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Authentication in social work education: the balancing act

Moses Faleolo

Social work education and practice, in regard to non-Western cultures, is struggling to develop and deliver services in an effective, acceptable and culturally appropriate manner. This is because schools of social work, widespread globalisation of Western culture and its scientific knowledge have displaced and been slow to accept non-Western and Indigenous world views, local knowledge and traditional forms of helping and healing. Culturally specific knowledge, values and skills lead to an understanding of other perspectives and cultures; if a social worker's acquisition of these is hampered, then cultural competency is limited. This chapter promotes a cultural authentication approach, where social work education and practices are developed by local cultures to suit their non-Western context and where curricula in Western countries diversify, and incorporate perspectives that are representative and multicultural. It urges a rethinking of what is really universal social work by challenging the dominance of Western beliefs and values.

認證在社會工作教育中的平衡作用

摩西·法萊奧洛

考慮到非西方文化的存在，社會工作教育和實踐在不斷致力於發展和提供有效的、可被接受的、適合本地文化的服務。這是由多種原因導致：首先，提供社會工作專業學習的院校，西方文化的全球化以及非西方文化、本土的世界觀、當地的知識和傳統救助治療體系慢慢接受西方科學知識并逐漸被其取代。有關於文化方面的特定知識、價值和技能會影響個人對於其他觀點和文化的理解。如果一個社會工作者在獲

取這些信息的時候有障礙，那麼其理解文化的能力也會因此被束縛。這個篇開述的是文化認證的過程。社會工作教育和實踐的發展需要倚靠的是不僅是當地文化對非西方文化環境的適應以及多元化的西方國家課程，還包括有代表性的多元文化的綜合視角。此文章通過挑戰西方信仰和價值的主導地位，敦促大家反思到底什麼才是真正廣而適之的社會工作。

ソシヤルワルクの認證：均衡を取る

西洋文化_r外におけるソシヤルワルクは_r育、_rとにも、_r率_r的で社_r的に容認され、かつ各文化にふさわしいサ_rビスの_r展と提供が_rっている。西洋文化_r外におけるソシヤルワルク_r育と_rは、_r率_r的で、社_r的に容認され、なおかつ各文化に適切なサ_rビスの提供と_r展にもがいている。これは、ソシヤルワルクの_r育機_rや、一般に_rがった西洋文化のグローバル化、またその科_r的知識が、西洋以外の_r固有の世界や地方固有の知識、また_r統的なたちの援助や治療を退け、容認することを_rらせていたためである。ソシヤルワルクが各文化特有の知識、_r値_rとしてスキルを習得することとは他の文化や見解を理解することにつながる。もしこれらの習得が妨げられるのなら、ソシヤルワルクの文化的適性は制限されてしまう。この章では、ソシヤルワルク_r育と_rが、地方の文化によって非西洋の環境に適したものとして_r展させられ、西洋諸_rのカリキュラムが多_r化し、代表的で多文化的な考え_r方を組み入れる、文化認証アプローチ(cultural authentication approach)への_rきかけを_rする。これは西洋的な信念と_r値_rの優勢に異議を唱え、本_rにユニバーサルなソシヤルワルクとは何か、再考することを促している。

사회복지교육에서 문화고유성 모색: 형평성 법칙

비서구문화권에서는 사회복지 교육과 실천현장에서 문화적으로 적절하고 효율적인 방법으로 서비스를 제공하는데 어려움을 겪고 있다. 왜냐하면 사회복지교육기관은 대체로 서구문화의 영향을 받았고 고유의 지식, 전통적인 치유방식을 받아들이지 못했기 때문이다. 문화적으로 독특한 지식,

가치, 기술을 익혀 다른 관점과 문화를 이해하는 것, 이런 점들이 사회복지사에게 없다면 문화적인 유능성은 부족할 수밖에 없다. 본 장은 문화적 고유성 접근방식을 모색하며 사회복지교육과 실천을 위해 비서구적 방식 대신 다문화적인 측면과 고유문화를 반영하여 교과과정들을 만들도록 하고 있다. 본 장은 서구의 신념과 가치가 지배하는 구조에 도전하면서 진정으로 보편적인 사회학지지가 무엇인지를 생각하게 한다.

INTRODUCTION

It is essential that any social work curricula be culturally valid so as to prepare social work students comprehensively for working with diversity and multiculturalism. Asian and Pacific Island nations such as China, South Korea and Samoa have an almost homogenous ethnic population makeup and each are the dominant ethnicities within their respective countries, however, when Chinese, South Korean and Samoan nationals migrate to countries such as New Zealand (NZ), they become minority groups. In terms of their cultural capital (indigenous identity, cultural heritage, cultural knowledges and practices), Asia Pacific Island peoples are very strong in their respective homelands; but when they migrate and settle in other countries their cultural validity becomes subordinated and inferior.

Western cultural hegemony and cultural capital have both acted against the onset of cultural valid social work education. The learning base of social work knowledge and skills is predominantly Western, and this form of cultural capital is reproduced in classrooms all around the world on a daily basis. For example, according to McDermott and Nygreen (2013), Farkas (2011), and Demerath (2009) there is nothing new in American educational history about the idea of teaching low-income students of colour how to act and behave more like members of the middle class. Spring (2009), labels the approach as deculturalisation, or 'the educational process of destroying a people's culture (cultural genocide) and replacing it with a new culture' (p. 7). Some social work theories such as human development (see Clairborne & Drewery, 2010); cognitive-behavioural (see González-Prendes, 2012; Schunk and Usher, 2012),

and systems and ecological perspectives (Robbins, Chatterjee, & Canda, 2012; Payne, 2011) are taught as core topics in social work education and are often unquestioned as the core contributions to social work theory learning.

These social work theories are not the only offerings. There are many other contributions, including many grounded in Asian and Pacific Island epistemologies (Faleolo, 2009a; Faleolo, 2009b; Suaali'i-Sauni, Wheeler, Saafi, Robinson, Agnew, Warren, Erick, & Hingano, 2009; Tuafuti, 2013). In an increasingly globalised century, the need for Asian and Pacific Island cultural capital and cultural validity in social work education is paramount. The 21st century social worker requires more integrated or multi-dimensional learning experiences. Samoan-based knowledges and practices (cultural capital) can be an important part of the development of cultural competency for social workers in the Asia Pacific Island region. Samoan knowledge and practices can be a partner sitting alongside Asian and Western-based offerings, each one contributing equally to practice theory, knowledge, skills and cross-cultural approaches.

I had the opportunity to present a paper entitled 'Same but different: The integration of Asian Pacific Island worldviews for social work education' at the 2012 International Conference on Social Work and Social Policy in Hanoi, Vietnam (Faleolo, 2012). My audience were representatives from various agencies and universities from the South East Asian region, America, Australia and NZ. Some were academics and researchers, and some were government employees, students, and practitioners. My ideas attracted numerous interests such as how was it possible for minority groups in NZ to have their worldviews and applications incorporated in Schools of Social Work. I mentioned that indigenous people (Māori) access inclusiveness through the Treaty of Waitangi that holds the dominant population group to account. I was also asked about how the social work teaching content was configured and the kinds of teaching activities that were provided. I referred to having a supportive management team and an environment that is accepting of cultural worldviews. This, I believe, are the main attributing factors that allow for the

incorporation of cultural worldviews which is spread throughout the teaching content in both undergraduate and postgraduate programs and a variety of pedagogy styles to suit the learning development of its student population including varied assessment activities.

One of the concerns I had as I left the conference in Vietnam was that its School of Social Work was developed and modelled by American influences and very little drawn from its local context. A crucial issue and debate in contemporary social work education is social work education and practice, in regard to non-Western cultures, is struggling to develop and deliver services in an effective, acceptable and culturally appropriate manner. This is because schools of social work, widespread globalisation of Western culture and its scientific knowledge have displaced and been slow to accept non-Western and Indigenous world views, local knowledge and traditional forms of helping and healing. Culturally specific knowledge, values and skills lead to an understanding of other perspectives and cultures; if a social worker's acquisition of these is hampered, then cultural competency is limited. I believe truly indigenised and culturally relevant social work knowledge is one that is free from the restrictions and expectations of positivistic Western worldviews.

In this chapter I propose that there are three ways in which indigenous social work practice (the processes through which traditional, indigenous and local helping interventions) can be achieved. Firstly, establish a social work education curriculum where its cultural content is strongly represented, equitable, and culturally relevant for, with and by indigenous peoples. Secondly, incorporate cultural knowledge and practices into the measuring and assessing of cultural competence in social work practice. Lastly, promote the philosophical approach of authentication and urge social workers in non-Western contexts to move away from simply adapting and modifying Western social work theory and practice to that of generating knowledge and practice models from the local context. For example, consider the importance of parables as culturally valid knowledge, for building and understanding knowledge and practices of particular cultures.

The first way of establishing indigenous social work is by an acknowledgement of the strength that cultural worldviews and cultural theories such as Samoan theory brings to other social work theory education, which is capable of commanding attention, and its knowledge considered as equal to other knowledge. Cultural validity is about recognising this strength, authority, and equity of Samoan ways of thinking by positioning its epistemology and methodology alongside Western ways. In other words Samoan concepts, theories, ideas, philosophies, and rationales, as well as Samoan frameworks, models, applications, modes, and techniques, are both authentic and prominent contributions to the learning and teaching of social work students. For example, Mulitalo-Lautā's concept of *Fa'asamoa*, which is partly based on his experience as a former Probation Officer (Mulitalo-Lautā, 2000; see also Faleolo, 2009b; Tuafuti, 2011; Suaali'i-Sauni et al., 2013), and Karl Pulotu-Endemann's *Fonofale Model*, which is partly based on his experience as a former Mental Health worker (Mental Health Commission, 2001; see also Seituli, 2012; Suaali'i-Sauni et al., 2013), are two contributions that accentuate the value of Samoan theorising and practice.

Mulitalo-Lautā's concept of *Fa'asamoa* is a holistic framework made up of five components:

1. the Samoan way;
2. the Samoan heart;
3. protocols and values;
4. social structures and social institutions; and
5. rituals and ceremonies

Taken together these provide an understanding of why Samoans think the way they think and act the way they act, and each component is relevant to social work education. For instance 'the Samoan heart' is an interesting concept, because Mulitalo-Lautā contends that Samoan social workers make decisions by using their hearts not their minds. That is, Samoan social workers follow their instincts or their gut feelings before they rationalise and calculate; or they may just follow their instincts or gut feelings alone. The

Samoan is assessing the social worker in the same fashion, using their instincts or gut feeling about the trustworthiness of the worker and the care the social worker brings into the relationship.

This leads to another component of *Fa'asamoa* 'the Samoan way', which is about the way that Samoan people act or particular mannerisms that are unique to Samoan people. When Samoan people avoid eye-to-eye contact with the social worker, for instance, they are showing a sign of respect, not guilt or non-compliance, because eye-to-eye contact behaviour is considered confrontational. A Samoan social worker would recognise and understand this type of behaviour instantly; a non-Samoan social worker may not.

Samoan people prefer to give even if it means that they would suffer hardship, because they believe that giving will be rewarded. But the reward is not why they give; they give because it is their duty to make sure others are comforted. Deference, or lowering oneself to elevate the other, is a common behavioural feature among Samoan people, as is living communally (two or three families in one house), and having strong spiritual beliefs.

Pulotu-Endemann's model is a holistic framework symbolised by Samoan fale or house:

The Fonofale model proposes four posts that establish the foundation of the fale or house. The foundation represents the *aiga* or family. These four posts hold up the roof, which represents cultural values and beliefs. The first of these posts is spirituality; the other three posts are 'physical' (the relationship between the body and medication, food and water either positively and/or negatively), 'mental' (the health of the mind including the emotional and behavioural states) and 'other' (age, sex, gender, class and other social aspects). Pulotu-Endemann's contention is that if any of the four posts become weak the entire structure or well being of the fale (or Samoan person) will collapse. The Fonofale model is not merely another way of understanding Samoan people, but for social work it is also an assessment tool, that is appropriate when working with Samoan mental health clients. In other words, the components that constitute the Fonofale model are in fact a typology which Samoan

and non-Samoan social workers can use to interview Samoan clients and compile a cultural profile of the Samoan client which can be placed alongside a medical and other psychosocial assessments.

More importantly, Faasamoa and the Fonofale model, illustrate the emergence and acknowledgement of Samoan theorising, which predominantly draws on the experience of being a Samoan, and on Samoan approaches. These approaches translate Samoan theorising into practice or skills, and thus create a significant teleological and culturally responsive learning and teaching experience. Both concepts are easily linked to social work education. Each brings to social work education strength and authority in terms of what each theory would contribute and the importance of incorporating these types of Samoan theorising into the curriculum. Developing this linkage is what degree program and course developers undertook when reviewing their undergraduate and postgraduate content and assessment at Massey University New Zealand. Samoan theorising and applications were placed on equal par with other content, and students from all walks of life were assessed in terms of their cultural competency development. Samoan knowledge and applications were accepted as fundamental and valid forms of theory and practice within mainstream social work education.

MEASURING AND ASSESSING CULTURAL VALIDITY

The second way for indigenous social work to be achieved is through making sure that assessments are fair, feasible and practical. Indigenous social work knowledge is not only important in terms of what and how it is taught, but also about how what is taught is to be measured. This was one of the findings from a research project based on eliciting from first-year Pacific Island BASW students views on culturally valid assessment (Faleolo, Clarke, & Milne, 2008). The pilot study found that there is a need to improve the style and quality of teaching and learning and improve the initial student experiences for Pacific Island students (Koloto, Katoanga & Tatila, 2006; Hodge a& Limb, 2010; Coxon & Arini, 2011). Gay (2010) suggests that teachers should recognise cultural diversities, understand

the cultural background of students and adjust their teaching and assessment accordingly. Collaborative and experiential learning are good approaches for Pacific Island students within a Pacific Island environment (Hynds & McDonald, 2010; Fletcher, Parkhill, Fa'afai, Taleni, & O'Regan, 2009; Koloto et al, 2006). However Pacific Island students are a diverse group and teaching and assessment approaches need to allow for this diversity.

'Culturally valid assessment' is any form of assessment (essay writing, oral presentation, group work, research and role play) that a culture or group prefer and as a result that culture or group are likely to excel in. It is also being aware of cultural issues that can influence the students' performance and using this information to best support the student. The literature search for this project found that there was a lot of literature on assessment, some on culturally related educational delivery, but much less on culturally valid assessment. Exploring culturally valid assessment is important, since assessment design and events, androgogy and moderation are central to learning and will have a significant impact on student learning (Hattie & Timerley, 2007). Social and cultural issues are significant in assessment at a classroom level (May, 2010).

A critical part of this study was to allow the Pacific Island students to speak their truths. Bishop and Berryman (2006), Bensemann, Coxon, Anderson and Anae (2006), Airini, Rakena, O'Shea, Tarawa, Sauni, Ulugia-Pua, Sua-Huirua, and Curtis (2007), Congdon and Congdon (2010) and Waycott, Gray, Thompson, Sheard, Clerehan, Richardson, and Hamilton (2010) use this participatory approach to assessment. Focus group participants were asked about their experiences of assessment including what they liked and disliked, the purpose of assessment, whether they valued feedback on assessment and why, whether assessments should be the same for every student or should they be different, and what they considered as culturally appropriate and culturally valid assessment.

In terms of the participants' experiences of assessment, most students liked oral group presentations. Participants recognised

and appreciated the support they received for assessments. Having approachable lecturers was important to them. They said the lecturers help them unpack what they need to do, and the Pacific Island lecturers helped them understand from a Pacific Island point of view. The findings also indicated that the purpose of assessment for students included time management, giving students direction or what to focus on, allowing students to check their progress and addressing things in their development that required improvement. Participants highly valued the feedback they received on their assessments. Participants said that feedback was essential because it provided direction on where they went wrong and where they were right. Some participants commented that feedback was important because it provided a guideline or a course of action, processes and procedures for correcting errors, and strengthening existing good points. Few participants linked feedback to the experience of reflection, which is a very important developmental skill in social work practice. Feedback, irrespective of whether it is positive or constructive, is important to students.

Participants were asked whether assessment should be the same for every student or be varied to suit the diversity of the student population. Most participants felt that assessments should be different in terms of its design and practicality. One participant suggested that the phrasing of questions in assessments be simpler or easier to understand rather than obscure and complex. Another participant commented that assessments require a 'weaving' to integrate Pacific Island values and beliefs, with Western notions of learning. In this way the participant added that assessments are different; it was not just assessing using written exercises (essays alone), but also other ways of writing such as how to write a court report, or an action plan to address a client issue. This practical assessment allows for 'reality' to be part of their learning as well as for learning to be more 'hands on'.

The group also felt that assessment tasks such as group presentations are more ideally suited to Pacific Island learners particularly the teamwork and oral feedback dynamics, because

Pacific Island learners learn more by collaboration and through non written exercises. The role of referencing in essay writing was also raised: personal communications were felt to be predominant source, as opposed to academic research literature. Students argued that knowledge is not just about what is said in text books but also what is uttered through word of mouth, particularly from elders, leaders, parents and other important people in the Samoan community. The role of personal communications should be accepted as a credible source of information; this is considered culturally valid for Pacific Island people.

Few student participants acknowledged that culturally valid assessments are based on having Pacific Island-specific lecturers. The role of the Pacific Island lecturer means his or her *Pacific Islandness* is important for understanding how Pacific Island students learn, and is an important factor for considering how a culturally valid assessment is to be applied to Pacific Island students. One participant commented that the Pacific Island lecturers in the BASW degree program were able to translate into the Samoan language what they said in English during lectures and in one-to-one supervision. This enabled Pacific Island students to be clearer about the content, whereas they could not relate entirely to the content presented in the English language. Another participant said that the Pacific Island lecturers were more creative. For instance, they provided case studies which featured Māori, Samoan, Tongan and Western contexts, they utilised many different media such as PowerPoint, music, role plays, debates, and open book tests, rather than a two-hour teacher-centred lecture.

HONOURING AND CREATING PATHWAYS FOR THE LESSER KNOWN

The final way for indigenous social work to be achieved is through honouring world views, creating opportunities for alternative perspectives to be heard, and allowing for indigenous identities to contribute towards learning and education. The choice of what is to be taught and how what is learned and to be measured is integral to ensuring that voices like the Samoan voice is not lost in the

translation. The majority of social work education programs (including courses and assessment practices) in NZ is heavily westernised with limited input from other cultures such as Samoa. Social work theory content throughout all of NZ tertiary institutions either features a small (e.g. one or two courses, probably an elective, and not a core paper) or no window for Samoan theoretical material to be incorporated as part of the social work education curriculum. Instead social work students are exposed to theories about human development, organisation and management, research, sociology and social policy, which are all important, but not about other perspectives like the Samoan perspective within these theories. Similarly social work students are taught skills such as communication, ethics, documentation, and group work but limited in terms of these same skills for working with other population groups like Samoan clients and their communities. Consequently there is a real struggle to get Samoan knowledge and applications accepted as valid because current social work education curricula have not been culturally responsive.

An example of one particular Samoan theory and application that should be incorporated into the social work education curriculum is the *Talanoa ile I'a*. This lesser-known theory is built from a parable, or *fa'afaletui*, which is a way of constructing a theory not from a research project or an idea, but from analogy or symbolism, in order to illustrate some truth or principle. The *Talanoa ile I'a* theory is an instructive example which conveys many lessons for teaching and learning. It guides social work students' understanding that no single version of truth is total and permanent as educators make authentic knowledge about different ethnic groups accessible to students. It enables social work students to relate personal growth to professional life, to develop strong social work skills, academic knowledge, critical thinking about society, power, inequality and change. It highlights the importance of equity, empowerment, biculturalism and multiculturalism. It also points to the value of cross-cultural social work education and the integration of Samoan and non-Samoan knowledge.

WHAT IS TALANOA ILE I'A?

'*Talanoa ile I'a*' is a Samoan phrase that literally means 'talk to the fish'. In the Samoan language there are two words that describe talking: *tautala* and *talanoa*. For example: one day the mother turned to the father and said, 'Tatou talanoaga fa'aleaiga nane' ('Tonight we will have a family talk'), the father replied, 'O le a le mea tatou te talanoa iai?' ('What are we going to talk about?'). The mother responded saying, 'O nisi o le fanau e tautala e taimi o le tatalo' ('Some of the children are talking during prayer'). The example above describes the term *talanoa* as an event or forum for discussing issues as in family talks, whereas, the term *tautala* describes the action of talking such as sharing of opinions and knowledge in family talks. The mother wanted to have a family talk (*talanoa*) regarding the talking (*tautala*) that occurs during prayer time.

The word, '*I'a*', is the Samoan word for, 'fish'. The characteristics and attributes of fish are used as personifications of Samoan young people. For example, fish are slippery creatures, easily slipping through hands unless experienced fishermen handle them. Samoan young people (both Samoan-born and NZ-born) are not slippery creatures but are young people who undergo tricky and tremendous turmoil in their lives (socially, culturally, biologically and emotionally) as they transition from childhood to adulthood via adolescence. Such trying and demanding situations that Samoan young people experience are likely to slip away or escape from their control as they are often insecure and unstable. Even the most experienced social work practitioner may find it difficult to hold on to the Samoan young person he/she is case managing because they tend to slip away from being helped or even backslide. Fish are silent aquatic animals: when they are captured, they struggle but their protests are voiceless. Most Samoan young people are the same: they find it difficult to disclose their issues such as sexual health problems because of fear and embarrassment. Competent parenting, effective social workers or youth workers, responsive social services, and practical policy are the keys to supporting Samoan young people through the changes in their lives. Fish roam the vast oceans in schools and live a relatively

quiet lifestyle. Samoan young people are the same: they congregate in groups and move about in this big world keeping their problems a secret because generally they are afraid to express what is wrong or to speak out for themselves.

Thus the concept of Talanoa ile I'a is about two things. Firstly, it is about staging an event to hold *talanoaga* (discussion) with Samoan young people that include listening, sharing, and inviting them to express their ideas and knowledge in order to learn and understand the issues that affect them while at the same time turn their responses into solution or problem solving strategies. This in turn is the foundation of cultural validity, building knowledge and understanding of a particular culture from the voices of those who know, live and breathe the Samoan culture. Essentially honouring and creating a pathway for the lesser known to become known, acknowledged and institutionalised. Secondly, it is about the fish or Samoan young people, and their experiences. So in order to find out what are the important issues for Samoan young people we simply ask them. We talk 'to' them and not 'around' them. We treat them as people and not like objects. By talking to Samoan young people we gain important insights into their world such as how they think, what they value, believe, and whom they trust the most. We stage a *talanoaga* (an event or forum) in order for talking to happen, and where Samoan young people and what they have to say is highly regarded. The Samoan young people are the authority, they are the experts. Their contribution will add strength towards justifying the importance of the Samoan cultural identity. The knowledge they share will be equal to Western knowledge.

ORIGINS OF TALANOA ILE I'A

The origins of the 'Talanoa ile I'a' concept stem from works by Tamasese, Peteru and Waldegrave (1997) and Tamasese (1997) on Pacific Island people and poverty. At the beginning of these works is a definition of Samoan culture by His Excellency Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Taisi Efi, former Prime Minister of (then) Western Samoa, one of the paramount matai (chief) of Samoa, and currently

the Samoan Head of State. Efi uses a *fa'afaletui* or a parable to define Samoan culture as three perspectives: '*O le faautaga i tumutumu o mauga*' (the perspective of the person at the top of the mountain); '*O le faautaga i tumutumu o la'au*' (the perspective of the person at the top of the tree); and '*Ma le faautaga o le pii ama*' (the perspective of the person in the canoe who is close to the school of fish). In any big problem the three perspectives are equally necessary. The person fishing in the canoe may not have the long view of the person on the mountain or the person at the top of the tree, but they are closer to the school of fish (Tamasese, Peteru, and Waldegrave, 1997; Tamasese, 1997).

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TALANOA ILE I'A THEORY

Efi's *fa'afaletui* for defining Samoan culture does not represent the perspective of the school of fish but attaches this important dimension to the perspective of the person in the canoe who is close to the school of fish. This creates the situation where a reconstruction is required of the *fa'afaletui* by separating out the school of fish from the perspective of the person in the canoe who is close to the school of fish, making three perspectives into *four* perspectives, and renaming the *fa'afaletui* as the Talanoa ile I'a theory. Thus the Talanoa ile I'a theory is not only about creating a pathway for the lesser known to become known, but is also an ecological depiction of Samoan society made up of dynamic and interactive environments.

The perspective of the school of fish or *O le faautaga o le I'a* is the everyday environment of home or school or work for Samoan young people, including their relationships with parents, siblings, caregivers, classmates, teachers, and employers. Samoan young people are in contact with these people every day in their lives, whether in the family home or at school, they are the people they trust the most. When Samoan young people come into contact with professionals and practitioners they become clients, consumers and customers. They become locked into public services by their linkages to youth workers, social workers, police officers, lawyers, doctors, judges, youth nurses and other people who are assigned to

manage and resolve their issues. This interlocking of various systems with which a Samoan young person is involved—the linkages between home and school (student-teacher), home and service provider (client-professional or practitioner), service provider and community (referrer-specialist), and so on, is the perspective of the person in the canoe who is close to the school of fish or *Ma le faautaga o le pii ama*, in the *Talanoa ile I'a* theory, and indicative of its dynamic and interactive nature.

The relationship between the Samoan young person and the professional or practitioner is further extended because each professional and practitioner is a representative of their organisation and collections of organisations become larger institutions: for example, national healthcare agencies, child protection agencies and justice organisations, which interact with each other by sharing resources and services, and headed by a single person or groups as in chief executive officers, directors, general managers, boards of trustees, and district health boards. These individuals or group members are represented by the perspective of the person at the top of the tree or *O le faautaga I tumutumu o la'au* in the *Talanoa ile I'a* theory. So in effect the relationships become three-dimensional: the Samoan young person—the professional or practitioner—the Supervisor or General Manager.

The collection of agencies that form national organisations, its organisational is underpinned by overarching cultural patterns mainly influenced by government, religion, education, and the economy. For example in social and economic policy changes in New Zealand over the last century (Cheyne, O'Brien & Belgrave, 2008; Lunt, O'Brien, & Stephens, 2008; Belgrave, 2012) are lawmakers and policymakers, which are representatives from institutions such as legislative council and policy units, who have the widest-ranging influence by setting the overall cultural pattern for the rest of society to follow. These individuals set national philosophy, the direction the nation will follow, the ideas that are most important over others (what is best for the nation), and also add to the relationship with Samoan young people making it four-dimensional: the Samoan

young person—the professional or practitioner—the supervisor or general manager—the policy maker or member of Parliament. The latter are represented by the person at the top of the mountain or *O le faautaga I tumutumu o mauga* in the *Talanoa ile I'a* theory, and within each dimension one acts upon the other collaboratively as Efi's faafaletui or parable states that '...all three perspectives are equally necessary' (Tamasese, Peteru, & Waldegrave, 1997; Tamasese, 1997), meaning that each is interrelated and functional, interchangeable and interdependent, electric, influential and changing, made up of dynamic interactive dimensions not as a single entity: lifeless and isolated.

The nearest Western equivalent to the *Talanoa ile I'a* theory in terms of its structural design is Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological approach to human development that identifies four different levels of environmental influence, extending from the most intimate environment to the global: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem. According to Bronfenbrenner in order to understand human development, one must understand each person within the context of multiple environments.

The nearest Western equivalent to understanding the dynamic and interactive nature of the Samoan world and in particular the *Talanoa ile I'a* theory is Finlayson's (2000) analysis of policymaking process (see also Waycott et al., 2010; Mortensen, 2011). Finlayson describes four ways of policymaking stage: top-down; bottom-up; centre-up; and/or centre-down. From a top-down approach, the perspective of the person at the top of the mountain sets the direction, the perspective of the person at the top of the tree translates this direction into their organisations or agencies, the perspective of the person in the canoe who is close to the school of fish implements the direction or puts it into practice, and then the perspective of the school of fish receive benefits. Alternatively, the perspective of the school of fish sets the direction, the perspective of the person in the canoe who is close to the school of fish supports and advocates, the perspective of the person at the top of the tree adopts and formalises a proposal, and the perspective of the person

at the top of the mountain endorses and legislates the direction as a norm, which is a bottom-up approach. Or the direction can be instigated from the perspective of the person in the canoe who is close to the school of fish to the perspective of the person at the top of the mountain' or to the perspective of the person in the canoe who is close to the school of fish (centre-up or centre-down). Even the perspective of the person in the canoe who is close to the school of fish can set the direction.

In a nutshell the structural design and dynamic nature of the Talanoa ile I'a theory distinguishes Samoan theory from Western theory. It gives greater recognition and cognisance to, the perspective of the school of fish by giving Samoan young people a pathway to have their needs acknowledged including their cultural identity. At the same time, it demonstrates how cultural validity would work in a social work education curriculum and honours the view of a lesser known contributor.

INDIGENOUS SOCIAL WORK THEORY AND PRACTICE

Gay, G. (2010), Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011) and Scherff & Spector (2011) emphasise that cultural responsiveness, in terms of teaching, is validating because it uses the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles of diverse students to make learning more appropriate and effective for them. The authors highlight that this type of androgogy validates indigenous identities and their perspectives in many ways such as legitimising their cultural heritages as worthy content to be taught in the formal curriculum, incorporating multicultural information or diverse worldviews, resources and materials in all subjects and skills being taught, and allows for a variety of instructional strategies and assessment events that are connected to different learning styles. For instance, the learning from the Talanoa ile I'a theory for students is significant. Social work students not only are taught the importance of learning about another culture that is different to their own but also the skills for engaging, assessing and addressing their social issues. When social workers engage Samoan clients they are able to identify and analyse cause

and effects by talking directly to them, then talk to other professionals or practitioners, then talk to their supervisors or managers, and refer to policy or legislation, before making a decision on the best way to approach their needs. Social workers also learn other skills from the Talanoa ile I'a theory such as deconstructing and reconstructing theory; critical thinking (actively and skilfully appraising information to reach an answer or conclusion); integration (synthesising, comparing and contrasting); and evaluation (summarising, recommending and suggesting).

Thus, cultural responsiveness and culturally relevant pedagogy is a way for Schools of Social Work to acknowledge the local context and culture of the students, and through sensitivity to cultural nuances integrate these cultural experiences, values, and understandings into the teaching and learning environment (Efi, 2009; Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011; Jabbar & Hardaker, 2012). As a Samoan man, I am partly responsible for establishing, maintaining and sustaining Samoan epistemologies and methodologies. In order to grow and foster Samoan knowledge and practices in social work education I need to keep researching and publishing literature so this body of knowledge continues to grow and advance. As a Samoan lecturer I need to be creative and interactive in order to integrate Samoan knowledge and practices with my Western knowledge and practices (formal education) so Samoan and non-Samoan social work students benefit from my teachings. However I am aware that the responsibility is shared by other parties involved in social work education: policymakers (the perspective of the person at the top of the mountain), governance and management (the perspective of the person at the top of the tree), educators and practitioners (the perspective of the person in the canoe who is close to the school of fish), the clients and the community (the perspective of the school of fish) as identified by the Talanoa ile I'a theory.

If indigenous social workers, researchers, academics and educators do not grow indigenous social work theory and practice, then Western models of social work will continue to be exported into newly established Schools of Social Work like Vietnam. Global

education standards set by International Association of Schools of Social Work will influence the content, pedagogy, and assessment of social work education to the point of standardisation and local knowledge and indigenous contributions will be at the periphery. Even efforts to accommodate diversity including multiculturalism, cultural and ethnic sensitivity, cross-cultural, trans-cultural and anti-oppressive practices will be carefully guarded by Western interests because these approaches bring attention to, and attempt to counter, the ways that dominate cultures can marginalise and oppress minority cultures like Samoan, Chinese, and South Korean nationals living in New Zealand.

When I was charged with the responsibility of developing a Pacific Island social work course one of the first things I did was to look for literature and other teaching materials to inform its construction. It became apparent that there was a limited amount of material to be found and that what was found was a scattering of material hidden away. This motivated me to publish a book entitled *The Pacific Island voice in Social Work Education in Aotearoa New Zealand an annotated bibliography 1998–2008* in order to bring together Pacific Island literature directly relevant to social work and find out where Pacific Island contributions needed to be strong in such as human development, management, policy, social work skills and research (Faleolo, 2009a; 2009b). One of my summary points was a challenge for all Samoan practitioners and academics to write and publish more literature and other types of materials in order to grow the Pacific Island presence and culturally validate our ways of thinking and doing things in social work education (Faleolo, 2009a; 2009b). In order for cultural validity in social work education to be achieved I needed to do it.

All social work students should be examined about their understanding of other cultures than their own, and about how much their knowledge about other cultures is applied in a bicultural and multicultural context. In NZ, not all the clients that a social worker will manage will be of European or Māori backgrounds, they will also be Asian and Pacific Island. If a non-Samoan social worker

comes into contact with a Samoan client he or she needs to be confident, culturally competent and effective. Provision of Samoan theory and practices for social work education not only recognise this perspective as equal to Western ways but strengthens the social work curricula by enhancing its cultural knowledge that is passed onto the social work student. The concept of Fāsamoa and the Fonofale model enables social workers to be able to understand why Samoan clients think and behave the way they do. Samoan people use their instincts and feelings to make decisions, they avoid eye-to-eye contact with other people not because they are guilty or remorseful, but because they are avoiding confrontation and being respectful. Samoan people always approach situations and circumstances with deference, lowering himself or herself in order to elevate the other. They prefer to save face rather than ask for help. They are not individualistic, they are communal and they see the world as made up of dynamic and interactive dimensions. Altogether the Fāsamoa and Fonofale concepts would add strength and authority to social work education curricula.

The development of cultural competency and indigenous social work theory and practice in social work education depends of having academic assessments that are real, supported and achievable. Structuring assessments where students are asked to write for essays in order to successfully complete the course is a very difficult task for Asian and Pacific Island nationals, even if support is provided. As a Samoan lecturer I have noticed that Samoan students are visual and kinesthetic learners. Setting a group presentation as an assessment task would enable Samoan learners to work collaboratively and this would be a common cultural experience. A group presentation would mean that Samoan students can still show their abilities and development as a social worker through theatre (role playing a family group conference) as opposed to essay writing. If a written assessment task is required, case notes will be understood as more relevant to what these students will need in the field of social work practice in terms of developing documentation and recording skills. Essays are only good for testing the learner's organisation

and grammatical skills, which is a small area for measuring cultural competency development and does not fully reflect the abilities of all social work students.

In order for indigenous social work theory and practice in social work education to be accepted, social workers in non-Western contexts are urged to move away from simply adapting and modifying social work theory and practice to that of generating knowledge and practice models from the ground up, drawing on the values, beliefs, customs, and cultural norms of *local* and indigenous helping practices. This is the process of authentication (Gray & Coates, 2010) whereby local culture is used as a primary source for knowledge and practiced development, and social work practice becomes culturally appropriate, relevant and authentic. It is rethinking what is regarded as universal in social work by challenging the dominance of Western beliefs and values. Such a process is necessary in order to provide professional services in a manner that is effective and consistent with local cultures but also to meet demand arising from members of non-mainstream cultures in wealthy countries like the USA and UK, as well as people from non-Western countries experiencing economic modernisation and globalisation, such as China and Vietnam.

I offer three considerations:

- Firstly, *strength, authority and equity*: acknowledging the strength that indigenous theory and practices brings to social work education, which is scholarly and equal to western and other epistemologies and methodologies such as Fa'asamoa. This alignment will mean Samoan ways of thinking and doing are equal and will become accepted as fundamental and valid forms of theory and practices within social work education. Social work curricula that feature this type of organisation and structure will be validating Samoan contributions of non-Western epistemologies generally in a globalising educational framework.
- Secondly, *measuring and assessing* cultural validity: making sure that assessments are fair, feasible and practical. Cultural validity

is not only important in terms of how a subject is taught but also about how what is taught is to be measured.

- Lastly, *honouring and creating pathways for the lesser-known through authentication*: creating opportunities for alternative perspectives to be heard, and allowing for indigenous identities to contribute towards learning and education. The choices of what are to be taught, and how what is learned to be measured are integral to ensuring that the Samoan voice is not lost in social work education curricula.

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National voices