them. How do they hold that early phase of social work when you are trying to build that rapport and listen and feel and let them suss you (Louise, interview, 18 May 2019)?*

Mary said she believed that the current funding regime pitted one organisation against another which in turn created a mentality amongst organisations where they only favoured ‘easier’ contracts. Mary commented

> *It encourages a competitive market particularly within the NGO sector. It encourages target driven work, it encourages cherry picking. It encourages, there’s a word people use for it … defensive social work (Mary, interview, 15 May 2019)!*

For both Evelyn and Carey, the funding model was a barrier to practising radical social work because of both the timeframes required by the funders and what the funders deemed as important measurement milestones. What Evelyn and Carey thought as important breakthroughs when working with clients took time to achieve which was at odds with the funders’ timeframes. Evelyn said

> *I think a big thing too is that we are unable to measure emancipation, we can’t show fast enough progress to evidence the need for the next funding round. Employers are not interested in the bigger picture. They become captivated by KPIs and open and shuts and all of that kind of stuff (Evelyn, interview, 12 June 2019).*

Carey was a little more descriptive when she commented

> *For us there are definitely barriers. We're restricted completely with funding. We're a not for profit so everything we do we have to evidence why we do it and our outcomes and all that sort of stuff. And this type of work, evidencing change and all of that stuff takes a long time. You know, those huge breakthroughs and all of that stuff it's never really like massive life changing change. It's never like 'oh, this is why we do it and we did it in 8 weeks'. We come from a place where we are working for over a year or longer with young people and their families so can you go along with this slow and steady change rather than this needing to fit something into a small amount of time and how many programmes we could run (Carey, interview, 27 June 2019).*

Kerstin intimated that funding created a barrier insofar as not being able to question the current funding system. It seems Kerstin suggested that there was a 'chilling effect' caused by receiving the money and not being able to criticise the outcomes required. Kerstin said

> *We have to be nice to the person giving us money. That's a barrier because we can't be too highly critical (Kerstin, interview, 12 June 2019).*

Evelyn was more forthright when she added

> *Who wants to pay someone to stir up their system? Like no one. And actually, that's why to be honest, I have worked in a voluntary unpaid capacity most of my working life for various reasons but ultimately as I have reflected more on it, that's where I can feel a sense of integrity in doing what I think needs to be done (Evelyn, interview, 12 June 2019)*.

Alina felt the narrow boundaries of the funding parameters and the tight time deadlines to be counterproductive to achieving a positive outcome and that this issue is not solely felt by social workers. She noted that employers were also under the same pressures to show their funders quick results to be able to keep services going. She stated

> *They really are caught in the middle in difficult situations where they're not able to offer services which meet the needs of their clients. Where they've got to do something in 6 weeks and the family needs longer. It needs a more comprehensive service delivery rather than just this (Alina, interview, 27 June 2019).*

Workload

Participants commented that workload was also a large barrier to practising radical social work. They said time pressures created by enormous caseloads negated any critical thinking and radical practice.

David said that the day to day workload is such that any radical thinking or practice may have retreated from view. David declared

> *in the practice environment people get so caught up in the day to day of doing work, addressing these very kind of serious needs that need to be addressed that the more critical focus might recede into the background (David, interview, 14 May 2019).*

Mary concurred with David when she noted that practice focused on the individual and enormous caseloads negated any chance of dramatic change. She put it succinctly when she stated

> *Social workers are so dug in and they're practising such individualised social work they don't have time to lift their head above their work, 60 caseloads or whatever daft thing it is and actually say, hang on a second, what am I actually going to do about this? How can I practise transformative social work? How can I actually change things for these people who are constantly coming to me homeless (Mary, interview, 15 May 2019)?*

Jane personalised the experience somewhat when she noted that the caseload coupled with very normal family pressures left her with very little time or mental strength to critically reflect. She said

> *in a way to be critical and radical you have to have the opportunity to take a step back and you have to have that head space and I don't think I had that for quite a few years while my kids were growing up. At least I didn't make time for it. The casework, the work demands were such that I really couldn't take a step back (Jane, interview, 21 May 2019).*

Education, funding and workload were by far the biggest barriers to practising radical social work.

Overall, the 'education' barrier was divided into two groups. One group addressed it from the student perspective, they argued they either had very little exposure in their undergraduate or postgraduate courses or had no exposure to radical social work. The other group, the educators, said there were outside influences which created tensions for them to teach a style of social work that facilitated the student to be 'work ready' rather than becoming agents of social change and transformation.

Participants felt funding was also a barrier since it measured irrelevant successes; the timeframes of the funding cycles were too short therefore not helping to facilitate the real transformative change required and it also created a chilling effect on the

participants when they wanted to speak out against the parameters associated with each funding grant.

Workload was also seen as a barrier to practising radical social work as it was said that the workloads did not allow social workers to step back from the day to day pressures and practise in a way that created real transformative change.

Summary

Overall, it seems the state of radical social work in Aotearoa New Zealand is dormant or receding from view. While the participants' definition of radical social work was complementary to international definition, it diverged from the international norm by straddling both academia and field practice. Radical social work entered the participants' consciousness in a several ways; through their undergraduate and postgraduate university studies or early on in their lives prior to entering the profession which seemed to suggest outside influences led them to the social work profession and being able to view the world through systemic lenses.

The bulk of participants stated that radical social work was not known amongst a large proportion of their peers however, some were in agreement that several core principles, that make up radical social work and the ANZASW Code of Ethics ANZASW (2019) were well known and were seeming to imply that the lack of

proficiency was more a ‘poverty of language’ as opposed to a ‘poverty of knowledge’.

Participants found it difficult to practice radical social work either because of barriers introduced by their employer, contractually forced to practice in a certain way or not having enough time during their normal working day, with the exception of the participants who worked in the education sector who believed they had the freedom and licence to practise radically.

The benefits of practising radical social work were many; participants said this included an increase in personal wellbeing and it brought an authenticity to their practice because it aligned with their beliefs and values. They reported the restoration of important principles such as social justice and human rights to their practice as a benefit to the profession and that the benefit of radical social work to society was that its practice focussed on disrupting the status quo which created lasting change.

There were a various barriers to practising radical social work as suggested by the participants however only the top three were reported on as they were by far the most abundant. Education was, according the participants, the biggest barrier to them practising radical social work due to the lack of attention it was given at the tertiary level. The funding model was seen as a barrier insofar as it promoted the

irrelevant measurements for a successful outcome and the timeframes associated with each funding cycle were inadequate. The inability to step back and critically analyse a case due to workload constraints was also seen as a barrier to practising radical social work.

In a wry sardonic way, it is these very barriers that form the main ingredients of radical social work. In regards to social work education it is about doing additional readings and thinking critically, it is about challenging inadequate funding systems that perpetuate the status quo and superficial defensive practice, and when it comes to workload, the best practice is done on the verge of a professional boundary and in situations when resources are limited and where social workers and their clients need to think creatively.

Self-proclaimed radical social workers find it extremely difficult to practice in a way congruent to their value base; this leaves very little hope for those practitioners with little or no knowledge of radical practice however this should not deter us from a concerted effort to resurrect the practice to its expected dominance of the 1970s. Without such a resurgence there is very little chance of meaningful systemic change and the profession is destined to continue to reinforce the neoliberal status quo.

Discussion

The aim of this research was to understand what the barriers are that block social workers from practising radically. As previously mentioned, it was important to understand whether the social worker in Aotearoa New Zealand concurred or diverged from international literature in terms of how they defined radical social work, as knowing this would give a solid foundation for this work.

Defining Radical Social Work

Several of the participants, when defining radical social work, mentioned addressing and combating the structural issues and inequalities so prevalent in Aotearoa New Zealand society. This supports (Bailey & Brake, 1975; Fook, 1993) both interpretation or definition of radical social work. The participants did not elaborate as to what those ‘structures’ may have been although in fairness to the participants, there was not a follow up question asking for elaboration.

Interestingly, the data presented several different viewpoints and omissions. While (Ioakimidis, 2016) made a direct link between radical social work and political activity participants made no mention of it. They also did not allude to any point surrounding the analysis of historical trauma as (Cardenas, 2017) did with scant notion of anti-racist practice (Fraser et al., 2017). However, one participant did mention racism as a structural cause of oppression which needed to be combated. These last two

omissions are provocative insofar as in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand one may have thought that combating historical trauma and anti-racist practice may be high on the agenda for a radical social work practitioner.

Participants did introduce what seems to be two uniquely Aotearoa New Zealand viewpoints. The first unique introduction is that both social justice and human rights, while not mentioned at all in the literature insofar as how scholars defined radical social work, did appear in the data defining radical social work in Aotearoa New Zealand, aligning radical social work practice with the ANZASW Code of Ethics (ANZASW, 2019) and the SWRB Core Competencies (SWRB, 2020) and, by association, seemingly making it 'common practice'. However, as it has been pointed out in the Findings section, radical social work is not 'common practice'. In fact, the direct antithetical approach is the status quo warranting further research to understand at what point, in a practice setting, are social justice and human rights omitted from current social work practice as suggested by the participants. Further to this, if both the Code of Ethics (ANZASW, 2019) and the Core Competencies (SWRB, 2020) require both these values to be present in a practitioner's practice, where does the accountability lay if they do not exist?

The second exceptional item is that the similarities between Aotearoa New Zealand educators and practitioners in their definition of radical social work differed to the literature review insofar as the literature made no mention of international educators and practitioners having such a combined view. The literature for overseas social

work settings tended to show a clear division between academia and practice (Hurley & Taiwo, 2019) reinforced by the distinct lack of appetite for macro practice methods in tertiary institutions which then flowed into a dearth of practitioners focused on the same (Rothman, 2013). The link between academia and practice in Aotearoa New Zealand reinforces the R2P (Ballantyne, Beddoe, Hay, Maidment, Ngan, et al., 2016) findings (Appendix 1) that radical social work, and its derivatives, are taught amongst a large number of social work schools in Aotearoa New Zealand and it was brought forward to the practice realm. While the findings ask for more education in radical social work, the declared curricula amongst social work schools in Aotearoa New Zealand shows that this is at least on the agenda to be taught to social work students.

The Reality of Radical Practice

Participants became aware of radical social work as a theory and practice both in their undergraduate and postgraduate studies however, in practice there was very little radical social work practice activity mentioned. Participants mentioned that radical social work was not known by name and that it was an unknown practice to a majority of the social work profession. This does not seem surprising, and while not specifically mentioned in the literature, aligns to criticism that there has been very little to challenge the neoliberal domination of social services over the last 30 years (Wallace & Pease, 2011). With nothing to challenge the status quo, alternative voices and approaches dissipate.

Radical social work practice was reserved for outside of the workplace or, if included into workplace practice, to small acts of resistance against specific processes that were deemed to be counter to positive client outcomes. This complemented both (Briskman, 2017b; Gallina, 2010) ‘dual citizenship’ or ‘dual loyalty’ commentary and thrust the participants into the scenario of either following the employer’s needs or the commitment to the code of ethics.

However, while the findings showed very little radical practice activity, it also clearly showed that the participants are enthusiastic to practice radical social work within their workplace settings. However, it seems that systemic forces stifle all if not most radical practice opportunities. While barriers will be discussed further down in this section, education, contemporary funding regimes and outrageous workload demands seem to be suffocating any notion of radical practice. While participants have been able to find ways to practice radically at work within a framework of micro resistances and on ‘outside of workplace’ opportunities it seems fleeting and sporadic in nature. A large part of the social work ‘system’ requires major reconstruction if radical social work is to make any progress. Alternatives as to how this reconstruction may look are discussed in the recommendations section.

Benefits of Practicing Radical Social Work

The personal benefits of practicing radical social work can be broadly broken down into two parts; congruency with their own personal and professional values and a marked increase in their own wellbeing.

The research exposed the difficulties the participants felt when they were having to practice in ways that were incongruent with their own values and in some instances needing to decide to practice in alignment with the ANZASW Code of Ethics (ANZASW, 2019) or in line with their employment contract, such was the chasm between the two, an unenviable space to be in. This is very much in line with Aronson and Sammon (2000) who wrote "Workers find themselves assigned substantially changed workloads and mandates and charged with enforcing definitions of need and entitlement with which they may be politically, professionally, and personally at odds"(p. 168).

The findings suggest that when the participants had to practice according to the employer policy, in other words not radically, this conflicted with their personal and professional values. The results in this study surrounding this incongruence work supports both (McDonald & Chenoweth, 2009) and (Abramovitz, 2005) who found that in Australia and the United States respectively, social workers expressed concern that they were forced to practice in ways that did not match their values when following respective employer policies.

What was not explored and warrants further research is exactly what values the participants were referring to. As there seems to be a link between at least three 'western' countries, is this phenomenon central to these countries and has neoliberalism played a role in the perceived de-valuing of social work values? While the participants and the literature did not present any suggestions as to how to regulate the lack of authenticity in social work practice, Thompson's theory of alienation as atrophied moral cognition , discussed in the Theory Chapter, may assist in understanding the cognitive mechanisms in play that allow social work practitioners to continue to practise in ways incongruent with their own values.

The other interesting finding is the notion that the participants' wellbeing was tied to practicing with integrity which in turn was directly associated with practicing radical social work. They discussed an increase in wellbeing and when they were not able to practice with integrity, they became unwell. In line with (Jones, 2005), who discusses serious health issues when social workers are divided between their values and employment needs, further research is justified to understand what these health concerns are and how the 'un-wellness' manifested itself.

In terms of the benefits to the profession of practising radical social work, one of the findings was that radical social work challenged the professional status quo. This supported both (De Maria, 2017) and (Hearn, 1982) who indicated that radical social work questioned the validity of all practice methods even its own, through the

process of continuous critical reflection, and that it also supported a move away from the status quo.

The findings showed that the benefits to the profession of practising radical social work would be the re-emergence of practice frameworks grounded in social justice and human rights, something the participants felt was sorely missing from contemporary social work practice even though, as was discussed in the findings, the Code of Ethics (ANZASW, 2019) mandated social justice and human rights values to be part of any practice in Aotearoa New Zealand. It is also part of the global definition of social work (IFSW, 2014) which the ANZASW subscribes to.

This is important because it presents research results that suggest, from the viewpoint of the practitioner, that by practising radical social work one advances social justice and human rights. Taking the reverse view on this implies that social justice and human rights may be missing from current social work practice. While the literature does not specifically speak to this, it does speak to contemporary social work practice ravaged by processes antithetical to the promotion of social justice and human rights based practices. The participants suggested that the practice methods, needing to rectify this deviation need to be radical and those processes currently consuming the profession, namely marketisation, consumerisation and managerialism (Harris, 2014) are responsible for pushing through standardisation, efficiency drives (Baines, 2010), profitability and recording outcomes over ‘rights centred’ practice (Baines et al., 2012; Garrett, 2009a), and it is these processes or

practice methods that the research suggests, by linkages mentioned above, are the reason why social justice and human rights are in shortfall.

The findings are interesting insofar that there are a several voices inferring the deficit of social justice and human rights in contemporary practice. This should instruct an in-depth study of what contemporary social work practice in Aotearoa New Zealand looks like, especially when both social justice and human rights are core tenets of both the ANZASW's Code of Ethics (ANZASW, 2019) and SWRB's Core Competencies (SWRB, 2020).

The findings, in regards to the benefits to society of practising radical social work, support both (Fook, 1993) and (Bailey & Brake, 1975) since linking real societal change with change at the structural level, working against the oppressive structures. Participants also discussed the creation of a more equal society if radical social work practice is engaged, which in turn is in agreement with (Morley & Ablett, 2017) and (Cannan, 1975) who comment on radical social work working with communities to advance equity and also redirecting the power back into the community.

The Barriers to Radical Practice

Three main themes emerged from the findings concerning barriers the participants felt were in place that stopped them from practicing radical social work. The barriers identified were the current social work undergraduate and postgraduate education system, the workload practitioners were currently facing within their workplaces and the current funding regimes in place.

The findings noted a lack of exposure to radical social work practice approaches during the participants' time at university. This is at odds with the literature emanating from Aotearoa New Zealand (Ballantyne, Beddoe, et al., 2016a) and presented in Appendix 1 which clearly shows quite a radical declared curriculum across a vast majority of Aotearoa New Zealand schools of social work (Ballantyne, Beddoe, Hay, Maidment, Ngan, et al., 2016). While it has been noted that what a university declares to teach "should not be confused with the taught curriculum (the curriculum as presented by tutors to students); or the learned curriculum (what the students actually learn)" (Ballantyne et al., 2017, p. 2), it is difficult to reconcile such a contrast in views between the findings and what the literature in Aotearoa New Zealand, declared. One explanation may be that some of the participants did study some years ago and curricula change over time, however, the research question did not allow participants to dig below the surface of the overarching term of radical social work. If this had occurred, the findings may well have been in line with the literature which shows a very clear declared radical curriculum. Further research is warranted to understand what current students learnt in terms of radical knowledge

in their university years and how it may have been weakened over years of mainstream practice.

Workload was a further barrier identified by participants. They noted large caseloads created a ‘time poor’ working environment leading to a distinct lack of critical inquiry and transformative practice with only enough time for individualised practice. This study strongly supported work of (Cross et al., 2010; Juby & Scannapieco, 2007; PSA, 2018; Stevens, 2008), who declared that high workloads within social work environments left little time for work that was deemed important and prevented practice that was transformative in nature. There are few avenues open to radical social workers in this instance. The pathway of a unionised workforce does tip the balance of power towards the worker, so becoming a union leader within a trade union organisation through the delegate structure is an option that allows for advocacy of better working conditions. The downside to this option is that the social worker becomes more visible to the hierarchy within the workplace and could be branded as a troublemaker. The other option available is to advocate, through the ANZASW, for more manageable workloads however this option does leave the work of advocating in the hands of a third party and out of the hands of the radical social worker. The nuclear option of whistle blowing is always fraught with danger insofar as the individual may lose their employment so great care is needed in making sure that anonymity, if possible, is kept.

The data in the findings largely replicate what the literature declares regarding the impact current funding regimes have on contemporary social work practice and social work organisation. Social work practice largely determined by conditions attached to funding requirements (Aronson & Smith, 2010; Baines et al., 2012; Ng & Sim, 2012; Scott, 2003) with invariably organisations measuring outcomes that bare no relations to what the clients require (Baines et al., 2014) and funding cycles that are too short for meaningful engagement and transformation (Scott, 2003). An important overarching outcome of these points is that due to the precarious nature of the funding environment criticism is muted. Organisations and social workers do not want to fall foul of the funders for fear of missing out on already scarce resources. The competitive nature of social services funding negates any critical examination of what is needed by the sector to progress and in the long run, it is the marginalised communities that ultimately pay the heaviest price.

With both the literature and the participants agreeing that current social service funding systems do not support transformative practice, alternatives to the prevailing funding regimes are required to allow a more relevant set of outcomes and objectives to be part of the regime moving forward. While the findings do not distinguish between government funding or funding through philanthropic sources, from experience the outcomes criteria required by all sources are predominantly quantitative in nature. A more exploratory approach during the interviews may have elicited a more granular answer.

Recommendations

Radical social work can play a leadership role in the creation of strategies to combat social disadvantages by encouraging contemporary social work practice to embrace a) radical analysis, b) radical social work curriculum, c) critical reflection, d) the promotion of socially just policies and e) activist's practices (Morley & Ablett, 2017, p. 12); in other words, "social workers need to re/politicize their purpose" (Fraser et al., 2017, p. 1).

While radical social work and its underlying practices were clearly on the declared curriculum on some of Aotearoa New Zealand schools of social work, the findings suggested a distinct lack of awareness of radical social work. This divergence may represent the earlier statement concerning what is declared versus what is taught and what is actually learnt. Schools of social work, to negate this perceived gap, may need to possibly create an entire 'radical social work' curriculum which is built year on year so that by the end of their degree students have an excellent grasp of radical social work and its derivatives. This approach is not advocating favouring one practice over another; it is about bringing those approaches "identified as Marxist, socialist, structural, feminist, anti-racist, anti-disablist and antioppressive" (Fraser et al., 2017, p. 1) under the umbrella of radical social work. Having it in bold bright curriculum headlights where it is the main point of the lesson and it can be as prevalent as social justice is currently in the curriculum. This may then produce a steady stream of social work students who are systemically minded and therefore

enter the contemporary workforce critically analysing the status quo and ready to ask the relevant questions.

This over time may produce a change in practice due to the increase in quantity of practitioners that think and work systemically entering the workforce. Additionally, as the number of these new practitioners coming into the workforce rise, there may be a demand for more community development and policy type roles, however, this will need to be bracketed with a larger collective response through a bigger trade union footprint that can help in putting pressure on employers and governments, the funder, to create these roles.

Another area of potential revitalisation surrounds the powers that SWRB, and perhaps ANZASW, have in holding employers to account when practice, unbecoming the social work profession, is evident. At present, the SWRB is there to protect the Aotearoa New Zealand public from social work professionals who transgress in their practice with the public. While some of these transgressions are the fault of the social worker and they need to be held accountable, some violations are a result of poor working conditions, such as the previously mentioned workload issues as an example. Where a social worker has not had the time to visit a particular client because of the strain of their caseload and as a result of not being able to see the client, obvious harm has been missed.

The findings showed that one of the main benefits to the profession of practising radical social work is that the core values off social justice and human rights would be reintegrated back into the profession. The participants felt that social justice and human rights were lacking in day to day practice. As both these values are core tenets of social work in Aotearoa New Zealand and internationally, strengthening the regulatory body to sanction clear breaches of both core competencies and code of ethics may go a long way in ‘self-regulating’ employers, not employees, who stray too far from these foundational values. While the SWRB does not see itself in this role; it is an organisation built on protecting the public from incompetent social work practice, it could be argued that employers who allow or promote social work practice lacking in social justice principles, may also be harming clients as much as, if not more, that direct practitioner to client relationships. While I acknowledge this would be hard to police or prove against an employer, having those powers available puts organisations on notice that bad practice, as a result of their current social work employment standards and values, would not be tolerated.

This may also counter another finding that mentioned a lack of trust in regulatory institutions when wanting to promote and practice radically. If the regulatory body, coupled with ANZASW, are seen as openly defending social justice and human rights and by association radical social work, social workers may be more inclined to question the status quo and promote alternative systemic ways of practice. By not practising radical social work the findings suggest a continuation of neoliberal processes within a framework almost devoid of social justice and human rights values.

Contemporary funding models were seen as large barriers to practising radical social work. Social workers and organisations are seeking alternative approaches in regards to the evaluation of their service in ways that are more purposeful and relevant while understanding the legislative context in which it is delivered (Cree et al., 2019). Qualitative work is notoriously hard to measure. It is difficult to calculate the effectiveness of a service that has helped a client achieve a life of ‘steady state’. (Cree et al., 2019). A potential alternative to the contemporary funding system is to create an anti-hegemonic regime that is democratic and participatory, and engages the society it professes to help (Eikenberry, 2009).

Such an alternative may be created applying processes modelled on PAR methods. PAR is an approach that promotes democratic change, is quite specific in the context that it is being performed and is for the benefit of the group that is working through the process (IDS, 2020).

Unlike common research methods where the researcher leads and controls the process, in PAR the expertise, power and control are in the hands of the participants (Greenwood et al., 1993). The ‘expert’, in this example a social worker, is available but used more in a ‘guidance’ capacity, working alongside the community as opposed to leading the process. With using a PAR style process, one could envisage a group of service users leading the development of the agenda, identifying the relevant issues, and creating with full democratic and participatory engagement, a set of outcomes directly tied to community success. Then with the

help of the social worker, a ‘funder’ is sought to finance the agreed set of outcomes. This process is bottom up, community led, participatory and democratic in nature, counter to present-day systems where it is the funding organisation that sets the agenda and the outcomes to be reported against. This process would empower participants and communities, create meaningful and relevant services and unite people with similar issues into, potentially, a social movement (Roy & Cain, 2001). The benefits to an organisation that facilitates such a participatory process are that they would add a great deal of legitimacy and credibility, into not only the community it helped (Roy & Cain, 2001), but also the funding organisation it approaches to help fund such a participatory initiative by presenting a set of outcomes that are relevant in nature and precise in its needs.

A contemporary example of this process can be seen with the pilot project called Participatory Evaluated Outcomes Implementation Plan (Appendix 7) currently under proposal inspired by the findings of this research. The eight stage implementation plan modelled on the PAR process, when operational, is facilitated and documented by the social worker, however, it is the community that uncovers the themes and outcomes through a series of face to face community meetings, interspersed with seven reflective pauses that allows the community to verify the path the process is taking. The project is specifically created to help communities create a set of outcomes that benefit their specific communities. The project is currently in the process of acquiring separate funding to implement phases one to eight in the Canterbury region of New Zealand. While outside of the scope of this research it is worth signposting it for future research.

The findings also ruminate over the larger question of who is the profession serving. As Mary suggests when she discusses ‘pushing back’ on processes that would not be helpful to the client as opposed to sticking ‘*to what the funder requires’,* or Kerstin who cannot advocate for her clients' housing needs for fear of alienating the funding organisation in the process. Is social work serving the client or the organisation that provides it with the funds to practice? Inevitably there seems to be a ‘chilling effect’ in place that arrests any notion of questioning the status quo through radical practice. With that comes a broader question of what values social work in Aotearoa New Zealand holds and, if the findings are to be taken literally, the summation is that the profession has lost its way by not tackling the broader systemic issues that are quite clearly hurting society. This is borne out when the participants are discussing the benefits to the profession. Several mentioned that by practising radical social work the profession would be infused, once again, with social justice and human rights and would be addressing significant issues. This infers that the profession, in its current state of praxis, to the participants at least, lacks those values.

All of these recommendations and suggestions should be progressed with a long-term view. The neoliberal stranglehold of contemporary social work practice and the dormancy of radical social work has been ‘in play’ for at least 40 years and therefore the reversal could take as long due to the highly integrated world we live in. We need to be as methodical in dismantling the current regimes as they have been in building it. It needs to be done in such a way that the status quo is being disassembled while all the while looking like the ‘status quo’ is being kept.

Overtime, infusing practice settings with critical thinkers, creating policy initiatives that allow practice unbecoming social work values to be rectified at the organisational level and inverting funding requirements may well change the trajectory of progressive social work values and practice in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Conclusion

With radical social work practice being described as one that combats oppression and works productively with marginalised groups to “promote a more equitable, democratic and ecologically sustainable world” (Morley & Ablett, 2017, pp. 6-7) and a blend of “critical questioning, reflexivity, emotional response and action that pushes boundaries” (Briskman, 2017a, p. 133) one could be mistaken for thinking that a practice with these progressive elements would be more prevalent. But it is not, and this research endeavoured to discover the barriers, through the voices of contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand social workers, that block them from practicing radical social work. Through a qualitative approach themes were identified with the three main ones; education, funding and workload, extracted and extrapolated on in this thesis.

Education, as a barrier, was divided between the perspective of the student and the perspective of the educator. The students viewpoint suggested they had very little exposure to radical social work paradigms with the educators amongst the participants suggesting that outside influences created tension between getting students ready for contemporary social work practice, that is ‘work ready’, as opposed to getting the students ready to be ‘change agents’.

Funding was seen as another barrier as it corralled organisations into measuring irrelevant outputs instead of relevant outcomes and created an atmosphere of

competitiveness for the funding that a chilling effect was created against speaking out too loudly against these processes.

The third barrier identified as high workload, simply did not allow practitioners time to reflect on whether the practice methods employed within their organisation actually created transformative change at the level needed for their clients and society.

The benefits of practising radical social work were an increase in wellbeing and a return to authentic practice methods congruent to the belief and values system of the practitioner. The restoration of social justice and human rights principles in social work practice in Aotearoa New Zealand was seen as beneficial to the profession and values that were lacking in contemporary practice circles. The benefits to society revolved around the creation of transformative change at the systemic and structural levels.

While there is a dearth of research literature on the state of radical social work practice in Aotearoa New Zealand, with no studies from the view point of what barriers there are that stop social workers in Aotearoa New Zealand from practising radical social work, the contribution this research adds to existing literature gives future researchers and fellow practitioners insight into what further areas of research could be pursued and what praxis and policy changes could be investigated to add meaningful change to the status quo.

During the process of this research, I found myself agreeing more and more with Russell (2017) who categorises contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand social workers as “risk-averse, uncomfortable with conflict and ill-equipped to work within a world characterised by conflict” (p. 137). I agree with him wholeheartedly when he suggests that social workers should ‘pick a side’ and calls for a “consciously political method of working” (Russell, 2017, p. 138).

However, internationally all is not lost. There are several academics, researchers and groups that are leading voices in the radical social work realm. Vasilios Ioakimidis, Iain Ferguson and Michael Lavallette from the United Kingdom, Terry Mizrahi from the United States and Linda Briskman from the University of Western Sydney either promote the need for activist activities amongst social workers or research the motivations of social workers who partake in such activities. Radical social work groups from around the globe include the Social Workers Action Network (SWAN) and the British Association of Social Work (BASW), Boot Out Austerity group from the UK, The New Approach Group from Hungary, the Progressive Welfare Network from Hong Kong and the Orange Tide in Spain (Ferguson, 2016, pp. 91-92) who all promulgate a new and more robust approach to altering the current neoliberal agenda. In Aotearoa New Zealand, the Social Work Action Network (SWAN), a creation of the Public Service Association (PSA) is active in policy submissions and public actions. The Critical and Radical Social Work journal and websites such as Re-Imagining Social Work also add academic rigour and critical thinking to a growing field.

Radical social work practice is currently rare and there are forces that would prefer it to remain that way. The scarcity of radical social work is achieved by in part pathologising the individual over the structural and ignoring the policy inadequacies created by a failed ideology (Ferguson, 2016). The findings of this research inform us to what is stopping social workers in Aotearoa New Zealand from joining “up the dots of the local and the global, and for acting in radical ways” (Briskman, 2017a, p. 136), further research is needed to be able progress to the next level of understanding how to dismantle those barriers so that social work can indeed return to its roots.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Specific Terms in the Declared Curriculum*

Term	Level	Institution Code														
		TEI01	TEI02	TEI03	TEI04	TEI05	TEI06	TEI07	TEI08	TEI09	TEI10	TEI11	TEI12	TEI13	TEI14	Grand Total
Social Justice																
social justice	L5		2	2	2		2		1	1	1	1	1	1		14
	L6	2	1	2	1				1		2	1	1	1		12
	L7		2	1	2	2	3	2	4		1	2	3	1		23
Practice																
radical social work	L5												1			1
	L6				1											1
	L7			1			1		1							3
Activism	L5								1		1		1			3

	L6											1		1		2
	L7										1					1
Advocacy	L5								1				1			2
	L6		1	1	1	1			3	1						8
	L7				2		3	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	12
anti-discriminatory practice	L5												1			1
	L6			1					1					2		4
	L7													2	1	3
bicultural practice	L5		2		3			1	2	3			2	3		16
	L6		2	2	3	1			4	3		2		2		19
	L7	1	3		6	1		2	6	4	2	2		1		28
	L8									1						1
cross-cultural practice	L5				2			2	2	3				1		10
	L6	1		1	1	1	1			3	2	1		3		14
	L7	2	1		1	2		2	1	2	2	2	1	1		17
	L7L8											1				1
	L8									1						1
ecological	L5		1	1								1	1			4

approach	L6	1	2	1				2	2	1	1	1		1		12
	L7		1					1	1	1	1	4		1		10
evidence-based practice	L5													2		2
	L6					1	1								1	3
	L7		1		2		1	2		3			1	1	1	12
	L8									1			1			2
faith-based practice	L5		5					1								6
	L6		2													2
	L7		4													4
fields of practice	L5		1					1	1	1	2			1	1	8
	L6		1	1			1	1	2	1		2		1		10
	L7				2	1			1	1	2			2		9
holistic practice	L5			1												1
	L6		1						1							2
	L7									1						1
	L7L8											1				1
Maori practice models	L5				1			1	1				2			5
	L6		1	1		1		2	2	2	1	2	1	2		15

	L7	1	1	1	1	1		2	4	1		4	1	1		18
	L7L8											1				1
multicultural practice	L5		1							1				1		3
	L6		1				2		2	1				3		9
	L7		2			1		1	2	2			1			9
	L8									1						1
anti-oppressive practice	L5				1					1			1			3
	L6		1	2	1							1		4		9
	L7	2	2	1	1							1	1	2		10
	L7L8											1				1
community development	L5		1	1		1			4							7
	L6	1	2					1	1					1	1	7
	L7	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1		3	1	1		13
	L7L8											1				1
community action	L7	1				1		1								3
community engagement	L5				1											1
	L6				1											1

	L7	1						1		1						3
community work	L5	1	1			2		1		1					3	9
	L6	1			1	1	1	3	2	1				2		12
	L7				2	1	1	2	1	4	4	2			1	18
	L7L8											1				1
	L8									1						1
gender-centred practice	L6								2							2
critical thinking skills	L5					2	1				1		2			6
	L6		1		1				1	1						4
	L7		1	2		1	2	1		1	1	1	4	1	1	16
	L8												1			1
task-centered practice	L6		1	1		1							1			4
	L7		1	1								1			1	4
macro-level	L5											1				1
	L6	1		1											1	3
	L7	1									1	2				4
	L7L8											1				1

Research	L5		1			1		1					1	1		5
	L6			1											1	2
	L7	1		2					4			1	1			9
Ethics																
ethical frameworks	L5		1					1								2
	L6				1		1	2		1					1	6
	L7	1	1					1	2	1		1	2	1	1	11
research ethics	L6	1										1	1	1	1	5
	L7	1	1	1	1			1	2	2	1	1		2	2	15
	L8									1		1				2
ethical issues	L6		1	1	1			1	1			1		1		7
	L7				1			2	3		1	3	1	3		14
	L7L8											1				1
Legislation / Government																
Care of	L6			1	1					2						4

Children Act 2004	L7											1	1			2
Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989	L5													1		1
	L6			1	1					2	1			1		6
	L7									1		1	1	1	1	5
Crimes Act 1961	L5													1		1
	L6													1		1
	L7			1							1			1		3
Domestic Violence Act 1995	L5													1		1
	L6				1				1	2				1		5
	L7			1							1		1	1		4
Family Proceedings Act 1980	L6				1											1
	L7										1					1
Health and Safety at Work Act 2015	L6				1											1
	L7										1					1
Human Rights Act 1993	L5			1												1
	L6				1				1							2
	L7										1		1			2

family law	L6									1						1
Law	L5	1	2		2		1	1								7
	L6		1	1	1	2		3		2	2		1		1	14
	L7	1		3		1	1	2	1	3	1	2		1	1	17
Maori customary law	L5				1											1
	L6		1													1
	L7							1								1
Mental Health (Compulsory Assessment and Treatment Act) 1992	L6				1		1			1						3
	L7			1							1		1		1	4
NZ laws	L5												1	1		2
	L6	1	1	1	1	1	1			1				2		9
	L7			2		1					1	1			1	6
NZ Public Health and Disability Act 2000	L5													1		1
	L6													1		1
	L7													1		1
Official	L6		1		1											2

Information Act 1982	L7										1					1
Privacy Act 1993	L5			1										1		2
	L6		1		1					1				1		4
	L7										1		1	1	1	4
Protection of Personal and Property Rights Act 1988	L5													1		1
	L6				1					1				1		3
	L7										1		1	1		3
Social Workers Registration Act 2003	L5													1		1
	L6		1	1	1									1		4
	L7										1			1	1	3
Vulnerable Children Act 2014	L5													1		1
	L6			1	1					1				1		4
	L7			1										1	1	3
central government	L6			1											1	2
	L7						1	1								2
local government	L5									1						1
	L6			1		1									1	3

	L7						1	1								2
regional government	L7						1									1
submissions	L6			1	1					1	1					4
	L7	1	1						1							3
Politics	L5		1		1			1	4	1	1		1	1		11
	L6	1				1			1	1			1		2	7
	L7	1	1	3					1	1		1		1		9
Policy																
health policy	L6												1			1
	L7							1		1						2
immigration policy	L5								1							1
	L6											1				1
	L7		1													1
mental health policy	L7			1						1	1					3
Policy	L5	1								1	2					4
	L6					1	1		1	1	2					6

	L7	1		1				2	1	1	1	6			1	14
policy analysis	L6					1							1			2
	L7	1	1			1		1						1	1	6
policy development	L5	1				1										2
	L6					1			2	1						4
	L7	1				2	2	1	1	1		2				10
	L8									1						1
policy issues	L5												1			1
	L6					1			1			1				3
	L7		1						1							2
policy review	L6									1						1
	L7	1				1				1						3
policy-making process	L5		1													1
	L6				1						1					2
	L7	1				1										2
public policy	L5		1													1
	L6					1										1
	L7	1				1										2

social policy	L5	1				1	1	1		1			1			6
	L6	1		1	1	1		1		1	1		1			8
	L7	2	1	1		2	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	20
families policy	L6									1		1	2			4
	L7									1		1				2
Rights																
Children's rights	L5										1					1
	L6							1	1	1						3
	L7											1				1
civil rights	L5				2						1					3
	L7							1								1
human rights	L5			2	2		2			1	1	1	2	1		12
	L6		1	1					4	1	1	2		1		11
	L7	1	2			2	1	1	1		1		2	1		12
Conventions / Commissions																

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women	L7						1									1
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination	L7						1									1
Convention on the Rights of the Child	L6				1					1						2
	L7						1									1
Hague Convention	L6									1						1
Human Rights Commission	L6								1							1
Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention	L7						1									1
International Covenant on Civil and	L7						1									1

Political Rights																
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	L7						1									1
international treaties	L7										1					1
United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples	L6		1						1							2
	L7								1							1
Universal Declaration of Human Rights	L5			1												1
	L7						1									1
Maori																
colonisation	L5		1	1	3		1	1	2	1	2	2	1	1	1	17
	L6	1							2	1	1	2		1		8
	L7											2				2
decolonisation	L5				1											1

	L6										1					1
	L7													1		1
kaupapa Maori	L5						1						1			2
	L6		1		1							1		1		4
	L7					1	1		2	1		1				6
	L7L8											1				1
kotahitanga	L5		1													1
	L7						1		1							2
Maori history	L5	1	1		1		1	1	5	1	1	1	1	1	2	17
	L6	1				1			2		1			1		6
	L7					2		1	1	2						6
Treaty of Waitangi	L5	1	1			1		1	1	3	2	2		3		15
	L6		1			1		1	2	4		2		1		12
	L7									5	3	4	1	2		15
Justice																
Family Court	L6									1						1
justice system	L5		1				1									2

	L6		1			1	1			1					1	5
	L7			1			1			1	1		1			5
Rangatahi Court	L7			1												1
Youth Court	L7									1						1
Misc																
communities	L5		1	3	1	1			3	1	1		1	1	4	17
	L6			2	2		1	1	1	2	1				2	12
	L7		1	2		1	1	2		4	1	4	1	1	2	20
	L7L8											1				1
diverse communities	L5									1						1
	L6								2					2	1	5
	L7					2					1			1		4
Equality	L5			1									1			2
	L6					1			1				1			3
	L7											1	1			2
Feminism	L6		1					1								2

	L7								1		1					2
Gender	L5		1		1			1	4		2	2	2	1		14
	L6	1	1					1	3			1		2	1	10
	L7		1	1	1		1	2	2		3	2	1	1		15
public health	L5								1							1
	L6								1	1						2
	L7								1							1
social change agents	L5	1	1										1			3
	L6								1							1
	L7		1				1			1	1					4
	L7L8											1				1
systems theory	L5											1	1			2
	L6		1		1											2
	L7							1								1

Appendix 2

Qualitative Questions

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COLLEGE OF HEALTH
TE KURA HAUORA TANGATA

- Can you tell me how long you have been in the profession and what current field / area you work in?

- How would you define radical social work?

- When did you first become aware of radical social work?

- How long have you been interested in radical social work?

- In your opinion is radical social work well known amongst social workers in Aotearoa?
    - If not, why do you think not?

- Have you tried to practice radical social work, in what way and what has been the reaction from your employer?

- Are there barriers which you believe prevent you from practicing radical social work?
    - If so, what are they?

- What do you believe the benefits are to a) you, b) the profession and c) society of being able to practice radical social work?

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Appendix 3

Kia ora,

Anecdotal conversations with several social workers across sectors point to a need to refocus their practice towards a more structural basis. Targeting the societal structures that cause more harm, is now seen as one of the main tools in combating the ever-increasing inroads neoliberal policies have made in society and the social work profession.

Many feel they need to move towards a radical social work practice model but find it almost impossible to do so. This research will look at what those barriers are that block practitioners from practicing radically through the voices of contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand practitioners.

I am looking for registered and non-registered trained social workers who self-identify as radical social workers. Those who have completed a Bachelor of Social Work, a Master of Social Work and / or the previously required Certificate.

Data will be collected preferably via face to face semi-structured interviews or alternatively over Skype, Facebook Messenger or Zoom.

I invite you to take part in this research.

Please contact me on:

Email - luis.arevalo@psa.org.nz

Mobile - 027 565 8887

Appendix 4

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Radical Social Work practice: What are the barriers that block social workers from practising radically?

INFORMATION SHEET

Researcher Introduction

My name is Luis Arevalo and I am a Master of Philosophy student at Massey University. The research project I am working on is entitled "Radical Social Work practice: What are the barriers that block social workers from practising radically?

Project Description and Invitation

Radical social work makes the link between the individual issue and the structures surrounding them. Targeting those societal structures that cause harm is now seen as one of the main tools in combatting the ever-increasing inroads neoliberal policies have made in society and the social work profession. Conversations I have had with social workers suggest that a more structural focus to practice could be beneficial. However, it seems there might be barriers that make it difficult for social workers to practise radically. I want to identify what those barriers are and how they can be overcome.

I would value your participation in this research. Please contact me if you are interested.

Participant Identification and Recruitment

- **Recruitment method**: I am recruiting research participants with the help of both the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW) and the Social Service Providers Aotearoa (SSPA). In addition, the research project is being advertised to social workers in a number of different places: a Facebook group called Social Workers Action Network (SWAN), the Public Service Association (PSA) union database as it has many social workers who are members.
- **Method of obtaining participant names**: Those social workers interested in participating have seen the advertisements online or have been alerted to the project by a participant
- **Selection criteria**: To be eligible to contribute to this project you do not need to be registered, but you self-identify as a radical social worker. You will have completed a Bachelor of Social Work, a Master of Social Work or the previously required Certificate.

Potential discomforts or risks

Radical social work can cause some risk to the individual practitioner particularly if the organisation they are employed by does not view this practice favourably. The thesis will be written up in such a way that your identity and the agency you work with cannot be identified. That is, I will not use any personal identifiers such as names, practice settings, region or city.

Project Procedures

You will take part in an interview lasting between 60 and 90 minutes. I will ask you some questions about your experience of barriers when you have wanted to practise radical social work in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Data Management

- The data will be used for writing my thesis. I will use a thematic analysis approach to identify themes and patterns. Only I and my supervisors will have access to the information.
- Your information will be kept on my computer which is password protected. The password itself is changed every three months. On completion of the project, all files and consent forms will be kept securely at Massey University and will be destroyed after 6 years.

Participants' Rights

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- withdraw from the study within the first two weeks following the interview
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used
- ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview

Project Contacts

You are invited to contact the researcher and/or supervisors if you have any questions about the project.

Researcher

- Luis Arevalo – 027 565 8887 – luis.arevalo@psa.org.nz

Supervisors

- Associate Professor Ksenija Napan - K.Napan@massey.ac.nz
- Dr Shirley Jülich - S.J.Julich@massey.ac.nz

LOW RISK NOTIFICATIONS

This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Prof Craig Johnson, Director, Research Ethics, telephone 06 356 9099 x 85271, email humanethics@massey.ac.nz

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Appendix 5

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Radical Social Work practice: What are the barriers that block social workers from practicing radically?

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM - INDIVIDUAL

I have read or have had read to me in my first language, and I understand the Information Sheet attached. I have had the details of the study explained to me, any questions I had have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time. I have been given sufficient time to consider whether to participate in this study and I understand participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time.

1. I agree to the interview being sound recorded.
2. I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Declaration by Participant:

I _____ hereby consent to take part in this study.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

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Appendix 6

HoU Review Group

Ethics Notification Number: 4000020452
Title: Radical Social Work practice: What are the barriers that block social workers from practicing radically?

Thank you for your notification which you have assessed as Low Risk.

Your project has been recorded in our system which is reported in the Annual Report of the Massey University Human Ethics Committee.

The low risk notification for this project is valid for a maximum of three years.

Please note that travel undertaken by students must be approved by the supervisor and the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor and be in accordance with the Policy and Procedures for Course-Related Student Travel Overseas. In addition, the supervisor must advise the University's Insurance Officer.

A reminder to include the following statement on all public documents:

"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named in this document are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.
If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you want to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor Craig Johnson, Director (Research Ethics), email humanethics@massey.ac.nz. "

Please note that if a sponsoring organisation, funding authority or a journal in which you wish to publish require evidence of committee approval (with an approval number), you will have to complete the application form again answering yes to the publication question to provide more information to go before one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. You should also note that such an approval can only be provided prior to the commencement of the research.

You are reminded that staff researchers and supervisors are fully responsible for ensuring that the information in the low risk notification has met the requirements and guidelines for submission of a low risk notification.

If you wish to print an official copy of this letter, please login to the RIMS system, and under the Reporting section, View Reports you will find a link to run the LR Report.

Yours sincerely

Professor Craig Johnson
Chair, Human Ethics Chairs' Committee and
Director (Research Ethics)

Appendix 7

Participatory Evaluated Outcomes Implementation Plan

Staff details

Staff Member	xxxxxxxxxx
Mobile Phone	xxxxxxxxxx
Email	xxxxxxxxxx
Staff Member	Luis Arevalo
Mobile Phone	027 974 2063
Email	luisa@psusi.org.nz

Summary

We have been discussing the possibility of delivering community led outcomes through a specific participatory processes for a number of months. With participatory processes, the funding and the renewal thereafter, is tied to not what the funder is wanting to see, but what your target client base / community is requiring as an outcome. This means that the outcomes are less of a quantitative measure and are more qualitative in nature.

Participatory concepts have been circulating since the 1940's. Participatory processes differ from conventional methods in a number of ways:

- Community led outcomes are achieved through a collective process of self-reflection, collecting and analysing data directly from the community and by the community, and then further self-reflection and analysis until the outcomes are clearly refined and agreed upon
- The power imbalance sometimes present in social service settings is negated by the very fact that the community is a leading partner in researching the issue and delivering the outcome parameters. The community ceases to be the researched and becomes the researchers.
- The whole process is highly interactive. They involve, as a basic need, a series of face-to-face meetings between the community, the NGO (PSUSI) and, we would assert, the funding organisation to both create a set of outcomes that the community can agree on but also a sense of partnership between the community, the NGO and the funder.

Participatory processes allow communities to articulate their own needs and outcomes through a series of self-reflective processes and by asking the questions that only they know need to be answered. NGO's and funding organizations are then their partners in achieving the community led outcomes.

This implementation plan is a living document insofar that, in true participatory manner, it is evolving through continuous process reflection.

Staged Implementation Plan:

It is envisaged that the implementation plan will be an 8 week staged rollout with periods of reflection, after each stage, to understand where the process could be improved.

Stage	Tasks	Group Responsible	Time/By When
Stage 1 Find a stakeholder group by	• Advertising our intention • Advertising the process • Reflect *	PSUSI	Week 1
Stage 2 Introductions and process	• Meet with the community / group – this is an introductory meeting only – rapport building • Discuss the process • Discuss roles and overall ground rules • Obtain consent to proceed • Document the meeting and disseminate to community / group for feedback • Reflect	Community PSUSI	Week 2
Stage 3 Outlining the themes of importance	• Meet with the community / group - What are the themes of importance that need addressing? • Prioritise the themes • Document the meeting and disseminate to community / group for feedback • Reflect	Community PSUSI	Week 3
Stage 4 Finalise the themes of importance - Outline outcomes	• Meet with the community / group - Agree and finalise on 1 or 2 themes to solve • What are the outcomes from these themes the community / group wants • Priorities the outcomes • Document the meeting and disseminate to community / group for feedback • Reflect	Community PSUSI	Week 4

Stage	Tasks	Group Responsible	Time/By When
Stage 5 Finalise outcomes	• Meet with the community / group - Agree and finalise on the outcomes required • Document the meeting and disseminate to community / group for feedback • Reflect	Community PSUSI	Week 5
Stage 6 Prepare Funding Requirement Document – *this can be done 'online' without meeting face to face*	• Prepare Funding Requirement Document • Disseminate to community / group for feedback • Reflect	Community PSUSI	Week 6
Stage 7 Funding Requirement Document	• Finalise Funding Requirement Document after community / group feedback • Reflect	Community PSUSI	Week 7
Stage 8 Deliver Funding Requirement Document to Market	Deliver Funding Requirement Document to Market	PSUSI	Week 8

* At the end of every stage there is a period of reflection where we look at want went well and what we want to keep, what did not go well and what we need to remove and what we may want to add for the next time we do this process. The reflection period can be of any chosen length although I would envisage a week would suffice.