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**From Family Group Conferencing to Whānau Ora:
Māori Social Workers Talk About Their Experiences**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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Abstract

This thesis explored the challenges faced by seven very experienced Māori social workers within the care and protection system. The views of these practitioners on what has improved for Māori whānau around recent changes to FGC and newer initiatives such as Whānau Ora were also examined.

In Aotearoa New Zealand the family group conference (FGC) is the legal mechanism through which matters related to the care and protection of children are dealt with; Māori are half of the total families who have participated in FGCs. A critical factor inhibiting our understanding of this disproportionate participation is the culture of silence that exists around the effectiveness of the FGC and related care and protection issues for Māori.

This research uses a Māori centred research approach to explore the challenges participants faced in care and protection and a thematic analysis of their accounts was undertaken. From this analysis it was found that: (a) the participants creatively walked between two world views in order to best meet the needs of their own people; (b) that these Māori practitioners felt over-worked and under-valued; and (c) the participants viewed the practices within FGCs as biased, demonstrating a lack of bicultural ability and contributing to significant barriers that whānau experience. They also noted that these issues were not being talked about in the sector.

The implications of this for Māori relate to them being generalised into the greater mainstream mix of academic research, policy and ministerial reports, rendering them invisible. Only the individual factors of social need are being focused on for Māori because they are measurable, whilst the drivers such as colonisation, structural discrimination and cultural genocide that perpetuate the marginalisation of Māori are ignored. This is proactive monoculturalism and this study talks about it.

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Chapter One

A STARTING PLACE

“For Māori entering into research...one need look no further than themselves as a ‘starting place’ to build a Māori model. Know yourself, your whānau, hapū, iwi, your tikanga, your reo, customary concepts and all the other aspects that make you special” (Cairns, 1996).

I am a Māori woman with whakapapa to Ngāti Porou through my mother and Welsh ancestry through my father. As the researcher I am not detached from the topic of this investigation because I am Māori, a member of ANZASW and an independent social work practice consultant. My viewpoint and stance is informed by a background of working for Child Youth and Family (CYF) as a social worker and FGC coordinator. This experience and knowledge led to my working in the south of England developing the FGC as a successful decision making tool for vulnerable adults at risk of going into institutional care. I have experienced the FGC from all sides and therefore I am well placed to carry out this study.

Part of the inspiration to do this research was based upon my experience of being taken from my parents as a small child by the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) and raised as a ward of the New Zealand state during the 1970/80s. Being raised non-Māori I experienced significant cultural alienation and I believe this has limited my ability to conduct or engage in Kaupapa Māori research. Therefore the chosen research design was Māori centred, whilst drawing strongly on Kaupapa Māori research principles and qualitative methods.

Positioning the Researcher

Ko Te Whetumatarau te maunga

Ko Awatere te awa

Ko Horouta te waka

Ko Ngāti Porou te iwi

Ko Tūwhakairiora te tangata

Ko Hinerupe te marae

Ko Te Araroa tōku kāinga tūturu

Ko Tutu Crawford tōku koro

*Ko Marseilles Campbell tōku kuia
Ko Steve Moyle, me Inumia Whakarereingarangi ōku mātua
Ko Chad Tipoki Moyle taku tamaiti
Ko Paora Moyle tōku ingoa
Tihei mauri ora!*

In 2010 whilst working with Māori Women's Refuge and experiencing a community perspective of FGC practice, the essence of this research presented its self to me. Wāhine Māori and tamariki experiencing family violence were being referred to the Refuge, Police and also to CYF. In working with these women and children I witnessed how they seemingly coped with violent partners yet that same resilience was not as evident when they tried to navigate through difficult CYF processes. The wāhine spoke of the lack of empathy or understanding of the dynamics of family violence or for tikanga Māori processes in care and protection. They spoke of whakamā, of feeling responsible for the violence at home and for not being able to protect their children; they also felt this being reflected back to them during the FGC. They spoke of the utter grief that goes with their children being taken from them and feeling a powerlessness similar to how they it felt when experiencing family violence. From this kōrero it became clear to me that the research chose me as the researcher.

The Care and Protection FGC Process

In Aotearoa New Zealand the Family Group Conference (FGC) is a legislated decision-making process between the state and families through which matters related to youth justice and the care and protection of children and young people are dealt with (Connolly, 2004). Both youth justice and care and protection FGCs differ in their process, however the outcome of agreeing a plan which addresses concerns and puts matters right as much as possible, is the same (Harris 2008). The following section explains how a care and protection FGC is typically carried out in Aotearoa, including the roles and responsibilities of those involved.

The FGC is arranged and facilitated by a care and protection coordinator employed by and directly accountable to Child, Youth and Family (CYF, 2012). The coordinator works with the family to organise the FGC (including date/time/venue and who will attend). This will usually include the child or young person, their advocate and/or legal representative, the parents, extended family members, any other support person the family wishes and the

referring care and protection social worker (CYF, 2012).

These people are all entitled under the Children Young Persons and Their Families Act (CYP&F Act) 1989 to attend the conference. Other professionals who might be working with the family (such as a kaumātua, Whānau Ora navigator, Iwi social worker, specialist teacher and drug and alcohol counsellor) may also be invited to attend the conference to provide information. Under current legislation however they are not entitled to remain throughout the conference (i.e. family deliberations), nor are they generally involved in decision-making. The purpose of the conference is for the family to hear the child protection concerns, to decide whether the child is in need of care and protection and to make plans that can address these concerns (Harris, 2008; & CYF, 2012).

The FGC happens in three distinct phases. The first phase involves the information sharing by child protection social workers and other professionals with the family. This will usually include discussion of the concerns that are held for the child as well as the services that are available to provide support to the plan. The second phase of a conference involves private family time, where the family meet on their own to deliberate and agree on possible solutions. In the third and final phase of the conference the aim is to arrive at agreement on whether (1) the child is in need of care and protection and (2) a plan that will address these concerns. This may involve negotiation between the family, the care and protection social worker and other agencies about the resources, services and support that can be provided. For the FGC plan to be legitimate and implemented it requires agreement from all entitled participants (Harris, 2008; & CYF, 2012).

Research Aims

The field of research is child protection social work policy and clinical practice in Aotearoa. In 2007 changes to the child protection legislation were introduced to strengthen the effectiveness of FGC (Waldegrave & Coy, 2005). An example of the strengthening of FGC practice is enabling the fuller participation of children and better informing of families involved throughout the whole process (New Zealand Parliamentary Library, 2007). These changes, selectively implemented over time impact upon social work practice and outcomes for whānau subject to care and protection involvement (NZCCSS, 2010). Moreover it is

compelling that we lead the world on the FGC yet fail exceptionally in research that advances the practice and research with our indigenous people (Love, 2000; Libesman, 2004, & Tauri, 2010).

The key aims:

1. Explore the challenges Māori social workers experience around care and protection FGC practice.
2. Explore Māori social workers views on recent changes to FGC and the impact of these changes and newer policies such as Whānau Ora on whānau wellbeing.
3. Talk about the principal factors that keep Maori over-represented in the care and protection system.

Māori practitioners' cultural expertise is a valuable and an under-utilised source of social work knowledge (ANZASW, 2008; Love, 2002; & Hollis, 2006). This study explored the challenges faced by seven very experienced Māori social workers within the care and protection system, particularly around FGC practice. The views of these practitioners on what has improved for Māori whānau regarding recent legislation changes to FGC and newer initiatives such as Whānau Ora were also examined.

Outline of the Thesis

The thesis is structured as follows:

Chapter Two provides a historical overview of the literature on the topic and discusses the periods before and after the introduction of the CYP&F Act 1989, the Pūao-te-Ata-Tū report and the origins of the Māori practitioner and FGC in relation to the Act.

Chapter Three reviews the more recent literature on the topic. It covers the challenges faced by Māori practitioners in care and protection and those faced by whānau Māori around recent changes to FGC and related care and protection issues.

Chapter Four discusses the theory and the research design. The connection between the

methodology and the research methods used is explained and the methods used to undertake the research are detailed. The chapter concludes with a brief reflection of this process.

Chapter Five presents the voices of the participants; seven long serving Māori social workers and ANZASW members who talked about their experiences in care and protection and FGC practice. There are three main sections in the chapter; the first is *Challenges with Supporting Non-Māori Practitioners*, the second is *Challenges & Family Group Conferences* and the third is *FGC Change & Whānau Ora*.

Chapter Six follows on from the description of the interviews by analysing the data and comparing it to the literature reviews in Chapters Two and Three. There are two main sections; the first is *Challenges for Māori Practitioners in Care and Protection* and the second is *Challenges for Whānau Māori in Family Group Conferences*. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the findings and future possibilities for research developments and change.

Chapter Seven presents a summary of the findings and the analysis chapters and provides questions for further research. It concludes with the researchers reflections of the research journey.

Chapter Two

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

“Me titiro ki ngā wā o mua, rapua te mea kua ngaro.”

“When searching for direction look back and see where you have come from.”

(Karetu: As cited in Moyle, 1998:5)

The aim of the literature search was to sieve through the available information, form a backdrop of existing knowledge related to the research topic, identify key areas of concern and interest and make connections between key concepts and practice (Bell, 2006). The above whakatauhākī highlights that it is important for the researcher to ‘research back’ in order to see the way forward. This was a key element in the research enabling a fuller story to be told. Two literature reviews are provided on the topic; historical and contemporary. The first discusses the periods before and after the introduction of the CYP&F Act 1989, as well as the origins of the Māori practitioner and family group conferencing (FGC) in relation to the Act. The second speaks of the challenges faced by Māori practitioners in care and protection as well as the challenges associated with FGC practice and newer policies such as Whānau Ora.

Care and Protection Before the CYP&F Act 1989

Jackson (1988), Walker (1990), Bradley (1995) and Te Whaiti et al (1998) clearly assert that in traditional Māori society the basic social unit was the whānau¹ or extended family. Under the guidance of kaumātua the whānau consisted of several related generations who held the responsibility for the interdependent support of one another including the rearing and nurture of tamariki and rangatahi. The whānau was tied by whakapapa to hapū and iwi, which gave overall organisation to its way of life.

¹ According to the Māori dictionary, *whānau* means “*extended family, a familiar term of address to a number of people - in the modern context the term is sometimes used to include friends who may not have any kinship ties to other members*” (Te Whanake, 2012). It is not a literal translation for the non-Māori meaning of *family*. To do so is inaccurate, however throughout Ministerial documents, reports and academic literature, *whānau* is used as a direct translation for the word *family* (i.e. family/whānau agreement, [CYF website, 2012]). This research expressly does not submit to this inaccuracy.

Jackson (1988) discusses how colonisation and the influences of Christianity and the state impacted on the Māori way of life by interrupting the values of a collective cultural identity. Urbanisation in particular disrupted the balance between the individual and the collective resulting in a loss of cultural identity for many Māori. Te Whaiti et al (1998) also assert how traditional structures and mechanisms of social organisation and control have been eroded by the adoption of Western concepts of patriarchal hierarchy. This resulted in the loss of hereditary leadership that held the connection to collective values and traditional responses to the wellbeing of whānau hapū and iwi.

Aotearoa had assimilation policies in place between 1847 and 1960 (Jackson, 1988). Although these did not include the direct forced removal of Māori children from their whānau like their indigenous counterparts in Australia (Van Krieken, 1999) government policies still managed to dismember whānau, hapū and iwi (Jackson, 1988; Moyle, 1998 & Libesman, 2004). For example, Jackson (1998) writes that following World War II over 70% of Māori throughout Aotearoa left their rural homes and settled in the cities². The move to the cities was not a casual drift due to restlessness or Māori desire for material wealth. It was instead a process over which they had no power (Walker, 1987; & Jackson, 1998).

There were various government regulations such as ‘Essential Services’ (1939) that directed young Māori to work in factories in the cities as part of their duty towards the war effort. This coupled with legislation such as the ‘Town and Country Planning Act’ (1945) restricted finance for the development of rural Māori land, effectively denying Māori the right to develop or build new homes on communally owned land. Because of this they had no means of supporting their families and were forced to move to the cities. Ehrhardt and Beaglehole (1993:35) state:

Māori were denied unemployment because it was said that they were not genuine workers because they had been living communally on a marae. Māori interest in customary land was used to deny Māori benefits and pensions.

The ‘Social Security Act’ (1938) gave the right to an unemployment benefit to all workers who were willing to work but could not find any work. The benefit was not available to Māori or married women. The unemployment work scheme, which was available to Māori,

² The ratio of Māori living in cities and boroughs grew from 17% in 1945 to 44% in 1966, growing from 99,000 in 1945 to over 200,000 in 1966 (Thorns and Sedgwick, 1997:2). Migration continued so that by the 1990s almost 70% of Māori lived in urban areas.

paid them more than Pākehā if they had no children (Ehrhardt and Beaglehole, 1993). These policies contributed to the depopulation of Māori rural areas and their ensuing economic decline. It also led to Māori being relegated to a position of poverty, a position many still occupy today (Walker, 1987).

Jackson (1998) and Love (2002) discuss how the move to the cities for whānau Māori brought them to the attention of social welfare and justice authorities resulting in Māori children being taken into care of the state in large numbers. From the 1960s, through the 1970s and 1980s many Māori were feeling the effects of the removal of their children. Bradley (1995) refers to these Māori children making up the majority of children in prisons, youth facilities and those placed with non-Māori foster parents. Love (2002) likens this position for Māori to cultural genocide and describes how whānau, hapū and iwi lamented the loss of their children in evident numbers. Levine (2000) in his review of the FGC discussed this loss and described how Māori and radical social workers criticised the system for the cultural alienation of Māori children. Reports that Māori children were suffering physical and/or sexual abuse in the care of the state also surfaced (see Auckland Committee on Racism and Discrimination 1978; & Moyle, 1998).

Love (2002) asserts that in response to continuing demonstrations of Māori unrest during the mid-1980s spaces were created in a variety of forums for Māori to give voice to their frustrations and their Tino-Rangtiratanga aspirations. One of these was the Auckland Committee on Racism and Discrimination (ACORD, 1978) report that addressed institutional racism. This was followed up by the work of the Women Against Racism Action Group (WARAG, 1984) that produced a report on institutional racism in the Auckland district office of DSW. The findings of these reports so disturbed the (then) Minister of Social Welfare that she appointed a Ministerial Advisory Committee on a Māori Perspective of Social Welfare (Moyle, 1998).

The committee's findings in the resulting Pūao-te-Ata-Tū report reinforced those of the WARAG report. It found that institutional racism existed within DSW and that the roots of Māori dependency were traced to the history of colonisation. History, combined with the way DSW functioned had made Māori dependent on the welfare system and principal consumers of its services (Ministerial Advisory Committee, 1986), a position many still occupy today (MSD, 2010 & 2011). Pūao-te-Ata-Tū and its significance relating to Māori social workers and FGC are discussed in the following section.

Te Tiriti & Pūao-te-Ata-Tū

Aotearoa New Zealand as a state was founded on Te Tiriti o Waitangi (1840) which was intended to lay a basis for a just society in which two races could live together in harmony. The differences in the English and Māori texts paved the way for different understandings and for a debate over its interpretation that has continued since 1840. Consequently Te Tiriti was declared a nullity in relation to political authority and policy making for much of the 20th century (Jackson, 1998). This continued until Māori unrest and political protest throughout the 1980s led to it being given authority in the latter part of the century influencing justice and social welfare policies that acknowledged whānau, hapū and iwi systems (Moyle, 1998; Love, 2002).

Walker (1987), Jackson (1992), Te Whaiti et al (1998) and Pihama (2001) all refer to Te Tiriti as Aotearoa's own unique statement of indigenous and human rights, setting out the rights and responsibilities between two founding cultures; Māori and the Crown. The articles include; article one – kawanatanga (governance: the rights and responsibilities of the Crown to govern), article two – Rangatiratanga (self-determination: the collective rights and responsibilities of Māori to live as Māori and to protect all that is precious to them) and article three – rite tahi (equality: the rights and responsibilities of equality and common citizenship for all New Zealanders) (Kawharu, 1989; Jackson, 1992 & HRC, 2012). The guarantee of Rangatiratanga in article two affirms the right of Māori to live as Māori and to protect and develop their taonga; this includes mātauranga Māori (Kawharu, 1989). Pihama (2001) asserts that Te Tiriti provides a basis through which Māori may critically analyse relationships, challenge the status quo and interpret the implications of Te Tiriti.

The spaces that were created in the 1980s in a variety of forums for Māori to vent their frustrations produced instrumental documents imbued with the voices of insightful Māori minds. This resulted in Pūao-te-Ata-Tū (see Pitama et al, 2002; Hollis, 2006; & Connolly, 2006) and other reports such as The Māori and the Criminal Justice System – He Whaipanga Hou: A New Perspective (1988) and the Royal Commission on Social Policy (1988) (Tauri, 1999; Love, 2000) that significantly influenced the development of a new child welfare system and the CYP&F Act 1989. The one theme that is consistent throughout these reports is how the monocultural nature of the justice and social welfare system was a significant driver of Māori over-representation. Thus, it was proposed that one way to alter this situation was to develop parallel or separate justice and welfare processes based on Māori philosophies and

practices.

Pūao-te-Ata-Tū is significant because it described the effect of institutional racism within DSW as individualistic and state centred dispensing of social services that, intentional or not, nurtured attitudes and practices that discriminated against Māori. The committee recommended that the Government adopt the following objective: To attack all forms of cultural racism in New Zealand that result in the values and lifestyle of the dominant group being regarded as superior to those of other groups, especially Māori by:

- a) Providing leadership and programmes which help develop a society in which the values of all groups are of central importance to its enhancement; and
- b) Incorporating the values, cultures and beliefs of Māori in all policies developed for the future of Aotearoa (Ministerial Advisory Committee, 1986).

The first two recommendations were about tackling cultural racism and eliminating deprivation. Without addressing these two in the first instance the other recommendations about making the social welfare system more responsive to Māori through true partnership, would be ineffectual (Ministerial Advisory Committee, 1986).

CYP&F Act 1989 and the FGC

The intention of the new CYP&F Act 1989 was about enabling families to work in partnership with the state to balance the needs of children with the strengthening and maintenance of those families (Connolly, 2004; Doolan, 2006). In an attempt to fulfil the recommendations of Pūao-te-Ata-Tū and the intentions of the new CYP&F Act various pro-Māori initiatives were introduced. These were Iwi social services, an increase in Māori frontline staff and the family group conference (FGC) (Love, 2002; Hollis, 2006; Connolly 2006). Pūao-te-Ata-Tū enabled Māori community representatives on working parties involved in setting up the new legislation to voice the effectiveness of traditional Māori practices. The FGC developed from the work produced by these working parties and with more Māori social workers being employed by DSW (or as the Department was known over a period of years as

NZCYPS,³ CYPFS and finally CYF). As various elements of Māori society became more vehement (Wilcox et al, 1991) the traditional problem solving mechanism of whānau hui was more often used or insisted on by Māori involved in CYPS processes at the time.

As outlined in chapter one the FGC became the mechanism that allowed families to be involved with the state to decide how the care and protection needs of children would be best met. Many proponents of the FGC believe that the model is based on traditional Māori cultural philosophy and practice (see Maxwell and Morris, 2000; Levine, 2000; Becroft, 2005; & Bazemore 2007). By contrast Walker et al (2000) and Love (2000) state that the FGC was co-opted from the Māori process of whānau hui before being formalised by the CYP&F Act. In any event the FGC became the legal mechanism through which matters related to child protection are dealt with in Aotearoa (Walker et al, 2000). Equally, as Tauri (2010) asserts it became a significant tool for advancing the perception that the state centred welfare system was culturally sensitive and responsive to the needs of Māori.

The FGC process as it is set out in the Act attempts to reflect responsiveness to Māori by providing for the involvement of whānau in decisions about the safety and wellbeing of a child (NZCCSS, 2010). For example, the first principle of the Act states that wherever possible a child or young person's family group, whānau, hapū, iwi should participate in making decisions about the child or young person and that regard be given to their views (NZCCSS, 2010). However, since the introduction of the FGC the definition of responsiveness and how responsive the process is has been contested and debated by Māori.

Tauri (2010) contends that Māori criticisms of the FGC centre on two main arguments. Firstly, that whilst the FGC has its faults it is how the present system administers child protection so therefore we just have to 'accept it' and 'just get on with it.' Secondly, the FGC process represents the 'Māorifying' of the system through splicing in selected cultural elements and practices (i.e. karakia, kai) in an attempt to make it more palatable for Māori seeking their own solutions to problems. This process has not included self-determination or sufficient resources to implement those solutions (Jackson, 1995; & Tauri, 1999). In any event

³ In 1992 the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) underwent a structural change and separated into five focused 'business' groups, including the New Zealand Children and Young Persons Service (NZCYPS). This was until 1995, and although not a structural change, the child protection brand name then changed to the Children Young Person's and Their Families Service (CYPFS). In 1998 the Director General of Social Welfare re-amalgamated the original split of the service and the funding arm and again significant structural changes occurred resulting in a further name change to the Department of Child Youth and Family (CYF) (Brown, 2000).

while Māori had issues with it, the FGC process and the new Act were key to government Māori policy regarding the process of ‘cultural appropriateness,’ for which the FGC and Māori practitioners working within it played a significant part.

The next section provides an in-depth discussion of Māori social workers and the FGC as government initiatives designed to address the over-representation of Māori in the welfare system.

Care and Protection Following the CYP&F Act 1989

As the participants in this research are Māori social workers talking about their experiences of the challenges they face with the FGC and related care and protection processes it is important to place them accurately within the context of this research. Thus knowing about the origins of Māori social workers in relation to the new Act is an important part of this study.

Although Māori social workers were practising before the 1989 CYP&F Act they were a scarce resource. The visible face of Māori social work in Aotearoa did not exist until after the new Act (Hollis, 2006). More Māori staff were employed by CYPFS in a drive akin to indigenisation exercises used by the Police and the Corrections Department at around the same time (Tauri, 1999). An example of the effectiveness of this initiative was the increase in Māori staff in the early 1990s that included FGC coordinators; half identified as Māori (Wilson, 1993).

Hollis' (2006) Kaupapa Māori research with Māori social workers practicing at this time found that Pūao-te-Ata-Tū created huge changes for Māori social workers and contributed significantly to the development of Māori social work practises. Not only were organisations actively employing Māori workers but their methods were also being validated which encouraged the acceptance and understanding of Māori ways of doing things. This in turn provided better outcomes for whānau Māori.

Hollis' (2006) also discussed challenges associated with this, particularly that the new Māori workers were often unqualified and that some were selected because of their knowledge and standing within the community and others were chosen because they suited the ‘new face’ of

service delivery. Furthermore, although Māori workers were permitted to use Māori processes and initiatives this was only within the boundaries and protocols of the organisation and therefore they were restricted in implementing practices based on tikanga (Hollis, 2006). Other Māori authors such as Tauri (1996) and Love (2002) argue that the new Māori workers were essentially the brown veneer of Eurocentric policy and the FGC was a hybridised Māori method grafted onto the new social welfare system, which amounted to tokenism. This tokenism also is highlighted in Hollis-English' (2012:66) most recent work with Māori social workers where she states:

The inclusion of Māori protocols was in many cases done in a tokenistic manner. Much of the success of the family group conference was dependent on the social worker's ability to engage with the family. This was particularly hard for Māori social workers as they were being asked to use some Māori methods of practice, but within a restricted environment.

Even with the later establishment of Māori for Māori (Roopu) teams within CYPFS there were little or no resources provided for Māori supervision or leadership to keep these Roopu teams supported and thriving (Love, 2002; & O'Donoghue, 2003). For example, it was not until 1986 that the professional social work body Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW) first initiated the two caucuses of Taiuiwi and Māori, to govern the organisation side by side as well as provide leadership in the profession (O'Donoghue, 2003). However Mataira (1985: as cited in O'Donoghue, 2003) states that despite the professional and social changes at this time cultural supervision was not a reality for Māori social workers.

Tauri's (1999:2) critique of the FGC further explains tokenism within CYPFS:

Rather than make major changes to departmental practices in reaction to Māori claims of systemic racism, they instead concentrated on 'co-opting' Māori, their bicultural ideology and cultural practices within institutional frameworks in order to transform the face of state service-delivery.

Love's (2002:30) critique of the FGC describes tokenism as a challenge for Māori workers:

One of the side effects of the co-option of Māori into the current statutory regime has

been that many of the social activists of the 1970s and 1980s have become the social service providers of the new millennium...Māori workers are employed for their Māori knowledge and standing, but pressured into conforming to institutional mores that are in conflict with tikanga Māori. This is particularly problematic for workers who have come from Iwi or Māori community practice, where the trust of their communities and their own standing among these people are pivotal to their successful work.

Māori and iwi providers saw Pūao-te-Ata-Tū as a potential pathway to actualisation of Tino-Rangatiratanga aspirations. However the new system was increasingly influenced by managerialism⁴ and international welfare developments/trends (Tauri, 2009). This coupled with the economic reforms of the late 1980s and early 1990s led to the budget for care and protection services being significantly decreased (Levine, 2000; Waldegrave & Coy, 2005 & Connolly, 2006). Sorrenson (1998) asserted that decline of Māori participation in CYPFS over the 1990s was mainly due to structural/organisational reform, policy confusion and management attitudes. He found that CYPFS management (predominantly Tauwiwi), while espousing the philosophy of Pūao-te-Ata-Tū and later Te Punga⁵ also resisted the implementation of many pro-Māori initiatives because they feared loss of power.

The economic reforms and resistance to pro-Māori initiatives starved Iwi social services, Māori social workers and family group conferencing of the potential to fully develop (Sorrenson, 1998; Love, 2000; & Pakura, 2005). Consequently the failure of these initiatives to fully develop then shifted the financial burden for care of children from the state to whānau increasing the issues faced by whānau who were already in need. (Cram, 2011). Pakura (2005) talks about reforms creating a negative cycle for whānau who were denied appropriate resources to implement their FGC plans. This included resources for whānau to travel to FGCs, which impacted upon whānau levels of attendance at the FGCs. There were also more children entering the care system, most of them Māori which further compounded this situation. Contrary to the principles of the 1989 Act social workers responded by using the FGC as the only means of securing services for children (Pakura, 2005).

⁴ Managerialism is based on a 'business' model and focuses on focuses on a value for money (effectiveness and efficiency) and also evidenced based policy. Instrumentalist reforms impacted public administration practice in numerous Western democracies from the early 1980s onwards. Thus central government agencies contracted providers to deliver services and in doing so were increasingly required to quantify what they are doing, why they do it and whether it's working. Thus the emergence of evidenced based policy and also from Government policy makers and their academic partners moving policy making from its long standing ideological basis into the realm of 'hard facts' and empirical certainty (Tauri 2009).

⁵ Te Punga was the CYPFS response to Pūao-te-Ata-Tū. It basically outlined the Advisory Committee's (to Pūao-te-Ata-Tū) view of biculturalism in Aotearoa (Brown, 2000).

There were also other practice issues occurring with the FGC process that were contrary to the 1989 Act. For example, Maxwell and Morris's (1993) research on youth justice FGC found that only 46% of victims attended FGCs (and only 49% of this group registered satisfaction with the result of the conference they attended). Social workers were present at 62% of all FGCs evaluated. This occurred despite the fact that the new legislation seriously restricted their right to attend. For example, a social worker may only attend where the young person is in the care of the Director General of DSW (Tauri, 2010). Bradley (1995: 30-31) speaking of the provisions for the establishment of Iwi Social Services noted that:

By 1992, DSW was receiving considerable criticism from iwi...evidence mounted to show that Māori were gaining less information from businesses within DSW; that Māori organisations were monitored more harshly; that they were given fewer resources to cover a larger target group; and that they were discriminated against by care and protection Co-ordinators who were failing to include or were actively excluding whānau members from family group conferences.

What Bradley presented here were serious inconsistencies in the practice that were contrary to the principles of Pūao-te-Ata-Tū and the 1989 Act. These inconsistencies are arguably still practised today (see Pakura, 2005; Stanley, 2007, Tauri, 2009 & 2010).

At a Social Policy Agency seminar (on 22 April 1993) Sir Apirana Mahuika⁶ (1993:2) was asked to provide advice on how best to “meet the needs of Māori in policy, planning and service delivery in the Department of Social Welfare” which included the FGC. He commented:

Despite the supposed role of the whānau/iwi (under the Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1989), DSW (“insensitive, rude DSW staff”) took over and the real issues remained unsolved...Where is the decision-making process, where is the equitable partnership now as promised? Pūao-te-Ata-Tū excited Māoridom. But where is it now? The report is found to be a threat, by the Department of Social Welfare staff, to the Pākehā position and an imposition on the bureaucratic system...worked fine in a

⁶ Pūao-te-Ata-Tū became the blueprint for bicultural initiatives and practice in the Department of Social Welfare during the late 1980s. Following the appointment of the Ministerial Advisory Committee of Pūao-te-Ata-Tū, a further committee, the Komiti Whakahaere, was established to advise Ministers and Departmental managers on the implementation of the recommendations contained in Pūao-te-Ata-Tū. Sir Apirana Mahuika, a Ngāti Porou rangātira was a founding member of this committee.

monocultural world. At the end of the day nothing happened. Maybe it is a case of policy or the readiness of politicians to change the breakfast menu day-by-day, week-by-week, and month-by-month (Mahuika, 1993:2).

The FGC was intended to address Māori over-representation in the care and protection system (Tauri, 1999; Love, 2000; Connolly, 2004; Libesman, 2004; & Doolan, 2004). However in 26 years of Pūao-te-Ata-Tū and 23 years of FGC the over-representation of Māori remains excessive. This is best illustrated through such reports over the years such as the ACORD (1978) and later WRARG (1984), which showed that Māori and Pacific Islanders comprised 70-80% of the children in the care of the state.

In terms of the FGC, the first year of the 1989 Act showed that half of FGCs held were for Pākehā, 38% Māori, and 7% Pacific children (Hassel & Maxwell, 1991). In 1993 42% of Māori made up the FGCs held whilst only 12% of the total population (Rimene, 1994). In the years after the Act was implemented CYF disclosed that approximately 47% of the children and young people they dealt with were Māori (Brown Report, 2000). More recent statistics tell us that between 2008 and 2010 47% of CYF clients were Māori (36% were Pākehā and 10% were Pacific people). This 47% includes CYF confirmed abuse findings, children in the care of CYF and nearly half of the care and protection FGCs held in this period (MSD, 2010). Furthermore, in their examination of CYF data the latest report from the Families Commission (2012) found that of the 4238 children in out-of-home care 52% were Māori. Of the Māori children who had custody orders taken in 2010 just under half (45%) had had a sibling previously removed (HRC, 2012:39). The point that is being made here is that no matter what the particular care and protection statistics pertain to, Māori continue to be grossly overrepresented in all of them. This is despite the implementation of the 1989 Act, pro-Māori initiatives such as the FGC, continued departmental restructuring and welfare reforms. Currently Māori make up nearly 15% of the population and half of the total families involved with CYF (Cram, 2012).

Te Punga (1994) was DSW's response to Pūao-te-Ata-Tū (Daybreak), it confirmed for many that the 'light of the dawn' in terms of what had been envisaged by Māori would never really reach whānau, hapū and iwi (Taki, 1996; & Bradley, 1997). Of particular significance is the review that the Waitangi Tribunal carried out on the response to Pūao-te-Ata-Tū which found that DSW's commitment to implementing its recommendations had waned by the time of DSW's restructuring to become CYPS in 1992. The report also said that DSW lacked

informed commitment to Pūao-te-Ata-Tū during its establishment phase and in its operations. Staff appreciation of the report's meaning for their work was neither required nor encouraged (Waitangi Tribunal, 1998). This lack of commitment by DSW is best illustrated in Pakura's (2005) keynote presentation (American Humane Association's Family Group Decision-making Conference) celebrating 14 years of FGC in Aotearoa. She stated:

There has been some retreat from a full Māori process in family group conferences with Māori. There are fewer such meetings held on marae, for example, and this can diminish the role and status of tribal leaders (Kuia and Kaumātua) in the problem-resolution process (p. 117). Further, organisationally, we (the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services) made some mistakes in the process of implementing the new law and its procedural requirements (p. 118). And, I wonder about the need to take our whole system back to its roots in Pūao-te-Ata-Tū, to revisit core philosophies and principles and to re-invigorate our staff in their meanings. Staff turnover rates have ensured that few staff in frontline positions today experienced the radicalism of these changes first hand. I am pondering also what role Māori might have in this process (p.121).

Despite the full retreat from Māori processes in FGC and other practices contrary to the Act it is clear from the literature that revisiting the principles of Pūao-te-Ata-Tū for DSW never eventuated. The lack of DSW's commitment to and encouragement of staff to value this document contributed significantly to the erosion of Māori social work practices, FGC and other initiatives inspired from Pūao-te-Ata-Tū.

Summary

In traditional Māori society whānau, hapū and iwi were responsible for the nurture, care and protection of their children. With the forced migration of Māori to the cities post World War II tribal organisation was fractured and Māori came to the attention of the authorities. Māori children were taken into state care in evident numbers culminating in Māori protest and reports of institutional racism in DSW. The instrumental Pūao-te-Ata-Tū report followed and its findings significantly influenced the development of the new CYP&F Act 1989.

The new Act introduced government initiatives such as an increase in frontline Māori workers and family group conferencing (Connolly, 2004; Hollis, 2006). For some these initiatives were nothing more than tokenism; a grafting of Māori faces and processes onto the same monocultural welfare system (Tauri, 1999; Love, 2000). The economic reforms of the late 1980s and early 1990s significantly slashed the social welfare budget (Levine, 2000; Waldegrave & Coy, 2005; & Connolly, 2006) and effectively eroded Māori social work and the FGC. Because of this, what had been envisaged for Māori through Pūao-te-Ata-Tū coupled with DSW's lack of commitment to keeping its principles alive diminished the 'light of the dawn' that Pūao-te-Ata-Tū represented (Bradley, 1997; Pakura, 2005; Hollis-English, 2012). The next chapter reviews the literature on the key challenges faced by Māori social workers in care and protection and related FGC practice. The chapter concludes with a summary of key findings and implications.

Chapter Three

CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT

“We operate in two aspects of reality. One is restricted (sacred); the other is unrestricted (public). That's why I find it easy to come into the white man's world and operate, then go back to my world without fear of losing it. I'm using white man's skills, Yolngu skills and putting them together for a new beginning” (Yunupingu, 1986:3).

The literature concerning Māori social work and family group conferencing (FGC) recognises the positive changes and gains that have occurred in care and protection over the past three decades. It also acknowledges the innovative capacity of iwi, Māori communities and Māori practitioners to adapt to meet new challenges and model new practices, in particular the challenges faced by Māori practitioners in care and protection and related FGC practice. Whilst there is a wealth of literature available on the benefits of the FGC for families both at home and internationally, research that engages directly with whānau about their experiences of the FGC is relatively non-existent. This is despite whānau Māori being half of the total families who have participated in FGCs. The chapter concludes with a summary of the key findings and implications.

Challenges for Māori Social Workers

This research positions Māori social workers as holders of professional and cultural knowledge in their field. It shows how they utilise their values and beliefs in their practice according to their own world views, how they were raised, what they have experienced and learned throughout their lives and how they translate this to their practice (Walsh-Tapiata, 2003). With this in mind it was important to locate Māori practitioners within the research by identifying the challenges they experience in care and protection and FGC.

Dual Accountability

The issue of dual accountability poses a particular challenge for Māori social workers

working in the contemporary context. Unlike many of their non-Māori social work counterparts Māori practitioners face the dual burden of professional and cultural expectations in organisations as well as from communities (Love, 2002 & NZCCSS, 2010). This position for Māori practitioners is also described in studies with Aboriginal and First Nation social workers in Australia and Canada. They described that a different practice reality exists for them where their cultural, personal and professional identities connect (Bennett & Zubrzycki, 2003; Blackstock, & Trocme, 2005).

This can result in indigenous workers taking on a variety of roles within their practitioner capacity to facilitate the needs of indigenous families. For example, they act as a translator between an indigenous family groups and welfare authorities. Their cultural identity strongly influences their practice, particularly when experiencing difficulties working with their own family groups. This 'in-between' role means that they are able to work with these families in ways that a family group responds best to, ways that are not present with non-indigenous practitioners. Because of this the identity of the indigenous social worker is fluid and thus continuously negotiated alongside a professional social work identity that is dominated by Western discourse (Bennett & Zubrzycki, 2003; Blackstock, & Trocme, 2005).

Challenges for Māori social workers were also highlighted in the recent Grassroots Voices report (NZSSCC, 2010). These include a serious lack of Māori practitioners employed in both statutory and community roles. This means there are not enough Māori social workers to match the over-representation of whānau Māori in the system. This lack of Maori practitioners inside organisations can leave them exposed to institutional isolation and makes them vulnerable to both the organisation and the community.

This position for Māori practitioners brings with it a plethora of other challenges such as the competition between agencies to employ them. Competition for Māori practitioners means they may have to choose between the best salary on offer or other advantages that a lesser paying role can offer (e.g. a particular kaupapa or political platform). A lack of Māori practitioners in social services also limits the growth of essential Māori initiatives, programmes and culturally progressive working environments. Durst (1998) and Libesman (2004) noted a lack of indigenous workers, supervision, resources and administrative support as other impediments to the development of First Nation agencies.

A lack of Kaupapa Māori supervision and leadership is also a continuing deficiency in social

services (O'Donoghue, 2003) as this limits the development of Māori social work and critical Māori programmes in care and protection (Hollis-English, 2012). Burnout and high turnover of Māori social workers further results in a drain of Māori knowledge in organisations (Pakura, 2005, Connolly, 2006; Hollis-English 2012). Failure to replenish the drain leads to loss of knowledge of the philosophy and principles of such founding documents as Pūao-te-Ata-Tū, and indeed of key principles of child care and protection handed down by tīpuna (Jackson, 1988; Hollis-English 2012). The Grassroots Voices (2010) report also highlighted the challenge for Māori practitioners to be resourced for training towards qualifications and professional registration (NZCCSS, 2010). This is a particular concern and will have implications for Māori practitioners with the recent move towards mandatory professional registration. Many Māori practitioners have yet to be qualified and finding the resourcing for registration is difficult when it has to be self-sourced or sought from already tight agency budgets.

Constant Change

Changes are inevitable in social services whether they are organisational, structural or in policy and these are challenges that Māori practitioners have risen to since the introduction of the 1989 CYP&F Act. This is highlighted in Hollis's (2006) in-depth research with Māori practitioners. Participants described the difficulty of not achieving gains when the government constantly changes tact to address inconsistencies relating to iwi and cultural policies. Tauri (2009) suggests that these changes are born from the policy sectors obsession with relying on the importation of socially and culturally inappropriate interventions. This is done rather than working directly with local Māori communities to develop effective long-term solutions unique to Aotearoa's indigenous context (Tauri, 2010). These constant changes in many cases obstruct Māori social worker practice and this appears as a recurring theme throughout the literature (see Love, 2000; Hollis-English, 2006 & 2012; Doolan, 2006).

Hollis (2006) discusses the challenge for Māori social workers in organisations with obvious gaps between policy writing and implementation at an organisational level. This includes social workers not being consulted on proposed policy or legislation changes and how these might specifically impact upon practice and outcomes for whānau. An example of social workers being 'left out of the loop' is in ANZASW's submission on the 'Children, Young

Persons, and Their Families Amendment Bill (No.6)' (ANZASW, 2007). The document asked why CYF and other frontline social workers and FGC coordinators were not consulted on how they or their practice might be impacted by proposed changes to FGC legislation (ANZASW, 2007). As Hollis (2006) asserts, the need for more stability at a political level is evident and the involvement of policy makers at the social work level is required so that policies are implemented successfully and sustainably particularly where Māori are concerned.

Māori practitioners have contributed a great deal to the development of Māori social work in Aotearoa (Hollis-English, 2006 & 2012). However, it has not been without a myriad of challenges that relate directly to the Māori social worker role. The most concerning finding with regard to the challenges Māori practitioners experience in care and protection is the lack of research on the topic. This would lead one to conclude that Māori social workers are undervalued and ill rewarded for their cultural and professional expertise and their contributions to social work development in care and protection. The next section discusses the challenges that Māori social workers and whānau experience in family group conference practice.

Challenges with Family Group Conferences

This section is comprehensive despite the minimal literature on care and protection FGC in Aotearoa. Although the literature for this investigation is centred largely on care and protection FGC research some discussion occurs in the area of youth justice studies in relation to care and protection.

International FGC Development

The literature reveals authors who have critiqued the FGC model (see Geddis, 1993; Bradley, 1995; Love, 2002, & Tauri, 1999 & 2010) and others who have written in support of its potential (Maxwell & Morris, 2001; Bush & O'Reilly, 1998; Connolly, 1999; Levine, 2000; Libesman 2004). Despite this, negligible attention has been paid to researching the FGCs effectiveness in Aotearoa (Smith, Gollop, Taylor, & Atwool, 1999; Connolly, 2004; Atwool,

2006; & Doolan (2006). This means that international researchers have gainfully advanced FGC practice and knowledge in contrast to Aotearoa (Connolly, 2006).

Overseas practice developments on FGC such as those in the United Kingdom rely on the findings of studies carried out on FGC projects there (see Lupton & Stevens, 1998; Marsh & Crow, 1998; Pennell & Burford, 1999; Sundell, 2000; Trotter & Sheehan, 2000; & Marsh, 2007). Evaluation studies conducted in countries such as Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada and Sweden have shown that where conferences have been implemented they have been successful in achieving positive outcomes. Findings suggest that conferences are making effective plans for children and seem to increase the safety of children and other family members where violence is a concern (Kiely, 2001; Marsh & Crow, 1998; Merkel-Holguin, Nixon & Burford, 2003; Pennell & Burford, 2000; Sundell & Vinnerljung, 2004 & Harris, 2008). FGC has also been developed in the UK as a decision-making model for vulnerable adults in social services (i.e. older people and those adults with learning and physical disabilities) (Ashley, 2006; & Marsh, 2007).

FGC Family Empowerment in Aotearoa

International proponents of the FGC refer to the model as exceptional in terms of how well families are empowered by the process (see Adams & Chandler, 2004; Burford & Adams, 2004; Pennell, 2004 & Harris, 2008). Libesman (2004) asserts that even if the FGC model is not well administered the process has the potential to be responsive to cultural diversity. Whilst potential empowerment of the FGC and responsiveness to cultural diversity might be worthy of discussion, the few FGC studies in Aotearoa show that the FGC process as it currently stands does not ensure the empowerment of Māori whānau. For example, Tauri (2010:14) describing youth justice FGCs argues:

Empirical research on the New Zealand family group conference forum fails to confirm that it empowers the indigenous population, particularly in relation to two key areas of concern for Māori; firstly, the cultural appropriateness of the conferencing forum; and secondly, deprofessionalisation and the exclusion of Māori cultural expertise (Tauri, 2010:14).

Tauri (2010) also asserts that whilst the model successfully demonstrates the co-option of Māori cultural practices, the way the FGC is practiced in Aotearoa disempowers Māori cultural experts. In making this point Tauri (2010) refers to findings in the Maxwell et al (2004) study that shows that Māori expertise and knowledge continues to be under-valued and is secondary to the process of carrying out the FGC. Maxwell et al (2004: 82) states that:

Details of particular (Māori) elders' involvement in facilitation were not usually available for the retrospective cases [that made up the study] but that all the [conference] coordinators who took part in this study reported that they did not normally delegate this role to anyone else although some reported asking elders to perform a mihi or a karakia (Maxwell et al, 2004: 82).

Maxwell and Pakura's (2006) paper titled "FGC does it work for care and protection" merges Maxwell's (2004) with Connolly's (2006) research on the link between FGCs and care and protection outcomes. The resulting findings are largely youth justice based but are also applied to care and protection FGCs. The paper includes a discussion on FGC best practice that ensures cultural responsiveness. This appears to refer to the appropriateness of and potential for the FGC to be responsive to Māori, although this is not a view held by Māori authors (see Rimene, 1994; Love 2002; Hollis, 2006; & Tauri 1999, 2004 & 2010). This paper is referring to the 'potential' of the FGC to be 'empowering' or 'responsive' to Māori. Apart from the obvious over-representation of Māori in every social statistic there is no 'actual' research that evidences care and protection FGC working for whānau, published or unpublished. The gap between the potential and actuality is an important issue, which the likes of Maxwell (2004 & 2006) and almost all international advocates of FGC seem to ignore (see Lupton & Stevens, 1998; Marsh & Crow, 1998; Pennell & Burford, 1999 & 2000; Sundell, 2000; Trotter & Sheehan, 2000; Kiely, 2001; Merkel-Holguin, Nixon & Burford, 2003; Sundell & Vinnerljung, 2004; and Marsh, 2007).

The concept of FGC empowerment for families is also quoted across various government websites such as Ministry of Social Development (MSD), Child Youth and Family (CYF) (i.e. Practice Centre) and the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). These organisations promote the FGC as empowering with the potential to be culturally responsive. There is however no mention of empowerment being subject to appropriate resourcing, cultural competence and the self-determination of Māori. What is being promoted is the potential but not the actuality of the FGC to be empowering. We cannot talk about actuality for whānau Māori because there is no

research that evidences it. Perhaps that is why there is no research; it would only confirm what we already know (but do not want to acknowledge) that in fact the FGC is not working for Māori. This is hard to accept when Aotearoa is heralded across Western countries for the brilliance of the FGC process especially within the growing restorative justice movement (Tauri, 2010).

Early Care and Protection FGC Research

Smith, Gollop, Taylor & Atwool (1999), Connolly (2004), Atwool (2006) & Doolan (2006) all refer to the lack of care and protection FGC research. Atwool (2006) states that apart from some research on youth justice FGCs no published research has been undertaken in Aotearoa. However a thorough search of the literature produced two very early (unpublished) care and protection FGC studies that are worthy of mention.

The first is Sonya Rimene's (1993) research where her compelling findings (undertaken with non-Māori practitioners and whānau Māori FGC participants) indicated that the principles of the CYP&F Act 1989 were not being implemented for whānau. Although the Act provided whānau, hapū and iwi with a means of participating in decision-making about their children, practitioners who implement the Act were not doing so because:

- Discretionary powers were being used by practitioners to veto whānau decisions;
- Insufficient information provided to whānau thus they were uninformed and unable to make decisions;
- FGCs and informal meetings were poorly arranged because practitioners were unable to network with whānau;
- Although whānau were involved in the process they had no real control over decision-making;
- Practitioners manipulated the process and the outcome to what they thought was in the best interests of the child.

Rimene's (1993) research showed that DSW practitioners were unable to network, communicate with or empower Māori whānau in the care and protection process. As

compelling as it is this research is barely referred to in later studies.

The second earlier study on care and protection FGC was undertaken by MSD in 1995 (Gilling, Patterson and Walker, 1995). It asserts that the reality of family empowerment depends entirely on sufficient resources, support and follow-up. The study revealed that aspects that worked well in FGC included the improvement of family members' relationships, the coordinators' effective management of the conference, provision of resources to address the situation and support from the social worker. They identified the following concerns with FGC:

- Inadequate information for families about the type of situations which give rise to care or protection concerns and the FGC process;
- The need to wait for the FGC process to commence before receiving help;
- Difficulties regarding the process for inviting participants to the conference;
- Inadequate management of relationships between participants at FGCs;
- Undue influence of officials and some family members in the decision-making process;
- Failure to ensure decisions meet the needs of the child and address the underlying issues;
- Resourcing of family group decisions;
- Unequal participation of attendees;
- A lack of effective monitoring of implementation and failure to address non-implementation (Gilling, Patterson & Walker, 1995).

Although the findings were invaluable in developing FGC practice the study was carried out with non-Māori families only. The Māori experience of FGCs and specific cultural implications relating to whānau are absent. This fact leads us to consider the visibility of Māori in mainstream research.

Indigenous Invisibility in Research

When discussing FGC and restorative approaches with indigenous populations Tauri (2004) impressed the importance of direct engagement with Māori to provide authenticity and validity in research. This engagement makes researchers and policy advisors aware of the range of drivers and explanations for Māori over-representation. These explanations include individual pre-dispositions, mental health issues, drug and alcohol abuse, histories of violence and abuse, institutional racism, biased practice, and long-term impact of social and economic dislocation via the colonisation process. The importance of engagement also applies to Kaupapa Māori research as a valid methodology to build understanding around the range of drivers for Māori over-representation as well as effective solutions (Smith, 1999).

Structural discrimination, systemic barriers, marginalisation, alienation, silenced voices and invisibility of indigenous populations are resounding themes throughout the literature. For example, Carr and Peters (1997), McKenzie (1997), Weaver (1998) and Libesman (2004) all note there is extremely limited literature available on indigenous children's services, particularly information prepared by indigenous researchers for indigenous organisations. Love (2002:13) explains this:

Ethnic statistics relating to Māori children in state care and Māori families who have been subjected to interventions through welfare authorities have been poorly recorded in the past. The result has been that researchers have faced obstacles to gaining a clear statistical picture of the extent and nature of interactions between Māori families and state welfare authorities. This, in turn, has operated first to prevent meaningful academic analysis and dialogue around the historical relationships and interactions between Māori and welfare authorities in Aotearoa and, second to exclude the lived realities of Māori from official (statistical) discourse.

Libesman's (2004) literature review on indigenous child protection and FGC asserted that 'one size fits all' approaches do not work. This is explained as Western theory or 'one worldview,' valuing identity and sameness over difference and using a 'one size fits all' approach when seeking to address assumed deficits of minority groups. This results in difficulties occurring for a myriad of minority groups that assert their right to be different. For example, heterosexuality verses homosexuality; the fight for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people to be seen and heard and have the same human value as the dominant

heterosexual group (i.e. the right to marry their life partner).

Difficulties arise from this dominant one world view when a person looks to the group for identity and feels that they are either a part of or alienated from the group. Feeling a 'part of' or 'alienated from' is what divides communities into 'them,' 'we' and 'others.' This dominant one worldview leads to the construction of an 'ideal' community and fails to recognise alternative forms of community identity. Thus the importance of frontline Māori practitioners' views on what they see as working and not working in care and protection for whānau. This leads to developing solutions that address alienation and division in communities.

NZ Studies with Coordinators

Libesman (2004), Pihama (2011) and Hollis-English (2012) all assert that indigenous practitioners play an essential role in defining problems and developing solutions for indigenous communities. Research with Māori practitioners working in FGC is essential for the effective development of best practice with Māori, including Māori FGC coordinators. The number of Māori FGC coordinators is high as a result of more Māori workers being employed by DSW in the early 1990s (Wilson, 1993). Given this is the case it is worth considering the findings of three FGC studies conducted in Aotearoa with coordinators.

The first is Schmid's (2001) survey of youth justice coordinators carried out jointly with CYF, of which 75% of those surveyed responded. The questionnaire, analysis and findings generalised Māori into the greater mainstream mix offering nothing new for Māori.

The second study with coordinators was Connolly's (2006) study, carried out over 2003 and 2004. The key findings that emerged from this research were that: (1) If CYF were to find family-based solutions they would need to invest time, effort and resources in the processes around the FGC; (2) Training for CYF staff was needed to improve their ability to work with whānau (this was also a key recommendation in the 2010 Grassroots Voices Report); (3) The ideological drift created as staff turned over had led to a weakening of organisational knowledge, This knowledge included the values, goals and basic philosophy underpinning the FGC process.

Connolly also talked about the issue of slippage from a family-driven model to a

professionally driven one over time and the need for continued training to redress this. Connolly's (2006) research offers much to FGC practice development as well as highlighting some important cultural deficiencies in FGC (i.e. lack of consultation and exclusion of extended whānau, or choice by whānau as to where the FGC is to be held, such as a Marae).

The third and most recent study with FGC practitioners is Slater's (2009) PhD dissertation on youth justice FGC that mirrored Connolly's (2006) methodology. Overall Slater's study showed that the youth justice FGC process was effective for the majority of young people but generally inadequate for repeat young offenders with complex additional needs, of which more than half are Māori (MOJ, 2010). Slater's study included recommendations for; (1) Improving the FGC process including addressing coordinator training and leadership in CYF; (2) Reviewing the FGC process for repeat offenders; (3) Improving the quality of information of the FGC process; and (4) Enhancing professional collaboration and addressing Police training on the Act and FGC.

The evident weakness of Slater's (2009) study is the complete absence of the Māori experience. This is the basis of Tauri's (2009, 2010 & 2012) argument with most non-Māori authors of FGC research. This absence shows up particularly in the more significant sections of the study: 'the offending theories' section, 'risk factors,' 'risk factors from a New Zealand perspective' and particularly the section on 'identified risks for young people engaged in the NZ youth justice FGC process.' This exclusion of Māori occurs despite Māori being four to five times more likely to be apprehended, prosecuted and convicted than their non-Māori counterparts. These rates are even higher when taking into account the age of offenders: Māori aged 10-13 are almost six times more likely to be apprehended than their non-Māori counterparts (MoJ, 2010 & Workman, 2011). Furthermore, in the proved Youth Court outcomes for all offences (except traffic) in the period studied more than half of the young people were Māori (MoJ, 2010).

The differences in convictions and sentencing for Māori and non-Māori illustrate evidence of structural discrimination and unconscious bias within the justice system sentencing process. However colonisation, structural discrimination and systemic barriers to ethnic equality as risk factors for rangatahi do not feature in Slater's (2009) study. This gives the impression that Māori do not exist or that the author does not have the confidence to include a valid analysis of Māori youth in her work despite half of those young people going through an FGC being Māori.

In her extensive list of participant interview questions not one of them refers to a Māori experience in the FGC, despite half of the coordinators interviewed identifying as Māori. However it is noted in her limitations section that her findings may have been enhanced if she had used a Māori co-researcher.

Slater's (2009) study is a prime example of a 'one size fits all' product where Māori are submerged into the mainstream mix. Tauri (2011) describes this as 'grand erasure', the process of only writing about the present Western context or discussing the neo-colonial present (i.e. Māori over-representation) as though the colonial past never happened. One also has to question the responsibility of academic institutions in perpetuating the marginalisation of Māori if they are approving PhD material that contribute to oppressive discourses. As Tauri (2012: 01) asserts:

...like so much of this type of work, when we peel back the thin veneer of 'science' we can see that the Western academic is wearing no clothes.

When exposed the 'grand erasure' highlights the impact upon the most vulnerable in society and the children of the most marginalised, especially those who are transacted through the FGC process.

Children's Participation in FGC

A good example of research that includes both the Māori experience and analysis of the issues pertaining specifically to Māori is Atwool's (2008) PhD on FGC. Atwool covers critical issues that are central to the FGC experience particularly concerning children's rights to be heard and have their views and aspirations considered in the FGC.

With youth justice FGCs the young person is required to attend, as they have to answer to the offending charge/s. With care and protection FGCs children and young people have not always been required to attend (Doolan, 2006). In fact a significant practice issue in Aotearoa is the absence of children participating fully in matters that affect them in FGC process (Atwool, 2006). Atwool (2006) explains this is partly due to the paternalism that exists within the care and protection system. Children are viewed as not being capable of the responsibility that goes with their rights, which is then confirmed when their rights are denied, thus ensuring

that children are never given the opportunity to take responsibility. These power and control issues reflect how children are not valued as contributing citizens in Aotearoa. It might be argued that they are but in actuality they are not. This is a powerful concept as there are disturbing correlations that can be drawn between how the FGC process responds to children and how it responds to Māori (the correlation idea is explained in further detail in the next section, see Changes to FGC). This issue begs the question: “*Is this then not amplified for a Māori child?*” Atwool (2006) answers this when talking about Māori children's participation and placement when stating:

It is likely that had children been consulted and their views respected, cultural dislocation of children in the care system may have been avoided. Young children may not have been able to articulate the importance of whakapapa and connection to whānau, hapū and iwi, but if we had paid attention to their views about who and what was important to them it is unlikely that we would have been so quick to assume that placement outside of these networks was appropriate (Atwool, 2006:265).

Recent research in the UK with children demonstrates that they value the opportunity to participate in family group conferences (Horan & Dalrymple, 2004; Holland et al, 2005; Bell & Wilson, 2006). An example of this is with Kent’s successful Children's FGC Service providers who train volunteer advocates to assist and in some cases be a child’s voice at their FGC. These are not legal professionals or statutory agents; they are independent lay people who act on behalf of the child (Marsh & Walsh, 2007). These advocates are also able to attend the private family time phase of the FGC where often children have particular difficulty getting their voices and aspirations over to the family group. The need to improve a child/young person’s participation in FGC has been a key driver towards changing the legislation on FGC in Aotearoa. Although changes have been geared towards strengthening youth justice FGC practice these changes should also improve children’s participation in care and protection FGCs.

On-going Issues with FGC

The Grassroots Voices (NZCCSS, 2010) study is an important piece of research because it appears to be the only recent study that engaged fully with community groups, including

Kaupapa Māori groups and a number of FGC participants, to gain their views on FGC. This report recognised that being solution focused means engaging directly with service recipients. The findings showed that FGCs were largely supported as a family centred approach to managing risks in families. However overall the FGC process needed improving. The reports criticisms related to the lack of:

- Funding to cover the cost of attendance at FGCs by family members;
- Resources for support agreed to through a family agreement; and
- Monitoring and support of FGC plans by CYF social workers.

Some of the other issues highlighted in the report were:

- Families not being properly informed about the FGC;
- Untimely procedures or not given enough time;
- Appropriate family not present or inappropriate family being present (NZCCSS, 2010).

The main issue the Grassroots Report identified with FGCs (both youth justice and care and protection) was the need to rebuild the resourcing of them so that their purpose and effectiveness could be restored. Roguski's (2006) engaging research on youth gangs in South Auckland highlighted the same problems with youth justice FGCs, specifically the insufficient resourcing and inadequate follow up of FGC plans.

The NZCCSS made these concerns known in their 2007 submission to cabinet on the 'Amendment to the Children Young Persons & their Family Bill' (No.6). Many other organisations also made their concerns known and the resulting report 'Safeguarding our Children: Updating the Children, Young Persons, and their Families Act 1989' showed that the lack of resourcing was a continuing factor in obstructing the administration of the care and protection FGC (Allen & Clarke, 2007:56). It stated that:

The resourcing available through and to the FGC process was an issue for seven submitters. Key concerns were that the funding available to implement agreed plans was not sufficient. Not having adequate funding available was seen as being contrary to the spirit of the Act and in conflict with the Chief Executive's obligation to give effect to agreed plans. Other proposals relating to the resourcing of the FGC included

that...more resourcing is required to ensure that all family members can attend...and resourcing needs to be more equitably split between government, iwi, and community services as the latter two are under-funded (Allen & Clarke, 2007:56).

These same issues were again expressed in the most recent study on youth justice FGC conducted by the Māori Youth Council (2011) and submitted to the Honourable Dr Peter Sharples, Co-Minister of Māori Affairs. It is compelling that with the minimal research on FGC and the Māori experience of it, many of the findings described in recent studies are the same as those described in earlier studies. It is as though nothing has progressed in terms of FGC practice development and families are being asked to ride round in the same old Cadillac without it being maintained.

The current state of FGC is amplified with Māori criticisms of it centring on two criticisms. Firstly, that whilst FGC has its faults it is how the present system transacts child protection, so you just have to put up with it. Secondly, Māorifying the system may have made it more palatable for Māori seeking their own solutions, however FGC is not working for whānau (Tauri, 2010). As well as the above criticisms, the main issues around FGC for whānau are insufficient resourcing, lack of culturally competent practice and self determination which simply described equates to a lack of Tino-Rangatiratanga (Jackson, 1992; & Tauri, 1999 & 2010).

The next section provides an overview of recent changes to the Act intended to improve FGC practice in Aotearoa.

Changes to Family Group Conferencing

The literature on child protection in Aotearoa shows that the decade following the introduction of the new CYP&F Act saw our child protection system increasingly influenced by managerialism and international trends/developments in welfare reforms and social work (Doolan, 2004). This nurtured a culture of risk adverse social work practice which eroded the intention of the CYP&F Act 1989. Aotearoa transitioned from a position of family support to one of forensic child protection and this created a misalignment between New Zealand's legislative principles and practice realities (Doolan, 2004, & Connolly, 2006). Conscious of

the negative impact this shift was having on practice with families and communities changes to CYP&F Act 1989 were sought to return practice to a former position of being family centred and preventive (Waldegrave & Coy, 2005).

In early 2007 the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) released 'Safeguarding our Children: Updating the Children, Young Persons, and their Families Act 1989,' a discussion document that worked towards updating the Act (MSD, 2007). MSD received ninety-five submissions from service providers, government agencies, Crown entities, legal organisations, professional bodies, child/youth advocates, individuals, employees of the Ministry of Social Development and academics (MSD, 2007). As a result the 'Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Amendment Bill' [No.6] was introduced into Parliament in late 2007 to better effect the Act's objectives and principles, enable and/or direct best practice and strengthen the effectiveness of the FGC process (New Zealand Parliamentary Library, 2008; & NZCCSS, 2010).

This activity proved timely as in 2007 the United Nations General assembly adopted the 'Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples' (UNDRIP). This forms part of the international human rights framework bringing together the various existing provisions of binding human rights treaties as minimum standards. UNDRIP provides important guidance on how universal human rights, including the rights of children, have been applied to the specific experiences of indigenous peoples (Human Rights Commission [HRC], 2012:b). According to the MSD (2007) website, changes to the CYP&F Act 1989 would also reflect Aotearoa's acceptance of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC), the Victims Rights and Sentencing Acts (2002) and the Care of Children Act (2004) (MSD, 2007). Following this logic it should equally reflect acceptance of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

According to the New Zealand Parliamentary Library (2008) website, proposed legislation changes to update the Act would be selectively implemented over time and would do a number of things;

- Change the definition of young people to include 17 year olds;
- Provide more options to deal with youth offending;
- Improve FGC processes;

- Enable CYF to refer families to approved community organisations for child and family assessments (also known as the Differential Response Model) (NZ Parliamentary Library, 2008).

Most of these changes relate to improving the youth justice system however they also impact on care and protection FGC practice and outcomes for whānau, particularly where there is a crossover of both youth justice and care and protection concerns for children and young people. These changes are intended to directly address the deficiencies that families have been identifying over the years regarding the eroding FGC process (Waldegrave & Coy, 2005). For example, improvements to FGC processes include; who must be consulted on, date, time and venue, who will attend and what the procedure will be before the conference takes place (particularly the child or young person concerned and family). All relevant information must be made available to the FGC by the coordinator. A child or young person must be given all opportunities to express views on matters affecting them and any views expressed (either directly or through a representative) must be taken into account (NZ Parliamentary Library, 2008).

Although CYF will evaluate legislation changes to FGC the literature is not clear on what methods will be used to measure their effectiveness. Waldegrave & Coy (2005) discuss the measures of success CYF developed for the recent Differential Response Model as a decrease in the number of CYF investigations and an increase in the number of child and family assessments carried out by community groups. It is reasonable to expect that measures of success for FGC change implementation will be similar, such as a decrease in the number of care and protection FGCs and increase in the number of family/whānau agreements (MSD, 2010)⁷.

However if the current literature on FGC made available through CYF is anything to go by, it is unlikely that their measures of success will include a Māori centred perspective on how changes are directly impacting on whānau (MSD, 2010 & 2011). We need to know from frontline Māori practitioners whether these changes are making a difference for whānau. This same sense of caution about the evaluation of a new initiative was also recently present for Whānau Ora (Pihama, 2011).

⁷ Both FGCs and family/whānau agreements are used for families where there are high levels of risk. Both are used later in the statutory process following either an investigation or child and family assessment (Waldegrave & Coy, 2005).

Whānau Ora

Whānau Ora is the most recent cross-agency initiative, introduced by government to address the over-representation of Māori in Aotearoa socio-economic and other statistics. As with Pūao-te-Ata-Tū, Māori and Iwi social service providers are looking to Whānau Ora as a potential pathway to the actualisation of Tino-Rangatiratanga aspirations such as the revitalisation of whānau, in the same way that Kohanga Reo did for te reo (HRC, 2012).

Informed by the 2010 report of the 'Taskforce on Whānau Centred Initiatives' Whānau Ora asks government agencies to commit to a new way of working with whānau that includes working with other agencies and an outcomes focus. The premise of Whānau Ora is to overcome structural barriers by tying social services together so that they can be accessed more easily for whānau in need, while at the same time supporting whānau to provide for their own development (Te Puni Kokiri, 2012). The Governance Board of Whānau Ora consists of government agency chief executives and community leaders, allowing for an efficient flow of ideas. The success of Whānau Ora will also be dependent on government agency leadership being and remaining engaged with community leadership (thus ensuring kawanatanga).

Although the practice of whānau ora has been around in Māori social services historically, the government policy initiative of Whānau Ora is still relatively new so assessment of its success is perhaps premature. Nonetheless this research was interested in Māori practitioners' views about the potential and experiences of Whānau Ora in care and protection. In terms of its evaluation Whānau Ora is being likened to Pūao-te-Ata-Tū by some commentators. They believe that the 'light of the dawn' (its voice) will diminish over time and never actually reach whānau, hapū and iwi. This is evidenced by the announcement by the Prime Minister in 2010 that Whānau Ora is for 'all New Zealanders.' As discussed earlier, evaluation of an initiative is essential in terms of developing meaningful practice with whānau. An example of this waning faith in the potential of Whānau Ora expressed by Pihama (2011) at a Kaupapa Māori research conference; she stated:

Last year we had Whānau Ora come to the table. When it comes, it's a limited, constrained version... There is also some discussion around an evaluation or research component... and then the tender comes out and it's action research... We had this great opportunity for Kaupapa Māori research to really work alongside the practice of these

interventions and the ministry (TPK) tendered for action research...If participatory action research models worked for us, we would not have had to develop Kaupapa Māori research methodologies (Pihama, 2011: 52).

Pihama (2011) claims that if we cannot get the evaluation of Māori initiatives right then the initiatives will never be right for Māori.

At this stage of reviewing the available literature it is useful to refer to the recent Human Rights Commission's (2012) 'Inquiry into the Determinants of Wellbeing for Māori Children.' The report recommends ensuring that legislation reflects Aotearoa's obligations under UNCROC, CRPD and UNDRIP through necessary changes to the CYP&F Act. It also suggests the development of a Children's Act that legislates for a Children's Action Plan that has specific targets for improving outcomes for Māori children. This includes identifying and addressing data needs required to monitor progress for Māori children and independent evaluation to ensure that welfare reforms do not adversely affect the wellbeing of Māori children and their whānau.

If future changes to the legislation recognise UNCROC and UNDRIP it would be reasonable to expect that any evaluation by CYF would include reference to article 30 under UNCROC: "An indigenous child shall not be denied the right to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion or to use his or her own language" (HRC, 2012b). According to HRC, (2012b: 5) this refers to the "empowerment of indigenous children and the effective exercise of their rights to culture, religion and language provide an essential foundation of a culturally diverse State in harmony and compliance with its human rights obligations." The HRC recommendations appear to have had a very positive impact upon CYF given the chosen four focus areas for CYF in the 2012 year, as discussed next.

Addressing the Challenges

For 2012 the CYF Executive Committee agreed on four focus areas that directly aligned with the implementation of legislation changes updating the Act (Child Youth & Family [CYF], 2012). The four focus areas were: (1) quality social work practice (2) children's participation (3) connecting communities and (4) responsiveness to Māori. An example of one of the focus

areas appeared in an article by Sturmfels & Manion (2012) in *Social Work Now* on CYF ‘giving children a voice strategy’. This article referred to work being carried out by coordinators and social workers using new ways to ensure children and young people’s voices are heard and their participation improved in their FGC.

In contrast the article makes no mention of how Māori children’s participation in FGC will be encouraged/enabled to meet the specific cultural needs of a tamaiti or rangatahi, such as whānaungatanga, whakapapa and tikanga. This is despite focus area (4) responsiveness to Māori, and Māori occupying half of CYFs client statistics (MSD, 2010 & 2011). Perhaps they believe the final sentence in the article where it refers to ‘working with the CYF Māori Leadership Group to ensure that the four focus areas are culturally appropriate’ makes the above acceptable.

Another article by Manion and Nixon (2012) on children’s participation in FGC suggests that children are the best experts on themselves, deserve to be treated with respect and be involved as partners with adults throughout the care and protection process. The conclusion of this article spotlights ‘the Moa in the room’ (an indigenous version of the elephant in the room, where the obvious is overlooked):

Ultimately we are looking for behaviour change, where adults start to see children as partners, change makers and future leaders. Children are experts on childhood and the effect of the services they receive. Their unique perspective places them in a valuable position to provide feedback and engage in decision-making and design. Wouldn't it be great if in future children and young people were able to be fully involved in consultation, advocacy, programme design and delivery, staff recruitment and evaluative feedback in a way that was respectful, timely, meaningful, consistent, reciprocal, and integrated into general approaches (Manion & Nixon, 2012:30).

Whānau Māori are viewed as not being capable of the responsibility that goes with their rights, which as a valid argument is then confirmed when their rights are denied, thus ensuring that whānau Māori are never given the opportunity to take responsibility (Atwool, 2006). If CYF leadership (includes the CYF Māori Leadership Group) cannot see the ‘Moa in the room’ in this strategy then they are blind to their organisational discrimination towards Māori who already face socio-economic disadvantage and political isolation. This ‘Moa in the room’ impacts on everyone because structural discrimination is a system of apportioning and

nurturing social privilege (HRC, 2012).

Whilst the above strategy is long overdue for all children involved with care and protection what has been overlooked is that whānau, hapū iwi and urban Māori have been asking for this partnership with the state from before Pūao-te-Ata-Tū.

Summary

The challenges Māori practitioners in care and protection face include constant organisational, policy and practice changes that obstruct the development of Māori specific programmes and practices, being invisible and/or isolated inside organisations and lack of Kaupapa Māori supervision, leadership and cultural support. They also face a lack of Māori practitioners across all social services resulting in competition, high turnover, knowledge loss, work overload and burnout. Other challenges include not being consulted on or involved in proposed policy and legislation changes and how it might impact upon them as Māori workers as well as implications around professional registration.

International researchers have gainfully advanced FGC practice overseas however negligible attention has been paid to researching its effectiveness at home (Connolly, 2004; & Doolan 2006). Many proponents of FGC assert it is a model of family empowerment although this is inaccurate when applied to Māori (Rimene, 1994; Love 2002; Hollis, 2006; & Tauri 1999, 2004 & 2010). Whilst the actual model works well, it is the administration of the FGC process as it continues to be practised in Aotearoa that fails it (Tauri, 2010). Specifically, the issues for whānau around FGC largely stem from insufficient resourcing, lack of culturally competent practice and self-determination for Māori.

Whilst there is a multitude of literature available on the benefits of FGC for families both at home and internationally, there is no recent research that engages directly with whānau about their experiences of FGC. There are reasonable examples of non-Māori research available that consider Māori experiences and issues around FGC and also poor examples that exclude Māori altogether. The 'one size fits all' assumption about the FGC model as identified by Libesman (2004) and Tauri (2010) is pro-active monoculturalism and does not work. Given this situation, undertaking this research with Māori practitioners is an exploratory first step.

Authors writing about care and protection in Aotearoa generalise Māori into the greater mainstream rendering them inaudible and denying Māori validation of their own diverse and unique realities. It ‘appears’ according to CYFs four focus areas for the 2012-year, that they are looking to improve the way in which they work with whānau Māori. However, for whānau Māori the proof (yet again) will not be in the pudding per se but in the eating of it.

Chapter Four

METHODOLOGY

“Research is the gathering of knowledge...more usually, not for its own sake, but for its use within a variety of different applications. It is about control, resource allocation, information and equity. It’s about power” (Te Awekotuku, 1991:13).

This chapter discusses the theory and the research design chosen to explore and respond to the research question. The connection between the methodology and the research methods used is explained and the methods used to undertake the research are detailed. The chapter concludes with a brief reflection of this process.

As previously noted (see Chapters One and Three), in 2007 changes to the Act were introduced to directly address the deficiencies that families have been identifying over the years regarding the eroding FGC process (Waldegrave & Coy, 2005; NZ Parliamentary Library, 2007; & ANZASW, 2008). This research explored the challenges Māori practitioners experienced in the care and protection system. These challenges included their views of how they and whānau were being impacted by recent legislation changes to FGC and newer policies such as Whānau Ora. The central research question was:

What challenges do Māori social workers face in care and protection and how are they and whānau Māori being impacted by recent changes to family group conferencing and newer policies such as Whānau Ora?

Kaupapa Māori Epistemology

Kaupapa Māori epistemology is a ‘home grown’ form of critical theory that focuses on emancipation (Smith, 1999). It refers to a framework or methodology for thinking about and undertaking research by Māori, with Māori, for the benefit of Māori (Bishop, 1998, Smith 1999). Kaupapa Māori epistemology is a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know and it affirms the right of Māori to be Māori (Pihama, Cram, & Walker, 2002).

Bishop (1999) asserts that Kaupapa Māori epistemology challenges the power position in

terms of research issues and the dominance of traditional Western research. It challenges the inherent right that individual researchers (white, academic and outsider) have to knowledge and truth. Furthermore, this ‘scientific’ ‘objective’ and ‘value free’ research fails to address the power imbalances between researchers and the researched. It also does not consider who owns or benefits from the research (Bishop, 1998). Smith (1999:183) agrees and asserts “*Western research has continued to privilege Western ways of knowing, while denying the validity for Māori of Māori knowledge, language and culture.*” The ‘positivist’ observation of indigenous people as seen through a non-indigenous cultural lens has become encrypted as ‘truth’ into the colonisers’ history books (Jackson, 1992, & Smith, 1999). This is despite the Treaty of Waitangi of 1840 guaranteeing nga Iwi o Aotearoa rights of participation, partnership and protection (Orange, 1990). The perpetual misrepresentation of Māori keeps them marginalised and reinforces the colonial culture as ‘superior’ and ‘expert’ (Bishop, 1998; Walker, 1990; Durie, 1996, & Chilisa, 2011).

Bishop (1998), Smith (1999) and Pihama (2001) contend that Kaupapa Māori is more than an epistemology; it embraces traditional beliefs and ethics while utilising contemporary research tools that upholds Tino-Rangatiratanga. Tino-Rangatiratanga and exclusive Māori research autonomy are the basis for Kaupapa Māori research. As Smith (1999) asserts, it is about thinking critically including developing a critique of Pākehā constructions and definitions of Māori and affirming the importance of Māori self-definitions and self-valuations. Other proponents (Irwin, 1990; Te Awekotuku, 1991; Irwin, 1992; & Cram et al, 2004) maintain that Kaupapa Māori research is an attempt to reclaim space for Māori voices and perspectives, where Māori realities are validated. Kaupapa Māori research influenced this project in terms of the researchers’ theoretical approach, having a critical angle and being by Māori for Māori (Smith, 1999; Pihama, 2001).

Discussion particular to Kaupapa Māori epistemology has been to a greater extent situated within academic discourse (see Smith, G., 1997, Durie, 1998 & 2003; Smith, L., 1999 & 2005; Pihama, 2001; & Bishop, 2005). More recently though academics have been talking about a shift away from Kaupapa Māori being a critical theory (always focusing on the West and the oppressor) and shifting towards being more of a constructivist theory. This means Kaupapa Māori being about Māori researchers having complete autonomy without needing to conform to ‘Western’ expectations but instead being able to develop and enhance practices as they see fit (Hollis-English, 2012). Pihama (2001) talks about the emancipatory intent of

Kaupapa Māori theory being viewed as a decolonisation process. It is not only about theorising for the reconstruction of a Māori world, it is directly related to the practical development of sustainable interventions for whānau Māori. It is important to consistently re-assert Kaupapa Māori as being part of the context of Māori communities that consider Māori understandings as the heart of the process of research and analysis (Pihama, 2001; Smith, 2005).

Kaupapa Māori has influenced this entire research project from the formation of the topic to the analysis, and the giving back to the Māori social work participants and the community. Eketone (2008) talks about the importance of Māori understanding and knowledge building not being located solely within Māori academia. Māori knowledge building should also come from those voices within all communities where the way of living is 'intrinsic' and 'everyday.' It acknowledges the diverse nature of contemporary Māori society as well complementing the existing voices from Māori academia (Eketone, 2008).

Māori centred Research

There is considerable debate that occurs about how research can best meet the needs of Māori. Durie (1993) talks about how Māori centred theory developed out of a philosophical view, that the development of Māori knowledge must consider current Māori world views and acknowledge the diverse nature of contemporary Māori society. Thus, on an individual level a novice researcher must at least be able to know their past in order to understand what forces shape their present life situation, in order to acknowledge others (Jackson, 1988).

Cunningham (1998) asserts that a Māori centred approach involves Māori in all levels of the research. It includes Māori data collection and a Māori analysis applied resulting in the provision of Māori knowledge. It also acknowledges that Māori knowledge is often owned and held by non-Māori (i.e. a non-Māori academic institution such as with this thesis). A Māori centred approach employs both Māori and non-Māori methods and contemporary research and analytical tools (Cunningham, 1998) such as interpretative phenomenological analysis (Chilisa, 2011). Other Māori researchers who have described useful models of collaborative research between Māori and non-Māori have also supported this approach (see Smith, 1992; M. Durie, 1993 & 1996; Cram, 1997; & Durie, 2001). The issue here is the need

for Māori to have increased control over their own lives. This is important given the focus of this research, which is to present the stories of Māori social workers in ways that honour their realities and validate their experiences.

Cunningham (1998) further describes a Māori centred approach as a valid form of critical theory that asserts Māori philosophy and world view and also recognises and accepts a level of Western approaches to research. Māori centred research is essentially a Kaupapa Māori approach; however the degree of control varies between the two approaches. For example, Māori centred approaches are often limited by dual accountabilities to both Māori and mainstream expectations (Cunningham, 1998).

Cram (1997) reminds us that positive research with Māori needs to be collaborative, empowering and reflexive. For example, Walker (2003) describes the principle of tuakana and teina and as such considers himself a teina to the participants. In this sense Walker (2003) becomes the learner/receiver and the participants the teachers who are gifting their stories, without which the research would not be research (Hollis, 2006). The position adopted in this study is teina to the participants and aligns with Kaupapa Māori research. It is a position that is privileged and subjective and one that the researcher has endeavoured to remain in throughout the research journey (Walker, 2003; Smith, 2006). There is no assumption on the part of the researcher that experience is all that is required to complete this project. Who the researcher is and what is brought to the project in terms of experience and skills add value to it. This expression maintains the validity and legitimacy of Māori knowledge and culture (Smith, 2000). The researcher agrees with Smith (1999) that her approach to research as an 'insider' must be ethical, respectful, reflexive, critical and grounded in humility. In terms of dual accountabilities and expectations, the researcher accepts that as well as being accountable to Massey University and ANZASW she is foremost accountable to her own whānau hapū and iwi and community in which she works and lives (Love, 2002).

Qualitative Methodology

Nash, Munford and O'Donoghue (2005) assert that qualitative methodology acknowledges that reality is socially constructed and thus subjective experiences are valued. Furthermore, they describe qualitative methodology as being multi-method focused, an approach that

studies things in their natural settings attempting to make sense of it and the meaning that people bring to them. Also acknowledged are the multiple realities of people that exist in any given situation. Robinson (1998:409) asserts: “*Qualitative techniques are essentially descriptions of people’s representations and constructions of what is occurring in their world*”. O’Leary (2011) states that qualitative research is one where the researcher can be involved rather than distant and independent, enabling the researcher to build rapport and get to know the participants.

Patton (2002) talks about how feelings, thoughts and intentions cannot be observed, as a result it may be difficult to grasp how people understand the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in it. Furthermore Patton (2002:161) states, “...*the purpose of interviewing is to access the perspective of the person being interviewed*”. Interviews enable a process of ‘talking back’ which creates the space for the legitimate exchange of views enabling the marginal and silenced voice to be heard. This fits well with Kaupapa Māori theory in terms of retrieval of space and the emancipatory purpose of Māori centred research (Cunningham 1998; Smith, 1999).

One-on-one, semi-structured, open and in-depth interviews were appropriate and effective qualitative methods through which it was possible to make visible the voices of the seven participants. The researcher aimed to discover the participants’ own framework of meanings based upon their professional and life experience. O’Leary (2011) talks about the research approach being an open and evolving one where issues and themes are captured and built upon. The advantages of utilising this method was that it gave the participants a level of autonomy where explanations of terms could be provided, clarification sought and the participants could explain their views as much or as little as they liked.

Research Design

A Māori centred approach, drawing from Kaupapa Māori theory and principles and using qualitative methods is an appropriate research design for the topic. The strategy of ‘researching back’ was also used to locate colonising aspects in the theoretical and historical literature. In terms of being accountable to one’s own people, community and social work profession, this has been a challenge in itself. Speaking out too strongly about the flaws in the

system is a double-edged sword and can be tantamount to professional and/or occupational suicide. This risk has been carefully considered and weighed against a lifetime of not speaking up about those issues the researcher is most impassioned by. There is no choice.

This project and its design provides a perfect opportunity to showcase the strengths of as well as the limitations of meeting the expectations of two often-opposing world views; the combination of Māori research methods and Pākehā (Massey/Qualitative) methods & requirements. The approach draws from Kaupapa Māori principles and these were foremost carefully considered by the researcher.

Principles and Ethics

Ethical principles outlined below and promoted by Mead (1996:221) in guiding Kaupapa Māori research have been identified by numerous Māori researchers (see Te Awekotuku 1991, Durie, 1994; Bishop, 1996; Ruwhiu, 1999; Cram, 2001; Bishop, 2005; & Mihaere, 2007). To demonstrate an understanding of and a commitment to these principles the researcher provided a personal interpretation of them and how they actively guided her research journey.

Aroha ki te tangata (Respect for the people you are working with): People are as diverse as the social constructs that that make up their individual and collective world views. This principle requires the researcher to be consciously aware of this reality and regardless of what participants bring to the research process (strengths and vulnerabilities) respect for them is actively demonstrated. In this sense the researcher was constantly mindful of the consequences for participants if their private information was not kept confidential and secure (Te Awekotuku, 1991). Participants were carefully made aware of the research process and of how their private information would be kept secure.

Kanohi kitea (The seen face): This principle refers to meeting face to face with participants; the researcher sees them and they see the researcher (no walls or masks). Gaining trust as a researcher is strengthened through *kanohi ki te kanohi*. Intention and heart is revealed here; body language and other unseen, unconscious processes of engagement are in play. Although not as authentic, there are elements of this principle present when using contemporary technology such as Skype. Although Skype was not used as a primary interview technique for

this project, it proved very useful for clarifying narratives and keeping some participants updated on the progress of the study.

Titiro whakarongo kōrero (Look and listen first: Speak later): This principle refers to the art of patience, humility and keen observation. The researcher is a learner in a privileged situation; looking till one sees and listening until one hears, so that nothing is missed. This includes not overlooking the quieter or silent participants. This principle is about the researcher being open to all that is being offered until it becomes his/her turn to respond. In a sense this principle is about the art of capturing truth, which the researcher felt she was successful in doing.

Manaaki ki tangata (Be generous in sharing with and hosting people): This refers to manaakitanga, the comfort and wellbeing of participants (i.e. they may prefer to be based in their own home when being interviewed). It also refers to the co-construction of the research journey and being accountable to the participants and their information (Smith, 1999). Be generous in sharing with and involving participants in the research process (as allowed or as consented to). This includes being creative with participants in the ways in which their stories are best captured (i.e. return their transcripts to them to ensure accurate reporting of their kōrero). Hosting also refers to the symbiotic relationship between the manuhiri/leaders out front and the workers behind the scenes making the event possible, without one another the event will fail. In terms of this study kai was an important part of the interview process, which the researcher provided in many of the interviews.

Kaua e takahia te mana o te tangata (Take care not to trample on the mana of people): Creating an agreed way of working together (contract and consent) is a good means of being clear about where the research journey is going, how to get there and knowing whether the destination has been reached. 'How' is key to this principle and refers to participants being fully informed of and involved throughout the process and also being clear about issues of ownership and control of the research. This principle is about the researcher not only being mindful of it, but actively responsible and ethical because of the lasting impact that research can have on individuals and communities (Bell, 2003).

Kia tūpato (Be cautious): This principle refers to the greatest care being taken to protect participants through confidentiality and anonymity, and about the care taken in accessing participants. It is equally about the safety of the researcher and the need to follow all legal, moral and ethical obligations of the research process (i.e. Kaupapa Māori principles,

ANZASW codes of practice and Massey University ethics committee requirements). It also means to be mindful that if the researcher is Māori, or the topic and/or participants are Māori this does not necessarily mean Kaupapa Māori research is being conducted or engaged in. This includes the researcher being reflective about their insider/outsider status (Smith, 2005).

Kaua e māhaki (Do not flaunt your knowledge): This principle asks the researcher to be consciously aware of the dynamics of power, politics and ethics and the impact that this has on research without grandstanding. It asks the researcher to acknowledge the co-construction of and collective ownership of the research journey. This principle also acknowledges individual diversity, allowing people to learn and express their learning in their own space and time. Finally this principle asks the researcher to continually reflect upon the question “*On whose back am I promoting my expertise?*” (Smith, 2005). This question helped the researcher stay on task and be mindful of authors who promote their expertise at the expense of silencing the marginalised.

The Principle of Te Tiriti o Waitangi: Pihama (2001) identified another principle to be taken into account; Te Tiriti o Waitangi (1840) is a crucial document that defines the relationship between Māori and the Crown in Aotearoa. It affirms both the tangata whenua status of whānau, hapū and iwi in Aotearoa and their rights of citizenship. Te Tiriti therefore provides a basis through which Māori may critically analyse relationships, challenge the status quo and affirm the rights of Māori, including research that contribute to the goals of Tino-Rangatiratanga.

Insider Status

Smith (2006:7) points out methodological risks inherent in ‘insider’ research as; “...*the potential for bias, lack of distance and lack of objectivity and...to mistake the research role with an advocacy role.*” However, according to Tauri, (2010) this is authoritarianism and reflects the exclusionary practices that have been used by mainstream researchers to silence indigenous research. Kiro (2000) suggests that it ‘takes one to know one’ and Māori research is based on the principle that only an insider can understand the variances of the social phenomenon affecting the participants in the research. This is not to say that non-Māori do not have a role to play in researching indigenous groups. This thesis attempts to contribute to

the goals of Tino-Rangatiratanga by providing a Māori centred view of standard research practices which have so far been ineffective for whānau subject to care and protection involvement (Love, 2002; Tauri, 2010; & Pihama, 2011). As such, it is important that a researcher clearly voices their involvement as an ‘insider’ to research (Smith, 2000).

The researcher is not detached from the topic of this investigation because she is Ngāti Porou, a member of ANZASW and an independent social work practice consultant. Her viewpoint and position is informed by a background as a long serving social worker in both statutory and community settings who actively supports Māori advancement (Smith, 1999). She worked in CYF for a number of years as a social worker and later as an FGC coordinator experiencing the FGC from a variety of positions. This also led to her involvement in developing the model for a number of years in the UK as a decision-making tool for vulnerable adults at risk of going into institutional care. It is this insider knowledge that contributes to the rapport established between the participants and the researcher and allows participants to talk freely about their experiences. Equally, these experiences contribute to the researcher’s role as an ‘outsider’ in the sense that she is currently an independent practitioner operating outside of care and protection social work.

Consultation

Smith (2005) states that consultation ensures that there has been a constructive critique of the proposed topic and its potential impact upon Māori. It also gives the community an opportunity to consider the track record of the researcher and their potential to carry out the research. With this in mind, consultation about this topic occurred with wāhine Māori kaimahi involved in Māori Women’s Refuge. It was whilst working with Māori Women’s Refuge that the idea for this research presented itself. Wāhine Māori seemingly coped with having to keep themselves and their tamariki safe from violent partners, yet that same resilience was not as evident when trying to navigate through difficult CYF processes over long periods, particularly the FGC.

The second stage of consultation occurred with academic tutors and supervisors who were interested and knowledgeable on this topic area. Following this was the development of the research proposal and application for ethical approval to the Massey University Human Ethics

Committee. The development of the proposal and the application proved a very daunting task and was only achievable with the tautoko of Te Rau Puawai (Māori student funding and support programme) and the projects two supervisors, one Māori and one tauwiwi.

The third stage of consultation involved the researcher who is a member of ANZASW presenting the research proposal to indigenous groups within ANZASW. This process was to get their blessing and tautoko for the research including access to potential participants. This was given and with the consultation process complete recruitment of participants followed.

Access and Recruitment

Access to and recruitment of participants through ANZASW was an important step. Participants were interviewed as Māori practitioners who are members of a professional body rather than as employees of any particular agency. This path was chosen as it kept the research away from agencies, meaning agency permission for the research did not have to be sought. It also enabled participants to be free to opt into the research and to give their consent freely from any agency obligations. Members who were interested in learning more about the study as potential participants or who had someone in mind as a participant, contacted the researcher and were provided with an information sheet and contact details. This is a snowballing technique described by O’Leary (2011). Once the researcher made contact with potential participants an individual hui was arranged with each of the them in their own time and choice of meeting place (see Appendix 3 – Information Sheet).

Participants and Interviews

The participants were social workers that were Māori members of the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW), practising in the care and protection sector in the lower North Island region. The participants had between five and thirty years experience in care and protection and were diverse in terms of iwi affiliations, age and gender. They each had sound FGC experience through variety of roles, including being a part of the inception of FGC, coordinators, referring social workers, cultural advisors, whānau support and/or whānau members. In terms of work place settings they were an even spread of being based in either

CYF or in health or community organisations. Drawing from their life and professional experience the participants openly and willingly got involved in the research.

The interviews were varied in length from one hour to one and half hours. They were individual, informal and semi-structured with open-ended questions presented as prompts. All interviews were conducted face to face, were audio-recorded and later transcribed, with transcripts returned to participants for checking and approval for use. Kaupapa Māori research methods were used such as koha, kai, mihi/karakia, use of te reo in conversation and a follow up hui to give back research to participants (presentation). As the interview space is where meaning is co-constructed by both the participants and the interviewer this approach was interactive and participatory. It allowed flexibility for participants to feel free to express themselves (how and what they think and feel is most significant and appropriate) whilst still allowing for the interview to remain focused on the topic area (Munford, 2003 & Chilisa, 2011).

All of the interviews were conducted during June and July 2012 as per the timeframe planning agreed with supervisors. It was important that planning around timing allowed for a copy of the transcript to be returned to each participant to check for accuracy and confirm that they were comfortable for their comments to be used, to be able to make suggestions, alterations and ultimately gain their consent for use (O’Leary, 2011 & Chilisa, 2011). Hutching (2004) asserts this is an integral part of the interview process because it gives the narrator autonomy and an opportunity to correct mistakes and reconsider their narrative after seeing their words typed. Each interview transcribed included participant’s words, the ‘ums’ and ‘ughs’, laughter and pauses because ‘how’ dialogue occurs may be important too (O’Leary 2011). This is explained under the ‘Tool & Tips’ and ‘Analysis’ sections.

Tools and Tips

The interviews were conducted kanohi ki te kanohi (face to face), recorded and later transcribed. As funding was limited, SKYPE was offered as a secondary and cost effective means of interviewing participants. Although SKYPE was not used for the actual interviews it proved to be a useful tool for follow up contact with some participants for example, when clarifying transcripts, answering questions and keeping them informed about the progression

of the research.

Two pieces of essential audio equipment were used; an electronic recording device and a Smartphone with an audio recording application downloaded from the Internet. Both devices were used in case one failed and were placed on other side of the participant during the interview (with their consent). The use of two devices was at the suggestion of the project supervisors and proved very sound advice because in at least two interviews the recording was either interrupted by outside sounds or one device malfunctioned.

Another form of capturing data was keeping notes as the interview proceeds if this is acceptable to the participants. Patton (2002) says feelings, thoughts and intentions cannot be observed and as a result it may be difficult to grasp how people understand the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on. However, there are ways in which Māori communicate and silences in which the intangible happens. Metge (1978:21) states, “*Culture is a system of shared understandings of what words and actions mean*”. When Māori are gathered there is more expression happening in the room than just merely spoken words (i.e. silence does not mean assent) (Metge, 1978). To this end the researcher found that a ‘journey journal’ was invaluable inside the interview, and later when noting observations, motivations and experiences with participants while listening to taped interviews, typing transcripts, and reflection. This can also assist with ones awareness of self and relationship with the research journey.

A research project or any project is enhanced if the researcher is self-aware (Jackson, 1998; Durie, 2003) for example, knowing ones learning style in order to optimise planning and moving through the stages of the research. As a visual/kinaesthetic learner the researcher utilised a number of avenues to stimulate, visualise and organise ideas. Bishop (2005:31) developed a diagram that shows the role of the researcher in the research project and poses some critical questions on how the researcher approaches the research. This was an effective tool used in the shaping of this research. Additionally, mind-mapping and its flowing nature allowed for free association of ideas, and was an ideal way to capture a wide range of perspectives around a central theme or issue, without first needing to prioritise them, or justify their relationship to any other sub-themes (Buzan, 1991).

Before getting to interview stage it was worth being well prepared through piloting the questions/discussion topics and testing the equipment via a dummy participant and pilot

interview. Piloting helped ensure that questions elicited the sort of data required and that the order of questions was likely to facilitate a progression that was comfortable and worked for both the interviewee and interviewer (Barbour, 2008).

Analysis

O’Leary (2011) argues,

“Good research should be seen as a thinking persons game. It is a creative and strategic process that involves constantly assessing, reassessing and making decisions about the best possible means, for obtaining trustworthy information, carrying out appropriate analysis and drawing credible conclusions” (O’Leary, 2011:257).

Being a visual/kinaesthetic learner the researcher chose to use O’Leary’s (2011:257) method of qualitative ‘interpretative phenomenological’ analysis. O’Leary states that the underlying logic of the process is very simple and requires the researcher to (1) *“organise their raw data; (2) enter and code that data; (3) search for meaning through thematic analysis; (4) interpret meaning; and (5) draw conclusions.”* This separates the interpretation of data from the presentation of it so as to avoid any distortion of the participants’ stories.

O’Leary states that at all times the researcher has to keep in mind the theory, methodological constraints and the research questions and aims. With this ‘bigger picture’ in mind the researcher co-opted this method into one that works collaboratively with a Māori centred approach, where participants have a thorough involvement in the process (Munford, 2003; Hollis, 2006 & Chilisa, 2011). In order to meet Kaupapa Māori principles outlined earlier, the researcher endeavoured to be reflexive throughout the research and consciously worked to uphold her ethical and professional responsibilities as a researcher. This included being aware of the dual accountabilities that exist towards the participants and community, as well as upholding the expectations/professional standards of the ANZASW.

The first step involved transcribing the interviews, which were undertaken by the researcher as it was seen as a thorough way to become familiar with the data, identify themes and begin the analytical process. The audio recordings were listened to and subsequent transcripts were read repeatedly, over several weeks. This resulted in the researcher knowing every silence and

change in tone, laughter, sarcasm and other telling characteristics of the interviews. It may have resulted in some frustration and feeling of monotony on the part of the researcher however, this was important to recognise because without this process a researcher can miss the intangible meanings.

Each interview transcript was then returned to the participants so that changes could be made and permission given again for its use. Once this had occurred the transcripts were sorted and coded. Rather than using Qualitative Data Analysis software (there are many available via the internet) the researcher opted to sort and code the data manually. For example, each transcript was printed out on paper (size 14 font so that it was easier to see) that was coloured according to something memorable about the participant (i.e. Ono was blue because that was her favourite colour, Whitu was red due to her passionate nature). Being familiar with colours helped identify participants during the sorting whilst keeping them confidential. The next stage involved manually cutting and pasting sections of transcripts onto boards representing a particular area of the research (i.e. FGC challenges). These were then subdivided into subthemes and colour-coded by way of colour markers and highlighters.

This was also where the importance of the journey journal and overarching notes taken became apparent. It was a case of data dissection, sorting, coding and data reconstruction. It involved the development of categories, findings, conclusions and integration of concepts connecting to the existing literature (O'Leary, 2011). The participants were contacted about the final stages and informed about when they would receive their own copy of the final document. Throughout this whole process the researcher kept in mind the Kaupapa Māori principle that the research is not about the researcher but about the participants and the greater cause ensured respect for the gift of their stories (Hollis-English, 2012).

Limitations

This research positioned Māori social workers as cultural and professional experts in their field to show how they utilised their values and beliefs in their practice according to their worldview, how they were raised and what they have experienced and learned throughout their lives (Walsh-Tapiata, 2003). Although this research was limited to seven participants the aim was to achieve a quality of personal, professional and cultural insight in the area being

explored that resonated with other Māori social workers in terms of the meaning and insights gleaned.

The location of the Māori analyst is important in Māori centred research and brings with it inherent biases (Cunningham, 1998; Smith 1999; Bell, 2003; & Hollis- English 2005 & 2012). With previous experience and personal knowledge on the topic the researcher endeavoured to make this fact transparent and aimed to incorporate strong reflective practices throughout the course of the study. The researcher acknowledges her bias in relation to this kaupapa and has given an account of her positioning. It is because of this positioning and the positioning of the participants that this study has transferability in regard to its meaning for other Māori social workers (O’Leary, 2011).

The small number of research participants mean this research is not exhaustive or representative of all Māori social workers. However, the sample was purposely kept small because Māori centred research assumes that knowledge is diverse, we do not seek a universal understanding. Using interpretative phenomenological analysis as a research method shows commitment to focusing specifically on individual experiences/accounts, its credibility is reliant on that of the participants and the research and the transferability of meaning it has for other social workers.

Summary

This chapter outlined the methodology and methods used in this research. The rationale for utilising a Māori centred approach whilst drawing from Kaupapa Māori theory and the use of qualitative tools to fit with the overall approach was explained. A Māori centred approach partnered with qualitative tools takes into consideration that reality is socially constructed. Employing open-ended questions reveals an understanding of rich diverse array of worldviews whilst allowing participants to freely express themselves. The results of this are revealed in the next chapter titled “Māori Social Workers Talk about Their Experiences.

Chapter Five

MĀORI SOCIAL WORKERS TALK ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES

“The stories of whānau are precious; they are the torch that cuts a pathway through the Pākehā fog. They talk of the past, of what is right and wrong, of where we come from; they light the way forward. Capture them so that they are not lost” (Crawford: As cited in Moyle, 1998).

The heart of this research is interviews with seven very experienced Māori social workers. This chapter discusses the themes that arose from those interviews, namely the challenges they experience in care and protection. These include their views of how they and whānau are being impacted by recent legislation changes to FGC and newer policies such as Whānau Ora.

Interview Themes

There were three conceptual categories that came out of the interviews. The first was *Challenges with Supporting Non-Māori Practitioners*, the second was *Challenges with Family Group Conferencing* and the third was *FGC Change and Whānau Ora*.

Challenges with Supporting Non-Māori Practitioners

This section presents the challenges that participants experienced in care and protection related to a lack of culturally competent social work practice with whānau. Participants described how they support their non-Māori colleagues to work more effectively with whānau, particularly through the various roles they take on to manage challenges faced in their work. Themes that participants identified were; *The In-betweens*, *Patch and Dispatch*, *State Centred FGC*, *A Child’s Whakapapa* and *Colonisation and Te Tiriti*.

The 'In-betweens'

Māori social workers take on various creative roles when working alongside their non-Māori colleagues to more effectively meet the needs of whānau. They do so not because it is in their job description but due to a lack of bicultural capability that exists in care and protection. Some of the additional roles participants described were cultural advisor, translator and teacher. Ono, a social worker of 20 plus years described this when she said:

You have to have a heart for the mahi, you don't have a choice about being the 'in-between' ...one shares their ability to walk in te ao Māori me te ao Pākehā.

What Ono described here is 'heart' for the role and 'tautoko' for her non-Māori colleagues who work from one world view. This ability means Ono has to navigate the distance between the two cultures, sharing her cultural and professional expertise without reservation to best meet the needs of whānau. This comes from being tangata whenua or mana whenua, from the notion of kaitiakitanga. Rua who has worked in CYF for 25 years also talked about having a heart for and a sense of obligation for this mahi:

I work alongside the new social workers, our Pākehā social workers sharing my experience with them and the tikanga that needs to be done.

This is an example of tuakana – teina in action, which again is a sense of obligation. This is also an example of bicultural social work in action which is not well recognised in mainstream social work.

The 'in-between' roles also appear for Māori social workers in health. Tahi stated that one of her greatest challenges in social work "...is having non-Māori understand where Māori are coming from." She explained this statement by describing three incidences in a typical workday for her. The first concerned a whānau who were aggrieved with non-Māori staff mispronouncing their whānau name. Tahi worked between the whānau and staff to come to an agreeable resolution.

I got them (staff) all to pronounce the name...they (the whānau) were happy then because at least they (staff) had attempted to try!

The second incident involved the same whānau and same staff group. The staff had given the

whānau a lot of information to read rather than talk it through with them. This caused more frustration for the whānau and an unwillingness to engage.

I got referred back up again and I listened to the staff and to the whānau...the whānau said “do they really expect us to read thirteen pages of information?” So I cut it down to two and the staff said “we’ll be happy with that”...in fact I cut it down to half a page.

The third incident was where a wahine Māori was referred for a psychiatric assessment because she talked to herself. Tahi found there was no need for an assessment as the wahine just needed tautoko and the non-Māori staff did not understand this. Tahi explained:

They (the staff) were saying that she talks to herself but she was talking to her tipuna...she was dying and she knew this...she was happy that the tipuna would come to be with her.

Bridging two world views demands additional energy from Māori practitioners. It is work that goes unrecognised and by the participants’ own admission, it takes a toll on them. Wha, who had 30 years experience in care and protection practice commented:

Well, we wear both hats...looking at the system and how Māori social workers balance and bridge it (world views). They have to work twice as hard to get the job done!

Rima talked about the toll it takes on Māori practitioners in CYF:

It’s hard, I have to humble myself...it’s quite shameful having to justify the processes to whānau and it is personal because I am the ministry (CYF).

What Rima is describing here is ‘dual accountability,’ unlike their non-Māori counterparts Māori practitioners face the double burden of professional and cultural expectations in organisations as well as from communities. The toll is a psychological one where she as an agent of the state is required foremost to carry out her duties under the Act, whilst at the same time witnessing the barriers that whānau face when subjected to care and protection processes. These processes often work against them rather than for them, particularly the case of the FGC (Rimene, 1994; Tauri, 1999; and Love 2002).

Wha also spoke about ‘tokenism’ and how many social workers are not aware of this as an

attitude and behaviour in themselves or the impact it has on their Māori colleagues. This could also be described as ignorance of te Ao Māori or personal racism that exists with many frontline practitioners and nurtured by a institutionally racist culture (HRC, 2012). The tautoko that Māori practitioners provide is often expected and equally taken for granted. Rima described this:

One has been the token Māori! I had colleagues come up to me and say, “Oh I’m working with this Māori whānau and the dad is gang affiliated, I think it might be appropriate that we have a Māori social worker” but I don’t go up to a tauīwi and say, “I’ve got this tauīwi whānau, can you visit with me...I think its more culturally appropriate than a brown person going.”

A further challenge described by participants and one that summons the ‘translator’ role for Māori practitioners is the use of jargon in care and protection processes. Rima describes this:

All the time, people (CYF staff) would round off numbers, sec 140 or sec 78 (sections of the CYP&F Act) and the whānau are sitting there going, “yeah and what does that mean, can you translate that please?” So there’s a lot of trying to be the ‘in-between’ person and gel everyone together.

This is not to say that Māori practitioners are not also prone to using CYF jargon. What was being described here was a sense of aroha not hōhā for both the whānau and non-Māori practitioners when struggling to understand each other.

Whilst all participants described various facets of the ‘in-between’ role as a practice reality only one shared her view on why she thought this was the case. Ono talked at length about the lack of cultural competency that exists in current social work practice and how this required Māori practitioners to work closely with non-Māori. She explained this as:

Not just ‘some’ cultural knowledge, I mean social workers have to be ‘bicultural.’ When you are dealing with whānau you have to have culturally competent workers on board who are not afraid of Māori and who know how to chase the whakapapa of a child. If not, then you have to have culturally competent supervisors. This is not currently the case in care and protection.

What Ono articulated was the need for social workers to possess more than just cultural

knowledge to be able to work effectively with whānau. They need to be able to work from both a Māori world view as well as their own, particularly when half of the families subject to the system are whānau Māori (MSD, 2010 & 2011). If social workers cannot work biculturally then supervisors must be qualified to do so.

Some of the participants spoke positively of the supervision provided through their organisations, while others thought it was insufficient. In many cases participants have to fund their own cultural or kaupapa Māori supervision. Almost all participants thought that cultural or Kaupapa Māori supervision was essential for all practitioners working with whānau. Its scarcity in the view of the participants was a contributing factor to the lack of cultural competence that currently exists in care and protection. All participants emphasised the need for more qualified and professionally registered Māori and/or bicultural capable practitioners and supervisors.

‘Patch and Dispatch’

The inability of social workers to work biculturally with whānau contributes to what participants described as ‘patch and dispatch’ practice. This means putting a patch on a whānau’s presenting problem/s (short-term) and sending them on their way. This occurred without assessing the deeper issues or root causes of the whānau coming to the notice of care and protection. If this were done it would inform the appropriate support/resources to effectively address a whānau’s (longer-term) needs. Although not a part of their job description, participants felt obliged to intervene and ask the question “*Does this case need to go to FGC? What else has been tried and what is the history with CYF?*” Most participants described varying degrees of doing this in their work with non-Māori practitioners. Rima in particular explained this:

Often I’d find more patch jobs happening as opposed to trying to get to the root. A lot of the job was re-challenging them (non-Māori) on why it is they took a certain approach and unpacking that on a cultural level, or offer up suggestions. There is no one looking at the roots, if you can find the roots then you can pull them out. The amount of whānau going through FGC is so high but does it need to go to FGC? For me it’s not actually my role, but at the same time I don’t want whānau to be jumping left and right when

there could be something else offered for them. A lot of whānau have had generational involvement with CYF and patch and dispatch is not helpful for them.

All participants understood the nature of care and protection work, where practitioners endure being under-resourced and over-worked however participants did not think that this was the key driver of ‘patch and dispatch’ practice. For Ono it was a case of “*one world view one size fits all.*” She talked about non-Māori, Western derived approaches and assessment tools that have been applied to whānau for years. These approaches are incapable of considering historical factors (i.e. colonisation and dispossession) and contemporary factors (i.e. systemic discrimination) as contributing to Māori over-representation in the system. Ono encapsulated this when she stated:

One of the challenges I continue to experience is the way non-Māori assess whānau. Statutory social workers have become desensitised from family-focused social work and now more risk-adverse operators and this contributes to Māori over-representation in the system. I was around when the ‘Risk Estimation System’ came and it was designed to assess potential risk not actual risk and therefore a justification for uplifting a child. Any imported child risk assessment tool cannot be applied to Māori because it’s incapable of assessing the historical root causes of risk for Māori children.

Another example of ‘patch and dispatch’ is where whānau were referred for FGC without a clearly established need for it. Rua described this issue:

You get pockets of social workers that do the right thing and go through the process, but it’s not usual. FGC should not be a forum to be used by social workers for their use, i.e. just because your 139 (an informal family agreement) is about to run out in five days is not a reason to have a FGC.

All participants shared various examples of the FGC being misused by social workers to forward their own agendas rather than the needs of the whānau. Ono who worked in CYF for seven years commented that:

I often saw FGC being used to forward social workers agenda or to have greater monitoring control over mainly Māori whānau. Social workers went to FGC with predetermined ideas about tamariki being unsafe and would go straight for

orders...these days I see that little has changed.

Balancing the needs of the child with the needs of the whānau is an on-going challenge in care and protection social work. Some participants talked about case examples where whānau were referred to a FGC for issues other than tamariki being in need of care and protection (i.e. poverty issues that lead to repeated health concerns). In these cases the common denominator was the focus on promoting the needs of the child in isolation from the whānau rather than within the whānau. The FGC focus is not on strengthening the needs of the whānau in order to provide a healthier living environment for all. Wha stated that:

At the end of the day it's about the care and protection concerns of the child but if the whānau need healing with other stuff...we need to question if the FGC is the right forum for it to be in. We talk about empowering the whānau yet CYF can be quite narrow in their approach focusing only on the kids and their needs.

According to participants a key challenge with care and protection FGCs was around balancing the needs of the tamaiti with the strengthening and maintenance of the whānau. Most participants thought the FGC would never achieve this balance as the focus was on the FGC being state centred rather than whānau centred.

State Centred FGC

Most participants thought that the FGC was more a state centred process and less about whānau decision-making or family empowerment. Rima reflected on this issue when she stated that:

Family group conferences have become watered down, it's a policy procedure and in the 'name of.'

Some participants talked about FGC outcomes being predetermined by the social worker (i.e. going for Court orders and uplifting the child). These were the cases where participants had described working with referrers and challenging the need for FGC, as well as exploring alternative and/or less formal options. Toru talked about many FGCs he'd attended where the power obviously sat with CYF. On this he said:

If it doesn't happen (agreement) then the power is with them (CYF) and they can close the process or you get a non-agreement.

Rima also commented:

It's more state centred...they (CYF) would prefer the whānau agreement according to what they (CYF) want and not what the whānau want. If the whānau doesn't come to an agreement then they (CYF) uplift the child anyway.

Some participants thought that as an informal intervention FGC should be happening for families much sooner, when issues first present. On this Rua stated:

We should be going to FGC sooner...by not going to FGC you avoid bringing family together and you just work with mum and dad and you can do that for six months to a year doing a family/whānau agreement and not get anywhere.

Toru agreed with this when talking about offending rangatahi:

We know that the ones who tend to come to our attention are just not coping with the schooling system. Their whaimatauranga in terms of their learning styles and ability to achieve needs to be recognised quite early.

Regardless of the FGC being about the needs of the child over the needs of the whānau or held sooner rather than later, most participants thought that as a process the FGC was more state centred than whānau centred. They also thought practice around the FGC did not value central Māori elements such as a child's whakapapa.

A Child's Whakapapa

According to most participants social workers were referring whānau for FGC without investigating a child's whakapapa. The implications of this disabled the potential for fuller whānau involvement in decision-making processes that were in the best interests of tamariki. Whakapapa was a crucial issue for participants and the challenge was that this work was being over-looked. Ono described this:

Whakapapa is fundamental to the wellbeing of tamariki but unfortunately the centrality of a Māori child within whānau is something that this system does not value. They (CYF) say they do, but their words are barren...to truly value this the worker and the system has to make a child's whakapapa centre stage.

Rua told the story of how a social worker came to her declaring that a tamaiti that was being referred for FGC had 'no whānau.' She responded:

There's no such thing as 'no whānau'...make your application for FGC but you have to have done your homework around that child's whakapapa. Basically, they do not know how chase the whakapapa of a child and they don't know how to engage with whānau, it's the 'too hard basket.'

Rua knew the whānau by the child's name and took the social worker to the meet with them and showed her how to implement whānaungatanga.

All participants talked about the failure to investigate a child's whakapapa as a more serious challenge when working with their non-Māori colleagues. With so few Māori practitioners in care and protection, if they are not doing the mahi then by default tamariki are being processed through the system without their whakapapa in tow. This makes tamariki vulnerable in ways that a monocultural system is unaware of. For example, if the whakapapa and wider whānau are unknown it renders the decision-making and placement of tamariki to the state or non-kin. The long-term risks of this for tamariki can be devastating and long lasting. The participants believe that no Māori child should be processed through a system without their whakapapa, nor the historical context and circumstances that has brought that child to notice.

Colonisation and Te Tiriti

All participants talked about the need for on-going Te Tiriti and de-colonisation training for all social workers. Toru commented on this:

It is an on-going process of decolonising our treaty partner that some of our whānau have been disenfranchised from their roots and natural supports...we are talking about

second and third and even fourth generations of being urbanised.

Rua also commented:

It makes sense that skilled social workers match the complex and layered dynamics and problems whānau experience today.

The participants acknowledged that social workers are disadvantaged by not having grounded knowledge of Te Tiriti and other the historical factors impacting current issues for whānau Māori. This is a policy, organisational and systemic challenge that needs to be addressed at all levels. Understanding how colonisation and systemic discrimination impact on whānau in the system is knowledge that is not being applied in current social work practice. This reality underpins many of the challenges that participants have conveyed in their support of non-Māori practitioners in care and protection social work.

Challenges with Family Group Conferencing

This section presents the challenges that participants experienced and what they reported whānau said they've experienced about family group conferencing (FGC). Areas that participants identified were; *FGC Origins and Potential, Under Resourcing, Coordinators and Constraints, Centrality of the Child, and What Whānau Say About FGC.*

FGC Origins and Potential

All participants spoke about the strengths and potential of the FGC model. However, most participants voiced how leaders and practitioners based within CYF did not appreciate the concept or the strengths of FGC. Ono best describes this position by her assertion that:

CYFs online 'Practice Centre' reflects its cultural ignorance for the entire world to see. The policy titled 'Working with Māori' lists three Māori models but there is nothing that explains how they are applied or how effective the practice is with whānau, nothing about how bicultural practice works. Half the systems clients are Māori and the 'Practice Centre' can't even explain how they work with them. There is a single

paragraph on Te Tiriti but no CYF commitment to it, or how it informs practice. The Practice Centre also has Pūao-te-Ata-Tū displayed as 'Our Vision,' which for Māori screams 'tokenism' and 'hypocrisy.' How can it be a vision for the future when it was never implemented in the past? (Emphasis added).

The potential for FGC as a decision-making forum for families is diminished if those who control the process see it as an overhead first and an intervention second. Whitu's view on this was:

Since FGC began...the statistics (for Māori) say that FGC is not working...if anything the stats have increased and unfortunately that's been at the hands of power hungry people that have not released that power.

Ono also commented:

The real strength of FGC is its 'potential' to be whānau centred...but as it's currently practised, it's an expense, a policy process that shunts whānau through the system.

The point that Whitu and Ono made here is more fully illustrated in the next section.

Under Resourcing & Predetermined Funding

Predetermined funding was one of the most disempowering elements of the FGC process voiced by participants witnessing the impact of the process on whānau. In terms of resourcing FGCs there were the coordinating costs (i.e. kai and venue and some travel for whānau to attend), which the coordinator was responsible for. There was also the resourcing of the FGC plan, which the social worker was responsible for. These two costs were applied for through a financial proposal to the CYF manager. Rua and Rima explained it as:

Funding wise the coordinator and the social worker are required to provide a financial proposal prior to each FGC. We're supposed to pre-empt what each plan will look like...the manager then approves the proposal or not.

The social worker is responsible for both the funding proposal and the referral to an FGC, it could be viewed that predetermined funding goes hand in hand with predetermined FGC

outcomes. Although other challenges associated with FGC are documented, this one is not. This seriously impedes the quality of the decision-making process for whānau and runs contrary to the philosophy of the FGC and principles of the CYP&F Act 1989. What was most surprising among the research findings was that according to the participants, predetermined funding of FGCs had been a common practice since the mid to late 1990s. Presented next are the participants' issues with the impact on whānau of predetermined funding controls and its limitations on the FGC process.

Predetermined funding for FGC plans clearly impacted upon whānau. Rima had worked in three CYF sites and explained that depending on the CYF office, typically there would be “*a set amount of about \$1500 for a FGC plan.*” This set budget may not account for other costs that arise during the FGC such as a CYF social worker insisting on periodic drug tests for parent/s suspected of drug use that led to behaviour that put a child at risk. Rima explained this:

In a case where drug use by the parents is alleged, a hair follicle test can be requested (drug test) by the FGC...it bumps the costs up to \$600 and more.

There are problems that arise with this practice. An example of this problem is if a hair follicle test costing \$600 upwards is ordered to evidence substance abuse by parents out of the \$1500 budget. This cost would mean that what is left over is all that is left to fund strength building rather than deficit confirming outcomes for whānau (i.e. substance abuse counselling). Anything outside of the set budget must be argued for with the manager. This could also occur during the holding of the FGC so that whānau could be told at the time of the FGC whether they were eligible for certain resources/programmes.

Under resourcing also seriously impedes tikanga as a central element of the FGC process for whānau. Kai is essential to the success of a whānau hui and according to participants this also applied to FGC. Rua talked about the importance of kai and of whakanoa when bringing two families together that may not get on. She said

When you bring kai to the table there's a neutrality that happens and the real kōrero happens amongst that. However, now we are down to about \$20 or \$30 per FGC.

Some participants thought FGCs were obstructed as a decision-making process for whānau

when coordinators were required to stay within a budget that provided for little choice around kai and venue.

Ten years ago FGC running costs were limited to the venue hire and two packets of biscuits...except back then we had chocolate biscuits and held the hui at the CYF office (Ono, laughing).

In many cases Māori practitioners (social workers and coordinators) personally fund or were bringing kai to ensure a more favourable FGC for whānau. Rua commented on this, “*There are coordinators that actually take it out of their own pocket to provide kai when you have a lot of whānau.*” Rima also said “*...and I feel so stink sometimes I bring a pot of pumpkin soup.*”

Participants recognise that when people are hungry they do not make good decisions and tempers are more frayed, increasing potential risk for the FGC to not be positive. Under resourcing diminishes the quality of an FGC for whānau and impacts upon its success.

Toru talked about the struggle to fight for resources for whānau:

We’ve had to fight for some resources...and we are mindful that a lot of our whānau do not have access to a lot.

By contrast some whānau just accept what resourcing is offered through the FGC. Wha commented on this:

They (CYF) say we’ll do that but when it comes to walking the talk, the resource to actually do isn’t there...mostly we accept where we get to.

Furthermore, whānau often just needed strengthening through support programmes (i.e. family violence prevention) but resourcing for them was not available through the FGC. On this point Ono commented:

What chance does a whānau have deciding what’s in the best interests of tamariki, if the FGC outcomes are predetermined?

Coordinators and Constraints

Most participants saw the coordinators as protectors of the process and philosophy. They thought that coordinators had a difficult role to execute within legislative and fiscal constraints with little support from CYF leaders. All participants spoke highly of coordinators and thought they had difficult job to do. On this point Rua commented:

There is a lot of pressure on coordinators, they can be seen as the protector of the social worker and that's not their role...they are protector of the process.

Regardless of this all participants agreed, “a good hui depends on who runs it.” Three of them referred to local Māori coordinators who made a difference for whānau attending a FGC. Wha explained this:

Then you have someone like our coordinator who runs the FGC on a totally Māori view. He will take that hui to be held anywhere except the CYF office...I am not saying that one is right or wrong, but it works differently for whānau.

If the coordinator is Māori and/or tika with tikanga he/she will be known for running a good hui where whānau feel more involved and at home with the process despite FGC constraints. Although participants were careful not to say outright that ‘Māori practitioners work more effectively with whānau than non-Māori’ essentially this is what they meant. The participants recognised that coordinators/practitioners who focus on the hui being whānau centred (as much as possible and despite the challenges) were more likely to get the best outcome, likely because Māori practitioners can draw from a two-world view perspective and know what is in the whānau’s best interests as well as CYFs.

Unreasonable timeframes and expectations of whānau can diminish the quality of the FGC in many ways. Rima illustrated this when she talked about two FGCs being held in one day, which was exhausting for her as she was required to attend both. She said:

Another challenge is where a coordinator will try and have a FGC at about 10am and another one at 1 or 2pm...expecting whānau to come together under statutory obligations and have an idea (a plan) within 2 to 3 hours.

Legislation states that the FGC is to be held where whānau feel most comfortable, however

timing and budget constraints often controls this. Rima highlighted this when she said:

More often than not the coordinators are calling the FGC at the CYF office. It's happening most places now because it's in the name of budgets.

Timing can interfere with how the FGC process starts for whānau, how it starts is important as it sets the conference up for how it means to proceed. Toru talked about how two hour FGCs allow little time for the centrality of karakia as a starting place for whānau. Toru said:

For me the process does not begin until we've had our whakamoemiti...for us it would not be appropriate otherwise not to do so.

Wha talked about the rush of the FGC and karakia feeling like a 'token' gesture so when the whānau are invited to open the hui:

Sometimes the whānau will say no because they know the karakia is not appreciated.

Timing also interferes with extended whānau being fully informed about or invited to the FGC. Toru talked about this:

Some of the challenge has been allowing us time to educate our own whānau about the process. Even though they get things in writing (FGC notification) it's still about helping them comprehend and whakamārama the kaupapa.

Limited whānau participation at FGCs was a concern for most participants. Rima explained this as a timing issue when she said:

I struggle with coordinators and/or social workers to reach out to as many whānau as possible. I've sat in FGCs and there are more professionals than whānau...there's a family having a FGC but there is no family group or there'd only be one side of the whānau but a kid comes from two sides.

Avoiding the ideological drift and knowledge loss around FGC is an ongoing training issue in CYF (Pakura, 2005; & Connolly, 2006). Unlike in the UK where FGC practice has advanced significantly and there is a national FGC coordinator qualification (Ashley, 2006), there is still no formal coordinator training in Aotearoa (Slater, 2009). Some participants thought it also came back to the inability of practitioners to network with whānau and thought that

coordinators like social workers needed on-going training in Te Tiriti and decolonisation. Improved understanding of issues such as family violence, mental illness and substance abuse would be advantageous. Where there is no cultural input from Māori practitioners it begs question what is the actual experience of whānau going through care and protection FGCs? We do not know because no such research exists.

This is what participants said about the FGC. Additionally, it was important to this research to know what whānau have said to the participants about their experience of FGC. This is covered next.

What Whānau Say about FGC

Most participants were unable to recall what whānau say about FGC despite being initially forthcoming about successful FGC accounts. It appeared difficult for participants to place themselves into the shoes of whānau and talk about what the whānau's actual experience of FGC might be. When the participants were prompted to elaborate on what they knew on a deeper level about whānau experiences of FGC, the following critical points emerged:

- They do not understand care and protection law and are not well informed about their rights, responsibilities and role in FGCs.
- Practitioners cannot engage with whānau and thus FGCs are not well organised to enable more whānau to attend.
- FGC is not whānau decision-making; it's about what CYF want rather than what whānau need.

Toru talked about what whānau say to him about FGC and commented:

This process (FGC) is daunting for our whānau and makes our whānau mataaku really.

Wha and Ono also openly recalled what whānau say to them about FGC. Ono said:

Whānau say to me, "it feels like we are taking part in a 'tick box' exercise for CYF and we are just there to witness it."

Wha was able to explain in detail why whānau experiencing FGC do not understand the care and protection law, understanding the range of definitions⁸ that constitute ‘a child in need of care and protection.’ If a whānau agreed to any one of the definitions they didn’t realise that they were saying ‘yes’ to all of them. This was confusing, especially when they thought that any one or more of the definitions did not apply to their case.

Of course they (the whānau) are going to say yes, yes to some parts and no to some parts. But the coordinator will say, if it’s only this part then it means a whole yes. The whānau will say, hang on its only that bit (i.e. neglect) but the rest nahh!

Wha also explained that whānau were confused about what formed the belief that a child is in need of care and protection when more than one practitioner/professional involved in the case had conflicting beliefs. Wha explained this:

They’ve said to me it’s the same set of information and circumstances but the beliefs formed can be poles apart...it doesn’t make sense and is totally conflicting for whānau.

The participant’s description of the ‘translator’ role when working with non-Māori practitioners supported what whānau said about FGC. Rima stated:

We do a lot of translating...often the whānau would keep on looking at me and would not listen to the key-worker so it was trying to build that bridge between the key-worker and the whānau.

Whānau also say that CYF social workers are under-developed and have no understanding of te Ao Māori. Wha’s comment encapsulated this:

CYF social workers are administrative and investigative social workers and lack life experience or the depth of knowledge to understand the gravity and impact of decisions on whānau. It’s like giving a very powerful tool to a child where it can quickly get out of control.

Ono talked about whānau experiences of FGC being held at CYF offices and the FGC not

⁸ For the range of definitions of a child in need of care and protection under the most recent version of the CYP&F Act 1989, go to this link:
http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1989/0024/latest/DLM149456.html?search=sw_096be8ed808e955e_care+and+protection+definitions_25&p=1

being organised properly, as this often obstructs whānau from attending. She talked about whānau who travelled a long way and only find out about the issues on the day of the FGC, or how some whānau were allowed to attend and others were not. Sometimes only one side of the whānau attended. Ono also talked about the prevalence of family violence amongst whānau Māori and how the impact of this has increased whānau referrals to FGC. She also talked about what wāhine Māori tell her of their experience inside the FGC:

Wāhine Māori experiencing family violence talk to me about feeling bullied into FGC decisions, because they don't fully understand the law and its implications. She feels unable to speak up, she is not an abuser but because of her victim status she is blamed for not being able to protect her children.

Two of the participants worked in family violence prevention and recovery work. For them family violence is a huge problem in Aotearoa and they questioned if the FGC is the most appropriate forum to understand, let alone deal with the dynamics of family violence. This is an area of FGC that needs more research. It also raises the question: *Are social workers well informed about or trained enough in the dynamics of whānau violence?* This issue also requires an understanding of how the historical and inter-generational factors impact upon family violence for whānau.

Finally 'what whānau say about FGC' is important because despite the limitations of being told through the eyes of the participants, a picture of their experience does begin to take shape. Regardless of its potential and some great practice and practitioners, FGC from the perspective many of the participants is not contributing to whānau wellbeing. A big question indeed and one that many Māori commentators have answered 'no' to is "*Has FGC ever contributed to whānau wellbeing?*" (see Mahuika, 1993; Rimene, 1994; Tauri, 1999 & 2010; and Love 2002).

FGC Change and Whānau Ora

This section presents participant's views on how recent changes to FGC are impacting on outcomes for whānau (CYP&F Act 1989 reforms and FGC legislation changes are explained in Chapter Three). Participants' views also include the potential for Whānau Ora to impact on

outcomes for whānau Māori in the care and protection system.

FGC Change

Most participants were not familiar with government moves in recent years towards modernising the CYP&F Act 1989 specifically the legislation changes to FGC and the implications for practice. This lack of communication reflects the nature of the non-relationship that frontline social workers have with the policy arm of CYF and the CYF national office. The responses to this section did not yield as fruitful a return as expected. Some participants thought this was partly due to it being ‘early days’ in terms of implementing proposed reforms and the evaluation of them. They also thought that the policy sector had not communicated legislation reforms well with frontline practitioners. This issue was highlighted in the ANZASW’s submission on the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Amendment Bill (No.6), in which the organisation asked why frontline social workers and FGC coordinators were not consulted on how they or their practice might be impacted by proposed changes to FGC legislation (ANZASW, 2007). Wha commented on this issue:

Whatever comes from the top doesn’t seem to fit with the bottom and they don’t know how the bottom can talk to the top.

Ono agreed when she said:

I know about the changes to FGC only because I’ve been following it for the last few years, this information has not been well publicised, if at all by MSD, particularly amongst Māori.

This lack of participant awareness of the changes was unexpected because the proposed reforms have been before Parliament since 2007. Despite this, two participants shared creative ways in which they contributed to improved FGC practice in their areas both in the role of social worker and FGC coordinator. These narratives are extremely important because although the findings are not huge in terms of the kaupapa of this research, they emphasise the potential for improved involvement of whānau and outcomes for them, despite the challenges that participants identified earlier about FGC.

In both case studies that were shared by participants of improving FGC practice it came down to working with families to ensure they were fully informed about their roles, rights and responsibilities in the FGC. The first was bringing a young girl on board with the goal of returning her to her family. The second was getting a whānau to be fully involved in a child's FGC. Rua was the FGC coordinator working with the social worker to get a young woman to be at the centre of her own FGC. A specific focus was on supporting the young woman to voice her fears/desires and the use of creative practice to enable this.

Rua explained this:

The most important thing was for us to let her know that it was her process and not anyone else's. We did a lot of preparation for that FGC but the most important part of this was to get that girl on board.

A further example was getting a whānau on board by making the FGC process transparent to them. Rua commented:

I don't know if it's policy but it's really encouraged that we have a hui before you have the FGC...at least then whānau know what they are in for, what their rights and roles are.

Creative practice took the form of pre-FGC hui to listen to fears and answer questions and provide truthful reassurances about what the FGC can and cannot do, or provide. Despite the challenges identified earlier, these participants (a Māori social worker and Māori coordinator) showed that a FGC change could be successfully implemented that empowers whānau and impacts positively on outcomes. This research further finds that successful practice with whānau is also due to the ethnicity and particular dual world view and skills of Māori practitioners. FGC practice can be improved but this needs to be captured and reported on in research with FGC recipients. The potential is known, the issues/constraints are known, what is not known is what whānau are actually experiencing. It is no longer acceptable for the Māori experience of FGC to be ignored by CYF/MSD. Māori have a right under Te Tiriti to be accountable to their own people and processes and the ministry as an agent of the Crown is obligated to resource and ensure this (HRC, 2012).

Whānau Ora

Along with moves to update the Act, newer initiatives such as the Differential Response Model (DRM) and Whānau Ora were introduced (2010) with the intention of addressing negative outcomes for Māori. In terms of Whānau Ora, some participants were better informed and positive about its potential as a policy initiative. In contrast, some participants expressed that if not properly resourced and administered it will not offer anything new for whānau. Most participants respected the likelihood that some whānau will benefit from Whānau Ora but many will probably not. They also thought that resourcing of the effective evaluation of Whānau Ora and initiatives including the development of Kaupapa Māori measures of wellbeing and success was needed. Although it is likely that Te Puni Kōkiri will evaluate Whānau Ora through action research (Pihama, 2011) it is unclear what measures CYF will use to evaluate FGC changes or if they will engage directly with Māori as participants.

All participants shared very similar views about the practice of whānau ora. As Tahi said:

It's been around mai rānō...whānau, hapū, iwi have been practising whānau ora forever.

Wha also commented:

We have been part of the pioneer movement of kōhanga, kura and wānanga as part of community development and we got excited by Whānau Ora (the policy).

Toru stated that even though Whānau Ora had been in his community since 2010, little has changed:

Whānau Ora is still new in terms of social agencies getting together and letting go of the resources...and to us it's 'watch this space.'

Rua thought Whānau Ora had great potential for FGC outcomes where whānau have to undergo strengthening processes that prepare them for the return of their children.

Participants thought the government policy initiative of Whānau Ora was a great concept but in terms of its development for all New Zealanders it was seriously under resourced. Tahi commented on this:

It was initiated for Māori but government said it had to be for all NZs...Tariana asked for 189 million but she got 34 million to cover the whole of NZ, it's an absolute joke.

Some participants likened Whānau Ora to what happened to whānau hui before becoming FGC, in that it was a successful Māori practice before being colonised. Whitu worked with the practice of whānau ora for many years and said:

Well I know it to be our vehicle, but to me it is sugar-coated over...the people that are trying to implement it have no idea of what whānau ora is...my issue with it is that they are words in the hands of corrupt people...the policy industry.

In terms of the evaluation of both legislation changes to FGC and to Whānau Ora, Ono was the only commentator:

Amending the legislation around FGC does nothing to improve practice; it just makes it more risk adverse if you are not first addressing the real system failures. MSD will evaluate FGC changes and TPK evaluate Whānau Ora...watch me roll my eyes when the evaluation is ministerial based rather than Kaupapa Māori based!

Summary

This chapter discussed the themes that arose from interviews with seven very experienced Māori practitioners. The first section presented the challenges that participants experience in care and protection, particularly those where Māori practitioners are compensating for the lack of collective bicultural capability that exists in care and protection. Māori practitioners take on various creative roles to manage this challenge. They are not contracted to do this additional mahi, however they feel obliged to in order to better meet the needs of their own people. It takes a toll on them and is work that goes unrecognised. This position for Māori practitioners in care and protection warrants further research.

The second section presented the challenges that Māori social workers and whānau experience with FGC. The FGC has huge potential but as it is currently practised its quality in terms of process and outcomes for whānau is poor. Many of the challenges shared by participants are the same challenges that families have voiced since the introduction of FGC

that specifically impact on whānau. What ‘whānau say about FGC’ is that they do not understand care and protection law, nor do they feel that FGC is empowering for them.

The third section explored participants’ views on recent legislation/policy changes to FGC and the impact upon outcomes for whānau. A key finding was that most participants are not informed about recent legislation/policy changes in care and protection and FGC. This lack of communication tends to reflect the level of relationship that frontline social workers have with the policy sector and CYF national office. A positive finding is that some evidence exists of changes to FGC being successfully implemented. Most participants thought that Whānau Ora the policy initiative would offer nothing new for whānau subject to care and protection.

Many of the themes participants voiced in this chapter are explained in greater detail in the next chapter. These findings and future possibilities for research developments will also be discussed.

Chapter Six

A MOA IN THE ROOM

“Leaders who do not act dialogically, but insist on imposing their decisions, do not organise the people: they manipulate them. They do not liberate, nor are they liberated: they oppress”
(Freire, 1968:178).

This chapter follows on from the previous description of the interviews with participants by examining the meaning and implications of the key findings as they relate to the literature and in terms of their transferability for other Māori practitioners and Māori social work practice. There are two sections in this chapter; the first is *Challenges for Māori Practitioners in Care and Protection* and the second is *Challenges for Whānau Māori in Family Group Conferences*.

Challenges for Māori Practitioners in Care and Protection

This section discusses the challenges Māori Practitioners faced in the care and protection system, particularly around supporting non-Māori practitioners to work more effectively with whānau. These challenges are; *A Lack of Māori Practitioners; The Practice of ‘Patch and Dispatch;’ Not Investigating a Child’s Whakapapa; Indigenous Rights and Cultural Competence; Culturally Competent Leadership; and Improving Cultural Competency*.

A Lack of Māori Practitioners

One key finding was the various ‘*in-between*’ roles Māori practitioners take on when supporting non-Māori practitioners to effect better outcomes for whānau. These roles were teacher, cultural advisor, interpreter and advocate. This result aligned with the ‘*in-between*’ roles described in studies with Aboriginal and First Nation social workers in Australia and Canada. In these studies the role and identity of the indigenous social worker is continuously negotiated alongside the professional social work identity that is dominated by Western discourse (Bennett & Zubrzycki, 2003; Blackstock, & Trocme, 2005). An indigenous practitioner walks the tightrope between two world views whilst at the same time managing their own personal and professional identity. This is an example of dual accountability and as

suggested by Love (2002) it is an unenviable position for Māori practitioners. Unlike their non-Māori counterparts they face the double burden of professional and cultural expectations in organisations as well as from communities. Love's (2002) work on FGC best describes this for Māori practitioners in statutory agencies:

Battling a system from within is a role that consumes enormous energy and can limit vision. It can leave the social worker vulnerable to both the organisation and the community. This position leaves Māori workers exposed to being individually demonised and labelled by institutional representatives as incompetent or unprofessional, if we do not conform to institutional mores. On the other hand, Māori workers perceived as conforming to the norms within statutory welfare systems, may be viewed by their whānau, hapū, iwi and communities; as brown faces doing the dirty work that was previously done by white social workers...the challenges they face are amplified and one is over-worked and yet undervalued or worse, invisible (Love, 2002:32).

In other words the Māori practitioners in this study often compensated for the lack of bicultural capability in the care and protection system. This is particularly difficult when they have their own casework to complete as well as providing support to their colleagues. They are often undervalued and ill rewarded for their cultural and professional expertise and this additional responsibility takes a toll on them that goes unrecognised in care and protection. This finding is consistent with Hollis-English' (2012) where she describes this position for Māori practitioners as 'brown-face burnout:'

Brown-face burnout has two important components; first it is about Māori social workers being over worked and generally unhappy about their workload. The second...burnout is associated with their ethnicity, being Māori.

This reference to 'burnout by being Māori' means that burnout is due to cultural expectations and additional responsibilities because of being Māori. This position is also reflected within the findings of the Grassroots Voices Report (2010), which showed a concerning lack of and high turnover of Māori practitioners in the social services. The same report also found that social workers in general needed on-going training and support around working more effectively with whānau (NZCCSS, 2010).

The participants' perspectives showed how the lack of Māori practitioners in social services and "sign up from higher up" limited the growth of Māori appropriate programmes and methods in essential social work with whānau. The scarcity of indigenous programme or

method growth is supported by Armitage (1993), Durst (1998) and Libesman (2004) whose work asserts that a factor inhibiting increased control of indigenous child and family services is the under-representation of indigenous workers. This then perpetuates the challenges that Māori practitioners and whānau face in care and protection because the status quo is maintained.

The toll of the 'in-between' role for Māori practitioners is "*turnout or burnout.*" This refers to the high turnover of Māori practitioners through stress and burnout in the sector. The Carr and Peters (1997) review of Native American child protection teams found that permanency should be a critical factor in the choice of indigenous practitioners because high staff turnover brings problems with training, confidentiality, knowledge loss and cohesion. Consequently this leads to stress, mental health issues and burnout for indigenous practitioners. This would also seem to support the HRC (2012) assertion that the under-representation of Māori practitioners in the social services sector or any of the public sectors is a manifestation of structural discrimination. This means, as described by the participants the "*one world view and one size fits all*" dominant mode of social work is maintained, at the detriment of a lack of Māori or bicultural capable practitioners in the industry. The implication of this is that capacity building or Māori advancement within social work is therefore inhibited For every step forward there is a step backwards as the system maintains its monocultural status quo.

As Tauri (1999) and Love (2000) assert it takes a lot more than just increasing the number of Māori workers in a workforce as this is a grafting of Māori faces and processes onto the same monocultural system which they describe as merely tokenism. For any social service delivery to be culturally competent it needs to move beyond co-opting Māori practitioners into mainstream programme delivery, and attempt to incorporate indigenous knowledge into the mainstream delivery frameworks (Weaver, 1999; Libesman, 2004 & Hollis-English, 2012). The growing of the Māori practitioner workforce needs to be both a strategic development and a shared responsibility. This is needed not only in social services but also in partnership with Māori using structured and sustainable approaches across a wide range of sectors including health, education, justice and research (HRC, 2012). In practice this means whānau Māori specific teams with Māori and non-Māori practitioners working biculturally using Māori practices and methods. This should be in addition to being guided by culturally competent supervisors and supervision practice (O'Donoghue, 2010; & Hollis-English, 2012). The lack of Māori practitioners and culturally competent practice in care and protection is best illustrated when explaining the findings concerning "*patch & dispatch*" and "*not*

chasing (investigating) *a child's whakapapa*.” The participants referred to these practice examples the most when describing the challenges they face supporting their non-Māori colleagues to work more effectively with whānau.

The Practice of ‘Patch and Dispatch’

The results showed that the practice of *‘patch and dispatch’* was a consequence of non-Māori inability and to work biculturally and appropriately assess the needs of a whānau.

Furthermore, it was a significant contributor to whānau experiencing the revolving care and protection door scenario. Whānau were often only being assessed in terms of their presenting issues and without the social worker ‘researching back’ into the underlying issues. This researching back would involve looking at past files and case notes in terms of the history of the whānau’s social service involvement and finding out what interventions had previously been tried with them. In cases where whānau were not assessed appropriately they were often referred to a FGC without the opportunity of less informal interventions being explored with them. This is despite Connolly’s (2006) assertion that the FGC model is a high-end legal and intrusive intervention and should only be used where there are high levels of risk.

In terms of assessed risk ‘patch and dispatch’ also occurred when the assessment tools used to assess risk for a whānau were culturally inappropriate, even non-applicable. This finding is consistent with Stanley’s (2007) work where he asserts that the Risk Estimation System (RES)⁹ only assessed risk for a child within the realm of direct physical harm. However the harm caused to a child by separating them from their whānau was not recognised as a risk, by either the social worker, the RES tool or indeed the system that supported the use of the tool.

Another finding of ‘patch and dispatch’ was social workers nursing a predetermined outcome for a whānau and using the FGC process to rubber-stamp that outcome (i.e. uplifting a child). According to participants this practice was premised on the mainstream view that a child’s needs are paramount and thus viewed as separate from the need to strengthen the whānau. ‘Patch and dispatch’ practice aligns with the findings of Rimene (1994), Love (2002) and Pakura (2005). They talk about the FGC being used to forward the social workers agenda rather than it being utilised to determine ways to strengthen the whānau balanced with the child’s best interests as the CYP&F Act 1989 advocates for. In particular Rimene (1994:87)

⁹ The Risk Estimation System (RES) is based on the Manitoba Risk Estimation System (MRES). The MRES was introduced into social work practice in New Zealand in 1996.

found that:

Practitioners manipulated the process to the outcome of what they think was in best interests of a child and used discretionary powers to veto whānau decisions (Rimene, 1994:87).

Maxwell & Pakura (2006) provide some understanding of this practice when they discussed social workers mistrust of family during the FGC process and fear of loss of control:

When professionals are cynical or judgemental about the importance or competence of the extended family they often fear losing control in decision-making and consequently family are disenfranchised. Inevitably in such circumstances the family group conference process is likely to fail or there will only be token agreement about outcomes (Maxwell & Pakura, 2006:4).

This means that when social workers do not trust the ability of the whānau to make competent decisions they may take control of the proceedings or worse, predetermine the outcome. This finding supports Stanley's (2007) work with social workers, when he found that the majority of them held predetermined ideas about the outcomes they regarded as being in the best interests of a child. He also found that they used the FGC to formalise an ongoing role for CYF and the level of intervention they saw as necessary to ensure a child's safety. Social workers described using the FGC as an increased intervention step and as a way to formalise monitoring of families. For other social workers he interviewed, the FGC provided the mandate to formalise support plans around families (i.e. going for declaration/custody order) (Stanley, 2007). 'Patch and dispatch' is an example of bias practice and ethnic inequality for whānau Māori in care and protection. This would also suggest that the FGC is more useful as an example of fiscal control or as a state centred process rather than as a family centred process.

Overall, the Māori practitioners perspectives reported in Chapter Five suggest that the FGC is being used as a state centred tool rather than a whānau centred (or led) decision-making process. Furthermore, it indicates that care and protection social workers are focusing on the child and not balancing this with the strengthening of the whānau. In other words, they are not working with the decisions of the whānau to better enable the needs of the child to be met or maintained within its whānau. This is not suggesting that Māori children should remain in abusive situations but instead that they should (where ever possible) live with or know who their whānau are and have regular contact with them. This leads onto the second practice

example that participants most referred to when describing their support of non-Māori practitioners to work more effectively with whānau, which is *'not chasing (investigating) a child's whakapapa.'*

'Not Investigating a Child's Whakapapa'

The results concerning the centrality of a child's whakapapa and place within its whānau as fundamental to their long-term wellbeing found that the practice of investigating a child's whakapapa was commonly being overlooked in care and protection. The reasons for this may be varied, but lamentably the Māori practitioners' views lead one to conclude that where there are no bicultural capable practitioners, Māori children are being transacted through the system without their whakapapa in tow. This would mean little or no whānau support, which aligns with Rimene's (1994) review of the CYP&F Act where she stated:

To work with Māori people you have you be able to access them. This means knowing how to contact them, knowing the relationships between the members...And knowing how to whakapapa into their respective whānau hapū and iwi (Rimene, 1994:72).

Rimene determined that practitioners who were largely Pākehā and middle class were incapable of networking with whānau, hapū and iwi at the time. Later when CYPFS were developing a data system that captured the ethnicity of a child Kuni-Shepard (1997) researched non-Māori social workers working with whānau. He found that they were not recording the whānau, hapū and iwi details of Māori children coming to notice despite the system being capable of capturing that information. Instead, non-Māori practitioners were choosing not to seek the whakapapa information of Māori children because it was too difficult regardless of the Act requiring them to do so. A critical consequence of this was that essential whānau were not invited to the FGC (Pakura, 2005). This is in stark contrast to Pakura's (2005) later assertion in the same paper that the Crown's recognition of whakapapa as central to the identity of our indigenous people was a success.

Although this research was limited to the lower North Island region and the researcher could not quantify the practice of 'not investigating a child's whakapapa,' the fact that experienced Māori practitioners testified to it happening is incomprehensible. If social workers are not trained and encouraged to value whakapapa and held to account for this essential mahi then culturally incompetent practice will very likely continue.

Whakapapa was important to the participants for many reasons as arguably the first claim to being Māori is through whakapapa. It is not the percentage of Māori blood a person possesses; it is their history, their connection to their past and future investment for whānau, hapū and iwi. In this sense whakapapa is not only identity; it is a duty and an obligation that Māori have to be able to effect. Understanding and knowing one's whakapapa is crucial in terms of Māori cultural identity and without this knowledge Māori may not lead full and meaningful lives. Through whakapapa an individual or group cultural identity is affirmed. Tamariki and rangatahi are taonga and their whakapapa completes them through affirming that they come from thousands of their tupuna. It links them with their history, citizenship, cultural identity and sovereignty (Moyle, 1998).

The importance of whakapapa for a child is well documented and publicised in mainstream literature so it is not a new or difficult concept for social workers working with whānau Māori. What is not publicised and unacceptable is that investigating a child's whakapapa is essential social work that is often is not happening for tamariki subject to care and protection involvement. Even after 23 years of changes to improve the over-representation of Māori in the welfare system findings align with the literature to show that nothing of consequence has really improved for them. This also has implications for members of ANZASW and the SWRB, both of which expect a level of cultural competency when working with whānau Māori. It is clear that the standard is not high enough and that some social workers know how to 'say' they can build whakapapa connections but don't actually do it. This raises the notion that they might lack the skills to do the mahi or actually consciously choose not to, even though they know they should.

According to the findings, social workers who don't know how to chase the whakapapa of a child need to be supported to see Māori as much greater than the 'too hard basket.' They also need to have a genuine desire to improve outcomes for them, otherwise Māori will continue to be perceived as a resented minority, an endless deficit and 'financial drain on hard working taxpayers' (HRC, 2012). It is not the responsibility of Māori practitioners to compensate for the lack of culturally competent practice in care and protection (Hollis, 2006). Organisations and leaders in the sector need to actively support Māori practitioners to become professionally registered and to enable them to utilise their own world views and tikanga Māori methods (Hollis-English, 2012). Māori practitioners also need to be employed as supervisors and supported to provide Kaupapa Māori, cultural or cross-cultural supervision to all frontline social workers (O'Donoghue, 2003). When social workers are supported to develop greater

awareness of their own attitudes towards those who are culturally different from themselves the result is improved outcomes for whānau (Eruera, 2005). This includes their ability to ask the question; “*If they are fearful and/or untrusting of Māori are they best placed to be working with Māori?*” (Libesman, 2004). This would also develop greater indigenous human rights awareness and cultural competence in practitioners, which is discussed next.

Indigenous Rights and Cultural Competence

The findings regarding ‘*patch and dispatch*’ and of ‘*not investigating a child’s whakapapa*’ also has implications in terms of meeting rather than contravening the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the CYP&F Act, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC) and United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP). It is worth referring to the most recent HRC (2012) document titled, ‘*Inquiry into the determinants of wellbeing for Māori children.*’ This document reiterates the principles of the Te Tiriti that whānau Māori have the right to:

- (a) *Enjoyment of all their rights on an equal basis as other children (Te Tiriti, article 3; UNCROC, article 2; UNDRIP articles 1, 2, 21)*
- (b) *Live as Māori, including the right to te reo, and te ao Māori (Te Tiriti, article 2; UNCROC, article 30; UNDRIP, articles 5, 9 and 11-15) (see HRC, 2012b: 17).*

According to this document the Crown has obligations to protect these indigenous rights and the standards indicate that government investment (present and future) should address inequalities experienced by Māori (HRC, 2012). This includes acknowledging that biased practices occur in care and protection just as it does in any other area of service provision. Whether it’s intentional or accepted there is a growing body of literature particularly in health that provides consistent evidence that frontline practitioners do treat people differently based on ethnicity (see for example, Reid, 2000; Crengle et al, 2006; & Jansen, 2011).

Although ethnic inequality in Aotearoa is entrenched and social and economic factors contribute to and compound these inequalities, these factors alone do not cause inequalities, they are also fed by bias practices (HRC, 2012). Tauri (2010) asserts that biased practice completely misses the social and economic benefits of diversity. An example of this would be taking full advantage of a child’s whakapapa and the social and economic benefit of whānau being involved in the long-term care of that child. However, given the above findings the big

question is: *What is bicultural or cultural competency in Aotearoa?*

The results from participants perspectives and their alignment with the literature thus far lead us to consider what cultural competence is, how it is defined and how this impacts upon practice with whānau Māori. Biculturally capable or culturally competent in practice is not the same as commonly accepted definitions of what it means to be culturally qualified. In this instance culturally qualified includes definitions such as a person who possesses or is able to demonstrate cultural sensitivity, cultural awareness and cultural knowledge (Adams, 1995).

A person who is culturally sensitive needs to know that cultural differences as well as similarities exist, without any judgment towards the former. A person who is culturally aware requires some cultural knowledge and ability to develop sensitivity and understanding of basic Māori life. This often means a personal attitude and value change that grows over time with training support and increased self-awareness (Adams, 1995). Most importantly, ‘cultural awareness’ requires openness, acceptance and flexibility about Māori development in relation to systemic and other barriers.

A person who possesses ‘cultural knowledge’ is familiar and comfortable with central elements of te Ao Māori such as the colonial history, values, belief systems and behaviours (Adams, 1995). However, true ‘cultural competence’ on an individual practitioner level in an Aotearoa context is being able to exist comfortably in ambiguity. This means a practitioner able to exist comfortably in two (often opposing) world views (i.e. te Ao Māori me te Ao Pākehā), knowing how to draw from each what is required to effectively meet the needs of whānau Māori (Eruera, 2005).

Culturally Competent Leadership

On a collective or organisational level, cultural competency is the inclusion of Māori with the weaving (embedding) of cultural knowledge into the fabric of organisations enabling them to work effectively with whānau (Weaver, 1999; Hollis-English, 2012). According to the Māori practitioners perspectives this is not currently the case in mainstream care and protection social work even though the CYF Practice Centre¹⁰ states that it is.

The CYF Practice Centre refers to biculturalism but does not explain how its quality control

¹⁰ See at: <http://www.practicecentre.cyf.govt.nz/knowledge-base-practice-frameworks/care-and-protection/resources/working-with-Māori.html>

of this is ensured, much less what cultural competency means in terms of social workers working directly with whānau Māori. Users of the website are referred to various useful readings and a single link on cultural competency. The link denotes Cross, Bazron, Dennis and Isaacs (1989) assertion that on an organisational or sector level, cultural competency is the integration and transformation of knowledge into a set of compatible elements. These elements include behaviours, attitudes, policies and resources that become the working cogs of an agency or amongst professionals that enables them to work effectively with marginalised groups. If New Zealand's statutory agency cannot transparently define what cultural competence is, in their own words on their own website, or explain how it works or how its quality is measured or ensured, then how can provider groups and professional bodies be expected to? The website's omission of how biculturalism works in practice with whānau Māori would seem to confirm what the participants in this study described, that it is a "*one world view and one size fits all*" modus operandi.

The Māori practitioners perspectives showed that '*one world view and one size fits all*' as well as being the dominant social work mode in Aotearoa at practitioner level also operates at a management level. For example, the culture of an organisation is nurtured through its leaders and is reflected back to families receiving services and the general public. This finding further supports Sorrenson's (1998) research of the relationship between DSW managers and Māori. His findings showed that at the time of implementing Pūao-te-Ata-Tū intentions into actions DSW managers were confused about how to actually translate plans and mission statements on Te Tiriti into frontline practice. Consequently, DSW managers claimed powerlessness (i.e. lack of training to effect implementation) and resisted responsibility for changes that would develop partnerships with Māori. This resulted in the demise of pro-Māori initiatives (i.e. those referred to in Chapter Two) and unsurprisingly the retention of Pākehā managerial power (Sorrenson, 1998; Hollis, 2006).

The Māori practitioners interviewed (see Chapter Five) also inferred that CYF leaders did not understand or value tikanga Māori, bicultural practice or indeed Māori practitioners' contributions to social work. This is one of the reasons why Māori practices and methods have not been embraced or encouraged in statutory social work. If management lead from their one-world view, which is non-Māori, then in terms of the potential for cultural diversity 'the buck stops with them.' This finding is in agreement with Stanley's (2007) research on FGC that recommended that CYF leaders receive substantial training on the principles and philosophy of FGC. He asserted that they had lost sight of the FGCs value, particularly

according to the Acts original intention of use as the ‘heart’ of child protection practice. It is this ‘heart’ that New Zealand was once praised for in the international social work arena.

Improving Cultural Competency

Training on decolonisation and philosophy of Pūao-te-Ata-Tū would be advantageous given the above findings and Stanley’s (2007) recommendation for CYF leaders to have substantial training on the principles and philosophy of FGC. The monocultural orientation of leaders and managers in care and protection has a cumulative effect. The effects of structural discrimination at one level or stage in the system, flows on to subsequent levels or stages (HRC, 2011). True change is more likely to occur in the sector through focusing on the capabilities and actions of leaders, managers and service providers as opposed to focusing on attitudes that contribute to inequalities. Leaders should have the competence and courage to change, to share power and to learn to work alongside Māori as an equal partner as well as manage and provide for a bicultural capable workforce (Sorrenson, 1998). This should occur rather than focusing only on frontline social workers to implement change and as opposed to inaction which is another form of structural discrimination (HRC, 2012).

The implications arising from the Māori practitioners’ perspectives are that improving cultural competency in leadership involves partnering with Māori to ensure that cultural competency initiatives are embedded in organisations. An over-arching framework or infrastructure should be in place to tautoko Māori processes, practices and organisations into taking responsibility for ensuring their staff receive on-going training and are well educated in decolonisation, Te Tiriti and tikanga Māori (Hollis-English, 2006 & 2012). Supporting good practice to promote diversity includes a combination of approaches such as mentoring, an organisational diversity review and ongoing monitoring of leadership, resourcing and training for management (HRC, 2012).

One example of this would be training on how the modern interpretations of the Te Tiriti can be translated into practice. This would emphasise the partnership or power sharing between the Crown and Māori arising from the principles of kawanatanga and rangatiratanga as outlined in articles one and two. These concepts provide a foundation on which to assist organisations to address structural discrimination and thereby contribute to improved outcomes for whānau Māori (Jackson, 1992; Pihama, 2001; and HRC, 2012). Tokenism, half-heartedness or a ‘one size fits all’ will not work. Training for practitioners and managers

(which includes practice managers and supervisors) does not mean merely a day workshop when they are released from duties, but rather substantial training that is refreshed over time and is part of the professional registration process and on-going competency measures for all social work practitioners (Hollis, 2006).

Improving the cultural competency of a workforce also means the inclusion of effective accountability measures within systems to confirm that cultural competency is achieved and sustained by way of a rigorous evaluation process. Increased research is also essential for achieving meaningful and sustainable outcomes towards developing a culturally competent and strong Māori workforce in Aotearoa. In terms of improved FGC and related care and protection processes there is also much to be gained by focusing on the experiences of its principle users who are whānau Māori. This is discussed next.

Challenges for Whānau Māori in Family Group Conferences

The findings that are discussed in this section relate to the challenges that participants described that they and whānau faced around the FGC process. They are; *Potential or Actual Empowerment; Under Resourcing and Predetermined Funding; Whānau Experiences of FGC; Indigenous Rights and Te Tiriti; Māori Research and FGC Development; Proactive Monoculturalism; and Collective Responsibility.*

Potential or Actual Empowerment

The most unanimous finding of the research was that the FGC is a brilliant model of family decision-making that if well administered has huge potential for empowering whānau. This finding aligns with proponents of the FGC who proclaim the potential of FGC for empowering families (see Adams & Chandler, 2004; Burford & Adams, 2004; Pennell, 2004 & Harris, 2008). Connolly (2006) referred to the FGC as ‘a family centred legal process’ and ‘family-led decision-making forum.’ Libesman (2004) asserts that even if the FGC model is not well administered it has the potential for being responsive to cultural diversity.

However, according to the Māori practitioners’ views ‘potential empowerment’ is not ‘actual empowerment.’ Whilst there were many positive accounts relayed of FGC practice and high regard for the coordinators role, the FGC as it continues to be administered often disempowers whānau. This finding aligns with Māori critiques of the FGC such as Rimene

(1994), Love (2000) and Tauri (1998 & 2010) who are barely referred to by those that purport the cultural responsiveness of the FGC model. Tauri (2004) in particular asserts that the actual success of FGC was as a significant tool for advancing the perception that the system was culturally sensitive and responsive to the needs of whānau. Whilst proponents of the model advance the perception that the FGC is responsive to Māori, the reason we don't know whether it is responsive is because no recent research exists that directly engages the care and protection FGC experience of Māori. The failure of the FGC to respond effectively to whānau Māori begins with how the process is under-resourced and funding for outcomes is predetermined.

Under Resourcing and Predetermined Funding

Whilst the FGC is reportedly successful with Māori with the co-option of Māori cultural practices, the few texts available of FGC from a Māori perspective shows that FGC often disempowers both cultural experts and whānau (see Rimene, 1994; Love, 2002; & Tauri, 2010). It is clear that under resourcing has been a key driver of eroding the FGC process since its introduction and this is supported by a number of FGC works (see Levine, 2000; Waldegrave & Coy, 2005 & Connolly, 2006).

The Māori practitioners in this study noted that under resourcing of the FGC significantly impeded many fundamental elements of the process for whānau. In particular elements such as tikanga Māori, karakia, kai, kaumātua and essential whānau members attending FGC were often not valued by CYF leaders and instead were viewed as non-essentials and expenses that can be ill afforded. This in turn forced Māori practitioners to stopgap the cracks such as providing kai for FGCs out of their own pockets. These practitioners upheld the FGC process where they could for whānau yet, according to participants; their managers often appeared unaware and/or unconcerned with this issue. Further to this issue was the fiscal saving practice of predetermined funding for FGC outcomes.

Predetermined funding of FGCs was one of the most disempowering elements of the process voiced by the Māori practitioners who witnessed the impact of it on whānau Māori. Although other challenges associated with FGC are documented, this one is not. The law forces whānau to participate in a state centred process, yet at the same time obstructs their potential to take responsibility for themselves and effect positive change. There are only two outcomes at this formalised level, the FGC or Court. This seriously impedes the quality of the decision-making

process for whānau and runs contrary to the philosophy of FGC and principles of the Act and Te Tiriti. What was most surprising among the research findings was that according to participants, predetermined funding has been a common practice in various CYF offices since the mid-late 1990's.

According to Pakura (2005) the FGC has been being good for Māori:

The family group conference process has been accepted and is part of the New Zealand way of decision-making, and for Māori families it is the only way...For Māori, faith and optimism in the family group conference process remain (Pakura, 2005: 121).

The findings from the participants however indicate that whānau Māori mainly accept the FGC process, not because they have faith in it, but because 'it is the only way' on offer besides going to Court and having matters decided by a Judge. Just because the FGC is all the state offers in terms of a purported bicultural child protection forum does not mean that whānau have to keep on being transacted through a process that clearly disempowers them.

The implication of under resourcing and predetermined funding for outcomes is that the quality of the FGC for whānau Māori is seriously impeded. In addition to this Māori expertise and knowledge is under-valued and secondary to the process of carrying out the FGC.

Therefore, the FGC process is not empowering for whānau because of; (1) Affordability; and (2) The systemic and institutional mores of '*one world view and one size fits all*' (monoculturalism). Moreover as asserted by Reid, Robson and Jones (2000), a fiscally driven universal approach assumes that everyone has equal access to social services and ignores the obstacles faced by Māori and Pacific peoples in accessing services. In so doing it provides evidence of structural discrimination. This position for Māori contravenes the Te Tiriti principle of *rite tahi* (equal access/outcomes etc).

Indigenous Rights and Te Tiriti

Te Tiriti o Waitangi and in particular article one – kawanatanga requires the government of Aotearoa to govern. This means the Crown has obligations to protect indigenous rights and should address inequalities experienced by Māori. It also means to support and empower whānau and communities to secure their children's wellbeing, and maintain and strengthen te ao Māori and te reo Māori (HRC, 2012). This includes FGC practice. If the culture of an organisation is more concerned with fiscal control and less about meeting its obligations

under Te Tiriti then this concern transmutes in frontline practice. This is what underpins the Māori practitioners' experiences of CYF leaders not valuing the FGC process and it being a state process rather than one of whānau empowerment.

A number of influential documents over the years have detailed what the state needs to address in order to improve over-representation of Māori in the system. For example, Pūao-te-Ata-Tū (1985) and the Mason Report (1992) stated that; "*If the Act is not generously supported in terms of personnel and funding, it will fail*" (Mason, 1992). The state was reminded again with the comprehensive Brown Report in 2000. Many of the recommendations in this report were never implemented (Brown, 2000). Clearly it is not a case of the state and organisations not knowing what to do. It seems more a case of not wanting to hand over power and resources to or work in true partnership with their Treaty partner. At the very heart of this position is the state's denial of its mistrust of Māori to be able to take care of their own interests. This is partly due to the paternalism that creates a barrier for Māori within the care and protection system, just as Atwool (2006) identified it as a barrier for children. Whānau are not viewed in care and protection as being capable of the responsibility that goes with their Te Tiriti rights. As a valid argument, this is then confirmed when their rights are denied via the FGC, thereby ensuring that Māori are never given the opportunity by the state to take responsibility.

The under resourcing of FGC and predetermining funding for outcomes and related care and protection processes for whānau has been influenced by legislation such as the Public Finance Act 1989. Introduced the same year as the CYP&F Act 1989 it shaped the operation of many public sector organisations in the 1990s. This Act governs the use of public funds and directs ministries to keep within set budgets. It was responsible for changing the focus from inputs to outputs and the accountability for these outputs (Dalley, 1998). The Public Finance Act provides a huge challenge for care and protection as the amount of work and costs involved may exceed what has been forecasted. In some cases to stay within the pre-empted cost for each case could mean placing a child at risk. As Dalley (1998) states:

Serious budgetary constraints and potential conflict between the provisions of the Public Finance Act and the Children Young Persons and their Families Act are very real issues within government agencies, which deliver welfare services to children (Dalley, 1998: 363).

Regardless of budget the CYP&F Act clearly directs CYF spending. For example, Section 34

requires the Chief Executive to give effect to decisions, recommendations and plans of the family group conference;

Shall give effect to that decision, recommendation, or plan by the provision of such services and resources, and the taking of such action and steps, as are necessary and appropriate in the circumstances of the particular case (New Zealand Legislation, 2012).

These power and control issues in the sector seem to reflect how little Māori are valued as Te Tiriti partners and as contributing citizens in Aotearoa. It also contributes to whānau experiencing the endless revolving door scenario of care and protection.

Whānau Experiences of FGC

Although told through the eyes of Māori practitioners, the findings of what whānau actually experienced in FGC was also mirrored in what these participants described as their experience of FGC. The finding that non-Māori practitioners and professionals attending an FGC often appeared not to understand the varying ways that whānau express themselves is a particular issue that requires further research. For example, emotional expressions, body language or long silences in which the intangible and/or the spiritual happens. Joan Metge (1978) explains this as:

Culture is a system of shared understandings of what words and actions mean...Pākehās typically fail to recognise that Māori...handle the expression of assent and dissent in ways diametrically opposed to their own...they interpret silence as assent only to become disillusioned when the support the thought was promised is not forth-coming (Metge, 1978:21).

This issue is not simply a language barrier; it is a world view divide. The inability of non-Māori practitioners to engage with whānau effectively contributes to poor experiences of the FGC and outcomes for them. Consequently this often disadvantages practitioners as well as whānau members and is an issue that needs to be recognised and addressed in care and protection.

This finding also provides a valid explanation as to why many whānau say they do not understand the care and protection law or the FGC process and find it contradictory and conflicting. The Māori practitioners views asserted that many whānau are reluctant to speak

up about not understanding FGC or other processes for fear that they will be ridiculed or blamed (i.e. they put themselves in the position of coming to notice, or perhaps believing they are just naturally thick) as this has often been their experience in life. This is a barrier and reflects the inequality that many whānau Māori face on a daily basis. Blame is designed to vindicate or reinforce the denial of those who hold the power (i.e. the social worker and professionals in the FGC) of any responsibility or wrongdoing. The HRC (2012) report explains blaming the marginalised as:

A way of thinking about social problems that locates their origins in the purported deficits and failings of their victims rather than in the social institutions and practices that had brought about and sustained their victimisation (HRC, 2012:15).

There can only be two reasons for the kinds of inequality Māori experience. Either it is Māori nature to experience disadvantage, which is a ‘deficit theory’ and one that the research does not support, or it is structural (HRC, 2012). This means that Māori genuinely face greater barriers than others in achieving good health, good education, decent work and an adequate standard of living (HRC, 2012).

The disempowering treatment the participants reported that whānau receive through the FGC and related care and protection processes is an example of structural (also known as systemic) discrimination. This occurs when an entire network of rules and practices disadvantage less empowered groups while at the same time advantaging the dominant group. This includes the dominant group doing little or nothing to address this (HRC, 2012). Whilst ethnically based decisions made by social workers in care and protection may affect a modest number of whānau Māori, institutional policy and practice can systematically disadvantage all Māori with the consequences of it compounding and enduring for many years. This is highlighted in the historical chapter of this research, with the cultural genocide of whānau hapū and iwi resulting from assimilation policies imposed by the Crown between 1847 and 1960 (Jackson 1988 & Walker, 1992). In terms of the effective reinvigoration of FGC practice in Aotearoa research needs to be carried out to bring these issues to the fore, particularly research that directly engages the indigenous experience.

Māori Research and FGC Development

It is compelling that 26 years after the release of Pūao-te-Ata-Tū and 23 years since the

establishment of the FGC that the literature on the Māori experience of the care and protection FGC is non-existent. This is despite both of these movements being sourced from Māori. This thesis has found that whilst Aotearoa leads the world on FGC sourced from its indigenous people, it fails exceptionally in research that advances the model for its indigenous people. Although not a legislated process like it is in Aotearoa, the success of the FGC has been heralded across various Western countries such as the United Kingdom, Sweden and Canada where it has been significantly advanced as a social work intervention. In these countries the FGC has advanced because of research that has directly engaged with families/professionals who have been involved in the process. Consequently they have learnt what does not work well about the model and this has been addressed to improve the process and experience for families. In contrast, Aotearoa is well known for its lack of FGC research particularly with its indigenous people (see Smith, Gollop, Taylor, & Atwool, 1999; Connolly, 2004; Atwool, 2006; & Doolan 2006).

According to Māori practitioners who participated in this research a CYF evaluation of recent legislation changes to strengthen the FGC or the impact upon whānau of newer initiatives such as Whānau Ora are unlikely to produce anything new. This sense of participants 'no faith' aligns with Harris (2008) who asserts that CYF reports are conventionally narrow in approach, statistically based or focus only on immediate outcomes. This finding is also confirmed by the wealth of ministerial research to date where Māori barely feature except as a deficit. This supports the assertion that policy is evidence based and only interested in outcomes rather than research that develops social work practice.

The evaluation of programme effectiveness with whānau, particularly over a longer term is essential for meaningful development of the FGC. Only research that directly engages with Māori will provide authentic and valid findings. Findings that make researchers and policy advisors aware of the range of drivers and explanations for Māori over-representation, such as institutional racism, biased practice and long-term impact of social and economic dislocation via the colonisation process (Tauri, 2004). The 'one world view and one-size fits all' approach to social service provision permits both the unconsciousness of ethnic inequalities and the privilege of non-Māori (by absolving them of any responsibility or wrongdoing).

Proactive Monoculturalism

The theme of ‘one world view and one size fits all’ was woven through all of the findings of this research. The Māori practitioners described this as the mainstream or dominant mode of social work practice in Aotearoa that is in essence proactive monoculturalism. According to the results, on an individual practitioner level a ‘one world view’ is where mainstream practice is dependent upon the practitioner’s professional judgement; they investigate, assess and intervene. Their judgement depends upon their value system sourced from their own view of how the world works. This one world view then determines how they interpret and implement the principles of the Act (Rimene, 1994). According to the participants, a practitioner who operates from a ‘one world’ view and whose value system is diametrically opposed to a Māori world view is disadvantaged and even ill-qualified to work with whānau.

At a collective or organisational level ‘one world view and one size fits all’ as the universal approach applies to all groups regardless of their differences, needs or the barriers they face in that system. This means that organisations need to move beyond their ‘one world view and one-size fits all’ assumptions and trust that Māori are their own best experts, capable of taking care of their own needs if sufficiently resourced. Weaver (1999), Libesman (2004), and Hollis-English (2005 & 2012) assert the need for effective and equal partnerships at all levels between organisations and Māori. Whānau have a right under Te Tiriti to be able to work in partnership with organisations and have access to sufficient resources. This includes access to social work practitioners who are qualified (culturally competent/bicultural capable) to practice with whānau. Organisations need to relinquish power and control, devolving responsibility and equitable share of the resources to communities via a more collaborative and community based response to service delivery (Libesman, 2004). For interventions to be effective for whānau, Māori need to be involved in the initiation of programmes from identification of community needs to designing and directly delivering programmes themselves. They also need to be involved at all stages of programme development, change and local evaluation of these such as with FGC (Weaver, 1999).

As noted previously (see Chapter Three) Libesman's (2004) literature review on FGC and child protection found that ‘one size fits all’ approaches do not work. She contends that generalising indigenous families into the larger mainstream mix is proactive monoculturalism and contributes to the over-representation of indigenous people’s world wide in Western legislative frameworks. The implication of this is that indigenous commentary on child

protection issues is often totally absent from literature reviews, ministerial reports, cabinet papers and strategic documents. Through this we witness the systematic deletion of indigenous knowledge throughout the child protection sector (Love, 2002; Atwool, 2004; & Tauri, 2011).

A prime example of this would be the recent 'White Paper for Vulnerable Children' (MSD, 2012) in which the epic omission was any reference to the prevalence of family violence in Aotearoa. When it comes to our profile of child abuse and maltreatment, the 'massive Moa in the room' is the over-representation of Māori children. Half of the children killed through maltreatment are Māori and they are twice as likely as other groups to be subjected to child abuse (Misa, 2012 & Kelly, 2012). Not only does the White Paper fail to specifically address this issue it completely ignores poverty as a key contributor in the abuse of children (Trevett, 2012).

Tauri (2011) explains the deletion of Māori knowledge as a tendency for the West to read the world from its own position rather than a position of the West's impact on other regions or peoples. In other words Western commentators will analyse and speak about the 'indigenous other' by focusing on mainly Western texts and theories. In terms of Māori knowledge building Tauri (2011) describes the universal approach as a 'war of knowledge' whereby Western science is deemed to be the zenith of human knowledge construction in non-Māori institutions (i.e. universities, government departments and funding organisations). For example the theory that any knowledge obtained can be applied to all people regardless of ethnicity, social and historical context.

Māori continue to be submerged into the mainstream mix of monoculturalist discourse and are misrepresented by those who are privileged and powerful, policy-makers, academics, managers and authors who seek to speak as experts on behalf of them. The implication of treating everyone the same leads to the assumption that they are the same. This ignores their unique differences and specific issues/needs (i.e. social barriers). Diluting the Māori experience only serves to perpetuate their disempowerment through the mindlessness of the role played by colonisation, cultural genocide and structural discrimination in the continued over-representation of Māori in the system. This can be seen within the policy sector of care and protection where only the individual factors of social need are focused on whilst the structural drivers are ignored because they are the 'too hard basket' and un-measurable.

The results of this study raised a further question: *How much of policy, legislation,*

intervention design and funding decisions are informed by Eurocentric, imported theories and interventions? ‘One-size fits all’ approaches (social work models, methods, risk assessment tools) such as the RES tool are predominantly Western derived (Eurocentric) and incapable of accounting for historical (i.e. colonisation, dispossession and whānau dismemberment) as well as contemporary factors (urbanisation and structural discrimination) that negatively impact upon whānau Māori.

One implication of the results of this study is that the social policy advice to Government should reconsider its reliance on the importation of socially and culturally inappropriate interventions and instead, work directly with local Māori communities to develop effective solutions that are unique to the Aotearoa’s indigenous context (Tauri, 2009 & 2011). The policy sector also needs to improve their relationship with frontline Māori practitioners. A good place to start would be to consult them and actually involve them in research, policy and legislation changes that impact upon practice and outcomes for whānau, such as the recent legislation changes to FGC. In terms of FGC development, Tauri (2010) is very vocal on the issue of Māori invisibility being a form of authoritarianism that partner with the policy sector in isolating the indigenous voice by seeking to speak for them. Power sharing, partnership and bottom-up approaches need to be encouraged as opposed to the dominant policy driven processes such as the present mode of ‘top-down managerialism’ focused on fiscal responsibility, accountability and measurable outcomes. The top-down approach is premised on ensuring state control of programme design, delivery and funding in social services which does not work for Māori because Māori taking responsibility for the development of their own people is a bottom-up approach (Tauri, 2012).

The present Māori and community requirement is to decentralise and design services from the ‘bottom-up’ or from a community’s perspective, which is grounded in a more complete understanding of its social reality. The real challenge is to move from mandates, which emphasise efficient delivery of services and evidenced based policy to mandates that focus on effective service outcomes. For example, policy should allow for diversity in communities, not define Māori in relation to non-Māori and/or treat them as an ‘add on.’

Collective Responsibility

Who is responsible for perpetuating the inequality that Māori experience particularly in care and protection? Is it MSD that silence Māori, or the policy sector that does not engage

directly with Māori when evaluating programmes. Is it the academic institutions that approve post-graduate level research that exclude the Māori experience even though they form 15% of the population and 50% of the statistics in all systems (MSD, 2010). Is it ethnocentric monoculturalist social commentators like Michael Laws, and political commentators like Don Brash, who have been allowed to elevate themselves and their own agendas by promoting negativity, ignorance and borderline ‘inciting hatred’ about Māori. Examples include Mr Laws continual radio commentary on ‘Māori child killers’ (Laws, 2010) and Mr Brash’s Orewa speeches and ‘one rule for all’ policy that suggested Māori should be assimilated (Brash, 2004 & 2010).

It is also worth asserting the need for authors who have written extensively on FGC (who are mindful of their contribution in the marginalisation of Māori) to have the courage and foresight to challenge a status quo that generalises Māori into the mainstream mix. These writers need to ask themselves *On whose back am I promoting my expertise?* The results of this research also asks professional and regulatory bodies (i.e. ANZASW and SWRB) to question if they are doing enough to address the lack of bicultural capability in current and future social work practice?

Throughout the literature there are a number of authors who advocate for Māori practitioners to challenge the status quo so that the body of Māori social work knowledge and practice is strengthened (see Jackson, 1988; Bradley, 1995; Te Whaiti et al, 1998; Ruwhiu, 1999; Love, 2002; Tapiata-Walsh, 2003; Bell, 2003; O’Donoghue, 2003; Libesman, 2004; Eruera, 2005; Hollis, 2006; & Tauri, 2010). This research has sought to do just this and although it pays tribute to Māori practitioners, at the same time it seeks to challenge them to ‘waha nui’ and record their experiences. It may not be traditional or tūturu Māori to record knowledge, however in contemporary times and with the various advanced technological tools, we need to be mindful that there are many non-Māori who believe that if it’s not written down, then it is not valid knowledge (Tauri, 2012). As Tauri (2012) asserts when talking about Māori knowledge being described by non-Māori commentators as deviant knowledge:

I would rather our work be considered deviant than hide behind the ideological facade expressed in such terms as 'empirical', 'scientific', 'rational' and 'value-free'. We should embrace and celebrate ‘deviant knowledge;’ for at least ‘our knowledge’ is derived from engagement with our communities (Tauri 2012)¹¹.

¹¹ Sourced from: <http://juantauri.blogspot.co.nz/2012/03/control-freaks-and-criminologists.html>

Indigenous and other critical scholars, commentators, social and community workers need to be aware of information provided by ministries, the policy industry and academia that collectively converge to silence the Māori voice. Don't be fooled into believing that just because a glossy report is adorned with kowhaiwhai, has smiling Māori faces and states certain facts about Māori, that it is accurate. One can still be a part of the colonising machine as well as challenge the status quo towards the development of Māori social work in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Summary

This chapter explained the meaning and implications of the challenges for Māori practitioners in care and protection, and also the challenges for whānau Māori in FGC. How these challenges related to the literature in terms of their transferability for other Māori practitioners and Māori social work practice in Aotearoa was also discussed.

The key findings from Māori practitioners in this study showed that the challenges they face in the care and protection system largely stem from the lack of biculturalism, Māori practitioners and culturally competent practitioners in the sector. The practice examples of most concern to participants, which highlighted cultural incompetency in the sector, were 'patch and dispatch' and 'not investigating a child's whakapapa.' In terms of the challenges for whānau in FGC the findings showed that it is a state centred process before it is a whānau centred process and that whānau genuinely struggle with understanding the care and protection law as well as their rights, roles and responsibilities inside the FGC. Tikanga Māori is secondary to the ministries fiscal control of the process, as participants described with their comments on under resourcing of FGC and the predetermined funding for outcomes.

This research found that the inequality that Māori practitioners and whānau experience in care and protection is born from ethnocentric (Pākehā as superior) monoculturalism (the one 'right' culture). These are powerful and ingrained characteristics of a 'one-world' view and 'one-size fits all' culture. These characteristics cannot be seen but are very real concepts that operate outside the level of individual or collective conscious awareness, and therefore are harmful to Māori (Jackson, 1988, Rimene, 1994; Love 2002; Tauri, 2010 & 2012). Both concepts define the reality of structural discrimination that advantage non-Māori whilst disadvantaging Māori (HRC, 2012). Although most social workers believe in equality and diversity, the inability to deconstruct these two concepts allows practitioners and

organisations to continue implementing policies and practices that disadvantage whānau Māori.

Māori have a right under Te Tiriti o Waitangi to be accountable to their own people and processes, and MSD as an agent of the Crown is obligated to effectively resource and ensure this (HRC, 2012). The 'Moa in the Room' and title of this chapter refer to how the system reports to meet the needs of Māori, such as with the 'culturally responsive' and 'empowering' FGC process, whilst ignoring the factors that keep Māori over-represented in the care and protection system. Further research on the key issues raised in this study is required and only research that directly engages with Māori will provide authentic and valid findings towards improved FGC practice and related care and protection issues for them. Findings are required that make researchers and policy advisors aware of the range of drivers and explanations for Māori over-representation, such as institutional racism, biased practice and long-term impact of social and economic dislocation via the colonisation process (Tauri, 2004).

The next chapter speaks back to the aims of the research. In revisiting the main findings and key points raised, some final reflections are made.

Chapter Seven

WHAKARITORITO

“Tungia te ururua, kia tupu whakaritorito te tupu o te harakeke.”

“Burn the over-growth to enable the flax to bring forth new shoots.”

(Author unknown: As cited in Māori Proverbs, 2012)

This research explored the challenges that Māori social workers and whānau face with FGC and related care and protection issues. This concluding chapter revisits the research, the research process and findings and offers some thoughts on future research and policy as well as reflections on undertaking this study.

The Research Reviewed

The research chose the researcher and was inspired by two sources. Firstly, the researcher worked with wāhine Māori experiencing family violence that consistently voiced negative experiences of the FGC process. Secondly, the researcher’s experience of being raised as a state ward and thus knowing what it is for a child to be lost to whānau Māori. The initial aim of the research was to create space for long serving Māori social workers to share their experiences of the challenges they and whānau face in FGC and related care and protection processes. However, over the course of the research and due to the giant ‘Moa in the room’ the aim grew into talking about ‘what is not being talked about’ in the sector. This is contrary to what FGC proponents, academia, CYF national office and its policy arm suggests, in fact Māori are too often disempowered through the FGC process and their experiences of it are ignored.

The Historical Context

In traditional Māori society whānau, hapū and iwi were responsible for the nurture, care and protection of their children. With the forced migration of Māori to the cities post World War II

tribal organisation was fractioned and Māori came to the attention of the welfare and justice authorities. Māori children were taken into state care in evident numbers culminating in Māori protest and reports of institutional racism in DSW. The instrumental Pūao-te-Ata-Tū report followed and its findings significantly influenced the development of the new CYP&F Act 1989.

The new Act introduced government initiatives such as an increase in frontline Māori workers and the family group conferencing (Connolly, 2004; Hollis, 2006). However, for some these initiatives were nothing more than tokenism; a grafting of Māori faces and processes onto the same monocentric welfare system (Tauri, 1999; Love, 2000). The economic reforms of the late 1980s and early 1990s slashed the social welfare budget (Levine, 2000; Waldegrave & Coy, 2005; & Connolly, 2006) and effectively eroded Māori social work and FGC. What had been envisaged for Māori through Pūao-te-Ata-Tū, like the light of the dawn that Pūao-te-Ata-Tū represented, never shone on whānau, hapū and iwi (Bradley, 1997; Pakura, 2005; Hollis-English, 2012).

The Contemporary Context

The challenges of Māori practitioners in care and protection include; constant organisational, policy and practice changes that obstruct the development of Māori specific programmes and practices and being invisible and/or isolated inside organisations. It also includes a lack of Kaupapa Māori supervision, leadership and cultural support, a lack of Māori practitioners across the social services resulting in competition, high turnover, knowledge loss, work overload and burnout. Other challenges include not being consulted on or involved in proposed policy and legislation changes and how these changes might impact upon them as Māori workers such as implications around professional registration.

In terms of FGC, international researchers have gainfully advanced the practice overseas however negligible attention has been paid to researching its effectiveness at home (Connolly, 2004; & Doolan 2006). Many proponents of FGC assert it as a model of family empowerment although the opposite applies to Māori (Rimene, 1994; Love 2002; Hollis, 2006; & Tauri 1999, 2004 & 2010). Whilst the actual model works well, it is the administration of the FGC process as it continues to be practised in Aotearoa that fails it (Tauri, 2010). The specific

issues for whānau around FGC are largely due to insufficient resourcing, lack of culturally competent practice and self-determination.

Whilst there is a multitude of literature available on the benefits of FGC for families, there is no recent research that engages directly with whānau about their experiences of care and protection FGC. This is despite Māori making up half the total families subject to FGCs. Any literature on FGC in Aotearoa has tended to generalise Māori into the greater mainstream of studies rendering them inaudible, denying Māori validation of their own diverse and unique realities. This is no longer acceptable.

Summary of Research Findings

The key findings from participants in this study showed that Māori practitioners compensate for the lack of cultural competence that exists in care and protection by taking on various ‘in-between’ roles. This was evidenced through what participants described as the practices of ‘patch and dispatch’ and ‘not investigating a child’s whakapapa’ due to mainstream social workers being unable to work biculturally. The research also showed that Māori social workers practiced inside the dominant mode of ‘one world view and one-size fits all.’ This made them invisible and/or isolated inside organisations and often occurred without sufficient Māori supervision, leadership and cultural support. This resulted in high turnover, knowledge loss, work overload and burnout (Love, 2002; NZCCSS, 2010). This position for Māori practitioners in care and protection warrants further research.

As a model, the care and protection FGC in Aotearoa has huge potential but as it is currently practised, the quality of it, in terms of process and outcomes for whānau, is poor. The findings showed the challenges for whānau Māori in FGC are by in large that they do not understand care and protection law and are not well informed about their rights, responsibilities and role in the FGC. Whānau said to participants that practitioners cannot engage with them and thus FGCs are often not well organised to enable more whānau to attend. They also indicated that FGC is not whānau decision-making; *“it’s about what CYF want rather than what whānau need.”*

The findings also showed that whānau are not being appropriately assessed and outcomes are

being predetermined for them. This, along with the lack of tikanga Māori, and the misuse of the FGC to forward the social workers agenda are all elements that disempower whānau and erode the quality of the FGC. On a positive note, this research evidenced some improved care and protection FGC practice being implemented in the lower North Island region. This was mainly around improving the participation of young people and whānau in the FGC by creatively involving and informing them of their roles, rights and responsibilities in the FGC.

This research talked about the structural discrimination that whānau Māori face in care and protection. There is little bicultural capability that exists in the sector and this leads to Māori being misunderstood and treated differently than non-Māori based on ethnicity. This specifically concerned not investigating a child's whakapapa or a whānau's intergenerational involvement within care and protection systems and the use of culturally inappropriate imported tools with whānau. In addition to this there was the ignoring of the Māori experience of FGC and related care and protection processes by generalising them into the mainstream mix of research, ministerial reports and programme evaluations.

Updating the CYP&F Act 1989 in terms of addressing the deficiencies that families have been identifying over the years regarding the eroded FGC process will be an ongoing process. This is evidenced by the proposed legislation changes under the White Paper and the HRC (2012) report: Inquiry into the Determinants of Wellbeing for Māori Children. However, it takes more than just updating the Act, it means updating a system that has clocked its 'use by date.' A good place to start would be a conscious effort by leaders in the sector to consider the focus and issues that were raised in this study. Further research is required that directly engages with Māori and provides authentic and valid findings that work towards an improved FGC practice and related care and protection issues for them. Findings are required that make researchers and policy advisors aware of the range of drivers and explanations for Māori over-representation, such as institutional racism, biased practice and long-term impact of social and economic dislocation via the colonisation process (Tauri, 2004).

Finally, this research appeals to the current Chief Social Worker who is world renowned for his contribution to FGC knowledge; Find out what whānau Māori really experience in the FGC and dare to be a leader that makes a genuine difference in social work practice with whānau Māori in Aotearoa. It's time the 'Moa in the room' left the building.

The Research Process

At the heart of this research are the experiences of seven long serving Māori social workers and ANZASW members working in the care and protection system. The researcher aimed to discover the participants' own framework of meanings based upon their world view and professional and life experience. A Māori centred approach, drawing strongly from Kaupapa Māori theory and principles, using qualitative methods was employed. This design was purposefully chosen as both Kaupapa Māori and Māori centred research are born from a desire to use research processes by Māori, with Māori, for the benefit of Māori. This desire firmly places Māori experiences and concerns at the heart of the research project (Smith, 1999; & Durie, 2003).

One-on-one, semi-structured, open and in-depth interviews were effective methods through which the voices of the seven participants were made visible in such an important and neglected area of social work practice with whānau. The research approach was an open and evolving one where issues and themes were captured and built upon. The advantages of utilising this method was that explanations of terms could be provided, clarification sought and the participants could explain their views as much or as little as they liked (O'Leary (2011).

The strategy of 'researching back' was also useful in locating colonising aspects in the theoretical and historical literature. To enable a fuller story to be told the researcher provided two chapters on the topic, one historical and one contemporary. As Jackson (1998) and Eruera (2005) assert; whether one is a social worker, supervisor or researcher in order to effectively work with ones own people, one has to be able to look back in order to see the way forward. This project and its design provided a perfect opportunity to showcase the strengths and limitations of meeting the expectations of two often-opposing world views.

In essence the research chose the researcher so it was appropriate and essential to consult kaimahi involved in Māori Women's Refuge. Further consultation with Māori member groups in ANZASW was also an important step because without their blessing and approval the research would not have been possible. Going through ANZASW also meant that the participants were free to opt into the project without having to seek agency permission or be subject to agency obligations because they were participating as members of that professional body and commenting from that standpoint.

Future Research and Recommendations

- That research is carried out on the specific issues raised in this study. In particular, the lack of bicultural practice and culturally competent practitioners in care and protection as was described with the practices of ‘patch and dispatch’ and ‘not investigating a child’s whakapapa.’ A good place for this to begin is with MSD funding research that utilises a Kaupapa Māori approach.
- That research is carried on care and protection FGC that directly engages with whānau Māori who have experienced a FGC, particularly more than one FGC.
- That research is carried out exploring an alternative whānau decision-making process that is held and controlled in the community with the same elements as FGC (not Strengthening Families as this is not a whānau centered process), however with an informal status (i.e. the model suggested by the MYC [2011] for youth justice FGCs – and a process that can be held sooner rather than later for whānau).
- That all social work tertiary institutions review their teaching curriculum and social work professional/registration bodies such as ANZASW and SWRB review their process for approving the ‘cultural competency’ of social workers.

Concluding Statement

I remember as a child being taken from my whānau and placed into a Pākehā institution. My siblings and I were all under the age of five and the state never returned us to our whānau. I spent all of my adolescent years trying to get home to my parents. In all its wisdom at the time DSW decided that we (blue eyed, fair haired Māori babies) were better off in the care of the state. This despite us growing up experiencing defective adult behaviour by those charged with our care in ways children should never be exposed to.

This cultural alienation and abuse of Māori children despite the best of intentions by a monocultural state is unacceptable, and it is with this experience in mind that I have been motivated to complete this research journey. For all those tamariki that are transacted through the system without their whakapapa and whānau, this research is for you. For all of those tamarariki that have had the cultural aspects that make them uniquely special taken from

them, this research is for you. For wāhine Māori and tamariki experiencing family violence, this research is for you.

Finally, whilst reflecting upon this research journey, I am reminded of Alice Walker (1944) when she said, “*The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don’t have any.*” It is likely in representing the voices of my participants in the way that I have in this research, it will be unpalatable for many key stakeholders in care and protection. It is also likely that I have limited my capacity for future work prospects, however that is the price one pays for speaking out. I have learned on this journey that one need not carry a weapon to be a ‘warrior wāhine toa.’ After a lifetime of giving my power away, a pen and a Ngāti Porou heart is more than one needs to give back to her own and in doing so, I now feel able to return home and begin the next phase of this very important mahi.

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Glossary

A

Aotearoa - New Zealand

Aroha - love, sympathise

Aroha ki te tangata - respect for people

Atawhaingia te pā Harakeke - a programme to assist traumatised children

Au - me, I (singular)

Awa - river

Awatere - a ancestral river in Te Araroa, New Zealand

H

Hapū - sub tribe

Harakeke - flax plant

Hinerupe - a Ngāti Porou rangatira and marae in Te Araroa

Hōhā - annoyed, bored, nuisance

Horouta - ancestral canoe of East Coast tribes

Hui - gathering, to assemble, meet

I

Ingoa – name, to acquire distinction

Iwi - tribe

K

Kāhui - flock, cluster, group of stars

Kai - food

Kaimahi Māori - Māori worker

Kaimahi whānau - family worker

Kāinga - home

Kaitiakitanga - guardianship, trustee

Kanohi kitea - a face seen (i.e. at an event)

Kanohi ki te kanohi - face to face

Karakia - prayer, chant

Katoa - all, every, total, whole

Kaua e takahia te mana o te tangata - take care not to trample on the mana of people

Kaua e māhaki - be humble, do not flaunt your knowledge

Kaumātua - elders (male and female)

Kaupapa - context, purpose

Kaupapa Māori - Māori philosophy

Kawanatanga - governorship, authority

Kia tūpato - be cautious

Koha – donation, gift

Kōhanga – nest, nursery

Kōmihana – commission
Kōrari - flower stem of the flax
Kōrero - narrative
Koro - elderly man, grandfather
Kuia - old woman, grandmother
Kura - school, education

M

Mahi - work
Mai rānō - ever since, from a long time ago
Mana - status, integrity, charisma, prestige, status, power
Mana tūpuna/tīpuna - ancestral /whakapapa connections
Manāki - help, embrace
Manāki ki tangata - be generous in sharing with and hosting people
Māori - indigenous New Zealander
Māoritanga - Māori culture, perspective
Māorifying - trying to make something non-Māori into something Māori
Marae - meeting area of whānau or iwi
Mātauranga - knowledge
Mātua - parents
Mātua whāngai - caring for children of relatives
Matāku - fearful
Maunga - Mountain
Mauriora - awareness, life principle
Mihi - to greet, pay tribute, acknowledge
Moa - large flightless extinct bird
Mokopuna - grandchild
Mua - in front
Muri - behind

N

Noho - stay
Nui - big, many, plentiful

NG

Ngā - the (*plural*)
Ngā wā - the time
Nga Kaiwhakamārama i Ngā Ture: Wellington Māori Legal Service
Ngāti Porou - tribal group from the East Coast area
Ngāti Raukawa - tribal group from the Maungatautari-Tokoroa area

O

Ora - well, wellbeing

P

Pākehā - non-Māori, European, Caucasian

Pono - truth, valid, honesty

Poroporoaki - closing ceremony, farewell

Pūao te Āta tū – daybreak: a report by the Ministerial Advisory Committee on a Maori Perspective for the Department of Social Welfare (1986).

R

Rangahau - research, survey

Rangatahi - modern youth

Rangatira - chief, leader

Rangatiratanga - sovereignty, chieftainship

Raruraru - trouble, problem

Reo - language

Rite - alike, same

Rite tahi – equality, rights and responsibilities of common citizenship

Rohe - territory, region

Rōpu - group

Rūnanga - council, assembly, board

T

Tamaiti - child

Tamariki - children

Tangata - person (also tāngata – people)

Tangata whenua - indigenous, local people, aborigine, native

Taonga - treasure

Tapu - forbidden, confidential, restricted

Tau - year

Tauira - student

Tauiwi - foreigner, non-Māori, immigrants

Tautoko - support

Te Ao Māori - a Māori worldview and/or the Māori worldview

Te Araroa - town on the upper East Coast

Te Kōhanga Reo - Māori language total immersion pre-school

Te Kōmako - a journal for the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers

Te Oru Rangahau - a Māori research and development conference at Massey University (1998)

Te Pokapu Rangahau Arotake Hapori - the centre for social research and evaluation, Ministry of Social Development

Te Pumanawa Hauora - Māori health research programme at Massey University

Te Puni Kōkiri - Ministry of Māori Development

Te Punga - Report published by the Department of Social Welfare (1994). Our bicultural strategy for the nineties.

Te Putahi A Toi - school of Māori studies, Massey University
Te Tiriti - The Treaty of Waitangi
Te Whetumatarau – ancestral mountain that’s overlooks Te Araroa
Tēina - younger sibling
Tihei mauri ora - behold there is life
Tika - correct, accurate, valid
Tīkanga - custom, practices
Tino rangatiratanga - self determination, sovereignty
Tīpuna / Tūpuna - ancestors, grandparents
Titiro - see, look
Titiro whakarongo kōrero - look and listen and then speak
Tohetohe – to argue, persistence
Tonga - southern, south east
Tuakana - older sibling
Tupu - grow, develop
Tūturu - real, authentic
Tūwhakairora - ancestor of the Tūwhakairora people of Ngāti Porou

U

Ururua – to be overgrown

W

Waiata - song, chant
Wairau - spirit
Wairuatanga - spirituality
Waka - canoe, vehicle
Wānanga - seminar, conference, learning place

WH

Wāhine - Māori woman
Whāea - mother, aunt or older female
Whaimatauranga – in pursuit of knowledge
Whaiora - client, literally to pursue wellbeing
Whaka - cause something to happen
Whākamā - shy, to be ashamed
Whakanoa - to make something right
Whakaritorito - bringing forth new shoots of the harekeke plant
Whakaaro - thought, opinion, plan
Whakatauākī - proverb, saying
Whānau - wider family group
Whānau Ora - family wellbeing, a government policy released in 2010
Whanaungatanga - relationship, kinship
Whawhai - to fight, argue
Whenua – land

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Massey University Human Ethics Approval



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA

5 March 2012

Paula Moyle

WELLINGTON

Dear Paula

Re: HEC: Southern B Application – 12/01
From family group conferencing to Whanau Ora: Maori social workers talk about their experiences

Thank you for your letter dated 5 March 2012.

On behalf of the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B I am pleased to advise you that the ethics of your application are now approved. Approval is for three years. If this project has not been completed within three years from the date of this letter, reapproval must be requested.

If the nature, content, location, procedures or personnel of your approved application change, please advise the Secretary of the Committee.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N Matthews'.

Dr Nathan Matthews, Chair
Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B

cc Dr Kieran O'Donoghue
School of Health & Social Services
PN371

Mrs Awhina English
School of Health & Social Services
PN371

Prof Steve LaGrow, HoS
School of Health & Social Services
PN371

Massey University Human Ethics Committee
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Appendix 2 – Interview Guide



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
TE KURA PUKENGA TANGATA

From Family Group Conferencing to Whānau Ora: Māori Social Workers Talk about Their Experiences

INTERVIEW GUIDE

This research aims to explore the challenges that Māori social workers face in the care and protection and discover their views about how recent legislation changes to FGC and newer policies such as Whānau Ora are impacting upon outcomes for Māori whanau.

1. What have been your experiences in care and protection?
 - What roles have you had? For how long?
 - What did you find rewarding in your work with whanau?
 - What was challenging?
 - What surprised you?
 - How did practice change over time?

2. What do you know about the recent legislation changes to FGC and policies?

3. Do you recall how care and protection FGC's were before the changes?
 - In your view what were the strengths of the FGC process?
 - Some of the key challenges that whanau identified that led to the changes?
 - Some of the challenges other key-players identified?

4. How do you feel FGC practice compares now?
 - What are its strengths?
 - What has changed particularly that directly impacts upon life outcomes for whanau?
 - What has changed for you as a practitioner working with whanau in this process?
 - What still needs to improve in terms of the development of the practice?

Appendix 3 – Information Sheet



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
TE KURA PUKENGA TANGATA

From Family Group Conferencing to Whanau Ora: Maori Social Workers Talk about Their Experiences

*Ko te Whetumatarau te maunga
Ko Awatere te awa
Ko Horouta te waka
Ko Ngati Porou te iwi
Ko Tuwhakairiora te tangata
Ko Hinerupe te marae
Nga mihi ki a koutou katoa*

My name is Paora Moyle and I am conducting a Maori-centred research project investigating the experiences of Maori social workers who work in care and protection and discover their views about; how recent legislation changes to *Family Group Conferencing* and newer policies such as *Whanau Ora* are impacting upon outcomes for Maori whanau.

This research project is relevant to current issues in social work policy, practice and programme development and its findings have the potential to make an original contribution to knowledge development and clinical practice in Aotearoa. There are potential benefits to Maori and non-Maori social workers, Maori whanau and social service organisations

This research is being conducted as part of the requirements to complete the Master of Social Work and will be supervised by Dr Kieran O'Donoghue and Dr Awhina English of the School of Health and Social Sciences. If you are interested in learning more about this study and think you may fit the criteria then please do not hesitate to contact me for further information: pmoyle2@yahoo.co.nz or text/phone 021 068 9773.

Participating in this research

Maori social workers who are ANZASW members and who have worked with whanau in and around the care and protection field for at least the last five years are invited to participate in this research.

There are three phases in this research project that you will be asked to participate in. The first stage involves a hui between yourself and me. This hui will provide an opportunity for you to learn more about the research and ask any questions, as well as allowing whakawhanungatanga to occur so you feel more comfortable with me as the researcher. It is expected that the initial hui may take between 30-45 minutes however there is no time limit being placed on this hui, it will be at your discretion. Please note, if it is more convenient for you, or you do not feel the need to have two separate hui, we can combine the initial whakawhanaungatanga hui with the second (interviewing) hui.

The second phase will be another hui which will involve me going over your rights as a participant and then obtaining written consent from you. The interview will then be conducted which will be recorded. During the interview I will ask you to speak about your experiences as a Maori social worker working in care and protection and what challenges you face and what has improved around recent changes to FGC and newer policies such as Whanau Ora. This interview is expected to take approximately 2 hours.

If you would like to have a support person or whanau member accompany you to the hui then you are most welcome to do so. Also, in order to ensure your confidentiality in this project all identifying information, including your name, will be removed from the raw data. Instead, you may use a code or pseudonym if you wish.

Te Kunenga
ki Purehuroa

School of Health and Social Services
Private Bag 11222, Palmerston North 4442, New Zealand T +64 6 356 9099 www.massey.ac.nz

Finally, the third phase will be the debrief hui. During this time I will discuss my analysis with you and what I have interpreted from your interview. You may provide feedback to ensure my analysis is accurate and correct. It is thought that this hui may take 30-45 minutes to complete however; again this will be primarily determined by you. Once this is done, the final report will be written.

In acknowledgement of your participation in this research project a koha in the form of a petrol voucher will be given to you. Kai will also be provided at all hui that you attend. All information from this research including, consent forms, notes from the hui and the recorded interviews will be stored safely and securely. The researcher and supervisor will be the only ones who have access to the information. Once the report is written up, you will have the option of having your interview information returned to you, otherwise it will be destroyed appropriately. The consent forms will also be destroyed upon completion of the research. You will be asked at the debrief hui if you would like a summary of the projects findings, if you do, I will get your contact details and ensure this is mailed to you in due course.

Participant's Rights

Please note you are under no obligation to accept this invitation to participate in this research project. Also, if you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- withdraw from the study at any time until the results are published.
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;
- be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.
- because all interviews will be recorded using a digital voice recorder you have the right to ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview.

Project Contacts

Paora Moyle is the key researcher in this project

pmoyle2@yahoo.co.nz

021 068 9773

Dr Awhina English (Ngati Porou) is the first supervisor

a.english@massey.ac.nz

06 356 9099 or 0800 MASSEY ext 2829

Dr Kieran O'Donoghue is the associate supervisor

k.b.odonoghue@massey.ac.nz

06 356 9099 or 0800 MASSEY ext 2818

Please do not hesitate to contact Paora, Awhina or Kieran for any further questions/comments regarding this research.

"This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 12/01. If you have any concerns about the conduct of the research, please contact Dr Nathan Matthews, Acting Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 350 5799 x 8729, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz

Appendix 4 – Consent Form



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
TE KURA PUKENGA TANGATA¹

From Family Group Conferencing to Whanau Ora: Maori Social Workers Talk about Their Experiences

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM – INDIVIDUAL

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me.

My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I understand the information at the interview will be voice recorded by the researcher but that I have the right to ask for the recorder to be turned off at any point during the interview phase.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Full Name - printed _____

Appendix 5 – Allocation of Research Supervisors



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
TE KURA PŪKENGĀ TANGATA

16 February 2012

Paula Moyle

WELLINGTON

Dear Paula

Re: Allocation of MSW Research Report Supervisors

This is to formally confirm that supervisors have now been allocated for 2012. This process takes into account, as much as possible, the research outline you have submitted, the research expertise and interests of staff and the individual teaching workloads of academic staff. You have enrolled in 179.899 and have advised that your research topic is:

Research topic: From Family Group Conferencing to Whanau Ora: Maori social workers talk about their experiences.

This letter is to formally advise you that the supervisor you have been allocated is:

Supervisor: Dr Awhina English (1st supervisor) and Dr Kieran O'Donoghue (2nd supervisor)

Your supervisor will be contacting you to make an appointment but you are also encouraged to contact them. Contact telephone and e-mail addresses are in the School's Handbook for Postgraduate Studies. The contact information we have for you is as follows – please check that this is correct.

Telephone:
E-mail address: pmoyle2@yahoo.co.nz
Student ID: 99429887

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Nancy Braithwaite
Senior Administrator

Cc: Martin Sullivan, Kieran O'Donoghue and Awhina English