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What are we thinking? Supervision as the vehicle for reflective practice in community-based child welfare services

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Abstract

Community-based child welfare social work within Aotearoa New Zealand has undergone major alterations in service delivery in response to a government neoliberal-driven agenda. To combat the challenges facing social work practice in community-based child welfare services, there is a necessity for reflective supervision to critique practice outcomes for practitioners and service users.

An exploration of critical theory and, in particular, Bourdieu's key concepts of *habitus*, *field* and *capital*, allow for a critical examination of reflective supervision in community-based child welfare, and the investigation of alternatives to social work practice in this study. This study aimed to explore reflective supervision practices within the current context of community-based child welfare services in Aotearoa New Zealand and to develop strategies that support reflective supervision. A qualitative critical reflection methodology provided a detailed understanding of reflective supervision in community-based child welfare through the participation of key informants and supervisory dyads.

Bourdieu's concepts were utilised in the critical analysis of the key informant findings and revealed that reflective supervision within community-based child welfare social work provides the social worker with an opportunity to develop self-awareness; identify their professional relationships and associated power dynamics; and explore the state's influence on community-based child welfare social work.

Key findings from the supervisory dyad data indicated that social workers utilised reflective supervision for developing self-awareness; understanding the tensions experienced within professional relationships; and discussing uncertainty within the organisation. However, the reflective supervision observed lacked a deeper analysis and critical examination of wider structural and environmental factors.

The findings of this study suggest community-based child welfare social workers need to employ a deeper analysis within reflective supervision to assist in the development of social justice informed strategies in their work with service users. Greater critical exploration is needed regarding the socio-cultural and political factors impacting on community-based child welfare social work in the Aotearoa New Zealand context, the power between agencies and disadvantaged groups, and the development of the social worker's self-awareness. The significance of this study is in its contribution to understanding the current supervision context within community-based child welfare and the thinking aloud process and the four-layered practice model as strategies to support reflective supervision.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Social justice and human rights are core elements of critical social work. These elements are in danger of being forgotten in practice with current neoliberal agendas dominating the functioning of social services. Amongst the challenges facing current social work practice, reflective supervision provides an approach for analysing practice and amplifies positive practice outcomes for practitioners and service users. Drawing on the experience of participant voices, this qualitative study aimed to explore reflective supervision within the current context of community-based child welfare services and potential strategies that support reflective supervision. This opening chapter establishes the importance of a critical theoretical approach to social work and its relevance to the context for this study: reflective supervision in community-based child welfare services. Key concepts from Bourdieu are introduced and their relevance is explained towards assisting critical exploration in this study.

Background to the study

The social work profession faces challenging times. Globally, neoliberalism has led to the dismantling of many welfare services and the introduction of austere measures by the state. These changes over the last thirty years have directly impacted upon social workers and clients (Gray & Webb, 2013a). Due to the devolution of many services from state provision and the contracting out of services, welfare services have now become a community responsibility. With this change in service provision, the functioning of professional groups and their interactions with service users has been altered from face-to-face work to policing packages of care and economic exchanges (Penna & O'Brien, 2013). The current socio-political and socio-cultural environment in which social workers operate has become dominated by organisational and government expectations to meet standards and by compliance-driven agendas (Adamson, 2011; Beddoe, 2010a; Stanford, 2010). The impact of both neoliberal ideology and managerialism on the social welfare profession has corroded professional identity through organisational accountability, risk management, and reducing government responsibilities for service provision. The social worker now has less control of their work with service users and a

greater emphasis is placed on a business culture concerned with measurable outcomes and meeting procedural requirements. Such a business culture is incongruent with the values of social work (Harris, 2003) that considers relationships, reflection and acknowledgment of the emotional content important to practice (Collins, 2008; Stanley & Goddard, 2002).

A space for social workers to reflect on their decision making and practice development has traditionally been provided by supervision and this space is crucial in a changing and hostile environment. Supervision can, at its most basic, be defined as a process where one worker (the supervisor) is responsible for working with another worker (the supervisee) in meeting organisational, administrative, personal and professional objectives (Morrison, 2001; Wonnacott, 2012). Supervision is a commitment by social workers to refresh their practice in this joint venture and work within their professional mandate to provide quality social work services and positive outcomes for service users (Bond & Holland, 2010; Wonnacott, 2012). It must have a formal structure, be regular, consistent, professionally oriented and evaluated (Munson, 2002). Many authors have supported a positive connection between supervision, performance and staff retention and supervision is widely recognised as the vehicle towards critically reflective practice in social work (Carpenter, Webb, Bostock, & Coomber, 2012; DePanfilis & Zlotnik, 2008; Hanna & Potter, 2012; Hawkins & Shohet, 2012; Mor Barak, Travis, Pyun, & Xie, 2009).

Reflective supervision is one of many approaches to supervision that stimulates experiential learning and encourages a holistic exploration of practice complexity (Fook & Gardner, 2007), and this approach encourages practitioners to consider alternative possibilities for practice. Reflection and critical analysis in social work needs to be continually developed so that it is relevant to both global and local contexts (Beddoe, 2015a). There are limited studies observing supervision and evidencing its importance for reflection to practitioners (Carpenter et al., 2012; Davys & Beddoe, 2010; Goodyear et al., 2016). The supervision session, and the relationship between supervisor and supervisee, is the space for critical examination of practice and it would be expected that this area would receive more attention in research (Hawkins, Fook, & Ryan, 2001; Maidment & Cooper, 2002). Research examining the reflective awareness in the supervision session adds valuable information in the identification of strategies that support reflective supervision.

Across the last decade, research on supervision as the forum for reflection for the practitioner has gathered momentum. Research on supervision covers all fields of practice, but there has been a particular focus on supervision in statutory child welfare services (Collins, 2008; Leitz, 2010); in particular, the evidence for supervision is studied in relation to better outcomes for workers and derives from the United States of America (Carpenter et al., 2012). Statutory child welfare work involves working with children at risk, and requires social workers to act within legislation, with authority and as agents of the state. However, very little research has explored supervision in the context of community-based child welfare services. It is not known to what extent the existing material – especially that related to reflective supervision – pertains to the community-based child welfare sector.

This study explores reflective practices in social work supervision within the current context of community-based child welfare in Aotearoa New Zealand. Each community organisation provides services, such as child welfare, to its members to promote well-being and capacity and services are reliant on funding from a range of sources. "Community-based child welfare services" is the phrase used in this study to describe the field of practice for social workers working in non-governmental organisations with children and their families and is separate from statutory child protection services. Social workers employed in community-based child welfare work operate in collaboration with families to meet the needs of local children and disadvantaged families (Sanders & Munford, 2010). These include early intervention services available to families with babies or young children, specific child welfare services, and family support and youth services (Connolly & Cashmore, 2009; Scott, 2009). Within Aotearoa New Zealand, community-based child welfare services range from local, community-based initiatives to structured national support services for more vulnerable or at-risk families (Munford & Sanders, 1999; Nash, Munford, & Hay, 2001; Scott, 2009). Recently, major changes to legislation in Aotearoa New Zealand regarding increased professional responsiveness to child welfare make this context a compelling field of practice for the study and exploration of current social work practice responding to these changes. These include the introduction of the Vulnerable Children Act (VCA) 2014 by the government to improve the well-being of vulnerable children and to strengthen child protection systems (New Zealand Government, 2014). Consequently, a managed market has resulted in greater competition for available funding to community-based child welfare services which, in turn has led to a greater need for professional consistency in child welfare services. Social workers in this field require on-going improvement

in their practice to ensure the survival of the practice values of empowerment and social justice towards the improvement of services for families, children and communities.

For this study, Bourdieu's conceptual tools assist a critical examination of reflective supervision in community-based child welfare, the impact of wider, structural issues and the exploration of alternative strategies to social work practice. As a key social theorist, Bourdieu makes important connections for social work practitioners towards understanding the relationship people have with their environment. Bourdieu's major theoretical contribution is found in his notions of *habitus, field* and *capital* within society. These concepts will be introduced later in this chapter. Drawing upon Bourdieu's analytical framework allows social workers to critically consider their professional position, the contradictions and how to challenge the marginalisation occurring in society. The ability to reflect and to engage in critical thinking in social work are important in challenging the contradictory systems and structures that oppress people in society. They allow social work to recall the importance of relationships, make a difference for disadvantaged groups and promote their human rights, social justice and diversity.

Using Bourdieu's terms, the supervisory space is an example of a social system that will produce and reproduce a professional discourse for social work. This discourse is fundamentally based on knowledge, skills and resources influenced by professional bodies and organisations that include dominant views and structural inequalities (Beddoe, 2015a). Analysing supervision from a Bourdieusian perspective provides critical consideration of existing power dynamics in social work and the impact of this on the work completed with service users.

The study contributes to understanding reflective supervision within the community-based child welfare services and in assisting social workers to develop strategies which support their professional practice in a challenging environment. Given the international importance of exploring supervision in diverse contexts (Carpenter et al., 2012), this study contributes considerably towards the evidence base of supervision literature in social work practice within an Aotearoa New Zealand perspective. The thesis analyses supervision theories and concepts, and the realities of reflective supervision within community-based child welfare as reported by study participants. Central to this study is the lived experience of the participants who work in the current community-based child welfare context, and their interactions as social work practitioners in this field. The current context is investigated through key informant interviews

and supervisory dyads' supervision sessions and participatory reflections across Aotearoa New Zealand.

This opening chapter establishes the importance of a critical approach to social work and its relevance to reflective supervision in community-based child welfare services. Such an approach ensures notions of social justice and human rights are at the forefront of practice. The following section provides an introduction to the notion of critical social work and the influence of social theorist, Bourdieu, as the central theoretical framework for this study.

Theoretical approach to the study

Social work supervision cannot be properly understood without reference to the professional context in which it is practised. Social work is in a constant state of flux, responding and adapting to the changing environment in which it operates. Social work practice has been developed through the era of modernity from a focus on universal need to a preoccupation with risk and accountability in the era of neoliberalism (Webb, 2006). It has a tradition of knowledge that has incorporated a number of theories and perspectives over the last century. Social work is the 'difference that makes a difference' for people in how it intervenes in people's lives and interprets how individuals operate within a social context (Gray & Webb, 2013a). Social work allows for person-centredness in its practice. It makes sense of people's behaviour through exploration of their lives and relationships and a process of planned change (Ferguson, 2008).

As much as evidence, laws and factual knowledge are important to research-based interventions, thinking critically in social work is essential to good practice judgements and skills. Critical thinking is, arguably, a particular way of viewing the world that can change society for the better. Central to critical thinking is the analysis of power and domination and the challenge to institutions whose practices create injustice. Gray and Webb (2013a) define critical thinking as:

> a skill that must be developed in order to interpret successfully, – and simultaneously – information from a variety of sources, such as interpersonal relationships, family life, government policy and legislation and changes in society. (p. 4)

A critical approach to social work practice starts with a position of valuing interpretive understandings of actions and rules that guide people's behaviour (Ife, 1997). Critical thinking identifies that domination and subordination of people operates individually and structurally; it

links collective and individual processes, reinforces the importance of communication and provides a theoretical framework to free individuals from assumptions and dominant thinking towards more effective ways of countering managerialist procedures and restrictions (Fook & Gardner, 2007; Gray & Webb, 2013a). Garrett (2013a) raises the notion that critical thinking assists professionals like social workers to compare, analyse, and synthesise. This process can interrupt mainstream perceptions and create new ways of looking at the world that are more equitable in relation to economic and social relationships. As argued in feminist theory, social work is about how the personal connects to the political (Orme, 2013).

A critical approach has an important place in social work practice. Ferguson (2008) argues that social work is "a profession worth fighting for" and has a history of working with and promoting interests of disadvantaged groups (p. 20). Critical social work is holistic in how issues for people are viewed and promotes notions of social and economic justice, freedom and equality through transformational change (Gray & Webb, 2013a).

'Critical social work' is a generic term that draws upon critical theory to promote social justice and change (Gray & Webb, 2013a). Critical social work comprises several broader notions that seek to explain, through a structural analysis of society, oppressive and exploitative aspects of individuals' lives and transforms various situations that social workers and service users find themselves in (Gray & Webb, 2013b). Critical social work has been formed from progressive political perspectives such as Marxism in understanding the position of oppressed groups within the context of economic and social structures and has shaped practice with service users for developing strategies of resistance.

The application of a critical frame to social work draws upon modern (traditional frameworks of science and rationality) and postmodern (multiple frameworks of knowledge) ideas. Making links between both orientations, as well as exploring their tensions, produces a critical analysis of existing practice, competing power configurations within structures and solution finding (Fawcett, 2013). Underpinning valid practice knowledge for critical social work is critical realism. Critical realism recognises the impact of social structures on day-to-day practice and provides the basis of a new politics in critical social work to emerge in policy and practice development (Baines, 2017). This "vision" centres on unity within the diversity of individuals, the centrality of social justice and solidarity (locally and internationally) and the reclaiming of the importance of relationships underpinning all social work practice (Ferguson, 2008).

Critical social work seeks to be politically transformative through effective interventions that maximise potential for social workers and service users. Inequality and oppression are central to society and critical social work reinforces an ongoing awareness that social work practice can contribute to challenging this. In this sense, critical social work challenges existing practices, concepts and organisations with an emphasis on recognising client's resilience, strength and finding alternatives to unequal resource provision (Gray & Webb, 2013b). These broad attributes of critical social work also highlight reflective aspects of action and attention towards emancipatory practice (Gray & Webb, 2013b) and 'the dialectical relationship' between theory and practice in social work (Garrett, 2013c).

The broader meanings of critical social work are explored further in Chapter Two. At this point, in summarising the theoretical approach used in this study, it is important to highlight the various works of social theorist Bourdieu in providing a framework for understanding social work as a profession and for critical exploration of practice.

Social work literature is strongly influenced by social theorists whose work can be used to inform, explain and critique social work and the context of practice. Social theories emphasise social problems being located holistically in the interaction between the individual and society (Ferguson, 2008). Thus people's lives are influenced by social relationships, forces and structures. Many social theorists have developed influential frameworks that seek to describe society and have been influential to how social workers work alongside service users. However, the significant contribution of critical theorists is their analysis of hierarchies of power, and mechanisms of domination that create and sustain inequalities (Gray & Webb, 2013b. As Gray and Webb (2013a) mention, to "think" social work is to engage with important social theory, the relevant concepts and to critically evaluate practice. The work of Bourdieu has been noted by social work authors (Garrett, 2007a; Houston, 2002) as particularly apposite to a critical exploration of social work.

Bourdieu's influence comes partly through his description of individuals and groups within society – dominated by structures but also potential agents of change. Through his theoretical work, Bourdieu explores how systems within society continue to reproduce and maintain disadvantage and inequality. Bourdieu's work also assists with an explanation of why people in their social relationships tolerate oppressive circumstances (Garrett, 2007a). On one hand the structures within society shape culture and dominate individuals – for Bourdieu, these vested interests create imbalance in different forms of capital in social classes and create ongoing

contestation. However, on the other hand, Bourdieu also recognises individuals or 'social actors' as having the ability to effect change in their own lives (Houston, 2002). Bourdieu's theory of social action permits the individual practitioner to explore the realm between agency and structure, as well as the connection between theory and practice. Bourdieu's major theoretical contribution is the three key notions of habitus, field and capital, often referred to as his 'conceptual arsenal' (Garrett, 2007b; Houston, 2002). These concepts are important in understanding how society and culture affect individuals and how this is reproduced in all aspects of social life.

Habitus refers to how individuals identify who they are and it encompasses their 'whole manner of being' (Bourdieu et al., 1999, p. 510). The habitus of an individual is developed from birth and is developed by their family life and their social milieu (Hart, 2013). Such a label encompasses the day-to-day habitual practices or 'mental' structures and the meaning individuals make of the social world (Bourdieu, 1989). For Bourdieu (1989):

> Habitus is both a system of schemes of production of practices and a system of perception and appreciation of practices. And, in both of these dimensions, its operation expresses the social position in which it was elaborated. (p. 19)

The production and understanding of these practices provides categorisation and social meaning for individuals. Individuals can be placed into social groupings that distinguish them from others due to the rituals and practices of their habitus (Ransome, 2010). Therefore habitus provides a definition and "sense of one's place but also a sense of the place of others" (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 19). Habitus is, by some people, seen as a product of the social world and paradoxically, a reproducer of the social world for people (Houston, 2002). The structures of an individual's habitus, through ongoing socialisation, lead to the disadvantages or privileges associated with the culture of that group in its reproduction and the ability to perform appropriately in that environment. Although structures and our habitus deeply influence how we interpret the social world around us, Houston (2002) reminds us that:

> habitus acts as a very loose set of guidelines permitting us to strategize, adapt, improvise or innovate in response to situations as they arise. (p. 157)

Field is the structured social space of the individual, family or group and their experiences. Bourdieu et al. (1999) argue that "human beings are situated in site … and they occupy a place"

and can be defined from the "physical space where an agent or things is situated" (p. 123). The field defines an individual's position and relationship to their environment in a context-specific way. According to Bourdieu (1985):

> [T]he social field can be described as a multi-dimensional space of positions such that every actual position can be defined in terms of a multi-dimensional system of co-ordinates whose values correspond to the values of the different pertinent variables. (p. 724)

Fields are structured systems in society that are occupied by individuals or institutions. The occupants of a field are therefore defined in terms of their position and a system of forces (and power) exists between these positions (Jenkins, 2002). There exists a close relationship between the field and the habitus (Garrett, 2013b). The social space (or field) is dependent on relations with others with its own set of rules and discourses (Garrett, 2007a). The structured social space of the habitus can evolve and change with an individual's position within it. *Field*, as a term, is also used to define broader social constructs. Bourdieu was also aware that sub-fields may exist within larger fields (Hilgers & Mangez, 2015; Hart, 2013), for example, statutory social work and community social work could be said to occupy the larger fields of government services and civil society respectively. Fields are unequal where there is competition for skills, resources and knowledge. Domination and subordination exist at the heart of each field and an individual's experience of this (Houston, 2002) and therefore, an individual's position in their habitus offers:

> The space of possibilities characteristic of each field – religious, political or scientific – functions like a structured ensemble of offers and appeals, bids, and solicitations, and prohibitions as well (Bourdieu et al., 1999, p. 512).

The third interrelated concept is *capital*. Capital is the influence an individual has over others in the struggle and competition for resources. Bourdieu (1985) defines capital thus:

> [Capital] which may exist in objectified form…represents a power over the field (at a given moment) and, more precisely, over the accumulated product of past labor (in particular over the set of instruments of production) and thereby over the mechanisms tending to ensure the production of a particular category of goods and so over a set of incomes and profits. The kinds of capital, like aces in a game of cards, are powers that define the chances of profit in a given field. (p. 724)

Capital is an individual's assets and dispositions that can be acquired over time and these depend upon their positioning in society (Garrett, 2013b). Consequently, capital can take different forms (and every field and sub-field has a different form of capital). These are social, economic, cultural and symbolic capitals. Social capital is defined through social connections and contacts; economic capital is the monetary wealth such as stocks, shares and material assets; cultural capital is the individual's or group's perceived and recognised knowledge such as titles, academic background and individual mannerisms (Garrett, 2007b; Hart, 2013). Symbolic capital refers to status and prestige. Symbolic capital can identify the individual or group with any of the previous forms of capital. Thus, as Bourdieu (1989) states:

> [T]itles of nobility, like educational credentials, represent true titles of symbolic property which give one a right to share in the profits of recognition … symbolic capital may be officially sanctioned and guaranteed, and juridically instituted by the effect of official nomination. (p. 21)

The different forms of capital allow individuals and groups to dominate places of social space and create hierarchies within society. An individual's portfolio with an array of economic, symbolic and cultural capital would ensure advantage and the ability to accrue further capital (Hart, 2013). Bourdieu et al. (1999) describe the process:

> Capital makes it possible to keep undesirable persons and things at a distance at the same time that it brings closer desirable persons and things (made desirable, among other things, by their richness in capital) … Conversely, those who are deprived of capital are either physically or symbolically held at a distance from goods that are the rarest socially; they are forced to stick with the most undesirable. (p. 127)

Bourdieu refers to *doxa* that operate across a social space from practices of individuals (habitus) to practices of social groups and perceptions of the state (field). Doxa refers to the taken-for-granted assumptions, hidden agendas and traditions held in society (Garrett, 2007b). Doxic ideas ensure there is no social transformation and no challenge to rule. They are an explanation surrounding why people tolerate oppression from a ruling class and different dynamics within society. The naming and framing of people through doxic categorisation by the state allows for unequal distribution of cultural resources among, for example, the "poor" or the "working class." Bourdieu refers to this as symbolic violence (Garrett, 2013b; Marston, 2013).

This unequal distribution of capital, Bourdieu argues, is reproduced within society, culture and education (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000). The doxa operating in society can be challenged through Bourdieu's concept of a "critical intellectual". A critical intellectual is an individual with free-thinking ideas and offers "the critique of received ideas, the demolition of either/ors, respect for the complexity of problems" (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 92). The critical intellectual can challenge doxa in society by scrutinising their own habitus and interrogate established truths and institutions potentially guided by demands of capital (Bourdieu, 2001). Challenging doxa can occur in times of crisis where there are greater opportunities for changing existing systems (Garrett, 2007b).

Human rights and social justice are core themes for Bourdieu. Both require critical examination within the relationship people have with their environment. A deeper understanding of oppression and the interrelatedness of different domains between people and structures allows opportunities for change to germinate. Bourdieu's systemic thinking of a person's identity and relationship with their environment has strong connections with and influences on professions like social work. Bourdieu's theories provide a useful explanation for the development of neoliberalism in society. In particular, his work provides critical tools for understanding and engaging with the dismantling of the welfare state; the impact that this has made on the social professions meeting the needs of communities versus becoming agents of the state; and the ongoing marginalisation of disadvantaged groups within society (Garrett, 2007b). Houston (2002) states that:

> armed with these conceptual tools, social workers can begin to understand and explain the deep-seated nature of cultural disadvantage which Bourdieu claims is at the heart of modern society. (p. 159)

Although writing very little in direct relation to social workers, Bourdieu has referred to the contradictions of current social work practice as 'agents of the state'. Social workers are part of administering welfare for the state within the current neoliberal climate but, paradoxically, social work opposes systems and administrations that oppress disadvantaged groups (Bourdieu et al., 1999). Neoliberalism has impacted on social work practice at both a professional level and a market level through increased role fragmentation and bureaucracy. The levels of oppression disadvantaged groups experience (and the doxa that has been created as a result) also impacts

on how social workers work and on their need to think critically about supporting those groups to fight back. Therefore, according to Bourdieu et al. (1999), social workers:

> must unceasingly fight on two fronts: on the one hand, against those they want to help and who are often too demoralized to take a hand in their own interests, let alone the interests of the collectivity; on the other hand, against administrations and bureaucrats divided and enclosed in separate universes. (p. 190)

Such contradiction and confusion for social workers working within bureaucratic structures "open up a margin of maneuver, initiative and freedom" to challenge doxas and explore alternatives to practice (Bourdieu et al., 1999, p. 191). The examination of different fields within a broader environment context assists social workers to view their interplay and their influence in the development of each individual.

Critical social thinkers such as Bourdieu have contributed to understanding the individual's interactions within modern society. Central in this thinking is the continued domination by privileged groups in society through construction of accepted knowledge, discourse and surveillance. Bourdieu's identification of dominant influences in society assists social work to critically analyse its position in being part of the state's dominance over groups in society. Through dialogic practice and greater understanding of their capital position, social workers can engage with service users and assist in locating opportunities for change. Bourdieu and his concepts have relevance towards developing a critical approach in social work to reflect on existing practice, examine structural and power issues and to explore alternatives.

In particular, Bourdieu's work provides a framework to examine reflective supervision within community-based child welfare social work. Beddoe (2015a), for example, has utilised Bourdieu's work in exploring contemporary supervision and comments that "supervision is a practice enacted and experienced within a structured social field" (p. 159). Supervision, as is social work, is defined within a context with different roles and competition being created between resources and individuals. Supervision too, will represent and re-enact the wider forces present within society. Within supervision, situations can be analysed and responded to critically but it can also be the habitus for reproducing dominant assumptions and practices (Beddoe, 2015a). Egan (2012a) also describes how the discourses within supervision are influenced by organisations and professional mandates. Such discourses may seek to silence less dominant groups, repeat colonising practices for indigenous groups and maintain the status quo of monocultural and traditional thinking in the supervision session (Egan, 2012a). Bourdieu's

notions of habitus, field and capital will be used throughout this study in relation to reflective supervision in community-based child welfare social work.

The following section provides an overview of key terms relevant to this study: reflection and critical reflection, reflective supervision and community services.

Reflection and critical reflection

Reflection and critical reflection have been problematic terms in relation to how they have been used and the different meanings implied by scholars and indeed, practitioners. Inclusive of these terms is reference to the reflective practitioner and the application of reflection towards learning in professional practice (Schön, 1983, 1987); critical reflection as the process for exploring the wider contextual meaning of practice (Fook & Gardner, 2007); critically reflective practice as the examination of the political environment of daily social work (Taylor, 2013); and critical reflection as a research methodology for the examination of participant meaning, interaction and experience (Fook, 2011). That said, reflection has been important to the development of social work practice for practitioners. Reflection and critical reflection assist in the analysis of existing practice, dominant political agendas impacting on current practice and exploration of transformative action to meet the needs of people.

Reflection is essential for human beings to create meaning and learn from experiences through experimentation and evaluation (Carroll, 2011). Reflection that occurs within professional practice supports diversity and complexity within human experiences. Scholars such as Schön applied reflection to professional practice learning and an evidence base for practice (Schön, 1983, 1987). This tool allows professionals to develop their own "theories-in-action" by reflecting on their practice experiences and the identification of gaps between theoretical concepts and their application in practice. Reflection has provided social workers with an approach that "looks back" on their practice through challenging questions and move forward with planned action (Taylor, 2013). Such approaches have been developed within supervision (which is discussed further later).

Critical reflection and other terms such as *critically reflective practice* have provided a wider contextual analysis to reflection. These terms have provided a deeper examination of power and structural analysis and the influence this has on individuals and their interactions with others

(Brookfield, 2009). Critical reflection is important in identifying authority and involves the challenging of existing assumptions held individually, socially, professionally, theoretically and politically. Critical reflection is perceived as a necessary process for deconstructing, and reconstructing meaning of the wider social and cultural context (Fook & Gardner, 2007). From this process, new insight and knowledge can be gathered that brings principles of social justice and human rights to the forefront of social work practice. Critically reflective practice as a concept argues for the ongoing review of political and systemic issues facing social work practice within a broader sociological context. Critically reflective practice also closely examines dominant discourses impacting on practice, the importance of language and insight into service users' responses to institutional settings (Taylor, 2013). Reflective practice, critical reflection and critically reflective practice are discussed in Chapter Two along with their relevance to critical social work as the theoretical approach to this study.

Recently, critical reflection has also been developed as a research methodology (Fook, 2011). Critical reflection as a research methodology incorporates the two stages of deconstructing and reconstructing understandings and experiences of professions in practice as its theoretical underpinning. The first stage involves the deconstructing and unearthing of hidden values and assumptions held by participants while the second involves participants reconstructing their reality with newly informed strategies and ways of thinking (Fook & Gardner, 2007). As a methodology in research, critical reflection can offer alternatives to other mainstream methods in that it captures the complex, contextual and integrated experience of professional practice. Fook (2011) outlines that the process of critical reflection in research is dialogic and socially interactive between researcher and participant, provides a framework that encompasses the complexity of the experience and is transformative in that agency is created for participants on personal and social levels. According to Fook (2011), raising the academic and intellectual credibility of critical reflection in research is crucial towards the understanding of diverse practice experience. In Chapter Four, the use of critical reflection as a methodology in this study is explored further.

Reflective supervision

Supervision is a multifaceted process and serves a number of different aspects for professionals within different organisations and as such, there are many different approaches to it. Traditionally, the functions of supervision (identified below) have provided a perspective of the

supervision session with a balance between each function being necessary (Davys & Beddoe, 2010; Hawkins & Shohet, 2012; Kadushin, 1976; Kadushin & Harkness, 2002). Initially, Kadushin (1976) influenced the development and practice of supervision with the identification of three functions. These functions defined individual supervision in social work as having the responsibility for ensuring an administrative, educational process to supervision and an expressive–supportive leadership function to sustain worker morale. Administrative processes included caseloads, feedback about performance and exploring resources; educational processes referred to roles and responsibilities, professional development and building professional confidence; supportive needs assisted the supervisee to explore their feelings, challenges and personal and professional boundaries (Kadushin, 1976). Other literature, such as Morrison's (2001), suggests that supervision also has a mediation function where negotiation occurs between professional and organisational needs. This function highlights the systemic tensions that exist within supervision to provide a balance of support, practice development and administration (Davys & Beddoe, 2010; Morrison, 2001); and that there is a focus on the worker's perceptions on the quality of the supervisory relationship and the interpersonal interaction (Mor Barak et al., 2009). Hughes and Pengelly (1997) graphically depict (as a triangle) the functions of supervision and the competing tensions between managing service delivery; focusing on practitioner's work; and facilitating practitioner's professional development. They argue that there is a lack of balance in the functions of supervision; the functions are interrelated and cannot be separate; and supervision becomes unsafe when one function of supervision is ignored over time (Hughes & Pengelly, 1997). Davys and Beddoe (2010) argue that support is a core condition of any supervision session and is *central* no matter what "function" of supervision is being used. Support includes aspects vital to supervision such as respect, validation, creating a safe space, managing conflict and reinforcing anti-discriminatory practice (Davys & Beddoe, 2010).

A reflective approach to supervision emphasises a process to learning and a focus on the *how* of supervision. This provides a roadmap for the supervisor and supervisee to construct an effective space to critically consider decision making and alternative options. Reflective supervision provides a blueprint to constructing a session and move beyond the *what* as identified in the functions of supervision (Davys & Beddoe, 2010; Wilkins, Forrester, & Grant, 2016). Morrison (2001) has previously stated that supervision must provide a framework to assist staff to use the skills and knowledge they have and to aid staff with adapting to new roles, skills and the ever-changing experiences in modern social work.

Recent literature has introduced *transformative* supervision as the deepest form of reflective supervision (Shohet, 2008; Carroll, 2009; Weld, 2012). Transformative supervision takes reflective practice to observable action by creating a significant breakthrough in thinking and establishing new behaviour within the work environment and the self (Shohet, 2011; Weld, 2012). Carroll (2010) has defined four levels of learning towards transformational learning. These are: solving the problem (Level 1); changing the behaviour (Level 2); changing the thinking (Level 3); and changing the thinking behind the thinking (Level 4) (Carroll, 2010, 2011). The transformative aspect to supervision embraces growth and the ability of the supervisor and supervisee to develop personally as well as professionally in the supervisory relationship (Shohet, 2008). Weld (2012) argues that learning in supervision is not a "one way street" and that in good supervision, the supervisor learns in the process too. The supervisor develops as a practitioner from the reflective exploration of the supervisee's issues in supervision. This creates the "butterfly effect" where the supervisor then carries their change and growth into the next session with another supervisee causing a ripple effect to learning (Weld, 2012). These fundamental shifts in learning have benefits for individuals, teams, service users, organisations and ultimately, wider society.

Supervisors also require knowledge about adult learning so an appropriate environment can be created within the supervision space. Adult learning is generally held to be cyclic and requires individuals to reflect on an activity, consider different possibilities and then take action. The reflective learning cycle (Kolb, 1984) is a popular cyclical structure that depicts adult learning and supports the process of reflective supervision. Davys and Beddoe (2010) link the practice of supervision with experiential learning and the stages of the reflective learning cycle; in the Reflective Learning model for supervision (Davys & Beddoe, 2010). The Reflective Learning model begins with the supervisee identifying the issue and recollecting the event. The supervisor's role is to ensure clarity on what the goal is for the supervisee in raising the issue in the session. The exploration of the issue involves understanding the impact of the issue for the supervisee and the implications of it from different perspectives (Davys & Beddoe, 2010). The supervisor's role here is to explore with the supervisee, to listen and to clarify. Once the supervisee has reached a decision for tackling the issue, it is important that supervision allows for an experimentation phase to ensure that the supervisee feels confident with their abilities to implement a plan (Davys & Beddoe, 2010). The evaluation phase, at the end of the Reflective Learning model, allows for questions to be raised by the supervisor if the issue has been

resolved effectively, and to assist the supervisee to identify the specific learning they have gained from the process.

Postmodernism, social constructionism and critical realism have influenced reflective supervision. Postmodern thinking considers a shift away from traditional approaches to supervision in that there is an increased sensitivity towards power dynamics, and an explicit focus on social and cultural contexts for supervision taking place and recognition of knowledge from every individual (Hair & O'Donoghue, 2009). Language and narratives become pivotal when adopting a postmodern perspective (Ungar, 2006). A postmodern approach questions linear thinking and considers multiple perspectives allowing for the deconstructing of dominant discourses around power and knowledge (Fook & Gardner, 2007). Adopting multiple perspectives relating to the construction of knowledge has assisted in the development of anti-oppressive, culturally sensitive and strengths-based practice for professionals (Hair & O'Donoghue, 2009).

Supervision, using a postmodern approach, adopts social constructionist ideas regarding how human beings in society construct their social world. Social constructionism values the importance of how knowledge is constructed through human interaction within different contexts. Social constructionism adopts the stance that there is no single truth; instead there are many narratives and perspectives relating to each individual's experience. Social constructionism has three core concepts: individuals construct their own worldview through their participation with others over time; reality is constructed personally and socially; and development is achieved through interdependence with the world (Chang, Hays, & Milliken, 2009). Therefore, language and culture provide important content to reflect upon in the supervisory space. Both the supervisor and supervisee's knowledge is regarded as equal and provide the basis for how meaning is constructed through the use of shared narratives in the session (Davys & Beddoe, 2010). Hernández and McDowell (2010) identify the intersectionality of multiple cultural identities (such as ethnicity, gender and religion) between the supervisor and supervisee as essential for establishing a transparent and reflective supervisory relationship. Within supervision, each participant brings with them a "plurality of selves" that influence their identity and their perspective.

Critical realism explores the multiplicity of perspectives and provides the opportunity to re-think and re-theorise social justice opportunities in practice. The influence of critical realism on supervision provides transformation of learning through the exploration and sharing of knowledge between supervisor and supervisee (Baines, 2017). The supervisor is invited to ask "curious" questions to co-construct a space with the supervisee; to develop conversations relating to structural barriers connecting to clients' conflicts; to acknowledge barriers; explore cultural narratives within the supervisory relationship; and critically self-reflect regarding power, privilege and authority (Davys & Beddoe, 2010; Hair & O'Donoghue, 2009; Tsui & Ho, 1997). The supervisor has a richness to draw from in the session and a complexity to be mindful of (Ungar, 2006) while reflective supervision acknowledges the importance of shared, co-constructed conversations and incorporates critical realist and social constructionist principles.

Supervision, its relationship to social work, and its significance to practice in Aotearoa New Zealand will be discussed further in Chapter Three.

Communities and community services

In order to understand the environment of community-based child welfare services which forms the context of this study (and which is examined further in Chapter Three), it is useful in this introductory chapter to consider definitions of communities and community services: the broader context within which community-based child welfare services are located. This is important in understanding the context of social work undertaken in this study with participants and is likely to influence their understanding of their role and professional positioning.

Payne (2009) defines communities as being "established and institutionalized connections between people" (p. 31). Community as a concept is complex and organic. Communities are ongoing, "felt" and "experienced" by their members (Ife & Tesoriero, 2006). The challenge to defining what a community is can be viewed in three different ways: looking backwards from a nostalgic point of view; looking forward from an idealised perception; or considering the complexity of current communities with different forms of communication and information technologies (Stepney & Popple, 2008). The implication of the term *community* is collective ownership where structures are created *by* people in the community *for* people in the community. Ife (1995) states that:

It is more appropriate to allow people to develop their own understanding of what community means for them, in their own context, and to help them to work towards the realization of a form of community which meets the criteria. (p. 93)

There are two basic themes underpinning the concept of a community and where the focus of work is undertaken: communities of shared localities (geographical) and communities of shared interests (functional) (Payne, 2009). Communities within the same locality have histories, social norms and are fixed in a unique, physical landscape while communities of shared interests are brought together due to shared issues or activities. These shared interests provide a sense of identity, for example, a church community or a disability community (Healy, 2012; Ife & Tesoriero, 2006).

Each community provides services to individuals and groups that assist them in building social, political and economic capacity. Characteristically, community services operate separately from government structures and are dependent on funding from client fees, fund raising, donations and the government through contracted services. These services are under increasing fiscal restraint to provide voluntary and diverse services that vary in size, focus and location. Community services are also commonly referred to as not-for-profit, non-government organisations (NGOs), third sector or voluntary services. Community services are commonly linked through the formation of a group of people who act in a not-for-profit capacity through democratic control (Chenoweth & McAuliffe, 2012). Many community services follow a collective model in that their participants have equal status, tasks and responsibilities and decision making is done through group meetings and consensus with everyone's participation (Chenoweth & McAuliffe, 2012).

Working in community services involves identifying collective needs, maximising the participation of community members, developing existing assets and accessing new resources (Derrick, 2000; Healy, 2012). Community work roles are broadly located within human services, social work, youth, local policy initiatives and health. A community worker may be in a paid role specific to the community service, an unpaid or voluntary role dedicated to community activities or employed in an occupation where participation in community activities is a requirement related to the role (Kenny, 2011). Community services can be located rurally and in cities and provide the needs relevant to the community in which they are based, for example, refugee

organisations, child care and parenting organisations, charitable trusts, neighbourhood groups and unemployment groups (Kenny, 2011).

There are different types and combinations of community services. Some community services are member-serving and specific to certain groups, such as disability groups, whilst other services cater for general public needs, like community centres. A significant number of community services may also be governed by faith based or religious entities and these may provide the mission statement and the cornerstone to the organisation's principles. Every community service has its own operational structure, policies and procedures and particular nature of authority within the organisation. Historically, community services operated separately from government structures and were dependent on funding from client fees, fund raising, and donations, however, over time this independent system of operating separate from statutory structures has changed.

Globally since the 1980s, community services have been drastically altered with the introduction of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism has reshaped economic, political and social spheres and in doing so, reduced the public sector in favour of community welfare services in order to reduce inflation and taxation (Baines, 2017; Penna & O'Brien, 2013). According to Ife and Tesoriero (2006), neoliberalism has increased inequalities and exclusion at the expense of social welfare and justice – these inequalities can be presented through differences in class, gender and ethnicity from dominant discourses that have led to exclusion of groups within communities and exacerbated problems such as unemployment and crime (Stepney & Popple, 2008). The focus on managerialism within services has reduced professional control of the worker and has seen important shifts towards increased productivity and allocation of resources. The operationalisation and administration of community services have changed with the principles of open and competitive markets where groups compete for funding (Kenny, 2011): these principles are inconsistent with the collective decision making found within many community services. To ensure their survival, many community services are now predominantly funded by the government through contracted services and are in competition with one another. These contracts have been on a fixed-term basis. Moreover, community services are developing strategic partnerships with statutory organisations, the private sector and other community services in order to co-ordinate service delivery for service users. Community services manage tensions between providing a service for community need versus meeting government outcomes to ensure continued funding. With a residual welfare state now operating, community

services have been further forced into a position of providing immediate support and solutions for service users rather than the preventative support of the past. Community-based child welfare services are examined more fully in Chapter Three.

From an overview of some key definitions used in this study, a summary of my practice interest, as author of this research, in the research topic and experiences of reflective supervision as a manager and practitioner in child welfare will follow.

Motivation for the study

On a personal level, the focus of this study identifies the author's long interest in the development of reflective supervision and its importance to social work practice. A passion to become a social worker was generated from travelling to different countries, developing an appreciation for diversity, the reality of discrimination and the importance of social justice. These experiences influenced the author's *social constructionist* and *critical realist* worldview where there are multiple worldviews where everyone's experience of the world has equal validity but existing structures create and maintain oppression. These notions influence the epistemological and theoretical rationale chosen for this study. Supervision has been of interest to me since beginning to practise as a social worker. I have been employed in several supervision and management positions in statutory and community-based child welfare settings and, later on in my career, completed a post-graduate diploma in the subject of supervision. Starting my career as a social worker and a supervisee, supervision was viewed as an important aspect in meeting casework requirements. *Reflection* was a term often used in relation to casework, the decision making I had made working with children and their families and my follow-up towards closing the case in the foreseeable future. Later, as a manager (and inheriting a team to supervise) the reflection in supervision focused on, and was limited to, completing assessments on children and meeting targets. This understanding and approach to supervision is commonly identified in literature where social work (and supervision) has been reshaped through management and auditing processes with professional skills and knowledge becoming decontextualised (Davys & Beddoe, 2010; Fook, 2002; Munro, 2008; Noble & Irwin, 2009). I introduced this discussion earlier.

My curiosity regarding the use of supervision led me to complete postgraduate studies in this area whilst still managing and supervising a team in community-based child welfare. Reflective approaches to supervision, such as the Reflective Learning model, had a profound and positive

experience on my supervisory practice. When I applied the different models of supervision as a supervisor, I became more aware of the tensions in providing a balance between professional and organisational objectives in the supervision session. My concerns developed into a view that the social services environment was reinforcing audited rules and procedures to ensure outcomes are measured against government funding requirements at the expense of professional development, support and improved practice. I also became aware of many social workers' lack of training on the use of reflection and the importance this had for effective and meaningful supervision. This led me to conduct a pilot study regarding group supervision as a way of supplementing individual supervision for social workers, to enhance reflective practice and to develop collaborative and critical decision making (Rankine, 2013). Whilst social workers provide important support to children and families, the current climate presents challenges to community-based child welfare through contracted services. The importance of reflection and supervision providing a space to counter the negative effects of resourcing cutbacks and lack of funding gathered momentum for me. Initial investigations into studies within community-based child welfare and supervision in a variety of different settings revealed scarce findings. My interest in developing further research in the area ensued.

Supervision being widely used as a space for reflection within social work practice appears aspirational. Rather, supervision continues to be driven by an organisational agenda to meet performance measures and procedure. In my current role as a Professional Teaching Fellow at a university, I contribute to the teaching in the supervision programme at a postgraduate level. Commonly, students completing the programme identify their increased awareness of supervision and the essential element of reflection at its core. Previously, reflective supervision had not been considered in their practice, nor had it been received from their supervisor. Community-based child welfare is a field of practice that I remain connected to professionally through my current role, as external supervisor of community professionals and through my active involvement as a member of Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW) and the Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB). A common theme I notice as an external supervisor (and that still fuels my passion for critical social work), is the importance of supervision in providing a reflective space, a platform to analyse practice and for supervisees to critically engage in developing their professionalism.

My interest and experience in this research area developed several key questions that form the basis of this study. The aim of this study, the research questions and the methods used to obtain the data will be identified in the following section.

Aim of the research

Following on from the earlier discussion, it is clear that reflective supervision provides social workers with the opportunity to analyse and critically examine their practice. This is essential for developing professionalism and for providing support to communities. This study aims to explore reflective supervision within the current context of community-based child welfare services and potential strategies that support reflective supervision.

The research questions that are the focus of this study are:

What are the perspectives of social workers regarding reflective supervision in community-based child welfare services?

How is reflective supervision utilised in the supervision session by the supervisor and supervisee?

How can reflective supervision be supported?

This study is grounded in a social constructionist/ critical realist ontology and epistemology and utilises a number of qualitative methods to answer the research questions. These methods are interlinked as follows and will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Four:

- key informant interviews that explore reflective supervision within community-based child welfare services; and
- supervisor/supervisee dyads that describe the utilisation of reflective supervision in the session and how this is supported through participatory reflection sessions.

Twenty-five participants contributed to the study. The nine individual key informants have been selected for their experience with community-based child welfare services and involvement with undergraduate and postgraduate social work programmes. Each key informant has been

interviewed for their perspective regarding reflective supervision within community-based child welfare services. Eight supervisor/supervisee dyads have also participated in the study and have been selected from their current professional involvement in community-based child welfare. The supervisory dyads have been involved in the study to provide multiple perspectives from participants regarding reflective supervision and opportunities to discuss how this can be supported in practice. A fuller discussion of the participants contributing to this study is in Chapter Four.

The key informants have been selected from across Aotearoa New Zealand. This sample consists of nine participants. Interviewees have worked across a range of community-based child welfare services, some with considerable experience in the practice field as social workers and supervisors. Other participants are currently involved as board members for community-based child welfare services and/or as external supervisors to social workers working in the field. Informants also have experience teaching on undergraduate and postgraduate social work programmes at different tertiary institutions and universities recognised by the SWRB; many are research-active in the social work field. The key informants have participated in a semi-structured interview and have been asked for their perspectives in answering the first research question related to reflective supervision within community-based child welfare services. Participants have spontaneously mentioned a range of micro and macro issues impacting on reflective supervision within community-based child welfare. These responses have been explored in more depth by the use of probing questions by the researcher. These interviews have been audio-recorded and transcribed.

The supervisory dyads in this study have been selected as participants from their involvement in a community-based child welfare service from across Auckland. Auckland has the largest urban population across Aotearoa New Zealand with over 1.5 million people. The community services across Auckland for children and their families are varied in their infrastructure. Services and interventions for children and families are provided by large and small community-based child welfare services. As a geographical area used in this study, Auckland offers the highest density and diversity of people in Aotearoa New Zealand, and considerable variation in child welfare services offered for communities. The supervisory dyads participated in the study and answered the second and third research question related to how reflection supervision was currently utilised and how strategies can be used through participatory reflection to support reflective supervision. The eight supervisory dyads have a range of experience working within social work

and community-based child welfare. This experience ranges from over thirty years to the newly qualified practitioner.The supervisors and supervisees also have a diversity of undergraduate and postgraduate tertiary backgrounds in social work. Each supervisory dyad has completed an audio recording of a supervision session that has been transcribed. Using a "thinking aloud" process, a participatory reflection session with the researcher has allowed participants to describe their reflections of their supervision experience and the importance of this to their practice. This process has also been audio-recorded and transcribed. This allows for participant voices to emerge in the study in regard to their experiences of reflective supervision, their social interactions, discourses and the socio-political context of their work.

Structure of the thesis

This chapter has introduced the theoretical approach and context of this study. Using participant voices, this study aims to explore reflective supervision within the current context of community-based child welfare services and potential strategies that support reflective supervision.

Chapter Two explores Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field and capital, their relevance to critical social work and supervision. The position of critical social work is located through an analysis of the foundational theoretical influences and relevance to practice. More specifically, Marxism and postmodernism will be discussed in relation to structural analysis and reflective practice, critical reflection and critically reflective practice as a major influence towards learning and transforming social work practice.

Chapter Three presents a review of literature on social work supervision and community-based child welfare with the aim of providing a background and context relevant to this study. Both topics are introduced with a brief history, the social work role, an Aotearoa New Zealand perspective and reflections on the current environment. An examination of recent supervision research identifies tensions towards providing a balance of supervision between organisational and professional goals in the current neoliberal environment. Supervision within social work requires greater exploration across different fields of practice, geographical communities and socio-political environments. Very little of the existing literature considers supervision within community-based child welfare services.

The methodological approach is outlined further in Chapter Four. This includes: a more detailed examination of the rationale for the research design; the population, recruitment and selection of the participants involved in this study; the approach used in analysing the data; and the study's limitations.

Chapter Five describes the key informant views on reflective supervision in community-based child welfare. Chapter Six explores the practice of reflective supervision from the supervisory dyads in community-based child welfare. Inclusive of these findings is commentary from the supervision sessions and the reflections of the participants using the thinking aloud process.

Chapter Seven considers the key messages from the data and the implications of this research for supervisors, supervisees, social workers in community-based child welfare and the wider profession. This chapter discusses strategies to support reflective supervision.

Chapter Eight highlights the strengths of the study and includes recommendations for further studies, policies and developing practice.

Chapter Two: Critical social work

Introduction

Understanding critical social work is important in the context of researching the supervision of social workers. Critical theory as a paradigm in social work is different from other traditional influences such as psychology and history. Critical theory has value for seeking social transformation through forms of justice and emancipation (Gray & Webb, 2013a). Critical theory in social work and supervision provides a focus on self-awareness, the deconstruction of existing truths and transformation of learning. In this study, critical theory offers an appropriate theoretical stance to the research aims of developing a deeper understanding of the current use of reflective supervision by social workers in community-based child welfare in Aotearoa New Zealand and potential strategies in relation to how this can be supported.

In examining critical social work and framing the context of this study, this chapter locates social theorist, Bourdieu, and his key concepts. The importance of Bourdieu's work towards renewing social work identity for the future and its relevance to supervision will be discussed. The chapter will then explore the position of critical theory in social work through an analysis of the foundational theoretical influences and relevance towards practice. In defining what critical social work is more broadly, Marxism and postmodernism will be discussed as key perspectives and political influences. These perspectives are influential for their focus on social justice and exploration of dominant discourses. They have provided a rationale for understanding the environment where social workers operate with service users, the structural disadvantages within society and the ability to transform current situations. Critical theory and its key underpinning perspectives assist supervision in social work to explore diversity, to examine oppression and honour social justice principles. In addition, from a broader lens, reflective practice and critically reflective practice will be explored as a major influence on critical social work towards learning and transforming social work practice. Essential to critical theory in social work is the ability to discuss existing practice politically and bring change to social structures – this can be achieved through reflective exploration resulting in emancipatory practice. Reflection and critical reflection in supervision provide effective interventions that maximise potential for social workers and their work with service users.

Bourdieu and critical social work

Social work exists within challenging times for the profession. Social work has a core set of principles relating to social justice, equality and freedom (Hyslop, 2016) that risk being overturned by the current climate of neoliberalism and managerialism (Gray & Webb, 2013b). The social suffering caused by current neoliberal policy seeks to disadvantage many in society and maintain the control of dominant groups (Bourdieu et al., 1999). For social work to be critical and to move forward, an integrated framework of social justice is needed. Social work needs to critically consider injustice and the inequality of individuals arising from socio-cultural and structural factors (Pease, 2013). The relationship people have with others in their environment, human rights and social justice are important considerations in Bourdieu's writing. According to Houston (2002), Bourdieu's theorisation is significant in that:

> [I]t acknowledges, on the one hand, that there are irrepressible structures linked to the mode of production within capitalism that shape culture, while, on the other, it gives recognition to actors' abilities to effect change in their daily lives. (p. 155)

Bourdieu's key concepts of habitus, field and capital (as discussed in Chapter One) can aid critical social work with frameworks to move into the future with renewed identity and purpose. They also have utility in this study to enable a deeper examination of reflective supervision within the habitus of social work. Bourdieu's analysis appeals to social work in taking a stance against dominant politics in neoliberal societies and revisiting core ethical practices that have been paramount in social work tradition (Webb, 2006). An awareness of habitus, field and capital are particularly important to social workers in understanding their interaction with service users (Garrett, 2013b). Habitus can assist with acknowledging the perceptions and actions of individuals in society and gain greater insight into embedded, doxic ways of living and practising. Within the field of interaction, social workers (and service users) are defined by their role and position relative to others (Beddoe, 2015b) and this can create competition for resources through skills, knowledge and political alliances. Social workers operate with different forms of capital that can be used in an advantageous way to advocate and support their work with service users. Bourdieu (1998) provides optimism that social workers can offer this:

If there is still cause for some hope, it is that forces still exist, both in state institutions and in the orientations of social actors (notably individuals and groups most attached to these institutions, those with a tradition of civil or public service) that … will be able to invent a new social order. One that will not have as its only law the pursuit of egoistic interests and the individual passion for profit and that will make room for collective oriented ends. (p. 3)

However, the social worker's use of capital also needs careful consideration. According to Bourdieu, such interactions between professional and service user reflect and reproduce inequality and oppression through the dominant discourses of professional bodies and organisations that seek to reinforce their own interests (Beddoe, 2015a). Therefore social workers work in a paradox of administering welfare driven by neoliberal state influences and, concurrently, struggling to provide a voice for disadvantaged groups (Bourdieu et al., 1999). Additionally, Beddoe (2010b) has used the term *professional capital* to describe:

(T)he aggregated value of mandated educational qualifications, social 'distinction' based in a territory of social practice, and economic worth marked by the artefacts of professional status, occupational closure and protection of title. (p. 245)

The social work profession is identified as having weak professional capital in that it is associated with negative outcomes for the public; poorly understood contributions to society and institutions; disputed knowledge claims; and in lacking a collective professional identity (Beddoe, 2010b). In order to develop social work's professional capital, Beddoe (2010b) proposes that the profession needs to develop its visibility in the public discourse, speak of its distinctive contribution, grow practitioner research and develop leadership and collaborative relationships. Bourdieu's identification of dominant discourses in society assists social work to critically analyse its position and explore opportunities for change.

Bourdieu's theories have been influential in writing about the social work profession. Bourdieu's argument about the immersion of people within cultures and dominant ideologies in society are important factors for critical social work. These theories allow social workers to critically consider taken-for-granted assumptions, vested interests in institutions and to acknowledge links between culture, social structure and inequality. Social workers can then develop culturally sensitive practice that tackles discrimination and oppression (Houston, 2002). Houston (2002)

has utilised Bourdieu's ideas in developing a model for the social work profession to pro-actively engage in the removal of oppression, social exclusion and discrimination. Four sequential stages are identified that flow from one stage to the next. The stages begin with the development of understanding around the dynamics of capital oppression; this understanding comes through acknowledging the interrelationship of habitus, field and capital on the reproduction of culture in society and how action is taken. The second stage requires the social worker to reflect on the impact of culture and taken-for-granted assumptions and actions. This capacity improves reflexivity on practice and how this is mediated through habitus and field (Houston, 2002). Demonstrating sensitivity to clients' experiences of culture and the associated meanings this has for them is the third stage. Integrating this understanding with Bourdieu's theorisations opens up opportunities for enquiry into experiences of self, others and society. This involves key skills on the part of social workers to be attentive in their listening and gathering of information with service users (Houston, 2002). The final stage of Houston's model is the promotion of strategies by the social worker to empower those who are culturally excluded. This is achieved through identifying the service users' preferred habitus and assisting them to critically analyse fields in their lives (Houston, 2002). Stimulating ideas leads to direction of action and change for those who are disadvantaged. Bourdieu's interrelated concepts of habitus, field and capital can assist in understanding the production and reproduction of oppression within individuals, groups and structures and directing action towards empowerment (Houston, 2002). Bourdieu's conceptual tools can assist social work scholars to critically analyse the inequalities existing in the social work field, how this impacts on the service users and the alignment of this with service provision within organisations (Beddoe, 2015a).

Drawing on Bourdieu's ideas, Garrett (2013b) identifies two important considerations for social work surviving in a 21st century neoliberal environment and maintaining a critical edge to practice. Firstly, social work practitioners and academics need to critically explore the collective habitus of the profession, supporting disadvantaged groups and the consequences of the ongoing push in society to accumulate capital. For social workers and their supervisors, Bourdieu's tools can assist to understand and challenge the doxic ideas by scrutinising their own habitus and seeing "the bigger picture." The oppressive dynamics that are being played out in the habitus of social work can be reviewed and practitioners can become more resilient, self-aware and aware of others and the organisation in which they work, the profession and the communities where social workers practise (Beddoe, 2015a). Garrett (2007b) comments that Bourdieu's work:

[E]mphasises how this is a more than abstract consideration because on a daily basis neo-liberalism bites into practice in social work and related fields … It is, therefore, particularly important, in this context, for the social professions to defend the autonomy of the field. (p. 240)

Secondly, social workers need to constantly scrutinise their own position in relation to their work with service users. Central to social work are the critical examination of discourses from dominant and marginalised groups. Bourdieu, too, values the importance of voice and difference. Bourdieu et al., (1999) encourages us to "work instead with the multiple perspectives that correspond to the multiplicity of coexisting, and sometimes directly competing, points of view" (p. 3). Social workers work within controversial fields of political capital and are supported from a Bourdieusian perspective to listen to the many voices of the service users (Garrett, 2007b). Developing an ongoing awareness of social workers' and each individual's habitus, field and capital serves to enrich the assessment and interaction with service users. This allows for understanding between subjective and objective views and developing meaning from contrary perspectives while it is also important for social work to ensure that work is person-centred and evolving to ensure better practice emerges (Garrett, 2013b).

Bourdieu's analysis of social systems and his conceptual framework also provide an understanding of social work supervision as a cultural practice within social work and the associated, often competing discourses. Egan (2012b) has outlined that this concept of field illuminates an understanding of social work supervision and its structure. Supervision can be defined as performing as a socialising process in a structured social field (Beddoe, 2015a) and a forum for maintaining social work boundaries in practice. Habitus, when considered in the context of supervision, describes the professional discourses that inform practice. Bourdieu's concept of capital is helpful towards understanding managerial discourses that encroach upon the supervision session and how influential these are towards practice, over time (Egan, 2012b).

The discourses within supervision compete between organisational and professional mandates. This is mirrored in the social work habitus. Egan (2012b) concurs that:

Given the critical role played by supervision in the development and maintenance of the social work habitus, it follows that changes in the way in which social work is practised can lead to changes in the way social work supervision is practised. (p. 20)

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In social work, supervision provides the professional forum for practice to be scrutinised, reinforced and reproduced. Social justice and human rights remain core principles of social work and supervision remains mandated by professional bodies. However, the influence of managerialism on major social institutions and professions threatens to dominate discourses and reinforce inequality. Supervision that lacks a reflective capacity Bourdieu would consider a *doxic* environment where the impact of neoliberalism has stunted professional development for social workers. In addition, supervision that promotes dominant discourses and agendas will silence less dominant groups (Egan, 2012b). A critical examination of supervision and its context is needed where a traditional approach of a *one-supervision* global construct is impossible (Beddoe, 2015a). The uncovering of assumptions, developing self-awareness in practitioners and exploration of structural and power imbalances are important elements of reflective supervision that are beneficial to managers, social workers and service users.

Bourdieu has links with critical social work in the exploration of dominant politics in neoliberal society, the relationships between people and their environment and the importance of social justice. From locating Bourdieu, his key concepts, and the relevance they have in examining social work and the context of this study, this chapter will now explore the position of critical social work through an analysis of foundational theoretical influences and their relevance towards practice.

Key perspectives in critical social work

Critical social work rests on a core set of principles relating to social justice, equality and freedom and provokes deeper thinking about existing social work environments (Gray & Webb, 2013b). In current times, thinking critically in social work is essential with neoliberalism still in the ascendency and the dismantled welfare state having a huge impact on service users. As briefly discussed in Chapter One, neoliberalism has also had an impact on social work practice and reflective supervision. Critical social work originates from key ideas developed in the 1970s concerning 'radical' social work (Langan, 2002). These ideas associated social work with being radical in working alongside service users and carers and in challenging power imbalances. The position of the oppressed groups and the context of the economic and social structure in which they lived became significant and collective approaches were emphasised (Ferguson, 2008). Radical social work changed the profession and its position in modern society (Pease, 2013).

With radical social work came a number of core ideas that influenced anti-discriminatory practice and empowerment of service users. These core ideas and theoretical approaches are important to the social work profession today in recalling its core values of human rights and social justice and strengthening its position against neoliberalism. Although critical social work comprises a number of key theoretical approaches, Marxism and post-modernism will be reflected upon in more detail as major influences on practice. Marxism recognises oppressive class systems and how social change and resistance occurs in society. Post-modernism provides an understanding of multiple truths, the identification of power and an integration of frameworks. Although unstable at a theoretical level, these combined influences support a critical realist frame at a practice level and provide opportunities to critically examine mainstream ideologies within society, and offer the habitus of social work (and supervision within this context) opportunities to consider diversity, social justice and equality in practice. To begin, Marxism, with its class-based analysis of capitalism, will first be explored as the main theoretical influence that shaped radical social work in the 1970s and critical social work today.

Marxism

Marx developed the theorisation of a capitalist system. This system is dependent on an economy to circulate the capital, the social organisation of that economy and its operation (Garrett, 2013a). Marxism identifies society and the structures put in place through class systems where one controls and exploits the other. This exploitation of a class system can identify processes of change for those exploited (Ife, 1997; Kenny, 2011; Munford & Walsh-Tapiata, 2001). Although the ideas behind Marxism were developed in the 19th century at the beginning of industrialisation and the modern age, it still holds huge significance for critical social work. The issues facing people began to be explored through structural analysis in the 1970s. Using this lens recognises the oppressive systems in which people live and its use has influenced models of empowerment. Marxism provides a theoretical approach for understanding class struggles and how social change and movement takes place in society (Barker, Cox, Krinsky, & Nilsen, 2013). Social movement is central to critical social work and how progressive change can occur through adaptation.

In the current economic environment impacted by managerialism and neoliberalism, Marxism reminds social work to reflect on the current global crisis and the systemic issues resulting from capitalism (Garrett, 2013a). This aids in understanding the transformations that have taken

place in modern society. Through neoliberalism, a new wave of capitalism is now being experienced through accumulation of wealth, exploitation, reduction in welfare and instability in the workplace (Garrett, 2013a). The changing nature of social work today with reduced professional autonomy can be illuminated from a Marxist perspective of time, toil and technology related to capital (Garrett, 2013a). For Marx, capitalism had the goal of maximising the working day towards profit making (Marx, 1990). The notion of time examines the social worker's working day, the changing work/life balance, increases in contractual work and engagement with service users through time-scaled assessments. Toil relates to the automated process of production, performance of workers and organisation of workplaces (Marx, 1990). An increased managerial focus on procedural guidelines, regulation and performance targets are commonplace within organisations. For social work, routine practice has become standardised with more fragmented casework involving different professionals and agencies responsible for different facets of work (Lawler, 2013). Marx also referred to technology used as a means of advancing capital's interests (Marx, 1990). Within the computer-dominated technology of the 21st century, social work practice has seen the development of assessment tools, information gathering and monitoring of targets.

Pease (2013) writes about social workers facing contradictions in working with oppressed individuals but, at the same time, being commissioned by the state to regulate such oppression and to have a controlling function. For example, Donzelot (1980) discusses the state's control of families through services acting as agents of the state. This has importance for social workers understanding via reflective supervision the forces that they can exert over families and their well-being. For Marx, capitalist forms of productivity have negative impacts and repercussions on workers – such an approach is at odds with the core principles of social work with importance on relationships with people. Within present practice, capitalism leads to illness, injury, burnout and problems associated with well-being (Garrett, 2013a). From a Marxist perspective, the role dilemma for social workers is to critically understand social forces and contradictions in order for strategies of resistance to be developed (Garrett, 2013a).

Marxism also provides critical social work with opportunities for resistance and promotion of human rights and social justice. For Marx, change was seen as inevitable where capitalism has a relationship with reform and revolution (Garrett, 2013a). Therefore, hegemony (or dominance) inherent within a capitalist structure also attracts counter-hegemony within society. This idea resonates for the social work profession today in its commitment to working with vulnerable and

disadvantaged groups. Adapted to addressing a modern neoliberal agenda, Marxism empowers critical social work to question current systems within society and to become a change agent.

Postmodernism

Postmodernism has been widely defined and incorporates a number of theoretical perspectives. The postmodernist perspective has an explanation of society and culture at a micro level concerning the individual and the environment they live in (Ransome, 2010). Postmodernism acknowledges that multiple frameworks, identities and discourses exist (Fook, 2002) and has created opportunities for deeper expression of experiences through its theoretical stance (Ransome, 2010). Multiple frameworks provide new ways of thinking and responding to the world and society that all have equal validity; recognition of multiple frameworks assist with responding to diverse social and cultural experiences; to make meaning of change; to challenge traditionally held truths and assumptions; and to tackle issues of social justice (Kenny, 2011). Postmodernism has ongoing relevance for critical social work in understanding multiple positions, integrating frameworks and differentiating between acceptable and unacceptable practice for different groups (Fawcett, 2013). Such a perspective allows social workers to manage complexity in the work they do. Knowledge and meaning can be questioned through the process of deconstructing theoretical frameworks. The synergy between critical social work and postmodernism is that information may be privileged and will have associated power divisions within each context. For the social worker working with the service user, the multiplicity of meanings, conceptual frames and use of power require ongoing consideration (Fawcett, 2013).

A postmodern perspective is also aligned with a particular period of human society in the late 20th century. The era of postmodernism has been influential on the emergence of critical social work in the 1990s (Fawcett, 2013) and has seen greater rates of change; developing complexity and fragmentation; an increased significance of diversity and difference; notions of individual *choice* and *freedom*; and how society describes its socially constructed nature (Garrett, 2013a). This has had huge significance for how individuals think, feel and act and the role of critical social work in meeting societal needs. In order to understand the era of postmodernism and what this supersedes, attention needs to also be given to what is meant by the term *modernism*.

Modernism has generally been defined as the grouping of economic, technological and social ideas and values since the beginning of the industrial age in human society and the introduction of capitalism (Ferguson, 2008). The emphasis, from a modernist perspective, is at a macro level of analysis of institutions and structures (Ransome, 2010). Modernist theories describe movements and developments in society as generative and dynamic over time – therefore, from a modernist perspective, economic and technological developments are still advancing society today and are seen by modernist theorists as 'an unfinished project' (Ransome, 2010). Exactly when the period of modernism began is debatable (Webb, 2006) but key intellectuals from the Italian Renaissance and the 17th century across Europe (known as the Enlightenment period), saw changes in social and moral life as inevitable (Ferguson, 2008). The importance of progress through scientific, objective facts increased to explain social and psychological phenomena. With the advances of technology in the 20th century, life was transformed as a consequence where knowledge and power was influential in conveying acceptable and unacceptable ways of living (Fawcett, 2013). Modernism views grand narratives or one truth as dominating society where principles can be applied universally (Fawcett, 2013). A modernist perspective relies on order and unity where things are neatly defined and categorised: individuals are identified as having a fixed self that does not change, language has fixed meaning over time and fragmentation and contradiction to facts are downplayed (Fawcett, 2013). Analysing modernity and its influences on society assists with understanding the function and transformation of social work practice. Webb (2006) has categorised the development of the modern welfare state and social work into three key periods:

> The first period is classical modernity (1850-1935) which focused on the improvement of philanthropic and charity work; modernity (1945-1979) is the second period which saw a focus on universal need and state social work intervention; and the third period of late modernity (1979-present) represents the era of neo-liberalism with the pre-occupation of risk on social work practice. (p. 32)

Modernism is seen in opposition to postmodernism regarding the creation of knowledge and understandings of society. Postmodernism rejects the traditional framework of science and rational thought that makes sense of the world we live in as one truth and as a totality. Ferguson (2008) argues that the use of totality from a welfare perspective flattens diversity and inequality and can be used as an apparatus of power to silence the experience of minorities. For postmodernists, individuals and their language are fragmented and fluid through construction

and reconstruction of social practices and dominant discourses (Ferguson, 2008). The notion of postmodernism recognises new and different forces, such as globalisation of media and culture, are changing society, and that the conceptual framework of modernism requires renovation (Ransome, 2010).

For critical social work, postmodernism provides the background to challenge knowledge and grand narratives through multiple perspectives. For Ferguson (2008), a postmodernist approach allows critical social work to emphasise *particularism* as opposed to the *false universalism* of a welfare state which relates to white, able-bodied, middle-class, heterosexual males as the norm. For authors such as Fawcett (2013), critically applying a postmodern perspective is to:

> [D]raw from modern and postmodern orientations to produce forms of critical analysis that critique, interrogate, deconstruct ... yet facilitate the identification of inequalities and the mounting of effective challenges in particular contexts. (p. 152)

Critically drawing on modern and postmodern ideas allows for science and technology to be brought together to resolve human and social problems. An individual can be seen to have many different identities, with different relationships produced in different situations (Ferguson, 2008). Competing power configurations within structures and wider society can also be explored and responded to in critical social work (Fawcett, 2013).

Postmodernism provides critical social work with a conceptual map to inform, critique and guide policy and practice considerations in relation to specific contexts. Knowledge and power can be examined more closely for relevance and privilege, context and connections highlighted, and dynamic practice created (Fawcett, 2013). This allows critical social work to uncover the truth (of what is really going on) (Garrett, 2013a). Postmodernism's acceptance of fragmentation and emphasis on context allows critical social work to focus on negotiation and inclusion for every individual to exercise agency. Gray and Webb (2013b) aptly state:

> As social workers we have the skills set to deploy practical methods by which to cement a social glue and weave connections through our common ties. (p. 209)

Postmodernism provides the basis of new politics in critical social work to emerge now and into the future. This is a vision which centres on unity within diversity of individuals, the centrality of

social justice and solidarity, developing new visions locally and internationally and reclaiming the importance of relationships underpinning all social work practice (Ferguson, 2008).

In defining critical social work more closely, the key theoretical approaches of Marxism and postmodernism have developed critical social work to view the position of service users and their connections to structural inequalities within society. Such theories have assisted in forming a critical approach to social work and they influence reflective supervision with the exploration of complexity, disadvantage and an examination of different viewpoints in order to facilitate change in practice. In a broader sense, critical social work challenges oppression and inequality through interventions that generate agency for social workers and service users. Critical social work highlights the importance of reflective action, exploration of alternatives to practice, emancipation and the connection of theory and practice in social work (Garratt, 2013c; Gray & Webb, 2013b). The next section will explore the importance of reflective practice and critically reflective practice towards critical social work providing effective interventions to practice.

Reflection and the development of 'critically' reflective practice

Davys and Beddoe (2010) identify that, "at the heart of all practice is the ability to assess, reflect, adapt and respond" (p. 21). Reflection has an essential relationship to social work practice in that it assists practitioners to analyse dominant political agendas and the needs of people. A reflective approach to supervision provides a process for professional development and critical examination. The use of reflective practice, critical reflection and critically reflective practice are terms that have been problematic in how they are described in literature and in practice. Such terms are subjective and open to interpretation, for example, when conditions are suitable for reflection or critical reflection and whether reflection and critical reflection are seamless or viewed as separate entities. However reflection, and subsequent layers of criticality that examine the wider environment of practice, assist critical social work and the contemporary development of supervision to explore existing practices within organisations while highlighting transformative action. Gray and Webb (2013a) write that:

> [R]eflective questions enable the social worker to research experience to uncover theory implicit in action, understand or construct the situation, and discern gaps, biases, themes and so on, engaging in the process of "deconstructing" experience and, in so doing, reconstructing the situation. (p. 101)

Reflection is the crucial element in making meaning for human beings and learning from our experiences (Carroll, 2011). Through reflection, there is the opportunity for "on-the-spot experimentation" (Schön, 1987, p. 28) where we can "think about it, mull it over and evaluate it" (Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 1985, p. 19). Carroll (2011) stated that:

> Reflection is the ability to examine, to observe, to look at, to review, to evaluate, to interrogate, to assess, to question and to own our own thinking. (p. 19)

Reflection is stimulated from disorientating, emotional events that cause a re-think to existing beliefs and it challenges individual assumptions already held about the social world (Carroll, 2010; Fook & Askeland, 2006; Johns, 2009). Certain qualities are necessary for reflection to take place, such as openness, intelligence, curiosity, energy, and passion (Johns, 2009). Reflection is multi-faceted in that assumptions (cognitive, emotional or experiential) link to an origin (social, cultural, political and personal). These assumptions are then reviewed, resulting in changed concepts and practices (Fook, White, & Gardner, 2006). Scaife (2010) identified the characteristics of reflection as being an active process that goes beyond describing experiences; an exploratory process where questions relating to experiences are examined and evaluated; a personal process that increases conscious awareness; and involves making links to practice from different sources. For the practitioner, reflection is a way of being that involves self-inquiry and transformation in order to be the best person and professional one can be (Johns, 2009).

The concept of reflection has ancient origins going back to Socrates, the notion of self-examination for ethical engagement within the world and addressing moral dilemmas (Fook & Askeland, 2006). Since the late 19th century there has been a resurgence in literature relating to reflection that covers fields of education, professional learning and organisational learning in many different disciplines, including social work (Fook & Gardner, 2007). Dewey was the first significant writer in the area of reflection and he influenced modern ideas of what reflective practice is. Dewey saw human intelligence as developing from experiences through a process of reflective thought, critical in shaping adult learning theories (Dewey, 1933; Redmond, 2004). Dewey argued that reflective activity in learning is created through trial and error (Boud et al., 1985; Dewey, 1933). Reflective thought had the following characteristics: a realisation that something is troubling; analysis of all aspects of the problem; formulating and sifting through

new hypotheses; testing a hypothesis and reflecting on whether other hypotheses would have been as effective (Redmond, 2004).

Reflective practice is a concept that has become embedded and developed within contemporary critical social work in that it rejects a technical, rational worldview and provides a tool for professional learning and an evidence base for practice (Taylor, 2013). From the 1980s, Schön progressively developed the concept of *the reflective practitioner* and its application to professional practice learning (Schön, 1983, 1987). Schön's reflective practice criticised professions in the 20th century for their insistence on *technical rationality* that, he believed, limited their approach to dealing with practice situations (Redmond, 2004; Schön, 1983). Rather, Schön identified practice as "messy" with no clear outcome due to a range of factors. The encapsulation of the messiness of practice is central to Schön's ideas and has influenced reflective practice in social work (Taylor, 2013). Schön's model for developing the reflective practitioner was based on the work with Argyris that compared "espoused theory" with "theories-in-use" (Argyris & Schön, 1974). This comparison of theory and practice allowed for "theories-of-action" to take place (Schön, 1987). The purpose of theories-of-action was that practitioners could develop their own theories by reflecting on their experiences (Fook & Askeland, 2006). This exposes assumptions and gaps between the theory that is being followed and the actual practice of *doing*.

Schön's process of reflective practice follows three concepts. This begins with performing a routine of action (*knowing-in-action*) that yields an unexpected result (Schön, 1987). This surprise triggers reflection on what could be done differently. The *reflection-in-action* is the critical function of inventing a new action and reflective practice occurs when this new action is carried out (Schön, 1987). The final step is the *reflection-on-action* where sense from completing an action occurs after an event and thus practice wisdom is developed (Schön, 1987; Taylor, 2013).

Reflection has become essential for the learning and development of social workers and developing their professional skills. Models of reflection and learning have developed in which the practitioner can look back on their practice through challenging questions and move forward with planned action (Taylor, 2013). As noted earlier, Kolb's experiential learning model (Kolb, 1984) is popular. Experiential learning has been characterised by following a continuous cycle of action; reviewing and reflecting on the action; thinking and theorising; and planning new

action (Davys & Beddoe, 2010; Hawkins & Shohet, 2012; Morrison, 2001; Scaife, 2010). Other models of reflection include hierarchical models that guide the learner developmentally through incremental levels of reflective learning (Mezirow, 1981); and structured models that facilitate the practitioner's learning through a selection of reflective questions (Johns, 2009; Smyth, 1991).

Reflection can be described has having many different layers essential to adult learning and education. Each layer can be seen as progressive in criticality, depth and transformation in reflection (Fook et al., 2006). Such a process allows the reflective practitioner to become critically aware of assumptions, constraints in experiences, understandings and relationships (Boud et al., 1985; Mezirow, 1981; Redmond, 2004). The different stages and levels of criticality of reflection have been described by several influential authors. The seminal work by Argyris and Schön (1974) introduced single and double loop learning to differentiate levels of reflection. Single-loop learning refers to the skills required to maintain a situation whereas double-loop learning allows for a critical appraisal of the situation and the acquisition of new skills as necessary (Redmond, 2004; Schön, 1987). Boud et al. (1985) and Brookfield (1995) have discussed stages of criticality in adult learning when the emotions and thoughts of the individual are challenged, alternative actions of thinking and acting require exploration and critical thinking surrounding habitual and entrenched beliefs is developed (Boud et al., 1985; Brookfield, 1995). Mezirow developed the seven stages of critical reflectivity and movement towards metacognition, transformative learning and new approaches to living (Fook & Gardner, 2007; Mezirow, 1981; Redmond, 2004). Mezirow believed that the higher levels of critical reflectivity allowed a person to consider their assumptions and judgements made on a particular situation and that these are shaped by social, cultural and psychological factors (Mezirow, 1981).

Reflective practice is central to critical social work in that it encourages practitioners to consider decisions and draw together other possibilities for practice. As a profession, social work handles complexity, uncertainty and risk on a daily basis (Beddoe & Maidment, 2009); reflective practice is helpful in seeking solutions within the unpredictable nature of social work. The primary focus for the reflective practitioner is on the individual and the subjective awareness of a situation. For critical social work, reflective practice assists with self-awareness and self-actualisation for each practitioner in order to change experiences in the environment around them. The implication of this for social work practice is that professional standards are upheld while the needs of service users are considered (Taylor, 2013). Reflection in critical social work can challenge the

limitations of *technical rationality* (Schön, 1983, 1987) through its connection to postmodern understandings that knowledge is socially constructed and that there are multiple inter-subjective truths (Ruch, 2009). Reflective practice is dynamic and emphasises the importance of interaction and openness to collegial input, learning in context, and the opportunities for formal and informal reflection to take place (Munford & Sanders, 2006).

Reflective practice, however, has not escaped criticism within social work. Reflective practice has been challenged for its superficial nature, lack of clarity and therefore its usefulness to practical application in social work (Fook et al., 2006; Taylor, 2013). Ixer (1999) also argued that reflection is not inductive and is not just derived from experience. Rather, reflection in a particular moment is influenced from complex historical, social and political factors. In addition, reflective practice does not consider forethought or planning ahead. For the reflective practitioner working in a demanding professional environment, experience and knowledge can be drawn upon in advance to make the best use of time in a present situation (Thompson & Pascal, 2012). Taylor (2013) refers to reflective practice as having "a politically neutral stance" (p. 83) as it is attuned only to the needs of individuals in practice. The importance of making meaning of experiences through language, discourse and narratives people have with one another are also neglected within reflective practice (Thompson & Pascal, 2012). Yelloly and Henkel (1995) argue that social work strikes a balance between the operationalisation of dominant political ideas in policy and the dilemmas in maintaining a person-centred approach. Social workers have legal responsibilities where they can be agents of the state but might also be in a position to challenge social justice and systems that are oppressive to their clients (Brookfield, 2009; Fook, 2002). Reflective practice also avoids concepts of social justice through a limited application of structural analysis and acknowledgment of power, hierarchy and domination (Taylor, 2013).

Fook et al. (2006) explain that *critical reflection* however:

> [I]nvolves social and political analyses which enable transformative changes, whereas reflection may remain at the level of relatively undisruptive changes in techniques or superficial thinking. (p. 9)

Ruch (2007) has argued that contemporary literature on reflective practice is pre-occupied with what reflective practice is and less literature has focussed on the wider contextual conditions.

Critical reflection and critically reflective practice associate meaning with deeper or profound examination of power or structural analysis within fields of practice (Brookfield, 2009). Critical reflection requires distance from practice in order for meaning to be made (Rossiter, 2005). In contrast with reflective practice, critical reflection views individuals produced through interaction with others and is a social and political process (Taylor, 2013). Brookfield (1995) argued that reflection becomes critical when it has two important distinctions: firstly, the analysis of power influencing interactions; and secondly, the questioning of assumptions that impact on practice (Brookfield, 1995).

Critical reflection is important in identifying the location of power and authority and how these impact on practice and decision making. Fook and Gardner (2007) argue that three main features are required to develop critical reflection: to understand the individual within a social context; to link theory and practice of reflection; and to link changed awareness to changed actions (Fook, 2011; Fook & Gardner, 2007). In order to critically reflect, the process of deconstructing and reconstructing meaning held within a wider social and cultural context is necessary – new insight and knowledge can be gained through the "unsettling" of assumptions and recognising power as being individually as well as structurally created (Fook & Gardner, 2007). This can result in change from a micro to a macro level (Fook & Askeland, 2006). This unsettling brings a very clear commitment to radical practice, structural politics and brings social justice right to the centre of the professional development of practitioners. Brookfield (2009) summarised these points:

> For reflection to be considered critical it must have as its explicit focus uncovering, and challenging, the power dynamics that frame practice and uncovering and challenging hegemonic assumptions (those assumptions we embrace as being in our best interests when in fact they are working against us). (p. 293)

Critical reflection provides critical social work with the theoretical and political resources to explore contemporary issues in society relating to social justice, emancipation, power relations and domination (Gray & Webb, 2013a). It can be seen as developing fresh perspectives in social work practice through "making sense of it differently as a constitutive activity" (Taylor, 2013, p. 93). Social work and critical reflection aid practitioners in reflecting, researching and changing existing practice through identification of theories; evaluating the practice that is being used in relation to the theory; revealing hidden elements of practice and dominant discourses of

power; developing new theories towards practice and changing existing power relationships (Beddoe & Egan, 2009). Critical social work is messy and practice is indeterminate. Critical reflection considers knowledge from multiple sources, both past and present (Taylor & White, 2000). Given its complexities and contradictions, critical reflection in social work needs to be continually developed so that it is relevant to global and local contexts. Critical reflection is an ongoing work in progress. Fook (2002) stated:

> We need, therefore, to be prepared continually to revise our understandings of power and its expression, our place and role in this, and our responsibilities to the possibilities it opens up. (p. 29)

As a result of critical reflection, social workers are able to be more active within the organisation, express values, challenge expectations and create more satisfying and effective practice (Fook & Gardner, 2007). According to McAuliffe and Chenoweth (2008), social work practitioners have an ethical responsibility:

> [T]o open up their decision making to scrutiny by self and others in a way that will lead to better future practice. Critical reflection is a cornerstone of good practice, and a critically aware and reflective worker is much more likely to acknowledge their own value patterning and the impact that personal values might have on decisions. (p. 43)

Taylor (2013) has critiqued forms of critical reflection as still focusing on individual reflection in local contexts. This individual focus does little to maintain a commitment to challenging and critically exploring wider societal messages and structural constraints. According to Taylor (2013), the preoccupation of self-examination, of "who am I?", as a practitioner does not seek to interrogate social relationships within society and their wider implications for practice. Rossiter (2005) has presented a series of questions relating to professional discourses, the operationalisation of power and service users' voices that assist in maintaining a critical analysis and unsettling existing practice. For social work to maintain a critical lens, social workers need to continually review practice at a wider systemic level.

Critically reflective practice shifts towards "a more politically nuanced treatment of social work as collective practice; which examines everyday routines of practice" (Taylor, 2013, p. 86). It scrutinises power in professional relationships and challenges existing understandings of

helping and *caring*. For critical social work, the notion of help and care may link to hegemonic ideologies (Heron, 2005). Critically reflective practice also provides an analysis of the conditions of everyday practice beyond self-examination and inclusive of social interactions within institutional settings (Taylor, 2013). Therefore, conversation and discourse analysis are important to critically review in relation to the culture of professional practice and institutions. Within professions like social work this is particularly important in the way engagement with service users is constructed by both practitioners and managers. Through exploration of case work with a critical lens, the micro-politics of power can be analysed highlighting how this impacts on social interactions (Taylor, 2013). Critically reflective practice allows for the depth, breadth and their interrelationship to assist looking at thoughts; values and feelings; and the broader sociological context of power, oppression and social justice (Bay & MacFarlane, 2011; Thompson & Pascal, 2012) – in doing so, a more sociologically informed critically reflective practice leads to emancipation.

Critically reflective practice provides social workers with an opportunity for developing social justice in work with service users. A close analysis of language in interaction with service users and in written assessments will provide social work with the opportunity to learn more about how it operates and opens up hidden discourses. Taylor (2013) highlights that critically reflective practice offers social workers insight into how service users may respond to institutional settings that seek to dominate and disempower them through a lack of co-operation, resistance and hostility. By interrogating feelings and their position with service users, social workers can begin to critically understand how they view a particular case and service user. Critically reflective practice encourages social workers to be creative when working with others; to allow alternative voices to be heard and different modes of representation to be illuminated (Taylor, 2013).

Essential to critical social work are effective interventions to practice. Underpinning critical social work in a broader sense are the concepts of reflective and critically reflective practice. Reflective practice, critical reflection and critically reflective practice provide opportunities to explore existing practice regarding challenging oppression and inequality within existing practices, both individually and structurally.

Conclusion

Critical theory in social work is vital to the profession's ethical survival in the current neoliberal climate. Critical social work recognises systems and structures of oppression for people in

society and promotes their human rights, social justice and diversity. Critical theory has influenced the development of critical reflection, as a more politically informed kind of reflective process in social work which offers a focus in supervision on self-awareness, the ability to deconstruct existing truths and to transform learning. Understanding critical social work is important in the context of researching supervision of social workers. For the purpose of this study, critical theory complements the research aims of developing a deeper understanding of reflective supervision by social workers in community-based child welfare in Aotearoa New Zealand and potential strategies towards supporting this approach to supervision.

This chapter has been important in connecting Bourdieu's key concepts with social work. Through an awareness of habitus, field and capital, social workers can analyse the structures that influence people, their position in society and the associated inequalities but also recognise potential for change. Bourdieu's concepts assist in providing a deeper examination of current supervision arrangements within the habitus of social work and will be the basis for more focused discussion in this study. Bourdieu and critical social work both take a stance against dominant discourses and provide further examination of the relationships people have with structures and the wider environment. The chapter has described the influences that underpin the foundations for critical social work today and their importance to reflective supervision through the exploration of key theoretical perspectives. It has been highlighted that critical social work has a number of meanings. Marxism and postmodernism as key contributors to the notion of critical social work have been discussed in relation to structural analysis and implications for social work practice. From a broader lens, reflective practice and critically reflective practice have been influential to learning and to transforming social work practice. From this understanding of Bourdieu's influence on social work and definition of critical social work, the next chapter will focus on a review of literature from the two core constructs explored in this study: social work supervision and community-based child welfare.

Chapter Three: Supervision and community-based child welfare

Introduction

The aim of this qualitative study is to explore both reflective supervision within the current context of community-based child welfare services and strategies to support reflective supervision. Specifically, the researcher is interested in how reflective supervision may be used and understood by social work professionals in community-based child welfare. In order to carry out this study, a critical review of relevant and current literature was undertaken.

This chapter focuses on the review of literature from the two core areas of focus explored in this study, namely supervision – and particularly within the context of social work – as well as community-based child welfare. The first part of this chapter will concentrate on the review of literature relating to supervision. A review of the literature on social work supervision provides an important tool to inform the research and provide a background and context relevant to this study. An important feature of this context is a description of the tensions associated with balancing supervision between organisational and professional goals in the current neoliberal environment. The second part to the chapter will review literature relating to community-based child welfare. The importance of exploring literature in community services, and child welfare services is that it provides a background and a context for the purpose of this research. Both topics are introduced with a brief history, the social work role, an Aotearoa New Zealand perspective and the current environment. Bourdieu's notions of habitus, field and capital will be used to aid analysis of the context and the different discourses present in supervision and community-based child welfare.

To conduct this literature review, the researcher used a number of electronic database sources including internet resources, books, journals and dissertations across social science literature. Key terms (such as *supervision*, *reflection, critical reflection* and *reflective practice*) produced a broad range of descriptive literature, particularly with a focus on supervision within statutory services. There were limited studies available which had included the observation of supervision in practice and evidencing its importance to practitioners. Relevant material was focussed primarily on the last five years of work in the subject area so literature was current. However, the inclusion of seminal pieces of work and substantial research, as identified by other authors,

in supervision scholarship and research were also included. The review of literature provides a backdrop for this study and is important towards informing the methodology chosen and research undertaken with the participants.

Supervision in social work

Supervision within social work commenced in the 19th century. It is likely that the first models of supervision used by early social workers were connected to a medical model of practice used by physicians (Grauel, 2002). Social workers worked within charity organisations and early supervision was administrative. Supervisors were also the employers and social workers learned about practice through observation, instruction and adherence to policy (Davys & Beddoe, 2010; Tsui, 2007). Historically, the habitus of supervision has walked alongside professional social work practice through societal and organisational change to include notions of ethical, effective and accountable practice (Munson, 2002; Noble & Irwin, 2009; Wonnacott, 2012). For the social work practitioner, the use of supervision has been an important socialising process towards their professional practice. Throughout the professional social worker's career, supervision is an ongoing process and is applicable to all social work environments, irrespective of their nature (Hutchings, 2008; Mor Barak et al., 2009). According to Munson (2002), the structure and form of supervision has remained the same up to the present day but the content has reflected the changes in the socio-political environment in which it takes place. The values of society have influenced the functions and purpose of supervision through changes in legislation and the strategies for ensuring professional practice. For Carroll (2007) it is "not easy to freeze supervision and capture it in words that last forever" (p. 34). Through a Bourdieusian lens, the habitus of supervision can be examined particularly in relation to how supervision has become shaped by dominant discourses and the development of cultural capital (Egan, 2012b).

Literature on supervision has developed within the health and helping professions such as counselling, social work, nursing, and psychology. The dominant discourses in these professions still influence the process of supervision today. Psychoanalytic and psychotherapy models of supervision were adopted by psychoanalysts, counsellors and psychotherapists from the 1930s, while the teaching of casework and the importance of the supervisor to assist the worker in addressing practice gaps became an important feature in the learning process (O'Donoghue, 2015). The approach to casework in supervision still remains evident in the structure and format of supervision (Munson, 2002; Tsui, 2005). In the 1950s, developmental models were used in counselling and psychology. These described how both supervisors and

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supervisees move through different stages of professional development, from dependency to mastery (Brown & Bourne, 1996; Davys & Beddoe, 2010; Hawkins & Shohet, 2012; Scaife, 2009). By the 1970s and 1980s, through counselling psychology, supervision became more centred on client work and reflection on practice (Carroll, 2007). Experiential learning became central to the practice of supervision and considering reflection in action to provide the basis for continual self-evaluation and improvement of practice (Davys & Beddoe, 2010; Hawkins & Shohet, 2012). A reflective approach to supervision provides the opportunity to explore diverse perspectives and elements involved in any practice situation (Fook & Gardner, 2007). Changes, too, were occurring in the traditional roles of social work to more diverse, radical approaches to practice that challenged the oppression of disadvantaged groups (Langan, 2002). The supervisor had been seen as the expert in their field of practice and the professional dependency this created from the supervisee began to be challenged. By the 1980s, changes began in the service delivery of health and social services related to increased fiscal pressure and the drive to maintain capital resources; the impact of neoliberalism in health and social services within most Western countries led to changes in the systems of accountability, while the *risk* society and intensified scrutiny of professional practice by the public have become major issues (Davys & Beddoe, 2010). These issues have led to changes in the public services with the operationalisation of regulatory policies and procedures, and are referred to as New Public Management (Penna & O'Brien, 2013) or managerialism. A New Public Management approach holds the belief that effective interventions result from competition and performance. Such an approach to human service work focuses on outcomes, performance management and efficiency at the expense of relational aspects of work (Bradley, Engelbrecht, & Hojer, 2010). This new discourse (influenced by managerialism and administration) created a new phase of supervision – the impact of managerialism on supervision has seen it becoming an accountability tool with a focus on job completion and it is associated with the introduction of managers from business backgrounds with little appreciation of supervising practitioners (O'Donoghue, 2015). The rise of managerialism and its impact on supervision has led to the development of more diverse forms of supervision delivery where "one size will certainly not fit all" (Beddoe, 2015a). The limiting nature of one worldview being expressed in supervision has led to the importance of diversity being incorporated into reflective approaches used in social work practice. This diversity has been the influence of postmodernism, emphasising a socially constructed meaning of practice. Wider socio-political factors, power and diversity are considered using reflection and critical reflection within the supervisory space. Such reflective approaches improve practice and have the intent to expose differences between espoused

theory and enacted theory in practice (Argyris & Schön, 1974; Fook & Gardner, 2007). In doing so, reflective supervision provides a transformative process and creates new theories of action. The influence of nation, region, profession and organisation all require consideration where traditional approaches to supervision have historically reflected postcolonial and dominant views (Beddoe, 2015a). This can be seen in supervision with the emergence of strengths-based approaches and cross-cultural supervision (Davys & Beddoe, 2010; Hair & O'Donoghue, 2009; O'Donoghue, 2010; Tsui, O'Donoghue, & Ng, 2014).

Within the changing environment where practice takes place, supervision has become multi-faceted and durable in order to meet the complex demands of social work practice. Using Bourdieu's notion of field, the different "players" in social work, either from an organisational or professional aspect of the profession have influenced how supervision is practised and the value of diverse approaches. Clinical supervision, professional supervision, consultancy supervision and managerial supervision are terms now used by social workers across health, statutory and community settings (Tsui, 2005; Wonnacott, 2012). Supervision has also been blurred with other organisational support mechanisms such as *preceptorship*, *coaching* and *mentoring* to enhance performance and assist transition for the newly qualified practitioner (Bond & Holland, 2010). Agencies have also designed specific delivery of supervision to the practitioners that are suitable to their organisational context.

Supervision can also take different forms such as interprofessional supervision, group supervision, cultural supervision, peer supervision and service delivery models that can exist both independently of one another and co-exist at the same time. These different forms allow for different aspects of supervision to occur and emphasise the changing needs of practice, individuals and organisations (Davys & Beddoe, 2010). Central to the rationale for alternative and co-existing aspects of supervision are the *accountabilities* of the professional. These are accountabilities to the organisation where they work and their professional accountabilities, which can, at times, act as opposing forces. Internal and external supervision provide an important opportunity to reflect on different aspects of practice. Characteristically, internal supervision has a focus on administrative and organisational considerations and external supervision concentrates more on professional issues (Beddoe, 2011; Egan, 2012a). Alternative ways of delivering supervision allow for different perspectives on practice and for practice needs being met (Field, 2008).

Supervision is essential to social work practice and in many countries is mandated (Beddoe 2015b). It is crucial to providing quality social work services, therapeutic proficiency and positive outcomes for service users (Bond & Holland, 2010; Wonnacott, 2012). The supervisory relationship itself is significant and a shared responsibility between supervisor and supervisee. Supervision is intertwined with how social workers practise and how practice is reproduced and mirrors other relationships within social work in that it is built upon trust, openness and empathy in order for the professional work to be completed (Hanna & Potter, 2012; Hawkins & Shohet, 2012; Noble & Irwin, 2009; Pack, 2009). Supervision should encapsulate a sharing of questions, concerns, observations, and speculations that are relevant to practice (Munson, 2002). Attention in the relationship also needs to be given to the other key stakeholders that will be influential upon the supervisory relationship, for example, clients, organisations, communities and the social work profession (Connolly & Harms, 2009; Wonnacott, 2012). According to Bourdieu, each stakeholder influences the supervisory relationship due to their own interests being met – such interests create competition and tensions with the practice of social work and its fields (Egan, 2012b).

The habitus of supervision has received more attention by scholars with a considerable increase in the literature in recent years. A review of the 86 English language articles published in social work journals between 1970 and 2010 reported that research was almost doubling each decade (O'Donoghue & Tsui, 2013). However, the current evidence base needs broadening to reinforce its influence towards improving practice, evaluation of supervision models and exploration of outcomes (Carpenter et al., 2012; Egan, 2012b). The literature for social work supervision has tended to focus on its importance; the current climate in which supervision is practised; and balancing different aspects of supervision between organisational and professional accountabilities. This is reviewed in more detail below.

Although supervision has been considered essential to effective social work practice and performance, Davys and Beddoe (2010) offer that supervision has remained an area where there is no general agreement as to what constitutes *good* supervision and how this is measured in practice. Traditionally, the supervision session has been regarded as private between supervisor and supervisee without analysis and examination from outside researchers (Maidment & Cooper, 2002). The importance of studying the relationships, transparency and communication within social work is essential to ensure effective practice being maintained (Hawkins et al., 2001). Studies examining the delivery of supervisory functions in the session,

the supervisors' and supervisees' interaction towards the success in the supervisory process and their participation in interviews and observation of their session are areas for future research agendas in social work supervision (O'Donoghue, 2015). Beddoe, Karvinen-Niinikoski, Ruch, and Tsui (2015) argue that shifts from "retrospective accounts of practice to empirical examination of actual supervision practice" are urgently needed in order to justify the worth of supervision (p. 5). Further research examining the supervision session is valuable in the identification of reflective practice and the importance that supervision has in this process. Statutory social work and, in particular, child protection has been the focus of most published research on supervision (Carpenter et al., 2012; Frey et al., 2012). This is due to the current complexities working within this environment where effective supervision and social work practice has been viewed as under threat from organisational and public surveillance, meeting good outcomes for children and managing risk. However, very little research has explored reflective supervision within different social work fields of practice (like community-based child welfare), their discourses around practice and whether similar issues present to those found in statutory services (Turner-Daly & Jack, 2014).

Importance of supervision in social work

Supervision is suggested to promote resilience (Hanna & Potter, 2012), self-care, learning (Collins, 2008), client centred practice (Frey et al., 2012), as well as reducing stress, burnout and dissatisfaction in the social work role (Carpenter et al., 2012; Mor Barak et al., 2009). Supervision encourages practitioners to consider decisions, reflect and draw together possibilities for practice.

The support a social worker receives in supervision is vital to practitioner resilience (Beddoe, Davys, & Adamson, 2014). A review by Collins (2008) of literature and research in statutory social work indicated that frequent, regular supervision allowed for effective, supportive relationships to develop where the supervisee felt valued and trusted. A small qualitative study by Hanna and Potter (2012) identified that resilient and effective child welfare workers are led by effective supervisors. Common traits exhibited by supervisors included demonstration of integrity, trust, honesty, good people skills and time and organisational management were seen to enhance the well-being of social workers (Hanna & Potter, 2012).

Supervisors have an important role in developing ongoing learning and self-care. Collins-Comargo and Royse's study (2010) examined the relationships between effective supervision and worker's efficacy in child welfare. The cross-sectional data of 900 child welfare workers indicated the importance supervisors have in developing a positive learning culture in the organisation and developing self-efficacy, particularly with newly qualified social workers (Collins-Camargo & Royse, 2010). Raeymaeckers and Dierckx (2012) also confirmed that every supportive supervision session the social worker received from their supervisor assisted them to make positive choices and facilitate an empowering approach to their work. Such research also highlights the importance of supervision to reframe problems and seek alternative solutions to problems (Raeymaeckers & Dierckx, 2012).

Social work supervision is important in developing professional practice and promotes a quality service for service users. Frey et al. (2012) identified that social workers use supervision for critical guidance, reflection and support through the implementation of pre-service training, consultation and coaching, evaluation and facilitative administration working with children and youth in foster care. The findings in the study promote the importance supervision has at a service level in promoting safety and well-being for youth and children. A study by Jones, Washington, and Steppe (2007) found that decision making in child welfare was important in developing professional growth, effective skills and individual learning for social workers. To increase effectiveness in supervision, Duffy (2011) developed a rationale in supervision for providing social workers with support and driving rigour into management accountability for practice. This process assisted reflective supervision that considered ethical issues, complexities and uncertainties in decision making (Duffy, 2011).

Supervision also assists social workers to avoid burnout and dissatisfaction in their role. Mor Barak et al. (2009) completed a meta-analysis on the impact of effective supervision within child welfare and mental health social work settings. Mor Barak et al. (2009) argued that task assistance in supervision (supervisor's advice and instruction to the supervisee), social and emotional support (responding to the supervisee's needs, feelings and stressors) and supervisory interpersonal interaction (focusing on the worker's relationship with the supervisor) were statistically significant in promoting positive worker outcomes (for example, job satisfaction, organisational commitment and effectiveness), as well as delaying harmful, negative factors (such as intention to leave, stress and burnout). DePanfilis and Zlotnik's (2008)

systematic review of research also identifies dimensions of supervisory support as significant in determining staff retention within front-line child welfare workers. The assistance of quality supervision was a strong predictor for staff to stay with an organisation whereas low supervisory support was a significant factor for a staff member to leave the organisation (DePanfilis & Zlotnik, 2008).

Current climate

Organisational and work-place change in the last 30 years in Western countries, such as Australia, United States of America, United Kingdom and Aotearoa New Zealand, has had an emphasis towards accountability and performance management on social work practice. These changes are associated with the development of neoliberalism and managerialism within social services. Services have been deregulated, privatised and responsibility of provision shifted away from the state (Egan, Maidment, & Connolly, 2015). This change in the social work landscape has altered the habitus of supervision from a professional space for reflection towards a compliance-driven business management model (Noble & Irwin, 2009; Wonnacott, 2012). Recent research has identified the *what and when* within the supervision process has become increasingly important at the expense of the *how and why* that triggers deeper, reflective thinking (Wilkins et al., 2016). This new management of social work has created emphasis on measurable outcomes from workers meeting procedural requirements and to ensure best value for services (Egan et al., 2015; Stanley & Goddard, 2002). As a consequence, the tendency for support and professional development in supervision is overlooked. The changes to the supervision habitus has seen a blurring of roles between manager and supervisor while limited attention in supervision to the emotional content and critical reflection in social work has led to an increase in anxiety, uncertainty, feelings of insignificance in roles and less satisfaction with the supervision experience (Collins, 2008). Therefore, the potential reflective supervision holds for social work development (as discussed earlier) has been minimised in many social work settings. The development of knowledge and critical skills in supervision needs to be evidenced further as 'best practice' as well as a way for social workers to find solutions towards social justice. As Noble and Irwin (2009) highlight, the future of supervision in social work remains uncertain. Munson (2002) remarked that:

> [I]f supervision is viewed as a place where supervisors give answers, check up on practitioner's work, and find solutions … the supervisor will have embarked on a process that is of limited utility. (p. 11)

In this current climate, Davys and Beddoe (2010) have highlighted three major threats to the habitus of reflective supervision in child protection work. These comprise a lack of skills to challenge existing practice, risk discourses of blaming and shaming, and professional values becoming replaced by technologies of practice.

Organisational changes in social work services towards a managerial focus have hampered the effectiveness of reflective supervision and led to high turnover of staff, individual and organisational anxiety and a lack of analysis of practice when making decisions (Gibbs, 2009; Hanna & Potter, 2012; Munro, 2008; Peach & Horner, 2007). Stanley and Goddard (2002) stressed that the turnover of supervisors and supervisees over a short period of time is a huge concern. New supervisors are appointed with knowledge of supervision drawn only from previous experiences of being supervised. Therefore, a new generation of supervisors emerge that have insufficient awareness of reflective practice within their work (Gibbs, 2009). Gibbs (2009) has defined a *sink or swim* approach to statutory social work and supervision of "being told what to do". This level of supervisory interaction is professionally dangerous to practice in that it does not allow for developing skills of reflection in managing complex situations. High levels of unprocessed feelings from overwhelmed social workers explains the levels of high turnover (Gibbs, 2009). As Davys and Beddoe (2010) highlight:

> Paradoxically, practitioners are urged to be mindful of their own feelings and interpret and reflect on these … Good practice requires the updating of knowledge for practice and the support of the practitioners' emotional strengths. (p. 179)

Morrison (2006) argues that, in the social work profession, the recognition of emotion, stress and relationships is at risk of becoming marginalised in supervision due to defensive practice, a practice which involves the denial and non-acceptance of emotional experiences associated with working with others (Fook & Askeland, 2006; Ruch, 2007). Practitioners become numb to reflection through working in stressful environments due to unsympathetic attitudes and lack of resources (Johns, 2009). An acceptance of emotions and how this acceptance can be integrated within professional practice through the use of supervision remains an ongoing challenge. A practitioner's skill and emotional competence leads to building resilience, hope and co-operation with others towards positive outcomes in an emotionally demanding environment (Morrison, 2006).

Risk-averse culture also permeates the supervision of practitioners (Beddoe, 2010a). Risk discourses have entered practice and policy with little thought to how risk assessments can be utilised effectively and understood by organisations (Stanley, 2007). Organisations have created an environment where practitioners assess risk in all activities concerning clients. This, in turn, has led to any adverse event being linked to accountability of the practitioner (Chenoweth & McAuliffe, 2012; Parton, 2006). Fook and Gardner (2007) describe that workers discuss risk assessments in their work with clients, supervisors manage risk through worker's action plans, and the organisation has policies and protocols to manage risk. The notion of risk has been a powerful discourse in recent social work practice as a fear of making "wrong" decisions has been the emotion driving a pre-occupation for safety and security (Stanford, 2010). Weld (2012) discussed the role of supervision in these social service organisations as:

> Rather than supervision being seen as a way of providing a unique learning opportunity, it has tipped into the territory of managing risk adversity through scrutiny and surveillance, and/or as a means of maintaining organisational status quo. (p. 22)

The emergence of risk management in supervision threatens reflection. Weld (2012) contends that supervision that is seen as line management reduces both openness in the relationship and transformative potential. With the blurring and duality of the roles between management and supervision, supervision is seen as surveillance that controls the practitioner in a professional and organisational context (Beddoe, 2010a). Social workers may view supervision as "snoopervision" by the supervisor (Derrick, 2000) and less as a reflective process (Yip, 2006). For the supervisor, the management of risk can be a huge source of stress and responsibility. Supervisors may fear mistakes in practice that could lead to serious harm for service users, individuals, teams, organisational and professional reputations (Beddoe, 2010a). Risk ensures the supervisor's pre-occupation on worker performance, appraisals and management systems necessary for survival in the organisation (Noble & Irwin, 2009).

Due to greater public and political scrutiny of social work, particularly in child protection, organisations have created a reliance on technologies of practice. Organisations have responded to risk through evidence-based systems of working to procedures, generating paperwork, narrowing service delivery towards a focus on outcomes (Fook & Gardner, 2007). Baldwin (2004) argues that evidence of what works through risk-dominated processes makes

reflective processes of inclusive methods, multiple truths and collaboration, redundant. Consequently, supervision within the organisation becomes reactive, and mechanistic determined by risk-dominated tools, technologies and bureaucratic processes rather than by a reflective and creative process (Beddoe, 2010a; Munro, 2008). Such a supervision space avoids the time to build relationships, acknowledge the complex emotion from clients, the current political and societal circumstances and allows for disassociation to creep into practice (Ruch, 2007). Noble and Irwin (2009) argue that:

> The changing context of supervision has meant that supervision had changed from being a priority of the profession to a priority of management. However, this change in focus … comes as a loss for the integrity and independence of supervision as a process for improving practice knowledge and skills and providing space for reflection separate to managerial concerns. (p. 352)

Managerialism has not led to improved quality social work practice and reflective supervision. Public concern has remained around social workers' ability to manage complexity and provide an effective service to disadvantaged groups (Munro, 2010; Wonnacott, 2012). Questions still remain around the complexity of work that practitioners face; the space to manage risk and respond reflectively and effectively (Parton, 2010; Ruch, 2007). Supervision has obligations from all parties towards standards of practice being met and harm being prevented. This implies more than compliance procedures and checklists (Weld, 2012).

Balancing the supervisory functions

The biggest challenge for supervision is to provide a balance between organisational requirements and professional expectations of the social worker in order for reflection to occur (Baglow, 2009). Literature stresses the need for supervision to be critically re-positioned so that a balance of different supervision dimensions is ensured between administrative functions and exploring the emotional impact on the practitioner to ensure their development (Beddoe, 2010a; Gibbs, 2001, 2009; Noble & Irwin, 2009). Central to this challenge is the organisation in promoting social work empowerment through participation in decision making and supportive leadership (Raeymaeckers & Dierckx, 2012). However, dominant managerialist discourses influence the culture of organisations and, in turn, the doxic discourses of managerial and organisational imperatives in supervision (Beddoe, 2015a). Approaching the tensions between organisational and professional expectations of supervision requires transparency and

commitment. This is an important task for organisations and professional associations in social work: to demonstrate leadership (Egan et al., 2015). Adamson (2011) depicted supervision as situated on a "swingometer"' between conflicting roles and functions in various organisations and the political environments where practice takes place. The time spent on each function of supervision will reflect a pre-determined agenda that will not be politically innocent (Adamson, 2011). Baglow (2009) has commented that:

> The challenge for social work supervision is to now resist the twin pressures to capitulate to the state and replace social work supervision with a watered-down management/administrative supervisory role, or to retreat into a psychological individualism that would restrict supervision functions to education and support. (p. 366)

The need to separate the functions of supervision is discussed within the literature so that there is plurality of forms of supervision between management and professional commitments to reflect and improve practice. Social workers too, see the need for multiple functions for supervision and its purpose (Hair, 2012). Professional and regulatory bodies assume the role of monitoring supervision for social workers and organisations have a duty in sanctioning this. However, further research evidence is needed regarding the developing practice of other professional forms of supervision (O'Donoghue, 2015). External supervision is one particular area requiring greater scrutiny. This form of supervision has been defined as taking place between a supervisor and practitioner who do not work for the same organisation and it occurs outside of the worker's normal place of work (Beddoe, 2011). Beddoe (2011) has described supervision on a continuum between internal (focussing on tasks) and external supervision (professional and worker focussed). Four dominant modes of internal and external supervision are suggested (internal managerial, internal reflective, external professional and external personal) from current discourses of risk, safety and where supervision takes place (Beddoe, 2011). Egan (2012a) has also suggested that external supervision allows supervisees to explore their professional issues in a substantive way and internal supervision is characterised by administrative considerations. External supervision provides an alternative to line management to ensure particular features and objectives are met for the social worker. O'Donoghue (2015) argues that social work supervision is part of an evolving paradigm that is now seeing a shift away from traditional line management models of supervision towards supervision being outsourced to external providers. Such a change in the delivery of supervision has seen a shift in the habitus of supervision and the previous expectation that supervision was only provided

internally to the social worker's place of work (Egan, 2012a). However, many organisations continue to have their own policies in place where social workers still receive traditional forms of supervision from their line manager. For example, an on-line study by Egan (2012a) reported that two thirds of social workers in Australia had supervision only from their line manager.

Different models of supervision exist across different countries that determine particular socio-political influences. Bradley and Höjer (2009) drew together two separate research findings on social work supervision within child welfare agencies in England and Sweden, and also with South Africa (Bradley et al., 2010). An exploration of the supervision functions in social work across these countries from external/supportive to internal/administrative reflect the possibilities for learning and innovation and the challenges to social work supervision (Bradley & Höjer, 2009). The benefits identified in having external supervision have been the emotional, work-related support and the benefits this brings to the service users (Bradley & Höjer, 2009). In comparison, England and South Africa predominantly focuses on administrative supervision functions where education and support within supervision is secondary (Bradley et al., 2010). This study concluded that there is no single solution to address the complexities of social work and the agenda for supervision will be drawn from a national context that favours occupational professionalism or organisational professionalism (Bradley et al., 2010). A Delphi study undertaken by Beddoe et al. (2015) across a number of English-speaking countries highlights the international interest in social work supervision. In particular, participants have expressed the importance supervision has on outcomes to practice and the need to demonstrate its effectiveness within austere times in the social work profession. Further scholarly activity is required towards the exploration of tensions between different supervisory functions and the impact of the current neoliberal climate on reflective supervision (Beddoe et al., 2015).

Social work supervision in Aotearoa New Zealand

The development of social work supervision in Aotearoa New Zealand demonstrates similar trends to other Western countries as well as having its own local characteristics. The establishment of charity organisations in the 19th century turned into public welfare agencies by the early 1900s, and it is likely that welfare workers had administrative forms of supervision (O'Donoghue & Tsui, 2011). Early supervision literature in Aotearoa New Zealand was influenced by the development of New Zealand Association of Social Workers (NZASW) in the 1960s and traditional perspectives of supervision (O'Donoghue, 2007). The changes in the late 1980s and 1990s with the introduction of neoliberalism and managerialism led to a shift away

from the professional components of supervision towards an administrative focus (O'Donoghue, 2007). Since the 1990s, supervision for social workers in Aotearoa New Zealand has been strengthened through a growth in research and literature (O'Donoghue, 2010). There have also been supervision conferences, books published, the establishment of postgraduate qualifications in professional supervision from several tertiary providers, and recognition by the SWRB and ANZASW for supervision being a "professional necessity" for continuing competent practice (Beddoe, 2016; O'Donoghue & Tsui, 2012). Literature on supervision in Aotearoa New Zealand can be broadly categorised into the areas of: the purpose and importance of supervision; the different functions of supervision and cultural diversity; and the mandate for supervision in practice.

A postal survey completed by O'Donoghue, Munford, and Trlin (2005) identified social workers' views regarding their supervision. The majority of respondents felt that supervision assisted decision making on practice, focused on the process of working with clients and was supportive (O'Donoghue et al., 2005). A subsequent study highlighted the positives associated with supervision including progressive learning and developing reflection, the space in which supervision took place, the relationship being open and honest, and the attributes of the supervisor (O'Donoghue, Munford, & Trlin, 2006). To compare Aotearoa New Zealand social work practice to overseas social work, an on-line survey of overseas qualified social workers was completed by Beddoe, Fouché, Bartley, and Harington (2012). Two hundred and three respondents gave answers regarding the quality of supervision they have received since working in Aotearoa New Zealand. A total of 75% of participants rated their supervision as "excellent" or "good" (Beddoe et al., 2012).

As with international trends, individual supervision remains central to social work practice with other forms used in conjunction with this to ensure different functions of supervision in different practitioner populations (O'Donoghue, 2010). Supervision within statutory organisations such as Child Youth and Family (CYF) has tended to be administrative and focussed on risk and surveillance (Beddoe, 2010a) while other functions of supervision relating to professional development and support have been secondary. This increased influence of managerial aspects of supervision has led to a decline in "professional" supervision that encompasses all facets of supervision. As with other Western countries, the impact of neoliberalism and managerialism on the habitus of supervision has led to a lack of understanding and of professional purpose in many organisations (Davys & Beddoe, 2010; Field, 2008). The group consult supervision model

(Lohrbach, 2008), as a form of group supervision, has been introduced to CYF as a pro-active step in developing supervisory capability to supplement individual supervision and identifying action planning in casework decisions (Field, 2008). The group consult supervision model has also been trialed in community-based child welfare (Rankine, 2013). External supervisions, where the supervisor is contracted to provide supervision outside of the supervisee's organisation, are alternative models of supervision used in health and community settings (Beddoe, 2011; Morrell, 2008; O'Donoghue, 2010).

In Aotearoa New Zealand, cultural supervision and context-specific supervision approaches have been developed (Davys, 2005; Davys & Beddoe, 2010; Hair & O'Donoghue, 2009; Munford & Sanders, 2011). Beddoe and Egan (2009) define cultural supervision as:

> A mode of supervision in which practitioners of a certain ethnicity are supported in their practice by a supervision process that is grounded in spiritual, traditional and theoretical understandings that are congruent with their worldview. (p. 414)

Within Aotearoa New Zealand, Western influences on models of supervision practice have historically prevailed (Eruera, 2007; O'Donoghue, 2010). However, the cultural space between the supervisee and supervisor (such as ethnicity, gender, class and sexual orientation) is important to recognise in the relationship with the inherent tensions and different value bases this brings (Davys, 2005). The co-creation of knowledge within supervision and for supervisors to develop their cross-cultural practice that is strengths-based, and reflexive in meeting diverse supervisory relationships has gathered momentum (DeSouza, 2007). In recent years, models of supervision based on indigenous and minority cultures that respond to issues of inequality have been developed alongside traditional supervision frameworks (Hair & O'Donoghue, 2009). These changes have altered the habitus of supervision and promoted other discourses to be heard in different fields of practice. Specifically within an Aotearoa New Zealand context, Kaupapa Māori and Pasifika models of supervision have been developed. Eruera (2007) raised specific Māori cultural principles and practices in promoting Kaupapa Māori supervision for Māori practitioners and supervisors in iwi (tribal) social services areas. This supervisory relationship is defined by Māori for Māori from a Māori world view that enables safe, accountable practice (Eruera, 2012; Webber-Dreadon, 1999). Lipsham (2012) and Pohatu (2004) have developed reflective supervision that aligns with a Māori world view and respectful supervisory interactions. Furthermore, Eketone (2012) has explored experiences of cultural

supervision amongst Māori social workers and their expectations. Culturally specific models of Pasifika supervision have also been developed by Autagavaia (2000), Mafile'o and Su'a Hawkins (2005) and Mafile'o (2009) to describe a Pasifika experience that comprises multi-levelled systems and connections.

Within the last fifteen years or so, supervision has been consolidated within the social work profession (Hutchings, 2008), social service organisations and training providers in Aotearoa New Zealand (O'Donoghue, 2010). From a Bourdieusian perspective, the practice of social work supervision in a neoliberal environment needs to accumulate capital to ensure its survival. This consolidation of supervision within the training and practice of social workers has ensured the professionalisation of supervision within Aotearoa New Zealand. The professional body of social work in Aotearoa New Zealand, ANZASW, provides its own mandate for social work supervision (Beddoe, 2016). In 1998, ANZASW formalised the link between assessment of social workers' competency and receiving supervision through the ANZASW's Code of Ethics, Individual Practice Standards towards social work practice and Supervision Practice Standards (ANZASW, 2008a; O'Donoghue, 2010). The objectives of supervision are defined by ANZASW as covering factors of accountability, competency, professional development, support and education (ANZASW, 2008a; Beddoe & Egan, 2009). In addition, the ANZASW specifies that supervisors also meet the criteria of being supervised for some years before becoming a supervisor themselves and that they have undertaken supervision training (Beddoe, 2016).

The New Zealand government passed the New Zealand Social Workers Registration Act (SWRA) in 2003 and the SWRB was established shortly after. The SWRB is a government agency that regulates and accredits social work education programmes and produces annual practice certificates for registered social workers (Beddoe, 2016). Currently, registration for social work practitioners is voluntary but has a purpose in maintaining high standards of professionalism and standards of practice; increasing safety for all stakeholders; and providing a system of accountability for social workers (Lonne & Duke, 2009). The requirement of mandatory registration for social workers in Aotearoa New Zealand appears inevitable in the future. The principles of supervision that the SWRB highlight in their policy are that every registered social worker has regular supervision; that supervision is safe and accountable practice to the client, individual and organisation; it is a learning environment and professional development for social workers is encouraged (SWRB, 2011). The SWRB have also linked the requirements of the annual practising certificate to supervision through confirmation from

registered social workers when renewing their certificate (Beddoe & Egan, 2009). Social service organisations have now established contracts as part of their policies and procedures to clarify accountability, expectations and requirements around supervision (Morrell, 2008). Where respondents in research have indicated poor supervision, this has been linked to lack of knowledge on the part of supervisors and lack of qualifications in supervision (Beddoe et al., 2012). The need for supervisors to attend postgraduate training has hugely increased. Although formal courses are available, many practitioners only attend short courses that are non-assessed. This is due to formal education training mainly being accessed by practitioners who are willing to pay for their own professional development where employers do not value such training (Beddoe, 2016). Training providers have developed clinical supervision educational programmes with an emphasis on interprofessional learning. The advantage of this learning has been the different world views and perspectives that are shared by groups. Interprofessional learning offers exciting new possibilities in health and social care in the future (Davys & Beddoe, 2008).

O'Donoghue (2001) identified challenges for supervision within Aotearoa New Zealand in the future. Namely, the importance that the habitus of social work supervision finds an identity that is specific to Aotearoa New Zealand. The delivery of supervision in social work and its associated fields needs to be explored so that it meets professional needs and attends to the complexities in the workplace (Maidment & Beddoe, 2012). O'Donoghue's (2008) survey of improvements towards social work supervision identified three areas. The first area concerned the structure, focus, and the importance of practitioner development and training in supervision; the second focused on supervisor's professional development, practices and knowledge through formal education; and the third, improvements needed in the environment in which supervision occurs within organisations and the contribution supervision has to social work development and client-centred practice (O'Donoghue, 2008).

Literature regarding supervision within social work has identified specific trends in recent years. Scholars have highlighted the importance supervision has in a number of studies (Beddoe et al., 2012; Mor Barak et al., 2009). The current climate of neoliberalism in which supervision is practised has led to concerns regarding social workers' capacity to reflect, and function within a professional context of risk and technologies of practice. Organisational and professional accountabilities provide two opposing tensions in how the habitus of social work supervision is being shaped. The need for the ongoing exploration of supervision in different contexts is

recommended for future research. The second part of this literature review will explore the second core construct of this study, community-based child welfare.

Community-based child welfare services

There has been political and social debate around what a community is and the functions of community services (Payne, 2009). However, in the last 100 years, community services have served to assist disadvantaged groups and increase life opportunities (Healy, 2012). In the late 19th century, social work activist, Jane Addams established Hull House, a social settlement in Chicago in the United States. Hull House promoted a multi-dimensional approach to women's health, community education and activities to promote social justice and participation among disadvantaged women. This early approach to empowerment by a community service made social transformation possible within that community of women. Principles of social action and social justice have remained an important characteristic of community services (Beddoe & Maidment, 2009).

The early to mid-20th century saw much debate from social commentators about the impact of immigration and urbanisation on community instability, breakdown in relationships and reduction in community spirit (Stepney & Popple, 2008). By the postwar period, compositions of communities began to be altered radically. Population distribution in most Western countries had spread with increased economic activities occurring in main cities and there was population drift from rural and remote areas (Alston, 2009). The welfare state was at its height where economic growth was fueled by expansion and perceptions of the rights of citizenship (Craig, Mayo, Popple, Shaw, & Taylor, 2011). The action-research studies of the time on communities revealed the social relationships taking place and the recognition of inequalities based upon class, gender and race (Healy, 2012; Stepney & Popple, 2008). Governments intervened in communities to assist with cohesion, renewal and regeneration through significant funding to community groups to support local initiatives and innovations (Craig et al., 2011). Community services provided an important role in the extension of particular services to certain groups in communities. The notion of a voluntary ethic in community services at the time led to service participation, planning, delivery and social justice in responding to needs (Baines, Charlesworth, Turner, & O'Neill, 2014). The 1960s and 1970s saw more radical approaches to community services being adopted in many Western countries that targeted the state as the focus of discontent. The political activism of the time including social justice, human rights, feminism and the overall ambition of a better society inspired the role of community services (Healy, 2012).

In the past twenty to thirty years, the Western world has been dominated by conservative politics, neoliberalism and globalisation. As a consequence, communities have been radically changed. The changes in society reflect a focus on market competition, economic capital and consumer choice on economic and social policy at the expense of social justice, collectivism and human rights (Alston, 2009). The habitus of community services can now be seen within the context of the welfare state "in crisis" where work has become more constrained with reduced opportunities for political advocacy (Ife, 1995; Ife & Tesoriero, 2006). From a Bourdieusian perspective, community services have struggled in the accumulation of capital to ensure their survival due to significant changes in social policy.

Community services provided within communities have been changed in three distinct ways. Firstly, the partnership model between state and communities reflects changed views on ownership and governance of services. Governments have reduced the welfare state and support services through cost cutting, requiring people to become self-reliant to cover gaps left in service provision (Alston, 2009). In order to accommodate such changes, community services have been increasingly seen as the alternative to providing human services. From a neoliberal government perspective, community services can provide services "on the cheap" through reduced funding rather than state-funded services (Ife & Tesoriero, 2006). More than ever, working within community services requires negotiation and involvement at multiple levels including the state, local government providers, groups and organisations. Secondly, a contract culture has emerged for service agreements between community services and the state to run particular programmes and provide support services (Davies, 2008). For many community services, the main source of funding is contract work with government departments. Over time, contracts have become more demanding for community services to fulfil and are often competitive between different agencies. Thirdly, auditing and performance management of services meeting targets has altered services and provision of services (Craig et al., 2011). As a consequence, there are greater processes of compliance, assessment and measuring outputs within health and welfare services. Community services "end up becoming agents and risk managers for governments" (Kenny, 2011, p. 13). The results of changes to community services have been the devaluing and deskilling of professionals where the focus of social justice and care in the community has been replaced by a mechanistic and compliance-driven practice. These significant changes have also had ramifications for social workers practising in this environment and in meeting the needs of communities.

Community-based child welfare is the particular community service examined in this project. Child welfare and the protection of children is a huge contemporary issue debated globally. In particular, child protection systems have been developed to increase an understanding of the harmful elements towards children in society and identification of areas that promote optimal child development (Spratt et al., 2014). Applying Bourdieu's notions of habitus, field and capital are particularly helpful in the analysis of individual's perceptions of child welfare, professional working relationships and the interaction with the state. Working with children also involves working with families. The understanding of the term *family* varies and is significantly different across ethnic groups, for example, Māori and Pākehā families. Family life is also influenced by a number of cultural positions such as economy, culture, class, political structures, past experiences, geographical location, household, networks and supports, religion and state interventions (Munford & Sanders, 2006). This cultural position, the values and location (or cultural capital from a Bourdieusian perspective) of each family's experience is important for professionals to bear in mind when working with them to achieve change (Sanders & Munford, 2010). The number of issues facing families within society is complex and impacts on vulnerable children and young people in a number of ways. This requires considerable expertise from the professional in community-based child welfare services as factors related to housing, family violence, mental illness, poverty, and substance abuse are also prevalent (Rose, 2011). Community-based child welfare services can provide interventions at a universal level to all families, for example, Plunket health services for new born babies, or targeted to vulnerable populations where abuse has occurred or is likely to occur, for example, parenting workshops (Adams, 2009; Healy, 2012). With the introduction of neoliberalism and managerialism into community-based child welfare services, issues involving child protection, risk, need and systems of bureaucracy have become prevalent in work undertaken. These have notable similarities with the environment of statutory child protection services (Chenoweth & McAuliffe, 2012). In the last twenty to thirty years, community-based child welfare services have been confronted with tensions relating to the types of support work and programmes offered to families by services. This has been due to competing issues of responding to local concerns versus providing resources to meet funding requirements issued by the state (Sanders & Munford, 2010). Contracting and partnership work in community-based child welfare services has become strategically important in order for services to survive. However, such a relationship with the state has presented tensions towards providing a service that responds to the needs of

the local community versus providing a service that meets targets imposed by the state. This is discussed further from an Aotearoa New Zealand perspective.

Social work in community-based child welfare services

Social work in the community has a long-established tradition where models of empowerment, radical social work, feminism and other discourses have originated from within social work practice (Ife, 1997). As Fook (2002) has stated, the social work profession has been shaped by the many contexts in which it exists. Social work is grounded within ecological systems, cultural, social and political contexts, and so has different meanings in different locations. From an international perspective, Ife (2008) discussed the role of social work within communities as covering a wide application of positions in different countries. This can range from being politically active in some countries to having a role in delivering services through contractual arrangements with the state in other countries. In a holistic sense, social workers working in the community encourage solutions to social and welfare issues and build empowerment within the community where they work. Central to social work in community services is to facilitate communication to ensure the success of the community's initiatives (Alston, 2009). Social work in communities allows for the development of endogenous opportunities (local networks, resources and strengths within the community) and exogenous opportunities (advocating and communicating with government departments, organisations and networks outside of the community) (Alston, 2009; Kenny, 2011).

The range of services social workers provide assists families to bond better with their children, assist their children to learn, develop routines, promote better communication, manage challenging behaviour, develop networks in their community and ensure children are cared for and looked after (Adams, 2009). These services will focus on particular children, age groups, parent groups and can be delivered in family homes, in the community, or in other organisations (Sanders & Munford, 2010). Healy (2012) outlined some of the methods social workers use in the area of child welfare as family casework, family therapy, family group meetings and family support. Family casework refers to the social worker's approach in working with the family as a unit to improve the well-being of the child or young person through assessment and planning that identify strengths and particular issues. Family casework can provide a gateway to access further resources such as child care or advocating for situational issues such as housing and benefits (Scott, 2009). Family therapy is social work practice that focuses on the family being the context for change through understanding the family dynamics. A therapeutic relationship is

developed with individuals as well as several family members at once. Family group meetings serve as a forum for assessing and developing a shared understanding of issues from the family and social worker. Vital to this process is the development of a shared action plan for addressing problems (Healy, 2012). Finally, family support refers to the services available to strengthen family capacity to care for their children and young people. This support can be very broad and may involve practical issues such as task assistance, household management or advocacy and mediation families may require with other agencies.

Within community-based child welfare services, social workers have scope for innovation in their position and support for their local community. Social work practitioners manage a variety of roles, such as casework, facilitator for family meetings and group programmes relating to community needs such as parenting skills, family violence, and step parents. There is also the expectation that social workers are active in their networking within the community and have the capability to initiate new projects of particular relevance to the community where they work (Chenoweth & McAuliffe, 2012). In recent years, more specific and targeted support programmes have been introduced to community-based child welfare services. Structured and targeted services provide care and support during the early stages of childhood through intensive, home-based social work support packages (Scott, 2009). Sanders and Munford (2010) identified that structured services have developed efficient mechanisms for delivering parenting strategies and skills to families in order to meet contracted specifications from the state. The targeting of social work in community-based child welfare services is the result of neoliberal agendas and managerialism that has resulted in increased auditing and contractual relationships with the state as mentioned earlier. To regard social work in community-based child welfare as benign and promoting the interests of communities it serves, needs critical consideration. The state's control of funding and contracts with community-based child welfare services demonstrates how social workers and their practice with families are influenced by wider social and political agendas (Garrett, 2014; Healy, 2009). As discussed in Chapter One, Bourdieu has referred to the contradictions faced by current social workers as they become agents of the state, necessitating ongoing critical examination of how they are administering welfare services for the state within a neoliberal climate (Bourdieu et al., 1999). Stepney (2009) highlights that social workers work in a "policy paradox" (p.21) where critical perspectives are encouraged but undermined by structural constraints. A critical realist epistemology is required to develop social work knowledge within a controlled welfare state (Stepney, 2009).

Managerial structures and policies are now commonplace in community-based child welfare services. According to Baldwin (2004), managerialism threatens the social work profession in two ways. Firstly, managerialism makes the assumption that managerial knowledge is more powerful than professional staff and service users' knowledge. Secondly, there is a reliance on managerial practices such as key performance indicators (KPIs) and thresholds for services (Baldwin, 2004). Consequently, the habitus of social work in community-based child welfare runs the risk of becoming controlled by a new welfare regime with rules and regulations and focused less on the needs of communities (Alston, 2009; Ife, 2008). The impact of managerialism provides an ongoing tension for social workers to maintain traditional principles of social justice, human rights and care in their work. The concerns are that social work becomes too fixated with contractual compliance and professional skills and knowledge become devalued and decontextualized, with roles and identities becoming more fragmented and autonomy diminishing (Fook, 2002). The risk then, is that the essence of social work is "smothered" by dominant ideologies, funders and management (Ross, 2011). The challenge for social work is to revitalise its position for the future within community services and re-establish its role within discourses involving human rights, social justice and resisting oppression. Social work as a profession will not be static and will reflect the future social, economic and political complexities in society (Ife, 2008). Social work needs strong leadership, identity and an ability to organise and challenge the political environment where practice is undertaken.

An Aotearoa New Zealand perspective

In Aotearoa New Zealand, social work in community services have been viewed by individuals as less threatening than services provided by government departments and have served an important interface between welfare bureaucracy and meeting client needs (Tennant, O'Brien, & Sanders, 2008). Community services have also been the conduit for people to participate and for social workers to advocate needs at a political level (Cheyne, O'Brien, & Belgrave, 2008). Social work's commitment to bi-culturalism and the contractual climate are two key influences on community services within Aotearoa New Zealand.

Aotearoa New Zealand has a founding document that highlights the relationships between Māori (the indigenous culture) and the Crown through the Treaty of Waitangi. It is important to acknowledge the historical context of the Treaty of Waitangi and bi-culturalism in relation to developing communities and services and reasserting cultural identity and self-determination (Voyle & Simmons, 1999). Since the 1970s, social workers have developed inclusive

frameworks to articulate what bi-culturalism means in daily practice and within organisations (Durie, 2003; Munford & Sanders, 2011). Bi-culturalism is dynamic in considering the heart of the issues, maintaining cultural traditions, the importance of wider family and identities between Māori and Pākehā and challenging dominant ideologies that lead to the marginalisation of other groups (Munford & Walsh-Tapiata, 2006). Having a bi-cultural framework creates challenges for practice that require ongoing critical reflection towards strategies for change within existing structures and processes (Munford & Walsh-Tapiata, 2006).

The introduction of neoliberal policies in Aotearoa New Zealand in the 1980s has seen the lack of expansion of statutory social welfare services. Instead, services have been contracted out to community services to promote efficiency, competition and cost savings under a managerial model of accountability and effectiveness (Baines et al., 2014). Community services now provide tightly constrained services that are fiscally efficient (Gray, Collett van Rooyen, Rennie, & Gaha, 2002). Service delivery from small and large community organisations have become more fractured between accountabilities to service users, and government expectations (Tennant et al., 2008). Contracting poses difficulties for community services. The main objectives of the organisation are under pressure to be altered to meet service provision demands of regulatory bodies where an infrastructure is developed to manage contracts and there is greater surveillance from governments on key objectives of the organisation (Payne, 2009). A Bourdieusian lens enables a deeper analysis of this context, the dominant discourse of the state and the fight for community services to generate their own capital in order to survive.

Currently within Aotearoa New Zealand, the primary source of funding for most community services is via short-term contracts with government-controlled departments to meet specific community needs. The competitive tendering by community services for government funding has resulted in service delivery that has become more siloed; criteria based on meeting particular client's needs, where outcomes that are externally identified, are addressed within a concrete timescale (Chenoweth & McAuliffe, 2012). Such funding constraints can limit the development of social work practice in these services. Social workers tend to face a quality versus quantity debate between accountable, ethical processes and fiscal surveillance, auditing and reporting on activities through transparent processes (Beddoe & Maidment, 2009). These factors may be difficult to achieve given an increasing competitiveness within community services for funding and maintaining specialisation of services unique to their community. The central concern with contracts and funding for community services by the state remains. The

power that the government holds, the distribution of capital and the socio-political agenda that is upheld means any "consultation" with community services is perceived as merely tokenistic (Cheyne et al., 2008; Kenny, 2011). The challenge for social workers in Aotearoa New Zealand is the significance of advocacy, relationship building, networking and social justice within community services (Larner & Craig, 2005).

A spectrum of community-based child welfare services is now available to meet the needs of children and families that provide specialist and targeted services (Connolly & Cashmore, 2009). Within Aotearoa New Zealand, these can be early intervention services available to families with babies or young children, child welfare, youth services and family support (Connolly & Cashmore, 2009; Scott, 2009). A number of services range from local, grassroots, initiatives to structured, nationally operated and iwi (tribal) based services for more vulnerable or at-risk families. Community-based child welfare services will also engage in child protection work such as providing foster care services; make important decisions relating to risk and harm; assess and liaise closely with the main statutory service, CYF (Keddell, 2014). As with many other Western countries, the topic of children, young people and their families has been a central concept to social policy in Aotearoa New Zealand (Cheyne et al., 2008). Child and family social work in Aotearoa New Zealand is shaped according to important legislation such as the Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1989 and Care of Children Act 2004 in response to child protection and decision making regarding a child's care. Recent legislation, such as The Vulnerable Children Act 2014 (VCA) has been established to strengthen the child-protection system and ensure children identified as vulnerable are protected by family, and supported in communities, agencies and government departments (Ministry of Social Development, 2012; New Zealand Government, 2014). This response to child abuse, through legislative and policy changes, has been criticised as a method of increasing the tools of surveillance. No additional funding has been made available for community-based child welfare services to promote the relationship-based work with families that has been occurring (Keddell, 2014). Stemming from the VCA has been the Children's Action Plan to support increased professional responsiveness to children and families through improved cross-agency partnerships, and the development of children's teams for assessment, planning and delivery of services.

As an independent Crown entity, the New Zealand Productivity Commission (2015) has made a series of recommendations on the future direction for social services. Central to the

recommendations is that services should be client centred. The New Zealand Productivity Commission argues that government contracts are currently too prescriptive. Ironically, the Commission recommends that a "managed market" in which the work of services and providers (as well as their practitioners) are determined by outcomes that reflects a technocratic approach to the needs of users and communities.

Partnerships across agencies are effective for children and families when there is commitment from the organisations, good communication, consultation, training and an infrastructure in place to deliver key outcomes (Rose, 2011). The current contracting climate within community-based child welfare social work offers both threats and opportunities for innovation. With the passing of the VCA 2014, consistent and improved professional social work practice in child welfare services is now critical. Bourdieu has identified the importance of reflection for professions such as social workers as a tool for scrutinising personal and professional habitus (Egan, 2012b). Reflective supervision is an essential vehicle for critically reviewing and improving social work practice with children and families.

Conclusion

The first part of this literature review chapter examined the history and development of supervision as a core professional practice within social work. It has been noted that supervision has changed from its beginnings over one hundred years ago in relation to the socio-political environment where it takes place. The literature for social work supervision has grown appreciably in recent years but many scholars argue that there are avenues for further exploration. Literature regarding supervision has tended to focus on statutory social work settings and these strands emerged: firstly, supervision has an importance in promoting resilience and on-going learning to practice (Collins, 2008; Frey et al., 2012), preventing practitioner burnout, reducing stress and dissatisfaction in role (Mor Barak et al., 2009). Secondly, the current climate of neoliberalism in which supervision is practised has led to huge tensions. This review has highlighted that social workers may lack skills to reflect, and function, within a professional context of risk and technologies of practice. Thirdly, the review has identified the need to re-position different aspects of supervision between organisational and professional accountabilities.

Literature on social work supervision in Aotearoa New Zealand has also expanded since the 1990s. From this literature review, the importance of supervision has been highlighted in studies

(Beddoe et al., 2012; O'Donoghue et al., 2005). The different functions of supervision regarding group supervision and external supervision have been aspects to ensure support and case discussion remains central to social work practice. The significance of cross-cultural supervision and indigenous models of supervision have also been identified in this review (Eruera, 2007; Hair & O'Donoghue, 2009; Webber-Dreadon, 1999). The mandate for social work supervision has been acknowledged through professional bodies and an increased recognition from tertiary providers in training supervisors and supervisees. Research opportunities for supervision in the future exist in its development for supervisees, supervisors, the social work profession and the organisations in which it operates.

The second part of the chapter reviewed literature of community-based child welfare services. Community services have a history of promoting social action and social justice for disadvantaged groups (Beddoe & Maidment, 2009). However, globalisation and neoliberalism have radically altered the delivery of community services in the Western world. The relationship that community services have with the state has led to constraints in political advocacy and service delivery through increased contractual arrangements and auditing procedures of services. From this review of the literature it can be said that child welfare remains an important social service but tensions continue with community-based child welfare providing services and programmes that respond to local community needs versus providing a service that meets targets imposed by the state.

This review highlighted that social work within community-based child welfare has a rich history where a number of roles have employed different methods for supporting children and their families (Sanders & Munford, 2010). However, structured and targeted community-based child welfare services in recent times have resulted in specific support packages delivered to families to meet state contracts. Moreover, social work practice with families has been influenced by wider neoliberal agendas coming from the state.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, community-based child welfare services are primarily funded through contract arrangements with the state. A spectrum of services exists between early intervention for families and child protection services that measure risk. Recent legislative changes in response to child abuse in Aotearoa New Zealand with VCA has led to criticism that these changes have increased the pressure upon community-based child welfare services to meet state targets with dwindling funding (Keddell, 2014). Social work in community-based child

welfare is in challenging times, attempting to ensure community empowerment and advocacy as well as providing services funded by the state. From this review, the importance of social workers to be critical of their practice and the socio-political environment in which it takes place are crucial for the principles of social justice and human rights to be upheld.

The literature reviewed in this chapter has explored the key areas central to this study: supervision and community-based child welfare services. Supervision within social work requires greater exploration across different fields of practice, geographical communities and socio-political environments. Community-based child welfare is a unique social work environment that has promoted the interests of local groups and applied principles of social justice in practice. Within the current neoliberal climate, the space for reflective supervision needs to be amplified in order for professional practice to be developed and, ultimately, better services provided for service users. Reviewing the literature has assisted in providing context and the backdrop to this study. The next chapter will outline the methodological approach chosen for this study and the analysis of data.

Chapter 4: Methodology

Introduction

This chapter commences with the identification of social constructionism and critical realism as the epistemological approaches and outlines the theoretical positioning of critical social work to the research. This is followed by a detailed examination of the rationale for the qualitative methodology chosen in the study and the positioning of the researcher. The design of the study is also described including the participants, their recruitment, sampling and pilot material. The data collection, including interview procedures, and the related ethical considerations are considered. The final section of this chapter reflects the approach used in analysing the data and the limitations of the study.

The four key questions posed by Crotty (1998) are useful to consider in defining the parameters of social research. These are:

What epistemology informs this theoretical perspective?
What theoretical perspective lies behind the methodology in question?
What methodology governs [my] choice and use of methods?
What research design [methods] do [I] propose to use?

These questions form the basis for exploration in this chapter regarding the epistemological, theoretical and methodological approaches used in this study.

Grix (2002) highlights the importance for researchers to articulate the interrelationship between their ontological position with other key components of the research process, namely epistemology, theoretical perspective and methodology. Figure 1 outlines the methodological approach of the study. The ontological and epistemological position of the researcher provides the backdrop for the research questions and underpins how these will be answered through the participants' perspectives in the research design. The theoretical perspective is important in the context of researching supervision of social workers to understand how professional learning is achieved in the supervision session and the processes undertaken to transform learning. The methodology chosen to acquire the information in the study provides flexibility and opportunity for a deeper understanding of the research context. The aims of the research regarding

reflective supervision in community-based child welfare services guide the choice of participants employed in this study: the key information interviews and the supervisory dyads.

Figure 1. The methodological approach of the study
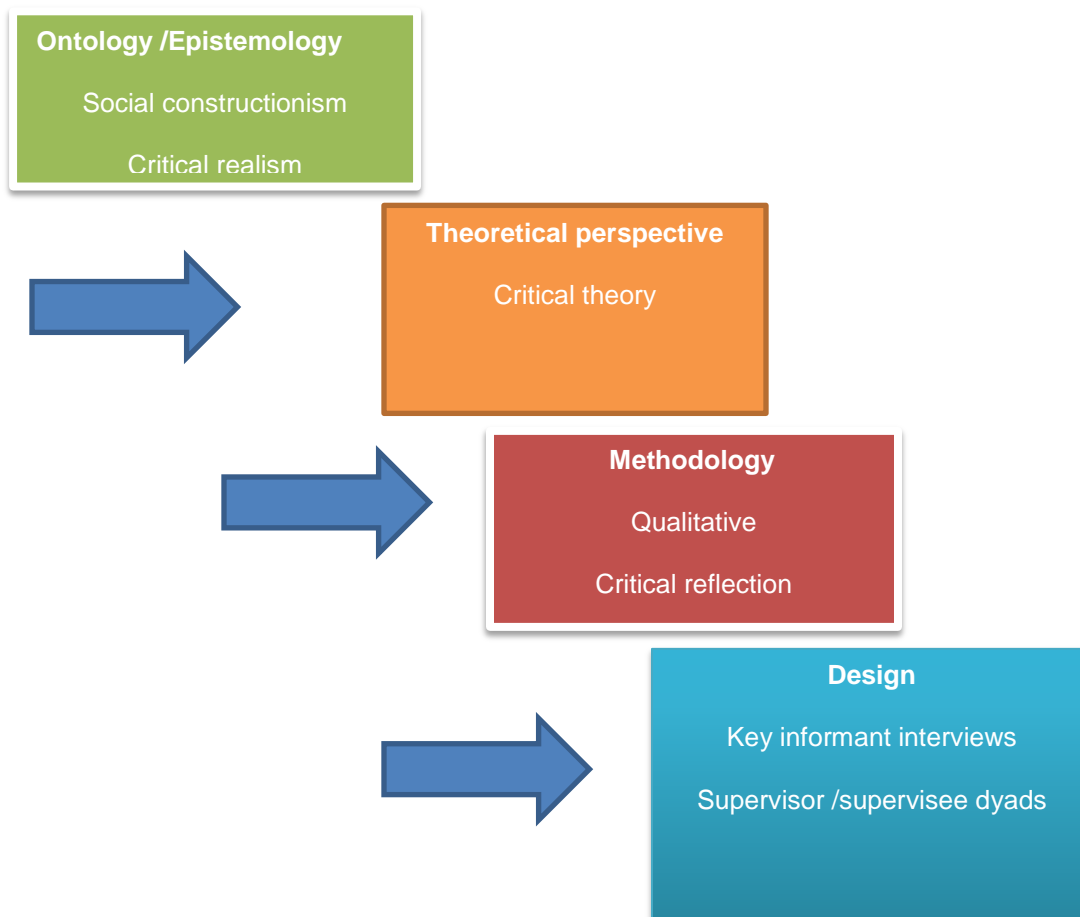
Methodological approach

Ontology

The methodological approach for this study begins with an understanding of the ontology and epistemology. In research, ontology is the starting point, "after which one's epistemological and methodological positions logically follow" (Grix, 2002, p. 177). Ontology is concerned with the nature of social reality and with *what is.* Questions surrounding ontology refer to the nature of social entities being objective or socially constructed. Objective entities consider phenomena and meaning to be independent of social actors whereas social constructions are built upon the perceptions of social actors and their ongoing interpretation of meaning (Bryman, 2012). The

researcher's approach to ontology is based around social constructionism and critical realism (see Chapter One). Social constructionism is the view that:

> [A]ll knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context. (Crotty, 1998, p. 42)

Therefore, social constructionists believe that reality is personally and socially constructed. Social constructionists reject the view that there is one singular truth to reality and support the position that there are different perspectives to describe experience. The focus of social constructionism is on language, relationships and how context can influence an individual's understanding of self, others and the world (Chang, Scott, & Decker, 2013). Social constructionism complements a postmodern perspective that emphasises context and diversity of knowledge from multiple sources and realities. Social constructionism acknowledges the importance of ideas, stories, culture and narratives for the identity of individuals and groups in society. The terms *social constructionism* and *constructivism* are used interchangeably. Constructivism refers to the individual cognitively developing their experience of the world around them whereas social constructionism has a more social focus to how reality is constructed (Andrews, 2012). However, both terms refer to the way meaning is constructed from people's engagement and their experiences with their world, and hence their interchangeable use in this thesis. Such meanings can be multiple, varied and co-constructed. These meanings can have different perspectives attached to different individuals and can exist simultaneously together. In addition, each construct developed by individuals or groups of people and their associated meanings can develop and change over time (Chang et al., 2013). Research from this perspective attempts to understand the social phenomena taking place that are context-specific (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Using a constructionist lens, the researcher can explore subjective meanings and gather diverse viewpoints of participants involved in research (Creswell, 2007; De Vos, Strydom, Fouché, & Delport, 2011). Theory is then created inductively from data collected in the research.

From a social constructionist viewpoint, the process of inquiry in research is value-laden. Therefore, the research is influenced by the researcher, the context of the study and the participants. Research becomes a shared and active experience. Bryman (2012) refers to the

researcher's worldviews also being constructed. The researcher needs to have an awareness of their own background, their experiences and how this shapes their interpretation of others' experiences. This requires the researcher to position themselves in relation to the research and acknowledge their own cultural, social and historical experiences (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008).

An important aspect of social constructionism is the understanding that certain statements and meanings become accepted as universal truth. At times, people may be unaware of their own personal constructs (how they perceive the world and others), believing their way is the only interpretation of reality (Chang et al., 2013). One idea becoming accepted as a universal truth are the interactions between people in society and the use and accumulation of capital that certain privileged groups impose over other disadvantaged groups (as discussed from a Bourdieusian perspective in Chapters One and Two). Although each discourse is valid from a social constructionist perspective, dominant discourses define societal norms and how knowledge and truth are disseminated. A dominant discourse will constrain other possibilities and this needs critical consideration when bearing in mind different perspectives. For Bourdieu, power can be viewed throughout society with the reproduction of doxas and therefore, so too, is resistance to power through the challenging of doxas by the critical intellectual (Bourdieu, 2001). Social constructionism provides flexibility, collaboration and voice to all discourses.

Social constructionism, the same as postmodernism, is argued by Baines (2017) and Fook (2002) as not have a theoretical base for political action. In other words, postmodernism and social constructionism are unable to view one action as better (or worse) than another action. Such a stance does not provide a basis in which social justice-informed strategies can be promoted in everyday practice. *Critical realism* provides a basis for political action in practice alongside the understanding that knowledge is socially created by people. Baines (2017) explains that:

> Critical realism embraces Marxism, feminism, and anti-racism's recognition of the existence and impacts of social structures in the real world of everyday experience and practice…,as well as postmodernism's sensitivity to the social construction of knowledge and the "multiple realities of subjective experience". (p.16)

A central challenge argued by Houston (2001) is the ability of human and social sciences to promote human agency theory alongside the impact of social structures. Critical realism has

been adopted from Bhaskar's ideas regarding how reality is constructed by the natural and social world (Bhaskar, 1978). For Bhaskar, 'realism' is created at an empirical level from experienced events; an actual level of experienced events or events not experienced; and systems and mechanisms that exist outside of an individual's impressions that generate causal events (Houston, 2001). Such systems provide oppression and are important to understand in order to transform and empower those who are oppressed. Critical realism is important towards identifying the incongruence between constructionism and modernist concepts, such as structural systems, and provides the argument that this instability can be explained within the real world experiences of people. From a description of the ontology, the epistemology related to this study needs consideration.

Epistemology

Epistemology is the nature of knowledge and how social phenomena and beliefs are justified (Crotty, 1998). The approach to epistemology has a focus on the processes and procedures for gathering knowledge (Grix, 2002). Bryman (2012) states that the central issue to epistemology is how knowledge is created: through *positivism* or *interpretivism*. Positivism relates to positive knowledge of the natural environment that is based upon logic and rationality. The epistemological position of positivism involves the gathering of facts and knowledge through applying the approaches of the natural sciences to the study of social phenomena. Positivism promotes the use of quantitative methods in research and scientific objectivity – knowledge based upon observations rather than belief - to the construction of knowledge (De Vos et al., 2011; Rice & Ezzy, 1999).

The opposite to positivism are interpretivist explanations. Rather than measuring causes based upon scientific assumptions, interpretivism considers the differences between people and natural sciences related to their individual experiences and how knowledge is socially constructed. This epistemological stance requires the researcher to consider subjective meaning and the individual's expression of the social world (Bryman, 2012). Creswell (2007) defines interpretive research as qualitative research with a small number of people. Interpretivism requires the researcher to grasp the subjective meaning of social action (Bryman, 2012) and look "for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world" (Crotty, 1998, p. 67). Interpretive researchers are interested in the everyday experiences of participants, feelings, meanings and rationales for their behaviour (Rubin & Babbie, 2008).

Thus, interpretive research is interested in how knowledge is created and perceived through an individual's lens.

Critical thinking and critical social work is based on an alternative philosophy of both interpretivist and positivist explanations. Between the scientific objectivity of positivism and the subjective meaning of interpretivism is realism. Realism provides the ontological understanding that external realities exist independent of knowledge and are theoretically unstable (Stepney, 2009). Whilst multiple realities of subjective experiences are acknowledged, critical realism is influenced by critical theory and "rejects the 'abyss of relativism' in postmodernism that all meanings are equally valid" (Stepney, 2009, p. 19). Critical realism recognises the importance of dominant social structures in shaping causal explanations. Epistemological privileging of positivism is challenged by critical realism that supports a variety of knowledge and practice bases (such as radical thought, qualitative research, tacit knowledge, participation and citizen-based knowledge) in the context of policy and location of practice (Pease, 2013; Stepney, 2009). The integration of approaches raises critical consciousness and provides social work with hybrid theories to draw upon for strategies of change at a practice level.

Critical realism (as discussed in the ontology section) is noted to influence the study and is relevant to the exploration of participants' perspectives and the promotion of alternative practice strategies. The importance of a critical approach to social work was introduced in Chapter One and is now discussed further in relation to the theoretical perspective to this study.

Theoretical perspective

The theoretical stance used in this study is underpinned by critical social theory and has been important in the methodological approach and design of this study. Critical theory assists people to recognise dominant discourses and structures that shape their daily lives. Brookfield (2015) identifies three core ideas regarding critical theory and how the world is structured. Firstly, that Western societies are unequal where economic, class and race inequity exists; secondly, this culture continues to be reproduced and is seen as natural and normal; and thirdly, critical theory attempts to understand these phenomena and to seek change (Brookfield, 2015). Schram (2006) proposes that:

> The term critical theory is … a blanket term denoting a set of several alternative
> paradigms, including additionally (but not limited to) neo-Marxism, feminism and

materialism and participatory inquiry … post structuralism, postmodernism and a blending of these two. Whatever their differences, the common breakaway assumption of all these variants is that of the value-determined nature of inquiry–an epistemological difference. (p. 23)

As discussed in Chapter Two, critical theory in relation to social work draws from a number of associated perspectives. The theoretical approaches of Marxism and postmodernism have been influential in critical social work to view service users' positions and the structural inequalities within society. Through these theories, the value of diversity and different cultural viewpoints has been highlighted in order to develop understanding and facilitate change in existing structures for disadvantaged groups. Essential to critical social work are also effective interventions to practice. Critical social work highlights the importance of reflective action and exploration of alternatives to practice to generate agency and challenge inequality for social workers and service users (Garratt, 2013c; Gray & Webb, 2013b). Critically reflective practice allows for the improvement of practice individually and organisationally, as well as locating and acting upon issues of social justice (Fook, 2013).

The interaction that people have with their environment and each other creates and reflects social justice issues, disadvantage and inequality of resource disposition in society. Critical approaches to social work allow for the identification and challenge of existing dominant discourses and provide aspirations, as well as opportunities for change (Brookfield, 2009). Critical theory as the theoretical perspective provides an important platform for applying critical reflection as a methodology to explore participant experiences in this study.

Methodology

A qualitative critical reflection methodology has been chosen in this study to explore and provide a detailed understanding of the phenomenon (reflective supervision in community-based child welfare) through the participants' perspectives.

Qualitative research is an umbrella term that can cut across different perspectives and paradigms in research (De Vos et al., 2011). Bryman (2012) defines qualitative research as a strategy that places emphasis on words in collecting and analysing data. According to Alasuutari (2009), qualitative inquiry is a humanistic approach that sets out to study the "social body", the practices of social institutions and provide an in-depth understanding of social and

cultural phenomena at the micro level. Creswell (2007) outlines the key characteristics of qualitative research as: the collection of data is in the participant's natural setting; the researcher is active in collecting the data; data are obtained from multiple sources; data are analysed from emerging themes; the focus is on participants' meanings and the researcher's interpretations; a specific theoretical lens is used and a holistic account is provided of the complex issue that is studied. Additionally, qualitative designs and methods are flexible in how knowledge is created through data collection (Beddoe, 2010b).

Qualitative research allows for critical thinking to take place in that it captures the contextual, holistic and complex issues of practice experience. Fook (2011) argues that qualitative research allows for diverse information to be captured rather than one dominant perspective – of either the participant or the researcher. As a methodology in research, critical reflection allows for deepening of professional practice through greater understanding of complexity and translation from one practice setting to another (Fook, 2011). Critical reflection is also socially interactive and dialogic, integrative and transformative in its nature (Fook, 2011).

Due to these processes, critical reflection as a methodology amplifies a number of opportunities in research. Firstly, critical reflection is dialogic in that it is a shared representation of the experience between the researcher and participant. Participants discuss their experience in their own words and the researcher forges new meaning from the use of research methods. Therefore, research becomes a co-constructed process between researcher and participant. Secondly, critical reflection as a research methodology is integrative in that it provides a framework that encompasses the complexity of the experience. This helps preserve the uniqueness of the interaction and provides a language that can be transferred to other experiences (Fook, 2011). Finally, the critical reflection process is transformative in that a sense of agency is created for participants for empowering change on personal and social levels. According to Fook (2011), research and learning can then lead to changes in actions for participants and to transferability of these actions into different settings.

Critical reflection as a methodology is based on the model developed by Fook and Gardner (2007). Their model is based on the process of surfacing assumptions and dominant discourses held about individuals and the social world around them (Morley, 2013). As a theory and practice, critical reflection links the changes in awareness to the changes that take place in practice (Askeland, 2013).Therefore critical reflection comprises two stages. The first stage

involves the deconstructing and unearthing of hidden values and assumptions held by participants. The second involves participants reconstructing their reality with newly informed strategies and ways of thinking (Fook & Gardner, 2007).

Considering how critical reflection may be incorporated into research approaches is still being debated (Ruch, West, Ross, Fook, & Collington, 2015). It is also useful to examine how researchers have employed critical reflection as a research methodology. In Australia, Morley (2013) has used critical reflection as a methodology for understanding practice with sexual assault survivors. Morley (2013) argues that critical reflection offers an emancipatory process for research and for research participants through the creation of reconstructed discourses around role and power in working with survivors of sexual assault. Allen (2013) has used critical reflection to research-espoused spiritual assumptions she had through the deconstructing and reconstructing of three practice moments. Allen recommends that this work can be adapted to explore spiritual assumptions and practice in other social work practice contexts through a critical reflection methodology. Askeland (2013) has explored culture and knowledge within Ethiopian social work. Alongside co-researchers, local social work knowledge was collected using Fook and Gardner's model of critical reflection in focus groups. Important cultural issues were identified through a shared and respectful awareness of the local, contextual social work (Askeland, 2013). Critical reflection has also been argued to be an important research method that can be interwoven with action research (Marshall, 2015) and narrative approaches (West, 2015).

The application of critical reflection as a research method, is still in its infancy. However, critical reflection is acknowledged as a powerful tool for gathering and engaging with information, developing knowledge and facilitating change (Ruch et al., 2015). Ruch et al. (2015) call for the need to expand research approaches and designs in critical reflection and propose several principles for researching in the future. Firstly, the multiplicity of perspectives, language and contexts needs recognition in research and, due to this, there are different understandings of critical reflection. Further examination of different frameworks is required as to how these may intersect and provide greater definition of critical reflection. The political context of critical reflection necessitates ongoing consideration as is how this is to be captured in research. Finally, the holistic process of capturing critical reflection where it is taught, learnt and experienced by practitioners from different disciplines and what this means for outcomes for service users is essential for its development in research (Ruch et al., 2015).

A critical reflection methodology provides the space for reflexivity – the impact of the researcher on what is being researched – to occur that is transparent and accountable (Morley, 2013). According to Askeland (2013), reflexivity is:

> Imperative in critical reflection because doing research from the position of a neutral outside observer is impossible. (p. 145)

The researcher is immersed in the participation and works collaboratively with participants in the research process. Given the role of synthesising information, Warin, Solomon, and Lewis (2007) state:

> The research outcome must succeed in containing the complexity and inconsistencies of our respondents' accounts, the differences between their accounts and, most significantly, it must contain, as far as possible, an account of our own influences within the making of the story. This means that we must explore the elements of mutual positioning that occur in the interaction between interviewer and interviewee because we do want to tell a coherent consistent story. It must be our own story. (p. 132)

For the researcher, critical reflection provided the opportunity to explore and engage with individuals and groups as an interested colleague within community-based child welfare services. This was due the researcher's position as a participant in the co-construction of knowledge alongside participants. Monzó (2013) describes co-construction as having an awareness that subjectivities are always present in research between researcher and participant. As discussed above, co-construction of knowledge is part of a social constructionist and ontology in that the researcher influences the research from their personal and professional experiences with the subject area (Bryman, 2012). A critical exploration of practice affirms the importance of acknowledging these cultural and historical factors. This construction of knowledge is also influenced by the participants, the meaning drawn out from the experience together and how additional knowledge is created within the interaction. The creation of further knowledge adds value to the research process in the dialogue that takes place.

Open conversations and developing relationships with participants assists in creating the space for participants to share their expert experiences alongside the researcher. This dialogical

process allows for different perspectives and interpretations on the research (Monzó, 2013). As Horsfall and Higgs (2011) describe:

> Being in relationships, negotiating these relationships, and acknowledging how we and others are or might be feeling, are essential parts of the research process. (p. 53)

Reflexive research acknowledges that the researcher is "part and parcel" of that setting, context and culture they are trying to understand and analyse (Rice & Ezzy, 1999). Reflexivity is helpful as a resource to understand data from the researcher's experience as well as the experiences of participants. This creates capacity to understand and builds meaning between all parties involved in the qualitative interview (Elliott, Ryan, & Hollway, 2012). Claims to objectivity in the research (and of researcher neutrality) would be inappropriate and unrealistic in this study. Creswell (2007) highlights that a researcher is influenced by cultural, social, class, gender, personal and professional factors. Critical realism as a frame for this study also identifies the dominant discourses that influence knowledge and contextual structures (Stepney, 2009). All these factors can have influence on interpreting data. In this study, the researcher is a heterosexual, middle-class, Pākehā male born in Aotearoa New Zealand. In addition, there are a number of proposed benefits to having previous experience in the subject area that can assist in the co-construction of knowledge. The social work researcher is able to develop collaborative relationships with other practitioners, identifying problems and solutions to "real-life" situations through recognition of interview and recording skills (Lunt & Fouché, 2010). The researcher's current academic role as a Professional Teaching Fellow, as well as previous roles and experiences with statutory and community-based child welfare services under a New Public Management agenda, are also important factors in the understanding of the subject area.

Critical reflection provides a qualitative methodological approach to this study in deconstructing values and assumptions held by participants and assists with reconstructing their reality with new informed strategies. The methodology also offers the backdrop for the design used in this study.

Design

In social research, the research questions are pivotal in developing the design of the study (Bryman, 2007). The overarching questions of this study drive the two distinct and sequential phases of the research (see Table 4.1). The first phase of the research explores social work perspectives on reflective supervision within the context of community-based child welfare services using interviews with key informants. The second phase describes how reflective supervision is utilised and demonstrated in the supervision session with supervisor/supervisee dyads. In addition, the second phase will also describe strategies highlighted by participants for how reflective supervision can be supported. Each phase will now be described separately relating to the method for collecting data, population, recruitment, sampling and pilot material undertaken**.**

Table 4.1. Research design of the study

Research questions

What are the perspectives of social workers regarding reflective supervision in community based child welfare services?

How is reflective supervision utilised in the supervision session by the supervisor and supervisee?

How can reflective supervision within community based child welfare services be supported?
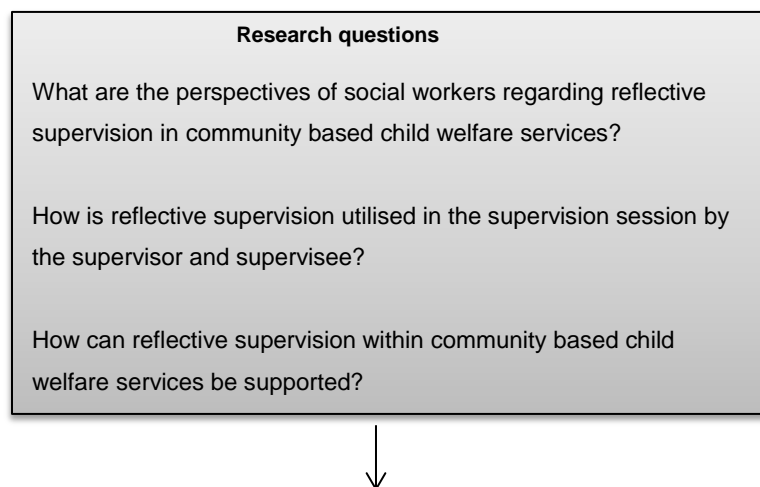
Phase of research	Methods	Research aim and questions	Population, recruitment, sample and criteria	Data collection	Data analysis
First	Key informant interviews	Explore perspectives of social workers regarding reflective supervision within the context of community-based child welfare services	Maximum variation from up to nine volunteers who are: Recruited via e-mail. Qualified and registered social work academics with	Audio recorded and transcribed interview	Key informant perspectives of reflective supervision. Content analysed and coded using NVivo and

			several years' experience and existing knowledge of community-based child welfare services.		stored into themes.
Second	Participatory reflections	Describe how reflective supervision is utilised and demonstrated in a session. Describe strategies on how reflective supervision can be supported.	Maximum variation from eight supervisor/supervisee dyad volunteers who are: Recruited by Regional Managers of community-based child welfare services across Auckland via e-mail correspondence. Qualified social workers in community-based child welfare services. E.g., supervisees, supervisors. external supervisors	Audio recorded and transcribed supervision session between supervisor and supervisee. Audio recorded and transcribed participatory reflection session between researcher, supervisor and supervisee using a "thinking aloud" process.	Thematic analysis by researcher, supervisor and supervisee on how practice has been deconstructed and reconstructed from the transcribed supervision session and participatory reflection session. Themes coded using NVivo software.

Phase one: Key informant interviews

For the first phase of the research, key informants were interviewed to obtain their views in relation to reflective supervision in community-based child welfare services. Interviews have the potential to stimulate context-rich perspectives, describe complex interactions and reflections (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). In addition to this, the individual interviews enable the researcher to gather a detailed understanding of the participants' views about a particular subject (De Vos, et al., 2011; Rice & Ezzy, 1999). To ensure accuracy of each participant's perspective, the key informant interview was audio-recorded and transcribed.

The key informant interviews provided the espoused theory of best practice and theories-in-use to describe and explain reflective supervision within the context of community-based child welfare services. Espoused theory and theories-in-use derive from the work of Schön (1983; 1987) and Argyris and Schön's (1974) development of the reflective practitioner (see Chapter Two). These concepts provide practitioners with the opportunity to develop their own theories-in-action from an analysis of their own experiences by exposing discrepancies between theory and the application in practice (Fook & Askeland, 2006; Schön, 1987). Drawing upon Argyris and Schön's key concepts via reflective supervision, the practice of supervision can be critically analysed as a space for encouraging practitioners to reflect upon their professional experiences, identify dominant and competing discourses, and develop their own theories-in-action.

The key informant interviews answers the first research question in this study and allows for examination of the diverse perspectives of participants and the potential barriers for reflective supervision occurring in different contexts. Fook (1996) argues that theory, practice and research become integrated and there is potential for this to be used in any setting where social work is practised: "It takes theory and research out of the purely academic domain and places them firmly back in the domain of all social workers" (p. 6). Additionally, the contextual location of where supervision takes place in an organisation is fundamental to the supervisory relationship and reflective capacity. The functions, roles and purpose of supervision are highly influenced by the organisational and the political environment where the practice of supervision takes place.

Nine key informant interviews were involved in the first phase of the study (see Table 4.2). The participants were chosen as key informants due to their background as social work academics, their experience as supervisors (past and current) and close associations with community-based child welfare services. The key informants selected have had considerable experience in the practice field, have taught on undergraduate and postgraduate social work programmes that are approved and recognised by the SWRB and have been research active in the social work field. All of the key informants provided external supervision to social worker practitioners and were also receiving ongoing supervision themselves. Seven were female, two were male. All participants were between the ages of 30 and 70. In order to protect confidentiality, a pseudonym was chosen by each participant. Eight participants identified as being Pākehā/New

Zealand and one as New Zealand Māori. All participants also brought considerable knowledge from a number of social work roles and held a range of qualifications from undergraduate diplomas in social work to postgraduate degrees and doctorates. In addition, the participants were members of the ANZASW and/or registered social work practitioners with the SWRB.

Table 4.2. Participant profile for phase one

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Role	Qualification	Community-based experience
Mary	Female	40-50	Pākehā	Lecturer/ External Supervisor	Postgraduate	Over 15 years
Rosie	Female	60-70	Pākehā	Lecturer/External Supervisor	Postgraduate	Over 10 years
Alana	Female	30-40	NZ Māori	Lecturer/External Supervisor	Undergraduate	Over 5 years
Rose	Female	60-70	Pākehā	Senior Academic Staff/ Supervisor	Postgraduate	Over 15 years
Elizabeth	Female	70+	Pākehā	External Supervisor	Postgraduate	Over 20 years
Bryan	Male	50-60	Pākehā	Head of Department	Postgraduate	Over 15 years
Caveman	Male	40-50	Pākehā	Lecturer/Supervisor/ Counsellor	Postgraduate	Over 20 years
Bridget	Female	50-60	Pākehā	External Supervisor/ Lecturer	Postgraduate	Over 10 years
Laura	Female	60-70	Pākehā	External Supervisor/Lecturer	Postgraduate	Over 20 years

The strategy employed for selecting the participants was via volunteer sampling. Volunteer samples are drawn through advertising and is a useful approach when participants are dispersed throughout the community (Rice & Ezzy, 1999). To select key informants from across Aotearoa New Zealand, the researcher approached the President of the Council for Social Work Education Aotearoa New Zealand (CSWEANZ) to distribute an advertisement amongst the delegates of this voluntary community. These delegates represented other tertiary institutions nationwide and it was anticipated that they, too, would pass on the advertisement to their

colleagues. Originally in the study, the researcher proposed to have eight key informants and more participants volunteered than originally proposed. This led to the recruitment of nine key informants, further harnessing the range of diversity and experiences relating to the scope of the study.

A pilot key informant interview was undertaken in advance of the data with participants being collected. Pilot studies are useful to detect early data-collection problems for the researcher so that they can be remedied before implementing the main study (Rubin & Babbie, 2008). The pilots was useful for the researcher to trial the semi-structured questions of the study and make amendments as necessary. For the purpose of the pilot key informant interview, the researcher selected an academic colleague who was willing to participate and signed a consent form to participate in the pilot. This interview was recorded and transcribed by the researcher. From the researcher's notes taken, a wide-ranging conversation occurred regarding reflective supervision and the wider environmental issues (such as changes in service delivery, funding, resources and social justice) that may impact on reflective supervision within a community-based child welfare context. The pilot key informant interview assisted with the reframing of several questions and further appreciation by the researcher of the research questions and the breadth of issues that reflective supervision can traverse.

Phase two: Supervisory dyads

The second phase of the research involved supervisor-supervisee dyads in community-based child welfare services. This phase of the research provides the theories-in-use in addressing the research question as to how reflective supervision is utilised in the current context. The third research question regarding strategies to support reflective practice in supervision was also addressed using the "thinking aloud" process.

Data were gathered from two separate sessions for each supervisor/supervisee dyad. This was the supervision session and a follow-up participatory reflection session (see Figure 2). The rationale for the recording of two separate sessions was to allow the process of deconstruction of surfacing assumptions, values and dominant discourses in the supervision session; and reconstructing practice with new informed strategies in the participatory reflection. This two-staged approach is outlined by Fook and Gardner (2007) as their critical reflection model.

Figure 2 The data collection process with supervisory dyads

The supervision session

| Audio-recorded and transcribed Supervisor and supervisee deconstruct practice | Initial analysis by researcher of key themes in the session |

Participatory reflection session

| Audio-recorded and transcribed Supervisor and supervisee reconstruct practice | Transcript of supervision session and themes used to facilitate reflection by supervision and supervisee 'thinking aloud' |

Feedback and review

| Audio-recorded and transcribed Consolidation of learning achieved by supervisor and supervisee | 'Thinking aloud' process allows supervisor and supervisee to reflect more deeply on their practice |

The supervision session between supervisor and supervisee was audio-recorded and transcribed. The supervision session was an example of the standard existing practice without the presence of the researcher. The supervisor and supervisee took responsibility for recording their supervision session via the audio-recorder. The guidelines for the recording of the supervision session are described further below in the interview procedures. On reflection by the researcher, the briefing of the supervisor/supervisee dyads prior to the collection of data may have had an influence on the supervisor and supervisee and the supervision process that was recorded (this is discussed further in the limitations section). The researcher had provisionally analysed the supervision transcripts for preliminary coding to assist the supervisor and supervisee in the thinking aloud process and summarise their supervision session. The analysis of the content from the supervision session was then grouped into themes (this is described further in the data analysis section below). The initial analysis of the transcript by the researcher was completed to allow smoother facilitation of the thinking aloud process within the participatory reflection session. This process was repeated for each of the dyads. The feedback

from the participants regarding this assistance was positive in allowing smoother facilitation of the meeting, and as up to three or four weeks had elapsed, was necessary in jogging the participants' memory of the supervision session.

Participatory reflection as a method has its roots in participatory action research. Participatory research allows people to acquire new knowledge in their participation, create a synthesis of different experiences and link theory to practice (Rice & Ezzy, 1999). This has been the purpose of the participatory reflections in this study so that the supervisor/supervisee dyads can demonstrate the utilisation of reflective supervision. During the participatory reflection, the researcher facilitated the session to allow the supervisor and supervisee time to reflect on the content of their supervision session more deeply and allowed for the reconstruction of their practice. To ensure little time had elapsed since the recorded supervision session and the issues were still fresh in the supervisor's and supervisee's mind, the participatory reflection was scheduled prior to the next supervision session by the dyad.

The participatory reflection sessions were also transcribed. The purpose of this transcription was to analyse and identify potential themes from the transcribed supervision session and the participatory reflection follow-up session. The potential themes examined describe how reflective supervision had been utilised and supported through the process of deconstructing and reconstructing practice using the thinking aloud process (described below). In addition to this, the supervision session and the participatory reflection session (theory-in-use) allowed for analysis of links and gaps from the key informant interviews (espoused theory and theories-in-use) regarding the demonstration of reflective practice within the supervision session.

The participatory reflections followed a thinking aloud process. This process was used as an activity to assist participants in the second stage of the critical reflection approach to reconstruct their practice with fresh strategies. Thinking aloud is seen as a cognitive interview technique where participants are encouraged to vocalise their thought processes and is useful in examining transcripts for participant understanding and the information they draw upon (Priede & Farrall, 2011). The process of thinking aloud has been described in previous literature (Cooper, 1999; Gursansky & Cooper, 1997; Maidment & Cooper, 2002; Priede & Farrall, 2011). Previous work by Cooper (1999) has discussed the value of the thinking aloud process in identifying diverse pedagogical strategies that social work supervisors use in their work with students. Maidment and Cooper (2002) also used thinking aloud between supervisors and

students to examine how diversity and oppression was discussed within the supervision session. In their study, the supervision session was recorded as part of the research-preparation phase and supervisors were then asked to comment on techniques that they used to foster greater reflection on diversity. A research feedback meeting was then conducted between the researchers and the supervisor to analyse the data and the supervisor's participation in the project (Maidment & Cooper, 2002). The thinking aloud process has been helpful in facilitating personal reflection and revealing a supervisor's and supervisee's style – how they use the session through the recorded content (Maidment & Cooper, 2002). The feedback from the thinking aloud process used in previous supervision sessions by Maidment and Cooper (2002) fits with the research question as to how reflective supervision within community-based child welfare services can be supported and also provides a strategy for doing so (see Table 4.1).

The thinking aloud process with the researcher was recorded as part of the participatory reflection session (see Figure 2). With each participant having a copy of the transcript available from the supervision session, the researcher began the process by highlighting the identified themes (previously identified by the researcher) to facilitate reflection in the session (see Figure 3). The supervisor and supervisee were encouraged to review the transcript, articulate their reflections and comment on the supervision session. In particular, participants discussed their techniques, examples of language that indicate reflective practice and awareness, thoughts and feelings in the session through the thinking aloud process (Cooper, 1999; Maidment & Cooper, 2002). The supervision transcript was sequentially reflected on from start to finish. During the recorded session, the researcher had adopted a stance of curiosity towards the transcript material and facilitated open questioning to assist the participants to articulate meaning and insight into their supervision time together. The role of the researcher had been to encourage the supervisor and supervisee to think aloud and clarify their particular answers (Priede & Farrall, 2011). The importance of the thinking aloud process was to allow for a deeper appreciation of how supervision, between the supervisor and supervisee, was used to reflect on practice. The session had been helpful in providing an additional lens with which to critically consider reflective practice in supervision and the thinking aloud process had allowed for the reconstruction of practice.

Figure 3 The "thinking aloud" process

The researcher facilitates process through supervision transcript, identification of key themes and inquiry.

Supervisor and supervisee reflect through active participation

Feedback and review of process
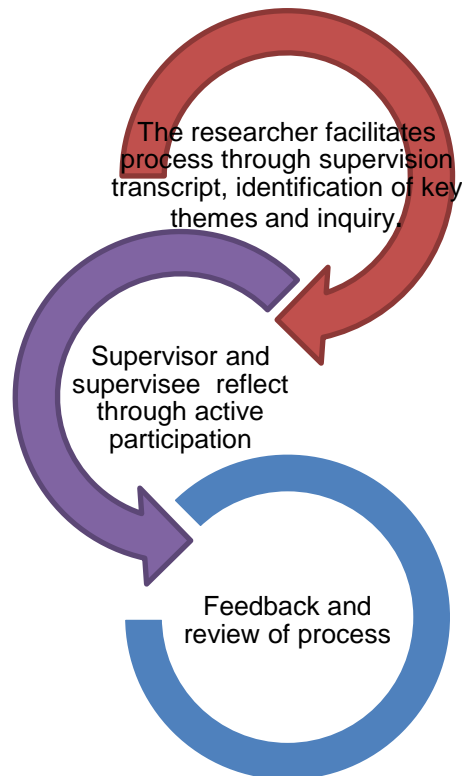
Following the thinking aloud process and to conclude the sessions, the supervisors and supervisees had the opportunity to feedback with the researcher, review comments, summarise the findings from their session and evaluate the thinking aloud process. The purpose of this was to ensure participants' comments had been accurately captured by the researcher in the data and allowed the opportunity for participants to reconstruct practice with the learning they have made from the experience. The feedback from the dyads was that the thinking aloud process was helpful in stimulating reflection and reminding them of the key issues discussed in the supervision session. The thinking aloud process as a strategy to support reflective supervision is discussed in Chapter Seven.

16 participants (eight supervisory dyads) were involved in the second phase of the study (see Table 4.3). The 16 participants ranged from newly qualified to experienced practitioners with over 30 years' practice experience and many were members of ANZASW and registered with

the SWRB. Participants brought a range of experience as social workers in community-based child welfare, statutory child welfare and other distinct areas of social work practice such as mental health. Some of these participants have had multiple roles as practice assessors, social workers, managers and external supervisors. Fifteen participants were female, one male. Participants were between the ages of 20 and 70. 11 identified as Pākehā/New Zealand; two as Māori; one as Māori/Pasifika; one as Chinese; and one as Pākehā/Māori. One participant, Bridget, was a key informant and also participated in the supervisory dyads. As with phase one, a pseudonym was chosen by each participant.

Table 4.3. Participant profile for phase two

Supervisory dyad	Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Role	Qualification
Dyad 1: Internal Supervisor	Jock	Male	50-60	Pākehā	Service Manager for community-based child welfare service	Undergraduate
Dyad 1: Supervisee	Susan	Female	50-60	Pākehā	Social Worker for community-based child welfare service	Undergraduate
Dyad 2: Internal Supervisor	Yvonne	Female	30-40	Pākehā	Line Manager/Supervisor in child welfare service	Postgraduate
Dyad 2: Supervisee	Tracey	Female	20-30	Pākehā	Residential Social Worker in child welfare service	Undergraduate
Dyad 3: External Supervisor	Debbie	Female	40-50	Pākehā	National Service Manager/ External Supervisor	Postgraduate
Dyad 3: Supervisee	Jane	Female	50-60	Pākehā	Regional Manager in child welfare service	Undergraduate
Dyad 4: Internal Supervisor	Jen	Female	30-40	Pākehā	Practice Leader for residential child welfare service	Undergraduate
Dyad 4: Supervisee	Alice	Female	30-40	Māori/Pasifika	Social Worker for residential child welfare service	Postgraduate

Dyad 5: External Supervisor	Bridget	Female	50-60	Pākehā	External Supervisor	Postgraduate
Dyad 5: Supervisee	Jackie	Female	30-40	Chinese	Social Worker for community-based child welfare service	Undergraduate
Dyad 6: External Supervisor	Selena	Female	40-50	Pākehā/ Māori	External Supervisor	Postgraduate
Dyad 6: Supervisee	Kath	Female	60-70	Pākehā	Centre Practice Manager for community-based child welfare service	Postgraduate
Dyad 7: External Supervisor	Jessica	Female	60-70	Pākehā	External Supervisor	Postgraduate
Dyad 7: Supervisee	Grace	Female	40-50	Pākehā	Community Social Worker for community- based child welfare service	Undergraduate
Dyad 8: External Supervisor	Ohaki	Female	40-50	Māori	External Supervisor/ Social Worker	Postgraduate
Dyad 8: Supervisee	Rangi	Female	50-60	Māori	Social Worker for Community-based service	Undergraduate

NB: Bridget is a participant in phase one and phase two in the study

The selection criteria for participation in the research included both the supervisor and
supervisee and that the supervision occurred in the context of community-based child welfare
services. Therefore the supervisor and the supervisee were already in an existing supervisory
relationship prior to participating in the study. In order to fully describe the themes that relate to
the research question, sufficient variation in the selection of participants was sought. Therefore,
the researcher was interested in selecting different participants to phase one key informants of
the study. Maximum variation sampling is used to select cases that provide difference to the
experience being researched (Rice & Ezzy, 1999). The researcher was interested in selecting
individuals from the volunteers who offered variation of perspectives and cultures so diversity
and difference across participants would be captured, for example, according to age, ethnicity,
demographics, role and experience. Participants were selected for the study across the wider

Auckland area. The rationale for this location was due to Auckland having the largest population across Aotearoa New Zealand with a variety of services and interventions for children and families from diverse backgrounds and cultures.

From the eight supervisory dyads, five of the supervisors identified as being external supervisors to their supervisees; and three as line managers. These different and varied supervisory relationships emerged within the data from the study participants. Therefore, diverse supervisory relationships internal to the community-based child welfare agency and supervision provided by an external supervisor were reflected in the sample. This was significant in capturing diverse forms of social work supervision in community-based child welfare and this added value to the research. Reflection on the similarities and differences on both forms of supervision were then considered by the researcher.

As with phase one of the study, the participants were selected via volunteer sampling (Rice & Ezzy, 1999). The researcher approached Chief Executive Officers and regional managers of several community-based child welfare services across Auckland to distribute advertisements for participants. The Chief Executive Officers and regional managers signed their consent that they were willing to distribute the advertisement and confirm that staff participation or non-participation in the research would not impact upon their employment status in the organisation. The community-based child welfare services selected are large organisations that focus on delivering services for children and families regionally and/or nationally across Aotearoa New Zealand. The importance of approaching these services in particular was to foster greater distribution of the advertisement across a larger audience of social workers in Auckland, working in a number of different teams to participate in the study. Participants were invited to contact the researcher for more information if they were interested in participating in the research. For every participant who contacted the researcher, information sheets relating to the research and a consent form were distributed by e-mail prior to participation. Consent forms were then collected by the researcher before recording took place. Originally, the researcher proposed to have six supervisor/supervisee dyads participate in phase two. More participants volunteered than originally proposed and a further two supervisor/supervisee dyads were recruited (eight supervisor/supervisee dyads in total). The availability of further participants led to further diversity in the dyads across other organisations in Auckland.

Phase two of the study was also piloted. The researcher chose their own external supervisory relationship with their supervisor for the past five years (we met for one hour each month). As a pilot supervisory dyad, both were interested in improving practice and in the co-constructed use of supervision. Three standard supervision sessions were audio-recorded and transcribed by the researcher over a nine-month period to critically reflect on the content through a process of deconstruction and reconstruction using Fook and Gardner's (2007) critical reflection model. The typed transcript was then perused by both parties and through an initial analysis, content was grouped into themes. The follow-up participatory reflection was undertaken three weeks after the supervision session using the transcript as a guide to think aloud. This was also audio-recorded and transcribed. The thinking aloud process allowed for a sharing of an identified process, content and meanings that emerged from each session. The use of open-ended questioning and inquiry in the thinking aloud process assisted with articulating meaning and gaining insight into the supervision time together. This pilot has developed into a specific project from which material has been published (Rankine & Thompson, 2015). The researcher's own participation in the pilot supervisory dyad assisted with a greater understanding of the thinking aloud process from direct experience and how this assists critical reflection in supervision. In addition, the pilot assisted the researcher to consider initial coding of the transcripts from the supervision session in order to facilitate the follow-up participatory reflection.

Interview procedures and schedules

The research requirement for participation in this study was that all the interviews and sessions were audio-recorded and transcribed. The advantage of this method of recording is that a high level of detail and accuracy from the interview is achieved. Additionally, by recording the interview, the interviewer is also able to maintain better engagement with the interviewee, for example, in using eye contact (Rice & Ezzy, 1999; Sarantakos, 2005).

Prior to their participation, each participant had signed a consent form and received a copy of the Participant Information sheet (see Appendix 3). Participants also had the opportunity to ask the researcher any queries they had in relation to the research. The key informant interviews and the participatory reflection session with the supervisory dyads were facilitated by the researcher and recorded by digital voice recorder with the participants' consent. The key informant interviews were undertaken within the participants' place of work or at a mutually convenient venue. Due to some key informants residing across different areas of Aotearoa New

Zealand, the researcher organised interviews via SKYPE as required. The supervision session between the supervisor and supervisee was audio-recorded by the participants. The recording of the supervision session and the follow-up participatory reflections also took place at the practitioners' place of work or at the external supervisor's place of work. The researcher had co-ordinated in advance with the supervisor and supervisee, instructions regarding the use, disposal and retrieval of the audio-recording device. The supervisor and supervisee were asked to record their supervision session in its entirety for transcription and were reassured that identifying information would be removed by the researcher.

The interview schedules for key informants and the participatory reflection session for supervisor/supervisee dyads differed (see Appendix 1). The key informants were asked semi-structured questions to stimulate discussion on the research topic and explore their espoused views such as "What is your understanding of the term reflective practice?" Interview questions such as "What are the particular issues/experiences facing community-based child welfare services?" were designed to facilitate exploration of the key informants' theories-in-use relating to the complexities faced by social workers in community-based child welfare services and their impact on reflective supervision. The supervisory dyads were asked more specific questions in relation to their supervision session to assist in the exploration of their theories-in-use. For example, "From analysing the transcript, what were your thoughts at the time?" *Facesheet* information had been recorded that is general (approximate age and gender) and specific (role, years' experience in the profession and current role) (Bryman, 2012). This information was useful in contextualising participants' answers. All the interviews were semi-structured and flexible to allow for each participant's view of their social world. According to Scheibelhofer (2008), qualitative interviewing prepares questions or themes and "the researcher is free to change the ways prepared questions are worded, as well as their sequence during the interview" (p. 406). The interview schedules remained broad and the process iterative to allow for unexpected themes, surprises and new ideas to emerge.

Ethical considerations

Bryman (2012) comments that research is not conducted in a vacuum and that ethical issues and values play a wide role in the research process. Ethics are the moral principles that guide research through its process to completion and behaving ethically means to reduce harm and to increase standards (McAreavey & Muir, 2011). Given that human beings are commonly the

participants in social sciences, ethical issues can be complex and there is increased recognition of this to ensure research and practice is successful (De Vos et al., 2011).

Ethical approval was required for the data collection associated with phase one and phase two of the study. The proposal for the research, pilot information work, Participant Information sheets, letters of support and consent forms were submitted to the Human Participants Ethics Committee at the University of Auckland and approved (see Appendix 2). According to Bryman (2012), ethics in social research revolve around the minimisation of harm to participants, respecting their privacy and informed consent to participate in research. These areas are explored further below in relation to this research.

Harm can encompass areas such as physical, emotional and legal harm and the researcher has an ethical obligation in social research to protect participants (De Vos et al., 2011; Sarantakos, 2005). In order to address potential harm to participants, the researcher needs to maintain confidential records (Bryman, 2012). Commitment was given in this research to hear the views of the participants and the following measures to protect participants from potential harm were considered. Participants were given information about the research prior to taking part (see Appendix 3) as well as consent forms. Potential conflicts of interest, such as collegial relationships currently or previously through different roles, between researcher and participant, were carefully considered before research participation proceeded through discussion between the researcher and the research supervisor. Given the researcher's current academic role, immediate colleagues and current students were not included as participants in this study. These particular relationships potentially confer power and collusion and were avoided in decisions on participant inclusion.

Informed consent refers to the principle that participants are given as much information as required when considering their participation in the research (Bryman, 2012). According to Sarantakos (2005), ethical practice requires that participants are not coerced to take part in the research and that their participation should be voluntary, free and fully informed of its purpose. To overcome direct contact with participants and potential coercion, the researcher sought ethical permission from different parties such as the President of CSWEANZ, Chief Executive officers and Regional Managers of community-based child welfare services to advertise for participants. An information sheet outlining the research undertaken was distributed to these parties. A consent form was completed to confirm willingness to distribute a research

advertisement to practitioners and assurances given that staff participation or non-participation in this research would no way impact upon their employment status in the organisation. (an example of an information sheet is Appendix 4). This is helpful so the researcher is not directly contacting potential participants in the field and alleviates concerns that participation or non-participation may impact on the participant's role in the agency. Gaining access to participants can also be seen as a political process as this is mediated by gatekeepers. The gatekeeper may have perceptions about the researcher's intentions in the research, the organisational gains attached to participating in the research, staff time and costs (Bryman, 2012). Potential participants had the choice to contact the researcher for further information. The advertisement recruiting for participants identified the researcher and the undertaking of the study to meet requirements of the PhD thesis at the University of Auckland. Brief information was given regarding the aim of the study and the different phases in the research design (see Appendix 5).

Participant Information sheets were distributed to those considering participation in the research. The Participant Information sheet outlined the participant's rights to withdraw; data storage and retention; and confidentiality, as well as potential negative consequences of participating in the research (Appendix 3). In order to gain the support of participants as referred to by Creswell (2007), participants could discuss with the researcher any research related queries prior to participating, request an executive summary of findings, and acknowledge that the thesis would be publically available through a digital repository. Each participant signed a consent form acknowledging an understanding of the research's purpose, the right to withdraw from the research and that information was to be audio-recorded and transcribed. The advantage of informed consent forms is that participants are provided with information regarding the research before they commence their participation and the researcher has a signed record of this consent (Bryman, 2012). For the supervisory dyads, the Participant Information sheet and the consent form specified the requirement for both the supervisor and supervisee to agree to participate in the research. In addition, each form highlighted that participation as a supervisory dyad included the recording of a supervision session and a recorded follow-up session with the researcher at a later scheduled date. It has to be noted that power is omnipresent in the supervisory relationship as the supervisor has accountabilities for the supervisee's practice (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012). The supervisor and supervisee were encouraged to discuss with the researcher (together or separately) any potential concerns related to their participation before and after the recordings.

Rubin and Babbie (2008) state that, due to the nature of social work research, participants may disclose personal information about themselves. This issue was particularly relevant to the second phase of the study relating to the supervisory dyads and the content of the supervision session. Within the supervision session, the supervisee and supervisor can reflect on aspects of self that will include emotion, feelings and personal information. Within some supervisory dyads sessions, strong emotion was displayed by participants. When this did occur, participants were given the option of stopping the recording and removing certain material from the transcript. During the participatory reflection session, the researcher sensitively enquired around this use of emotion in supervision to better understand the context of this occurring. Participants offered transparent information around their use of emotion in their supervision session. This added richness to the data collected. The dyads also used the space to discuss colleagues, client information and other sensitive information relating to the organisation and the environment in which they work. Ethically, the researcher is expected to avoid obtaining personal and sensitive information from participants (Sarantakos, 2005). In this study, the researcher encouraged the dyads to avoid revealing information during the recordings that they may feel could jeopardise their professional status or employment. However, given the context of the study relating to the supervision session itself and the inevitable sharing of confidential information in each session, this particular issue is unavoidable.

Within research, confidentiality means identifiable information provided by participants is not discussed with others and participants cannot be identified through research findings (Wiles, Crow, Heath, & Charles, 2008). When considering harm to participants in this research, the personal and professional information of participants was made confidential through providing pseudonyms to protect participants (Creswell, 2007; Wiles et al., 2008). Information that may have led to identification regarding office location, identification of the participants and their case work was removed or altered to protect anonymity and confidentiality. In addition, the researcher worked pro-actively with the research participants to provide choices around the altering of information in the research. Participants had the opportunity to peruse the typed transcripts and withdraw, remove or modify information that may lead to identification. Participants were advised that the data files will be accessible by the researcher and their supervisor for six years in a password-protected computer file for secure measures, after which they will be destroyed. However, as discussed in other literature (Bryman, 2012; Wiles et al., 2008), confidentiality cannot be absolutely guaranteed. There are factors that are beyond the researcher's control such as theft of confidential documents (Bryman, 2012). The Participant

Information sheet and consent forms also highlighted that, due to the nature of the small size of the professional social work community in Aotearoa New Zealand, there is still a possibility of being identified from the thesis findings, results published in peer-reviewed academic journals and disseminated at social work conferences.

In this section, the methodological approach to the study has been discussed. Social constructionism and critical realism has been identified as the ontological frame and the epistemology for this study. Central to these paradigms is the understanding of knowledge being created through participants' experiences and the promotion of social justice strategies. Such experiences are multiple, diverse, co-constructed and interactive with the researcher. Critical theory has been highlighted as the primary theoretical influence informing this study. Such a theoretical influence provides an examination of existing dominant discourses and further opportunities for alternative interventions in social work. Critical reflection is the qualitative methodological approach used in this study and the section has included discussion regarding the researcher's immersion within the process. The design employed for the data collection of this study has been defined and each phase (including the method for collecting data, population, recruitment, sampling and pilot material used) were introduced. Finally, this section outlined the pragmatics of collecting data in the study. The interview procedures and ethical considerations relating to harm, informed consent, confidentiality and disclosure of personal information were also explored. The next section of this chapter discusses how the data for this study have been analysed, categorised and electronically stored. The potential limitations and trustworthiness of the study is also deliberated upon.

Analysis of data

Thematic analysis is an analytic method for identifying and exploring qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2012; 2013). Thematic analysis was first used in the 1970s and many authors have since explored how this approach has been used with qualitative data (Aronson, 1994; Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Joffe & Yardley, 2004; Merton, 1975). Thematic analysis is developed from analysis of content (Joffe, 2011) and is a process of coding and recording communicated information (Rubin & Babbie, 2008). Thematic analysis is based upon categories and codes that capture the main themes in a text (Franzosi, 2004). It has been a common qualitative approach used in psychology and other helping professions. As an analytic method, Braun and Clarke (2013) argue that thematic analysis may be applicable across a range of

theoretical frameworks as it involves attention to the role of language and the examination of patterns and associated meanings.

The process of thematic analysis is the generation of codes and themes from the qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Coding is central to analysing data and codes are useful for recording data into categories when there are many items or participants (Sarantakos, 2005). Bryman (2012) states that:

> With the analysis of qualitative data … coding is a process whereby the data are broken down into their component parts and those parts are given labels. The analyst then searches for recurrences of these sequences of coded text within and across cases for links between different codes. (p. 13)

Codes capture the semantic (surface) meaning within the data and latent (underlying) meaning. The themes are constructed from coding, and from the data set. Themes capture the broader patterns within the data and aid with the presentation of results (Braun & Clarke, 2012; 2013). The themes are the basis for developing the textual and structural descriptions in the research that develop the *essence* of the experience (Creswell, 2007). Using thematic analysis allows the researcher to be active in making decisions regarding the generation of codes and theme construction.

Braun and Clarke's approach to thematic analysis involves a six-phase process that is recursive (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In other words, each phase is not completed sequentially before the next phase can be undertaken.

- For phase one, the researcher familiarises themselves with the data through reading and re-reading (as well as listening to audio data) and recording their own initial interpretations for further exploration at a later stage.

- Phase two is the coding process of the data. Codes may evolve during this phase and will capture relevant information relating to the original research question(s). The researcher ends this phase collating the codes and data that are relevant to each code.

- During phase three of the six-phase process, the themes from the data emerge. The researcher is active in this process of constructing the themes and interpretation from the analysis of the codes. Codes may be clustered together and examination between themes is also reflected on by the researcher. By the end of this phase, the researcher has a "thematic map" of the data.

- Phase four involves the researcher reviewing the themes. The themes are reviewed against the coded data for coherency. The researcher is mindful of the themes making a compelling story of the data both individually and relationally with other themes, as well as addressing the research question. At this phase, themes may be collapsed or jettisoned altogether for further development.

- During the fifth phase, the researcher has made a decision upon the set of themes and develops a detailed analysis of each theme. The themes are defined by their core concepts, essence and scope. The theme is then given a concise and punchy title.

- The writing up is the final phase and is integral to thematic analysis. The writing involves the notion of weaving and integrating a narrative with the extracted data. This includes writing, editing, analysing, organising and re-organising themes and data. The data then need contextualising to existing literature.

Braun and Clarke's six-phase process has been helpful to apply to the analysis of data in this study. Analysing the data has been an iterative process where key words and themes have led to further exploration of data and the transcripts. The steps in the process of analysing the data have been repeated several times and assisted with reducing data content and making the research foci more specific (Hansen, 1995). This checking and re-checking of data information has occurred throughout the writing stages of the research. Table 4.4 highlights the sequential steps used in the analysis of the data for this study.

Table 4.4. Steps of data analysis

Phase	Process and details of data analysis
1	Material recorded by audio recorder. Researcher makes notes from session. Audio recording listened to by researcher. Material transcribed and initially printed out by researcher for analysis.
2	Researcher makes some initial coding for transcript analysis. Data uploaded onto NVivo software. Key terms are identified from data and collated by researcher as the initial codes.
3	Codes re-read by researcher. Transcripts re-read. Researcher notes also explored. Codes collapsed and re-examined. Notes made regarding key words and themes.
4	Themes are reviewed, checked and re-checked against coded data. Themes collapsed or relabelled and developed.
5	Detailed analysis of each theme. Reviewing the data and re-checking against the overall coverage of the data. Construction of appropriate name for each theme.
6	Writing of findings. Analysis, re-writing and editing.

Use of Qualitative Data analysis (QDA) software

The use of computer software for data analysis and coding is an important part of the data gathering and retrieval process. Previous discussions regarding the use of QDA software and the researcher's engagement with the data through closeness and distance have been noted (Gilbert, 2002; Bringer, Johnston, & Brackenbridge, 2006). Gilbert (2002) highlights three levels of distance when working with QDA software. The "tactile-digital divide" is the initial level of transitioning data between paper-based file collecting and use of computer software. The

second stage, named "the coding trap", argues for the analytical distance the researcher needs to achieve with the data. With the use of QDA software, data can become coded quickly by the researcher, often at the risk of not considering broader perspectives in the data. The final level, "the metacognitive shift" is the researcher's ability to become consciously aware of the closeness that QDA software brings and the importance of distancing from the data so the researcher can "step back to look at processes and decisions" (Gilbert, 2002, p. 227).

In this study, NVivo™ (QSR International Pty Ltd. Version 10, 2012), a qualitative research software from QSR International, was used to store and categorise the data. NVivo™ is supportive of the analysis of qualitative data in that it: assists in the organisation and management of data; aids management of, and access to, conceptual and theoretical knowledge; allows for retrieval of queries from data; can graphically depict information; and report information from the data (Bazeley, 2007). For each phase of the study, initial coding and themes were completed on printed out copies of the transcripts. Initial coding by the researcher was established through line-by-line reading of the transcripts. The process involved in establishing these initial codes was the researcher reflecting on the subject essence every two to three lines of the transcript. This provided further focus in the categorisation of data. Some provisional questions the researcher asked in this initial coding process were:

What is the main message emerging from the text?
What are the common messages in relation to other transcripts?
What are the different messages in relation to other transcripts?
What are the dominant and conflicting discourses?

At the completion of each phase of the data collection, the transcripts were entered into the NVivo™ program as internal sources. Research and field notes by the researcher from the interviews were entered as external sources.

For the key informant data, the researcher was interested in exploring three discussion topics within the interviews: definitions of reflective practice; attributes of reflective supervision; and reflective supervision within the current context of community-based child welfare. In alignment with the ontology and epistemology of the study, the first two discussion topics were important for key informants to provide a definition of the terms used in this study from their perspective. In terms of the researcher being part of the co-constructed process, the establishment of a

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shared understanding of terminology in the interview process was important to the context of the study. The third discussion topic related specifically to the first research question. This topic provided the key informants with the opportunity to discuss a number of factors related to reflective supervision and community-based child welfare and diverse perspectives from each key informant's background and experience. Codes were established from the three broad discussion topics (see Figure 4). In defining reflective practice as the first discussion topic, self-awareness, stepping back and going deeper were the codes. The attributes of reflective supervision as the second broad discussion topic, led to the identification of skills, good connection and traversing different elements as the codes. Under the broad grouping of reflective supervision in community-based child welfare, codes were organised according to the theoretical lens of Bourdieu's key concepts habitus, field and capital.

Figure 4 Phase one and the development of initial codes used in the data analysis
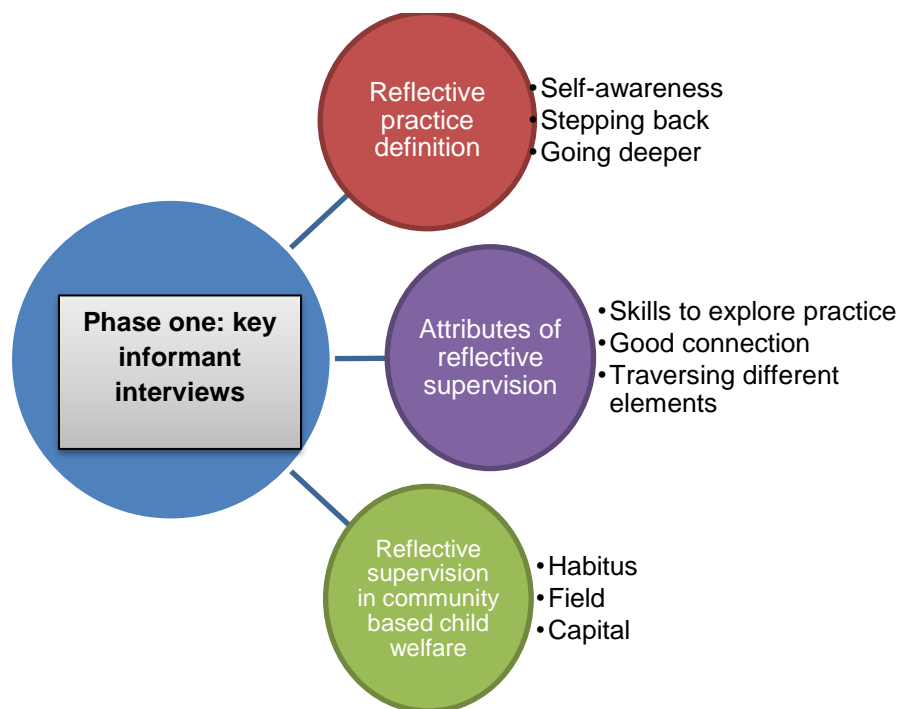
The phase two data from the supervisory dyads provided the researcher with the opportunity to answer the last two research questions of the study relating to the utilisation of reflective supervision in the session and strategies to support reflective supervision. Similar to the phase one process, the data was initially grouped by initial coding categories namely, *reflective*

supervision, *attributes of reflective supervision* and *feedback on thinking aloud process* (see Figure 5). The initial two codes were developed by the researcher to capture the understandings and utilisation of reflective supervision in the session by the participants. The third initial code was developed by the researcher to incorporate the feedback from the two sessions and the use of the thinking aloud process as a strategy to support reflection.

Figure 5 Phase two and the development of initial codes used in the data analysis
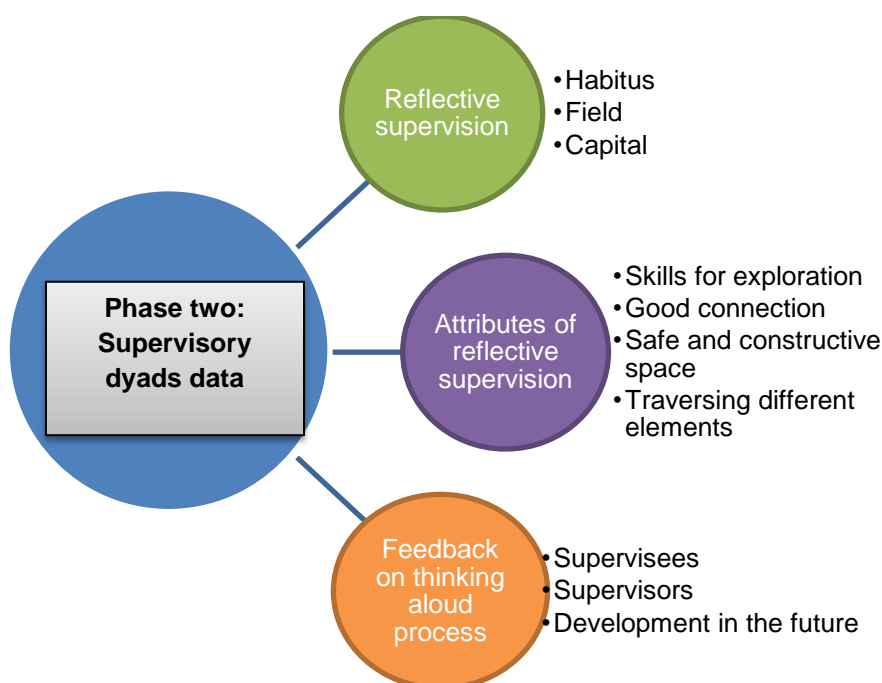
Further descriptive codes were developed from these broad groupings in the data by the initial coding process that the researcher had used with the transcripts (described earlier). Table 4.5 provides an example of the categorisation and the key codes developed in the data analysis in phase two. Illustrated in Table 4.5, the initial codes for supervisory dyads under the broad heading of reflective supervision, allowed the researcher to develop themes that corresponded to factors influencing reflective supervision related to Bourdieu's key concepts of habitus, field and capital. These themes were important in the demonstration of factors that the supervisory dyads critically explored in relation to themselves, the wider structural and associated tensions of the socio-political environment in which they practised. Moreover, the themes assisted in the

understanding of reflective supervision in the session from a social constructionist and critical realist perspective.

Table 4.5. The key codes developed from data analysis of the theme "reflective supervision and Bourdieu's key concepts" from supervisory dyads

Broad theme	Level 1 code	Level 2 code	Level 3 code
Reflective supervision and Bourdieu's key concepts	Habitus	Use of self	Buttons being pushed
		Role and skills	
		Exploration of feelings	
		Self-care	
	Field	Relationships in supervision	Internal vs external supervision
		Working with service users	
		Working with colleagues	Power issues
		Working with other agencies	
		Wider risk environment	
	Capital	Organisational culture	Building resiliency
		Staff downsizing	Professionalism and knowledge base
		Unqualified staff	

Codes were developed and further categorised. Some codes were immediately identified by the researcher, for example, "working with colleagues" as a level two code under the umbrella of "field". Some other codes, such as "exploration of feelings" required the researcher to go back and re-read the transcript to ascertain the relationship this had with the material discussed by the participant at the time. Text searches were also performed throughout the study for closer data analysis. Level two and level three codes were collapsed by the researcher into a more specific code if there appeared to be similar meanings and definition. At various stages of data analysis, codes were re-checked, transcripts (and connections between transcripts) were re-read and codes renamed to explore participant data in further detail.

Limitations to the study

Research practices, such as the consistent use of interview schedules with various participants, the recording of researcher memos and notes and conducting transcriptions utilising qualitative research software, assist in adding credibility to the research. The variation of participants across two phases of data collection in this research meant different experiences of reflective supervision within community-based child welfare services due to a variety of factors such as age, experience, and qualification. Prior to the commencement of data collection, the researcher assumed that eight key informants and six supervisor/supervisee dyads in the two phases of the research would provide sufficient qualitative data for the purpose of the study. The researcher's initial expectations were exceeded as more participants volunteered than originally proposed. This included an additional key informant participant and a further two supervisory dyads. Further participants became invaluable to the study in providing further rich perspectives relating to the research from different cultural viewpoints and experiences.

There are limits in this study to the transferability of findings and claims related to generalisability to other social workers' supervision experience. The participants have varied and different experiences of community-based child welfare that will not represent phenomena in other community-based child welfare agencies. Other community agencies, not child-welfare specific, have also not been considered in this study. Given the number of participants used in this study, it is unlikely divergent views from diverse backgrounds, such as gender or ethnic background, have been captured. However, what is highlighted is the importance of reflective supervision in the context of community-based child welfare and further research is required

that relates to community services, the influence of managerialism and social workers' experiences and practice of reflective supervision.

The role of the researcher and the power attached to the role requires careful consideration and clarity in any research study. Adopting a particular position with the participant involves a power balance that can impact on the research interview and outcomes. The role of the researcher facilitating the interview coupled with the participant's assumptions and expectations of the data that are collected has the ability to change participants' views or influence the research outcome. The positioning of the researcher in the interviews was deliberated in research supervision meetings, pilot material and feedback from participants. This checking and re-checking at these times became important to ensure participants felt comfortable in sharing their experiences related to reflective supervision and participants had the opportunity to approach the researcher after the transcribed recordings to clarify or remove their comments. Briefing the supervisor/supervisee dyads on the research and the thinking aloud process may have impacted on the attempt to record a *normal* supervision session. The participants knew that the transcriptions from the supervision session would be used to inform analysis about the use of reflective practice in supervision, and therefore, it is likely that the conversations in the supervision session replicated the desire to ensure that reflective practice did occur. Given the fact that the supervisory dyads knew one another (in some instances had a supervisory relationship spanning several years), would likely present the process of supervision in a very positive way and is unlikely to replicate every supervisory relationship in practice. Therefore it was likely that the dyads' co-construction of knowledge reflected their desire to reflect at an optimal level on practice and assist the researcher with the perceived aims of the research.

The recording of supervisory dyads potentially had some additional complications for the study. The presence of the audio-recorder in the supervision session may have stunted authenticity. The expression of strong emotion or discussion of perceived problematic agenda items within the supervision session may have been avoided as a consequence. This effect may have made an impact on the data collected and the supervision session. McIntosh (2011) writes:

> When [data collection] is attempted through the use of media alien to all experiences of professional and educational learning then the difficulties are amplified and can be met with resistance, an understandable and natural reaction. However, once the learners … challenged their reservations, they

produced powerful reflections that opened up much space for dialogues with themselves and with the…readers of their work. (p. 95)

The supervisory dyads had the opportunity to give feedback to the researcher on potential issues that they experienced with the session being audio-recorded. Most participants had raised their initial awareness of the audio-recorder presence in the session but this was forgotten as they became more engaged with the content of the supervision session and reflected on their practice. In addition, the dyads commented on the value of recording their session in their participatory reflection as this provided another critical layer to their reflection. Given that the dyads already had a supervisory relationship in practice assisted towards the critical narrative that was recorded in the sessions and the data analysis.

Conclusion

This study aims to explore reflective supervision within the current context of community-based child welfare services and potential strategies that support reflective supervision. In order to answer the research questions related to this study, the chapter began with a definition of social constructionism (where reality is personally and socially constructed) and critical realism as the underpinning ontological and epistemological approaches used. The theoretical approach to the study is embedded in critical theory that provides an understanding of the positions of individuals and the structural inequalities within society. These theories are the backbone to understanding critical social work and developing practice. The research methodology is influenced by critical reflection and is comprised of two stages. The first stage allows for the deconstructing and unearthing of assumptions held by participants. The second stage involves participants reconstructing their reality with new, informed strategies and ways of thinking.

The key informant interviews and the supervisory dyads were the two phases used in the research design. The two phases provided a comparison between the espoused theory of reflective supervision with the theories-in-use. The recording of the supervision session in phase two of the study and the follow-up participatory reflection session using a thinking aloud process provided a process for critical reflection to occur for the supervisory dyads. In this study, participants were recruited via volunteer sampling and advertisements to participate in the study were distributed through key people in the social work community nationally and locally. The participants varied in age, ethnic background, and experience in the social work profession. The

pragmatics of collecting data from a critical reflection methodology and in the context of a critical realist paradigm was furthermore deliberated including the interview schedules and the associated ethical considerations.

In the second section of this chapter, thematic analysis was discussed, including Braun and Clarke's six-stage approach to capturing data, as central to the development of themes and the creating of categories in the data. In this study, NVivo™, a qualitative research software from QSR International, was used to store the data. The researcher's approach to using NVivo™ to group data has been explained above. Potential limitations of the study such as sample size, the transferability of findings and any claims regarding generalisability to other practitioners' supervision experience have been highlighted. Participant expectations and audio-recording of supervision sessions have also been considered as impacting on the study. The study provides value in providing participant experiences of reflective supervision and exploring the current context of social work practice in community-based child welfare. This study also offers the opportunity for a comparable analysis in other fields of social work.

The next chapter will examine the findings of the first phase of the study: the key informant interviews.

Chapter Five: Findings from phase one data

Introduction

The first research aim explores social workers' perspectives on reflective supervision within the context of community-based child welfare services (see Table 4.1). This chapter describes these social workers' (as key informants) aspirations for reflective supervision and its importance (espoused theory), as well as the realities and tensions of how reflective supervision is implemented in practice (theory-in-use) (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Schön, 1983, 1987).

As highlighted in chapter four, the participants who contributed to the study's phase one data were recruited due to their experience as research active social work academics and considerable experience (as well as current practice) in the supervision of practitioners in community-based child welfare. The key informants also shared a close association with community-based child welfare services through previous employment (as supervisors or practitioners) or governance (involvement as Board members) in a community-based child welfare service.

The interview schedule focused on the participants' ideal espoused views on reflection, critical reflection and supervision. The theories-in-use were revealed from interview questions relating to the particular issues faced by community-based child welfare services and the impact these have on reflective supervision. Specific questions were asked in the study to stimulate perspectives related to both the espoused theory and theory-in-use from participants (see Appendix 2). The researcher noted initial codes that arose from the participant range of responses in the transcript. These were analysed in an iterative process using NVivo™ software (QSR International Pty Ltd. Version 10, 2012) to allow a deeper exploration and coding of the data (see Table 4.4 in the methodology chapter). Key words were also identified from the data that led to further examination of the transcripts.

The phase one data commenced with the key informants' definition of reflective practice and critical reflection. Given the variability of defining such terms from the literature, the researcher's intention was to gain a theoretical articulation from key informants and develop a common understanding of these terms in the study. Analysis of the key informant data provided a

description of reflective practice as a layered process with different stages of criticality and transformation in thinking (see Figure 6). It was also identified as a process where reflection can be differentiated from critical reflection.

The attributes of reflective supervision were also defined by the key informants. The researcher wished to develop some commonly agreed characteristics and theoretical aspirations regarding reflective supervision from key informants. Analysis of the key informant data revealed the significance of three key espoused attributes (see Figure 7).

Finally, the key informants were asked to comment on the particular issues facing community-based child welfare services and the impact these issues have on reflective supervision. The purpose of asking these questions was to explore the wide-ranging micro and macro factors that impact on reflective supervision within the community-based child welfare context. From these questions, the participants were highly cognizant of a variety of matters impacting on the individual practitioner and the environment they worked in. The intention of the study was also to gather data about the key informant's aspirations for reflective supervision as well as what they report about the current realities in community-based child welfare. These issues were analysed and the espoused theory was contrasted with the key informants' theory-in-use regarding reflective supervision within a managerial landscape of community-based child welfare. Bourdieu's theoretical concepts of habitus, field and capital were utilised for critical analysis of key informant findings (see Table 5.1). These findings are discussed in the final section of this chapter.

Definitions of reflective practice and critical reflection

Key informants were asked by the researcher to define what reflective practice and critical reflection meant to them. They described reflective practice and critical reflection as a layered process with different levels of criticality in thinking. Reflective practice was also identified as a process where reflection can be differentiated from critical reflection. This description is consistent with scholars (Boud et al., 1985; Brookfield, 1995) who have suggested stages of experience and awareness in adult learning; and as a layered process of attaining progressive levels of criticality, depth and transformation (Fook et al., 2006).

Analysis of the data revealed key words used to describe the layers and depth of reflective practice and critical reflection (see Figure 6). Key informants identified that, initially, reflective practice requires self-awareness and a positioning of one's thinking. Then a process of stepping

back from the work allows social workers to reflect on different perspectives which, in turn, leads to changes in actions. Finally, critical reflection and critically reflective practice are achieved by going deeper and extending beyond the micro to consider wider issues that impact on professionals and service users such as structural systems, the environment and legislation.

Figure 6: The layers of reflective practice

Thinking and self-awareness

Stepping back and changing perspectives

Going deeper, extending beyond the micro
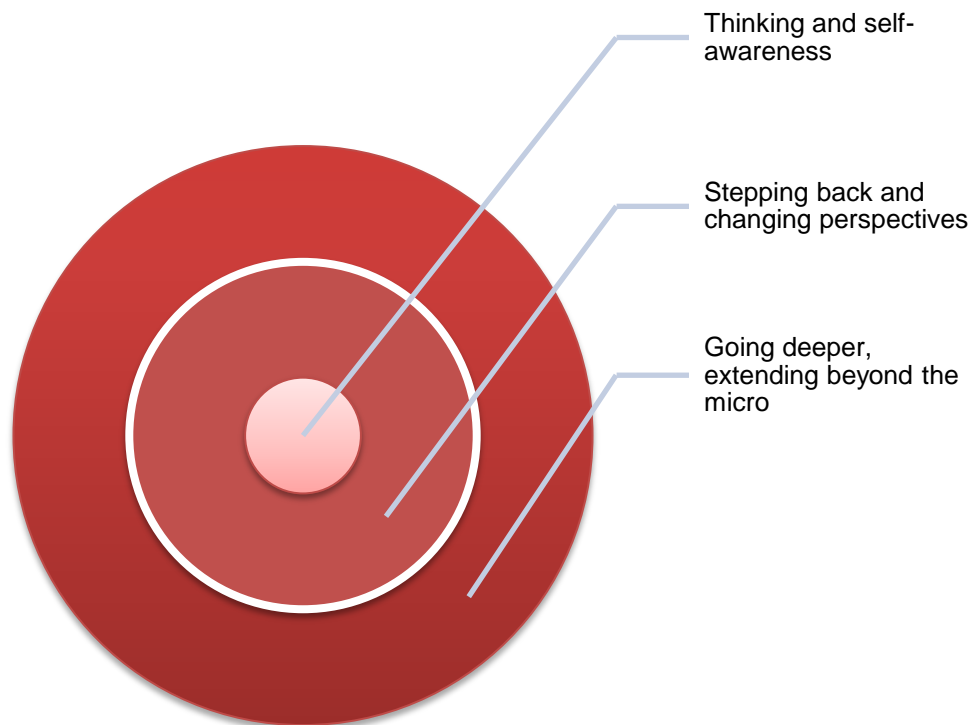
Thinking and self-awareness were key terms associated with reflective practice from the key informant data. The thinking about assumptions from an event is the process of reflecting. Mary, a key informant, described this thinking as "after something happens ... how you felt at the time and able to discuss it. Hopefully that makes you more self-aware the next time you find yourself in that situation." This awareness leads to examination of values, beliefs, and skills that Laura also acknowledged as "the ability to look and reflect on the work, actions, relationships and work with the client. Being able to integrate what you are doing and what's happening." According to Johns and Freshwater (2005), thinking and reflection is driven by the individual and may happen in isolation or be guided so learning can occur. Dewey (1933) saw adult learning develop from the process of reflective thought. Brookfield (2009) states that:

so much of what we think, say and do in the context of adult life is based on

assumptions about how the world should work, and what counts as appropriate, moral action within it that we have developed. (p. 295)

The learning and development from reflective practice is "all encompassing" in that it is essential to a practitioner's growth and the work with service users. Reflective practice is ongoing and assists in developing knowledge and skills for the practitioner:

> *[T]he more you learn and take from everything, the deeper the platform you stand on as a practitioner that grows around your experience, knowledge and skills. It's a learning spiral not linear.* (Bridget)

Reflective practice provides the space and opportunity to consider alternative possibilities towards learning. In order to have reflective practice that develops practitioners personally and professionally, they need to stand back from *doing* the practice. Both Bridget and Bryan identified stepping back as an important process towards reflective practice:

> *By sitting back, exploration can begin with the good things, the things that aren't so good, the mistakes, you get to pull it apart and putting the jigsaw puzzle back together so it fits.* (Bridget)

> *[It's about] stepping back to say "Well I've had this experience, this is how I understand it, let's look at it and what does it mean for how I work around this into the future."* (Bryan)

Reflective practice was described in the data as having a change orientation, rather than a repetitive cycle of the same *doing*. Change through reflection is the important element to alter practice and leads to transformation in thinking in the future. This discussion connects with the cyclic models of reflection highlighted by Kolb (1984) and Davys and Beddoe (2010) and discussed in Chapter One. In order to change thinking, different perspectives are examined that lead to changes in actions. Mary and Alana concurred:

> *The introspection and talking about how you felt about something, [this] will lead to some sort of change in your behaviour in the future.* (Mary)

> *When working with the client you look at it from their perspective, you dissect it, investigate it and how you might look at it differently. You need to make some change in that.* (Alana)

Reflective practice also has different stages and depth in thinking (Boud et al., 1985; Brookfield, 1995; Redmond, 2004; Scaife, 2010). Critical reflection and critically reflective practice takes into consideration wider structural aspects and dominant discourses influencing social work practice (see Chapter One and Two). This depth in thinking extends into the wider, macro issues that may be influencing actions. Critical reflection was viewed by the key informants as embedded in reflection at a deeper level. Alana and Elizabeth described this:

> *Critical reflection takes it up a level [and] is about learning but you're cutting to the chase and really peeling it back.* (Alana)

> *Critical reflection is … looking [more] at what are the reasons behind the action and the outcome.* (Elizabeth)

Brookfield (2009) discusses the importance that critical reflection has in uncovering the different power dynamics and assumptions that influence practice. Fook and Gardner's framework of critical reflection (2007) argues that the individual is required to explore their values, attitudes, social, political, professional and theoretical influences in order for transformational changes in awareness and actions to occur. By doing so, critical reflection allows new insight to be gained by recognising power as being not only individually but structurally created as well. This process allows for change within the different contexts of one's own practice and the consideration of the wider influences on practice (Fook, 2013). Critical reflection and critically reflective practice allow social workers to recognise the need to challenge inequality and identify new alternatives to combating oppressive practice. Key informants too made a distinction of a wider level of critical practice that involved the practitioner thinking more deeply and considering macro issues concerning the service users and themselves as social workers:

> *I think critical reflection is: "Why have I done what I did and what was the effect on me as a practitioner? What is it that drives me to make the decisions that I make?" And it's also looking at what preconceived attitudes I might have that affect what I do.* (Elizabeth)

> *Critically reflective practice examines the sources of the assumptions you are making about the situation you find yourself in. It's about being able to articulate the moral and value laden aspects of your work [and] identify the structural constraints on both yourself and your client's lives... It's moving beyond that micro level … to thinking more broadly in social work.* (Mary)

Bridget took the distinction of critical reflection further when she provided an example of the interaction between different layers of reflection in practice:

> It's looking at the bigger picture in terms of self, client and agency … and what does it mean for you as a practitioner. Government policy, the "working poor," the poverty, those kind of issues where decisions are made around policy that impact on clients.

In the following section, the attributes of reflective supervision are analysed from the participant data.

Attributes of reflective supervision

Supervision of social work provides the cornerstone for reflective practice. Fundamental to effective supervision occurring, is the supervision space being viewed as a reflective learning process. Bryan, Bridget and Laura in the key informant data reiterated this importance within the context of supervision:

> The key thing in supervision is that it is a reflective process… It's creative and building a safe space for someone to reflect on their social work practice to make it more effective. That's the whole point. That's its foundation. (Bryan)

> Supervision is a place that you can go to where you can learn from your mistakes, where you can celebrate your successes and keep growing in your practice. (Bridget)

> It's a space where people choose to bring the issues that they want to reflect, unpack, think and examine in terms of … their profession as a social worker and working with clients. (Laura)

Reflective supervision allows for the affirmation of practitioner development, connects theory to practice, and develops knowledge and action (Davys & Beddoe, 2010). As discussed in Chapter One, reflective supervision is one of many supervisory approaches and models that have been specifically developed around action and reflection (Kolb, 1984) and reflective practice (Schön, 1983). The Reflective Learning model is an example of reflective supervision as a learning process for supervisees in the helping professions (Davys & Beddoe, 2010). This model encourages practitioners to consider decisions, and draw together possibilities for practice.

Analysis of the data revealed the significance of three aspirational attributes that the key informants described in reflective supervision (see Figure 7). These attributes include the skills

of the supervisor to interrupt and explore the supervisee's practice; a good connection between both parties; and the navigation of different elements and perspectives.

Figure 7: The attributes of reflective supervision

Skills to explore practice

Attributes of reflective supervision

Traversing different elements

A good connection
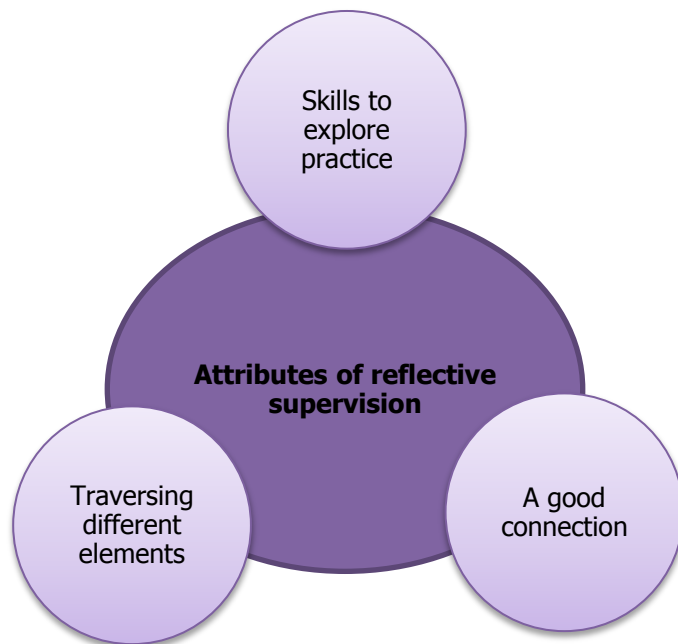
As the first key attribute to reflective supervision, the supervisor is required to have a number of qualities and skills in order for supervision to be a wonderful learning opportunity. The focus is on supervisors to be trained in supervision, understand the purpose of supervision and possess professional boundaries. Caveman suggested that a supervisor needs to be "well trained, well prepared, knowledgeable" and "have a good handle on critically reflective practice" as well as maintaining "good boundaries." Having boundaries in place also means that supervisors are willing to challenge the supervisee in a pro-active sense to encourage deeper learning and foster professional behaviour. Rose concurred that her supervisor needed to be "strong enough to stand up and make those challenges to me." Elizabeth identified that a supervisor needed to display confidence in interrupting a supervisee's stream of dialogue and make connections for critical examination:

> *If a person starts rattling off what they've done, I'll often say "Hang on, let's stop there, I just want to ask you a question about that. You told me before that you're having trouble sleeping and now I notice that when you're talking about that case that you seem to be*

getting pretty worked up about it." Often they'll laugh and say, "Well, actually it's been on my mind"; "Well why is it on your mind? What is it that you can't get off your mind?"

Supervision needs to encapsulate a sharing of questions, concerns and speculations around practice (Munson, 2002). In order to do so, the supervisor adopts the role of "facilitator" towards reflective learning through open-question enquiry and skills to invite exploration towards change for supervisees (Carroll, 2009; Davys & Beddoe, 2010). For supervisees, displaying a curiosity and skills to explore and deepen their practice are essential too. Rose identified that a supervisee should show "a lot of wonder" to their practice and Rosie agreed that supervisees need help to "unpack the sorts of things that are going on." From the key informants' description of reflective supervision, skills such as exploratory questions and paraphrasing to reflect on practice featured prominently in the analysis.

> *The supervisor is able to ask key critical questions to enable the supervisee to figure out the answers for themselves ... you know if you ask the right questions and they can't answer you for a while. So they've got to turn it over in their minds and … come to the decisions themselves reflectively.* (Elizabeth)

> *[Supervisors would be] asking inquiring questions, asking people to name what they were doing and to consider from what perspective they were working ... offering back the scenario in their words to check it was what they were talking about accurately.* (Caveman)

A good connection between the supervisor and supervisee is essential and is the second attribute for reflective supervision. A professional relationship that is based on "openness and transparency to the supervisory relationship"; "honesty and a willingness to learn"; and a "one to one connection … to formulate codes of ethics and conduct" were statements repeated by different key informants. These attributes are consistent with literature outlining the importance of the supervisory relationship towards "good" supervision (Hanna & Potter, 2012).

The relationship between the supervisor and supervisee has been described as the key factor for improving practice and reflection (Davys & Beddoe, 2010; Egan et al., 2016; Hanna & Potter, 2012; Hawkins & Shohet, 2012; Mor Barak et al., 2009). Having a "good connection" as an attribute to reflective supervision adds to the supervisee feeling positive, trusted and valued in the work that they are doing:

Your supervisor is someone you can be absolutely honest without upsetting them. You need to be able to talk about all things and not have to worry about being seen in a good light. As a supervisor you've got to be able to be trustworthy and wise. You've got to support your supervisee in making that sort of connection … you do need to promote and reassure that openness. I know that's when a supervision relationship really takes off. (Rose)

The third key attribute of reflective supervision is that a number of different elements are traversed in the session. For reflective practice to take place in supervision, a range of perspectives can be explored that require re-positioning of beliefs and create new learning. These different elements to supervision allow the supervisee to articulate and test out their new learning. Laura and Bryan highlighted the value of supervision to alleviate "stuckness" in thinking and provide insight:

[Supervision] covers the professional knowledge and skills [but also] anything that might be getting in the way personally of being able to practice competently, safely, respectfully and thoughtful self-awareness towards the families and clients. (Laura)

[The supervisee can] come back and be able to reaffirm their original understanding or have a different insight … Sometimes it's seeing something different that hasn't been noticed before. For me that's the outcome of reflective practice. (Bryan)

The supervisor can also foster the supervisee's wider understanding of structural, theoretical and societal issues to social work practice. Data analysis of the interviews illuminated perspectives consistent with definitions of critical reflection and critically reflective practice in literature (Fook et al., 2006; Taylor, 2013). Laura explained that reflective supervision meant the consideration of a range of influences from the position of "power, cultural experience and what else externally might be impacting on the situation as well as what may be happening on a more personal and emotional level."

In order for reflective supervision to be effective for the practitioner, several key attributes are needed. The final section provides a critical analysis of reflective supervision in community-based child welfare services from an Aotearoa New Zealand perspective. Bourdieu's key theoretical concepts, habitus, field and capital are utilised for examination of the key informant findings. In doing so, the aim is to provide insight and a deeper understanding of the current use of reflective supervision in this area.

Analysis of reflective supervision in community-based child welfare

The key informants were asked to comment on the particular issues facing community-based child welfare services and the impact these issues have on reflective supervision. Key informants' aspirations for reflective supervision as well as what they report about the current realities in community-based child welfare were gathered from the data. The information was analysed and the espoused theory was contrasted with the key informants' theory-in-use regarding reflective supervision within the current context of community-based child welfare.

Bourdieu's key theoretical concepts of habitus, field and capital were applied to the key informant findings. Utilising a Bourdieusian lens, social workers and supervisors can be seen as professionals acting in a complex field of forces, subject to impacts from the wider environment. The application of these theoretical concepts to the findings of this study captures the experience and allows for a critical analysis of the social work habitus within community-based child welfare and the space for reflective supervision (see Table 5.1). Analysis of key informants' accounts revealed reflective supervision within community-based child welfare provides the social worker an opportunity to examine their self-awareness and their professional role through a greater understanding of their habitus. Bourdieu's theoretical concept of field assists in the analysis of the social work habitus as well as the environment and context where social work professionals exist. A variety of relationships considered in reflective supervision emerged from the analysis of key informant data. These included working relationships with supervisors/supervisees, clients, colleagues, social service agencies, government, society and the tensions inherent in these relationships. The analysis of the data utilising Bourdieu's concept of capital revealed a lack of resources on community-based child welfare services as featuring prominently within reflective supervision. The social work profession was viewed by key informants as struggling to maintain autonomy and accumulate economic and professional capital within a state controlled neoliberal environment. From the data, reflective supervision was seen as providing the opportunity to develop critical analysis, alternatives to practice and re-establish core ethical social work values.

Table 5.1: The analysis of key informant data about reflective supervision in community-based child welfare (CCW) using Bourdieu's key concepts

Bourdieu's concepts	Bourdieu's definition of concept	Summary of Bourdieu's concept	Bourdieu's concept within data
Habitus	*Habitus* encompasses an individual's 'whole manner of being' (Bourdieu, 2002). *"Habitus is both a system of schemes of production of practices and a system of perception and appreciation of practices. And, in both of these dimensions, its operation expresses the social position in which it was elaborated…..[a] sense of one's place but also a sense of the place of others."* (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 19)	Developed from birth, by an individual's family life and the social milieu around them. How individuals internalise, identify who they are. The day-to-day habitual practices or 'mental' structures and meanings of the social world. The professional discourses that inform practice. Product of, but also reproducer of, the social world.	Supervisee self-awareness, morals, values and assumptions. Connections between professional work and personal life. Personal triggers. Understanding of professional role. Relieving "stuckness" and building resilience.
Field	"*Structured social space, a field of forces.*" (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 40) "*Human beings are situated in site…and they occupy a place' and can be defined from the 'physical space where an agent or things is situated.*" (Bourdieu et al., 1999, p. 123). *"The social field can be described as a multi-dimensional space of positions such that every actual position can be defined in terms of a multi-dimensional system of co-ordinates whose values correspond to the values of the different pertinent variables."* (Bourdieu, 1985, p. 724)	Defines an individual's position and relationship to their environment in a context specific way. Define broader structured social constructs. The field of interaction, social workers (and service users) are defined by their role and position relative to others. Unequal competition exists for skills, resources and knowledge. Social workers work in a paradox of administering welfare driven by neoliberal influences of the state and, concurrently, provide a voice for disadvantaged groups.	Relationship with supervisor. Discourses within supervision compete between organisational and professional mandates. Relationships with service users. Relationships to statutory services. Influence of government policy on others. Negative public stigma of child welfare work and how social workers have used power. Social workers also maintaining stance of empowerment and building relationships with marginalised groups.

Capital	"Which may exist in objectified form … represents a power over the field (at a given moment) and, more precisely, over the accumulated product of past labor (in particular over the set of instruments of production) and thereby over the mechanisms tending to ensure the production of a particular category of goods and so over a set of incomes and profits. The kinds of capital, like aces in a game of cards, are powers that define the chances of profit in a given field.'" (Bourdieu, 1985, p. 724)	The influence an individual has over others in the struggle and competition for resources.	Managerial discourses related to compliance and outcomes that encroach upon the supervision session and social work.
		Social capital is defined through social connections and contacts.	Government de-valuing CCW social work with control of funding and resources.
	"Titles of nobility, like educational credentials, represent true titles of symbolic property which give one a right to share in the profits of recognition … symbolic capital may be officially sanctioned and guaranteed, and juridically instituted by the effect of official nomination." (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 21)	Professional capital is the qualifications and distinction in social practice.	
			Weakness of social work profession through lack of qualified workers in CCW.
		Economic capital is the monetary wealth and material assets.	
			CCW seen as undesirable due to lack of income and resources.
		Cultural capital is the perceived and recognised knowledge.	
	"Capital makes it possible to keep undesirable persons and things at a distance at the same time that it brings closer desirable persons and things (made desirable, among other things, by their richness in capital),…Conversely, those who are deprived of capital are either physically or symbolically held at a distance from goods that are the rarest socially; they are forced to stick with the most undesirable." (Bourdieu et al., 1999, p. 127)	Symbolic capital refers to status and prestige.	Structural constraints and influences on social workers and service users.
		Different forms of capital allow individuals and groups to dominate places of social space and create hierarchies within society.	Socio-cultural factors, the impact on Māori and bi-cultural practice.
		Social work possesses weak capital.	Development of reflective supervision in social work to challenge doxas and current state control.

Habitus

Habitus encompasses an individual's dispositions and way of life (Bourdieu, 2002). As discussed in Chapter One, Bourdieu has identified that an individual's habitus is developed from birth and interaction with others. The habitus assists an individual, or group, to internalise and identify who they are (Bourdieu, 1989). Within the context of reflective supervision in community-based child welfare social work, analysis of the key informant data reveals habitus as the social worker's self awareness, development of their self-care, professional identity and maintaining resilience within a deficit based environment.

Adamovich, Kuwee Kumsa, Rego, Stoddart, and Vito (2014) maintain that practitioners need to engage in critical self-reflection in order to develop strategies in their practice. A social worker's use of self and personal attributes are core and essential to their practice (Yip, 2006). The personal habitus of the social worker is inextricably linked with their professional habitus. Bourdieu (2002) relates habitus to how an individual identifies who they are and how this is internalised. Therefore, it is within the professional habitus of social work where the personal habitus of the social worker also requires examination. Supervision is also part of the social work habitus and provides opportunities for social workers to develop self-awareness, knowledge, and skills to inform their practice and ways of working with others (Adamovich et al., 2014). Key informants such as Mary reiterated these factors:

> [Y]ou need to [in supervision] be able to talk about the personal issues, the personal experiences and how it affects your viewing about things, how it impacts on the morals, values and assumptions … people's own experiences shape the way they inform their own practice.

Social work can trigger personal histories of practitioners. For Bourdieu, habitus provides an individual with social conditioning and can be a reproducer of privilege and disadvantage from their experiences (Houston, 2002). This level of self-awareness is important for social workers to critically examine within supervision. Grant, Schofield, and Crawford (2012) identify the need for supervisors to acknowledge the personal and professional issues of the supervisee and the close interplay these have with one another in practice. Bryan strongly emphasised that supervision needed to start with the social worker's self-awareness and development:

> It's about the supervisee's insight, that's the heart of it … feelings are a big part of what drives us as practitioners so [supervisors] should be asking about it.

Working with perpetrators and survivors of abuse is commonplace within community-based child welfare and can perpetuate an individual's personal histories of disadvantage and abuse. Supervision that promotes reflection can assist the social worker to identify their triggers related to the professional work. Laura provided an example of theory-in-use from her supervision practice with a particular supervisee:

> She was…working with a couple of children and was thinking those children have violence in their home. Her level of distress was such that she was compelled to pick those children and take them away because that is what she wanted so desperately for

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herself. So I think that's an issue for people who work in child welfare and identifying
with the vulnerability of children especially if you've had a vulnerable childhood yourself.
That requires a huge amount of work for her to be able to step back from her own
experience to work out what could be strategic in this situation and what could support
the family, what needed to be set up, who would be involved and how might it be.

Bourdieu highlights habitus as the day-to-day socialising practices of the individual (Bourdieu, 1989). Working in a community-based child welfare role, these day-to-day practices are stressful and demanding where the social worker manages high caseloads with families. However, habitus also allows individuals to adapt to factors impacting on them. Reflective supervision within social work provides a space for social workers to reflect on self-care and develop strategies towards well-being. Elizabeth referred to this as "reflective of practice in situ":

So [in supervision] it's not just what's going on for them clinically but it's what's going on
for them in varying parts of their lives. So they might say something to you like, "My
family's starting to grizzle about the fact I don't get home until 8 o'clock at night and I'm
going to visit people in South Auckland in the dark and my husband says I'm not safe."

The habitus of social work operating in community-based child welfare (as discussed in previous chapters) has changed in recent years. Therefore changes to the social worker's role in community-based child welfare have also altered the process of reflective supervision. Changes from prevention and support services to families have occurred towards the assessment of risk and child abuse – once an exclusive role of statutory child welfare services. Bourdieu (1989) refers to habitus as "a production of practices and a system of perception and appreciation of practices" (p. 19). These changes within the habitus of social work have required social workers to re-think their social grouping and practices. Bourdieu's theorisations are helpful for community-based child welfare social workers to manage the contradictions and complexity associated with their work. For many social workers this has provided tensions between shifts in accountability to service changes and what this means to their professional practice.

Participants defined reflective supervision as an opportunity to explore changes in role and the associated implications to fulfil others' expectations. Bridget identified the "bewilderment" that social workers would raise in their supervision and feelings of "I don't have the skills for this and I've never done that before and now I'm having to do it." Reflective supervision is important towards developing practitioner confidence in a changing workplace and maintaining connection

between practice and social work theory. Alana provided an example of the support she provided in supervision towards developing role confidence for a supervisee:

> *She was a ground level, residential "hands on" social worker. It took some work working on the concepts with her (in supervision), trying to make connections with what she had learnt in her study and what she was doing in the [name of organisation].*

The supervisee's understanding of their role and the connections they make to their professional habitus is an important aspect in the discussion that takes place in reflective supervision. Often social workers are anxious around their performance and the supervisor has a key role in reassuring the supervisee and inviting deeper exploration of practice:

> *Generally when they arrive, we will begin with "What is your agenda?"' and "What do you want to gain from this?"' Quite often it's clarity around their role or if they have done the right thing …There will be those who … are looking for lots of reassurance "Am I doing it OK?" or advice. We will do that process for them around looking at what they've done and what they could do.* (Bridget)

Bourdieu (1989) has commented that habitus can define the place of an individual in relation to others and how habitus reproduces privilege and disadvantage. Social workers operate at the heart of disadvantage due to working with disadvantaged groups in society (Houston, 2002). Similar to the disadvantaged groups that they work with, social workers may appear "stuck," resulting in negative self-talk. This negative talk can be corrosive to practice and reproduce disadvantage. In turn, a parallel process may occur for the supervisor where they struggle to shift the supervisee's thinking and feel a sense of powerlessness. Mary identified that oppressive and negative culture permeated supervision conversations:

> *[T]here are some [social work supervisees] so set in their ways viewing what's right and wrong and what should happen in situations. It's very difficult to encourage them to step back from that and reflect for a moment on the values driving negative assumptions and that's actually resulting in oppressive practice.*

From a Bourdieusian perspective, oppressive dynamics that are reproduced in the habitus of social work require ongoing review by the practitioner (Beddoe, 2015a). The need for supervisees to discuss their stress, uncertainty and negative self-talk in supervision is essential to the development of their professional habitus and in building resiliency (Brown & Bourne,

1996; Collins, 2008). The challenge then in reflective supervision is for the supervisor to motivate supervisees past their "stuckness" so that they can reflect on positive aspects and value of community-based child welfare social work. As Houston (2002) has stated, habitus can also be a product of the social world which allows individuals the space for innovation and improvisation to situations. Analysis of the key informant data revealed the importance supervision had to refreshing supervisees' negative views on their habitus and explore a different narrative:

> *[The supervisee] was trapped by the experience.... It was really important for this person to be understood, a place to talk about it and … show understanding that this is part of what happens in child welfare.* (Laura)

> *They can get stuck in their own feelings … Your resilience is based on having good feelings as well as dealing with the stuff that's not OK. You have to have positive feedback and reflect as well. So we look at what's gone really well. It's interesting because they get pulled into it. "Oh wow, that was amazing, I didn't think of it that way' "It's that 'What do you think worked well".* (Bridget)

Rose powerfully emphasised the necessity for social workers to maintain resiliency when working within oppressive circumstances:

> *The most important tool social workers bring into an intervention is themselves…we demonstrate hope and energy … How do we live full and fulfilling lives ourselves? We have to thrive [by using supervision to build resiliency] when people around us are not.*

Field

Hawkins and Shohet (2012) state that, "at the core of all the helping professions is the capacity to relate to others" (p. 19). From a Bourdieusian perspective, social workers and their roles are defined by their position relative to others and the competition for resources. Bourdieu (1998) defined the concept of field as a "structured social space, a field of forces" (p. 40). Bourdieu (1989) also referred to fields as "multi-dimensional" in that there are many fields and sub-fields that an individual operates within in their environment and context. Bourdieu's theoretical concept of field provides critical analysis of the key informants' accounts – the social systems, the contradictions and the competing discourses that permeate the space for reflective supervision. A variety of relationships emerge from this analysis including working relationships

with supervisors/supervisees, clients, colleagues, social service agencies, government, society and the associated tensions inherent in these relationships. Reflective supervision provides the opportunity for honest and open exploration of professional relationships. This allows for a wider appreciation and understanding of the dynamics impacting upon where the social work supervisee is located. Key informants, like Bryan and Mary, could clearly articulate the importance supervision had towards understanding the relationships with others in the social work field:

> *Sometimes, [reflective supervision] is about clients and what's going on, the people they work with, the structures and systems of the agency they work in and other agencies they come into conflict with like care and protection and youth justice. Supervision seems to help get a better contextual understanding of the sector … the organisational stuff, the manager, your colleagues and other agencies.* (Bryan)

> *[I]t's a chance for supervisees to talk about the relationships that are actually going on …. It's a chance to explore those intense relationships you are forming with clients. How their buttons are getting pushed or not pushed, and the ability to form relationships with people.* (Mary)

A central relationship for the social worker towards the navigation and exploration of these fields of forces is the relationship with the supervisor in supervision:

> *There needs to be a good connection and relationship… You need to be comfortable to share in supervision. Without this, it's not going to get anywhere.* (Alana)

"Field" provides an understanding of the structure of the supervisory relationship. Beddoe (2015a) has previously described supervision as a socialising process for social workers towards maintaining boundaries in a structured social field. This is enacted and experienced over time. For the supervision relationship to be effective and for reflection to take place, the supervisor and supervisee have particular roles. Rosie described reflective supervision as:

> *[A] professional relationship … the social work supervisee [should be] trying out new ways of working. Being reflective is about being open and the supervisor being positive and encouraging.*

Two particular fields of forces influencing the supervisory relationship are the organisational and professional obligations of the social worker. Each force permeates the relationship and how

practice is reproduced. These two forces may be in opposition to one another. Professional social work values such as social justice and human rights compete with dominant managerial agendas formed by dominant groups within society that influence the discourse, agenda and relationship within supervision. The separation of the supervisory functions between organisational and professional obligations is one solution for combating these tensions and has been discussed in Chapter Three. In addition, supervision as a process of cultural socialisation itself may hinder learning in that the supervisor is often viewed with the responsibility of shaping the norms and behaviours of supervisees (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012). In this exchange, the supervisor is characteristically viewed as the expert where knowledge and skills are passed to the supervisee over time (Beddoe, 2015a). The position of the supervisor too, is influenced by dominant structures that control this process at the expense of silencing others (Egan, 2012b). As Beddoe (2015a) states: "people engaged in supervision can represent the forces at play in a microcosm of the wider social world in supervision" (p. 159).

Such multiplicity and contradiction of forces is recognised by a Bourdieusian perspective and provides supervisors with an awareness of dominant discourses played out in supervision but also towards the creation of opportunities for critical reflection. Hawkins and Shohet (2012) argue that supervision needs to provide "a dialogical container" (p. 238) in that learning emerges for the supervisee and supervisor based on both their experiences and understandings of the content reflected upon. Several key informants promoted the importance of external supervision that favours a professional discourse that enabled reflection on practice. This relationship was identified as different to internal supervision:

> *Because you are external, you don't have that management stuff that you need to work through with [the supervisees] …generally it's their time, they come through the door and they tell me their goal and agenda. I provide the process and take them through that reflection … I don't think you have that luxury in internal supervision.* (Bridget)

> *[L]essening that power differential [through external supervision] helps supervisees to be freer to be able to say "This person irritates me and I feel pissed off with them all the time"…Having the relationship with the supervisor so you can say that.* (Mary)

Laura also offered that social workers had a choice of who their external supervisor was and this was important to the relationship:

I think [external supervision] makes a difference because they are choosing for a [supervisory] relationship that they are attaching a lot of value to and knowledge they have about me.

A supervisory relationship within community-based child welfare that has an emphasis on meeting organisational imperatives can lead to the supervision process becoming mechanistic: pre-occupied with surveillance, micro-management of decision making and reporting back. In doing so, the impact of managerialism has shifted supervision away from critical analysis of structural influence on practice. Such practices reflect a dominant Western viewpoint and create organisational and professional cultures that generalise one notion of operating for all different contexts (Beddoe, 2015a). Bourdieu's idea of doxa refers to issues that "remain unspoken and taken for granted" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 169) that maintain and reproduce dominant traditions in society (Garrett, 2007b). Doxa is often hidden in practices so social workers may be unaware of the extent to which insidious aspects of neoliberalism permeate this space. Bourdieu would consider supervision as doxic where the impact of neoliberalism and managerialism occupies the session and consequently, has stunted professional development for social workers. The key informants demonstrated their awareness of doxic managerial tensions that influence reflective supervision and the kind of professional relationship they advocate for. Laura made the following important distinction:

If it's about going through your client list for the week and what you're doing with them … then the space for reflection is not that great. If you've got a bureaucratic, managerial, outcomes focused efficiency and compliance monitoring culture happening, then that would reduce the opportunity for taking the time to really reflect on practice and what might be informing it.

Bourdieu's field concept assists in uncovering the impact of managerialism and unequal power relations that are present within social work and supervision. Analysis of the key informant data identified that, in community-based child welfare, there is an increased tendency for supervision to be used to monitor performance and outcomes by managers at the expense of reflective supervision. This has been previously identified within statutory child welfare services (Beddoe, 2010) and, now of supervision within community-based child welfare. Bridget explained that "there's real pressure in NGOs [to] demand more work for the same pay. So more for less … It's about meeting KPIs [key performance indicators] and outcomes. A lot of case management more so than case *reflection.*" The frequency of supervision to reflect on practice has also been

undermined. Caveman stated that, from his experience, social workers struggle to have reflective supervision:

> *When you ask the question are people getting enough [reflective supervision], I would say no. I think people who are working in child welfare organisations … aren't getting that to improve practice and make it safer, I would say that it isn't enough.*

An analysis of the struggle for a professional social work discourse to be heard within a managerial framework reveals inconsistency in the quality of reflective supervision. For Bourdieu, fields are variable and comprised of many different co-ordinates (Bourdieu, 1985). The inconsistencies between one field and the next provides an explanation of the variance in quality supervision. This variability may be as a consequence of compliance-related organisational and financial tensions that dominate discourses within community-based child welfare. Due to size and location, the context of every community-based child welfare service is also different and will reflect a different organisational culture. Within a culture highly influenced by managerial discourses, reflective supervision may be seen as a luxury:

> *I think there's some agencies who put a lot of energy into professional development and thought into supervision for their staff. They do this incredibly well. Then there's some agencies who don't get off the starting blocks who really don't have a grasp of supervision … supervision is often at the bottom of the pile. There's all these other things we have to do and then it's "What do we do about supervision?"* (Rosie)

For some community-based child welfare services, reflective supervision has been removed. Senior managers, without social work experience or qualifications, have promoted a more business management model of running the service (Harris, 2003). Elizabeth recalled an example from her practice experience:

> *I worked in an agency where the regional director left and the job was taken over by someone who wasn't a social worker who saw no use in supervision whatsoever, no use. This was just an absolute waste of time. "They should be out there doing a job. What's it all about?" It was just awful.*

Bourdieu's *field* allows for an examination of the relationships the social worker has with service users. Bourdieu maintains that a new social order can be created by "public civil servants" in providing a voice for disadvantaged groups (Bourdieu, 1998). Reflective supervision supports Bourdieu's notions in that it provides a space to develop a greater understanding of the

systems, forces and power that impact on the social worker's role, relationships with service users and position of the service user within society. The key informants' espoused theory of reflective supervision for community-based child welfare social workers concurred that regular supervision assisted with building positive and proactive relationships between the practitioner and service user. Alana highlighted that social workers "need to take time with their clients to work around that issue to try to clarify roles for them. Once they get across those hurdles, they are really successful with clients." According to Mary, social workers in community-based child welfare services "have the best vantage point in being able to engage with those families much more than CYF [Child Youth and Family, statutory child protection in Aotearoa New Zealand] workers."

Community-based child welfare services are in a unique situation in working with others. Community social work can create opportunities for creative practice and promote principles of social justice and human rights (Ife, 2008). Bourdieu et al. (1999) argue that contradictions exist within organisations driven by a neoliberal agenda and highlights that:

> [T]he rigidity of bureaucratic institutions is such that … they can only function … thanks to the initiative, the inventiveness, if not the charisma of those functionaries who are the least imprisoned in their function. (p. 191)

Laura stated that community-based child welfare "form strong relationships with local networks... They can focus on not only the children that are currently vulnerable but what will contribute to building a safer community for everyone." Reflective supervision that offers exploration of different community needs can provide opportunities for solutions to be found in the current community-based child welfare environment (Baines et al., 2014). Mary discussed how reflective supervision in community-based child welfare can utilise strengths in working with families:

> *[Community-based child welfare services] can "etch out" a space to be empowering because they have an extra organisational apparatus that can protect them in a way that the Government and CYF workers don't have. The large NGO [I know] has a strong faith base. That [faith base discussion in supervision] comes through as a way of maintaining humanistic values around "We're contracted to the Government to provide services but the way we do that will embody values in respecting the person with support and prevention rather than being punitive and risk adverse."*

Mary stated that "supervision provides the ability to explore relationships according to our own moral and value position of looking at people's strengths and working together with families." This exploration in supervision can assist with "forming [better] relationships with people."

The uniqueness of community-based child welfare work is often overlooked as social workers are buffeted about within a complex field of forces and relationships with other professionals and institutions. A preoccupation for community-based child welfare social workers is the ongoing power struggles with other social workers and professionals working in statutory services. Bourdieu has previously highlighted the institutional field of education as a socialising process where children who are "materially secure" have more opportunity than children from disadvantaged backgrounds who are likely to meet obstacles and difficulties (Bourdieu et al., 1999; Garrett, 2007b). A parallel emerges between the social work profession itself and the disparity Bourdieu has discussed across educational systems and institutions. In addition, according to Bourdieu, discourses promulgated by the state will carry greater weight for professionals than those without this influence. Therefore, community-based child welfare social work may be seen as disadvantaged as a field of practice when compared to the power of statutory social work and this is continually reinforced through interactions. Within supervision, social workers in community-based child welfare discuss tensions in the relationships with professionals working in statutory child welfare services. Bridget provided an example of a common concern she gleaned from her experiences with others in supervision:

> *I have to have this incredibly close relationship with CYF and I'm worried that's going to impact on the relationship I have with my client…The fear [that] if I do it and the family find out, and I've lost the relationship.*

With different social work fields, there is competition for resources where skills and knowledge are unequal. This unequal distribution of resources and power is a common concern connected to the statutory power of CYF over families and the impact that this has on community-based child welfare social work and relationships with service users. Elizabeth gave a case example raised by a social worker in supervision regarding the power dynamics between a supervisee, the service user, the statutory child protection service and other professionals:

> *A foster mother had been looking after this fifteen year old girl that had twenty five placements, mother an alcoholic, father in prison... This girl ran away and then she went to Child, Youth and Family the next day and said that she'd been abused by the older sister in the house. It was an NGO placement, and CYF just waltzed in and said "Okay,*

*we're taking the kid's things, they're not coming back to you, there's been an allegation."
The poor [supervisee] felt "Oh my gosh" and … it was the whole powerlessness … that
we focused on in that supervision session [and] to look at routes that could be taken to
actually empower the foster mother … The issues of power went right through the whole
thing.*

A notable feature of the relationships between social workers in community-based child welfare
and statutory services is the inconsistency when working in partnership with families. Bridget
described how supervisees would reveal their frustrations regarding how power was used or not
used by statutory social workers with families:

*Sometimes you get a social worker who would come in with a sledgehammer and other
times you get … absolutely nothing … you end up doing all the work and they [CYF]
write a report based on your work.*

Davys and Beddoe (2010) highlight that "health and social care service organisations do not
exist in a vacuum" (p. 70), and political and societal attitudes also impact on practice. These
broader social constructs all represent multi-dimensional fields that influence an individual or
group within society and maintain domination and subordination (Bourdieu, 1985; Houston,
2002). These broader attitudes include the issues affecting service users, the status of the
social work profession and the political nature of community-based child welfare. Social work
requires practitioners to link the contemporary issues facing service users to structural and
cultural factors that serve oppression (Gray & Webb, 2013a). In the study, the key informants
articulated the espoused theory that reflective supervision needs to provide opportunities for
critical thinking by practitioners about dominant discourses and traditional thinking held in
society and analytically find alternative solutions:

*It's about saying "What [are] the bigger, environmental context in which you are
practising?" An understanding [of] critical theory and … where people are that [social
workers] work with.* (Bryan)

The advocating of social justice and addressing the oppression of disadvantaged groups are
central factors to professional social work nationally and internationally (ANZASW, 2008b).
These are also core themes that align with Bourdieu and his theorisations. Reflective
supervision provides an important space for the community-based child welfare social worker to
reflect on their professional standards and how these are implemented in social work practice.

The supervisor does have a role in what the Code of Ethics says [and] make that a two way street to get the practitioner to talk about the things that they are contributing to their good practice. (Mary)

The provision of reflective supervision in community-based child welfare is challenging within the wider socio-cultural and political fields of forces. Bourdieu et al. (1999) refer to the precarious nature of the social workers' habitus as "agents of the state" that "are shot through with the contradictions of the state" (p. 184). Social workers work to support the most disadvantaged groups related to child welfare but paradoxically, are employed by the state to manage expectations and responsibilities to minimise child protection. Beddoe (2010) argues that supervision within public service organisations increasingly has a strong focus on risk and surveillance – dominant features of the current neoliberal state. Scrutiny and judgement are now common characteristics of social work practice in child welfare, as well as supervision. Risk-averse practices, deficit-based thinking and surveillance reflect public mistrust – to the detriment of reflective processes. The theory-in-use of supervision revealed in the key informant data recognised a lack of critical examination of the wider forces prevalent in community-based child welfare work. The theoretical aspirations key informants held for reflective supervision and its vital role in deeper exploration of the social work context described above were quite contrary: "If we just look at risk, we are going to reveal that every time and that deficit based approach is not that helpful," according to Mary.

The managerial environment within community-based child welfare and the technical changes that accompany this environment, appear to emphasise that case management and administrative functions of supervision are necessary to ensure social workers "survive" in a risk-averse system. The impact of managerialism and the reduction of the welfare state has seen social care represented as low-cost, high-efficiency and accountability (Baines et al., 2014) with the removal of social justice from community work. Such change in the community-based child welfare environment has led to the erosion of reflection in supervision regarding structural and cultural factors impacting on professional social work standards. For Bourdieu, fields are created unequal and are in competition with one another (Bourdieu et al., 1999). The forces of managerialism and neoliberal policy dominate and disadvantage professional social work. Analysis of the key informants' findings also revealed the current concerns related to the impact of managerialism on social work practice and supervision:

They [Government] strip it all away…. If anyone thought about it for two minutes, they
would realise you can't possibly operate well in that system … I think for many people I
suspect the supervision is around 'how do you survive in this system and work more
efficiently? (Rose)

In Stanford's study (2010), social workers reflected on the fear surrounding negative reactions
and judgements working on risk-adverse interventions with service users. The changes that
have resulted from neoliberalism and managerialism have altered the habitus of social work,
community-based child welfare services and perceptions of communities. Working within child
welfare has meant social workers need to manage negative perceptions from the public. Alana
explained that:

[P]eople just have this perception of CYF and everyone is tarred with the same brush.
It's hard sometimes to say "it's just people's perceptions." It's not, it's a community-wide
thing. It's a hard stigma to remove yourself from.

Caveman recalled that being a service user of a community service has changed over the
years:

I can remember… family community centres with social workers was deemed as socially
acceptable. It wouldn't be now. There would be a judgement behind it… In terms of the
work that they [community-based child welfare services] do, they are often positioned as
a negative force... They are somebody that makes negative judgements on family
processes. I think that position immediately puts workers at a deficit with family/whānau
they are working with.

The influences from government, policy, managerialism and how these political issues impact
on the service users of community-based child welfare are areas for social workers to critically
explore in supervision and promote alternatives to practice. Bridget felt that this was aspirational
but that supervision was an important place to discuss the socio-political factors:

[T]he government of the day and what their idea is about abuse… those kind of issues
where decisions are made around policy that impact on clients [needs to be reflected
upon in supervision]. Also, how do you work with poverty? Where's the hope? Seeing
the levels of poverty where some people live and looking at the impact of all of that on
the children.

Capital

The concept of capital provides a valuable analysis of the resources the community-based child welfare social workers have access to in society, the ongoing struggle to accumulate these resources over time (Bourdieu, 1985) and the impact of this on reflective supervision. Capital is helpful for analysing the impact of managerial discourses on social work professional discourse and practice. From a Bourdieusian perspective, the habitus of community-based child welfare social work is impacted upon by a lack of economic, symbolic and professional capital. As identified by Beddoe (2010b), professional capital is a combination of social and cultural capital and is the value of educational qualifications, distinction in social practice, respected base of knowledge and artefacts of professional status. Reduced funding by the state, finite resources and contracted services influenced by government expectations on service delivery reflects the lack of capital in community-based child welfare social work. In Aotearoa New Zealand, the delivery of specific programmes and services that meet the government's criteria ensure the survival of many community services (New Zealand Government, 2014). Funding and resources is a theme that constantly resonates within supervision and the associated pressure placed upon social workers in community-based child welfare. The key informants described the current environment within community-based child welfare and supervision as dominated by financial and resourcing constraints that controlled all aspects of services. Elizabeth referred to the government as the "master paying you" and the consequence for the community-based child welfare service was that this "defines the area of your practice and how far you are allowed to go." Alana added that community-based child welfare services "are never given sufficient funds to do the job." The competition for government funding between community-based child welfare services has meant recent closure of many locally operated services. Instead, as Rose commented, "many of the agencies continue to be passed over in favour of larger organisations that can offer services in different places." Practice was defined by Caveman as reactive in order to meet targets of the state to ensure ongoing funding:

> *There's a huge volume of work that is … quite disabling and dangerous …The way that [community-based child welfare services] are funded and asked to do their work through contracts sets them into a position where they do more reactive than positive work … I think it's the way contracts are managed now that there's less flexibility and much more results focused auditing going on ... It's a sad reality.*

The influence of the state, from the different forms of capital it holds, provides a hierarchical position over social work within community-based child welfare and the practice of reflective supervision. Bourdieu et al. (1999) highlights the advantage that economic, social and symbolic capital has to an individual's position, their influence over others and the ability to keep undesirable individuals at a distance. Mary explained that "the Government is heading in a general direction that is very punitive and sanction based as a way of trying to control parent's behaviour (and how to parent their children)." As agents of the state, social workers in community-based child welfare are part of the implementation of state policy. For Caveman, social work within community-based child welfare was "specific and targeted" where support services are "generalised and fitting one model to everybody." Rose illuminated that this may require an agency to modify its service provision as "very few [community-based child welfare] organisations fit neatly into packages that the government likes to sponsor [but] the funding is really difficult … they have to get contract work in order to survive." Bryan described the busyness of social work and supervision as a result of neoliberalism and state control over the profession:

> *The current neoliberal environment … [with] increasing bureaucratisation of decision making … social workers being seen as professionals, we can't make independent decisions based on practices and policies. [Supervision] is becoming more of a tick based approach like the computer system knows best. I think that's creating quite a lot of stress. The resourcing issues, the social control aspect that is coming across in terms of "We must make them do things." The contract environment where people are working in competition whilst also being told to be collaborative creates qualitative issues.*

The government's control over economic capital has placed the social work profession within community-based child welfare in a weak position. Bourdieu et al. (1999) sympathetically wrote of social workers:

> It is understandable … those charged with carrying out the so-called "social functions", that is, with compensating, without given all the necessary means, for the most intolerable effects and deficiencies of the logic of the market … should feel abandoned, if not disowned outright, in their efforts to deal with the material and moral suffering. (p. 183)

As mentioned above, the impact of working with disadvantage leads the community-based child welfare social worker to resort to negative self-talk and disillusionment associated with their role.

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In supervision, these oppressive conversations may be reproduced and impede the supervisee from reflecting on practice. The impact of austere funding measures has also obstructed the professionalism, relationships and knowledge claim of social work within community-based child welfare. The professional and symbolic capital related to the social work status, knowledge, cultural value and its artefacts are vulnerable in the current environment and susceptible to dominant discourses (Beddoe, 2010b). The status of community-based child welfare social work has changed over the years. Community-based child welfare social work is often associated with low pay, lack of resources and high casework. As a consequence, this area of practice has been seen as undesirable by many social workers as a place to work in. Alana explained that "financial reasons has been the main pull" for many social workers to seek employment elsewhere. Due to lower income levels, unqualified staff are often employed in social work roles. Key informants such as Mary and Rosie could clearly identify that the reality of funding and contracts also impacted on the employment of social workers:

> *The funding of these organisations won't give you enough to employ fully qualified people so [community-based child welfare services] are in this unenviable position of having been told to fix all these problems but not having the money or the resources to employ well qualified people who can actually do that.* (Mary)

> *I think getting qualified staff is very difficult. It's hard getting [unqualified staff] up to speed. I think there's tensions around funding and that it varies from year to year so you don't have that stability…. I think trained and qualified social workers bring an extra dimension.* (Rosie)

Due to the financial constraints, Alana also added that community-based child welfare services had a lack of power and there was a lack of popularity for social workers to work in the sector:

> *[Community-based child welfare] are the poor cousins …You actually feel sorry for them because they're being told more and more that they need to comply but there's no resourcing there….Community-based child welfare sits below the state … there is a power imbalance between social work vacancies and government organisations. There isn't a lot of desire [among] social workers to get into community-based child welfare.*

The number of unqualified staff in community-based child welfare undertaking social work tasks leads to the erosion of important practice values and principles. Social, cultural and professional capital of the social work profession is reduced through the comprising of the title of "social

worker" and a lack of protection through mandatory social work registration, lack of academic qualifications and maintaining an invisibility of status within relationships with others and in organisations (Beddoe, 2010b). This potential reduction of the skill base and cultural capital within social work also reduces the profession to a preoccupation of assessment schedules and structures prescribed by the state. Mary emphasised the importance of qualified social workers in community-based child welfare work and the need for practitioners "to say what knowledge bases they were drawing on and thinking about theories or tools that inform their practice." Reflective supervision is also compromised. From her supervisory experience, Alana expressed her ongoing frustration towards assisting an unqualified supervisee to reflect in supervision:

> *Our sessions are clearly different to that of a qualified social worker … it's quite geared towards the educational aspect of supervision. So it's not only teaching her about the social work tasks but also teaching her about how she should operate in supervision … what my role is and what she needs to be sharing with me. It's definitely an ongoing thing.*

In a Bourdieusian sense, unequal distribution of capital and the maintenance of doxic ideas (taken-for-granted traditions that are not openly voiced) ensures a struggle for social transformation and challenge to the state (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000). A fundamental aspect to Bourdieu's theorisations is that the state of doxa, therefore, ensures disadvantage within society is maintained through privileging some who have capital and creating unawareness of the many without. Within community-based child welfare, the pre-occupation of meeting service requirements to maintain survival of the service and employment of its workers has led to the decline of social work values that challenge the status quo and the space for reflective supervision. Rose rationalised the current situation within community-based child welfare:

> *If workers were truly reflective, we would start challenging the system….you have to prioritise and do what is good enough. Not your best work …We have to stop saying "We will do x amount of work" because you can't do it when the system won't let you.*

Despite the identification of the state's impact on the profession, Bourdieu's theorisations also provide hope for social work and the use of reflective supervision. For Bourdieu, social workers are in a position to challenge doxa and the demands of capital influencing institutions by identifying and voicing hidden agendas (Bourdieu, 2001). The social worker has a responsibility to promote social justice and identify oppression and disadvantage of minority groups (SWRB, 2016). Supervision provides the opportunities for social workers to critically reflect on this

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position and doxa within society. Historically, community services have been known to have strong principles of social-justice-engaged work and supervision provides an instrumental role to reflect on these tensions and maintain the strong ethic of social justice in community work (Baines, et al., 2014). A particular tension responding to targets and maintain efficiency have been the associated ethical issues created for the supervisor and supervisee in their practice and how to respond best to service user needs. Elizabeth provided an example of a common conversation held in supervision:

> *You see that social workers are absolutely torn. As a supervisor and a social worker where somebody turns up and they're asking for help but there's no funding for that person. The social worker, because of her ethical stance, [and] code of conduct, wants to work with that person. The supervisor thinks we should be working with that person and you talk about that reflectively. But there's a barrier here – who's going to pay? … You don't get funded for all that you do because you tend to pick up those ones that don't reach the criteria [from the] government.*

Reflective supervision provides the opportunity to dissect the capital disadvantage within community-based child welfare social work, to explore alternatives to working with the most vulnerable groups within society and to effect change. Bourdieu's theorisations also maintain that social actors, such as social workers, have the ability to create alternatives to practice within a neoliberal environment.

> *There's always a tension there for [community-based child welfare services to] work to meet funding outcomes as opposed to doing work that you would consider to be good social work. You could say they are hopelessly caught by the constraints of their funding or they can provide a "buffer" between the work with state cutbacks, particularly in this current environment.* (Mary)

At the heart of an analysis of capital within community-based child welfare social work are the structural and socio-cultural factors essential for the social worker to critically reflect and engage with in supervision. Bourdieu has previously raised the immersion of people within culture, power relationships and how dominant cultural ideologies and discourses are maintained in society (Bourdieu et al., 1999). The social worker's ability to critically consider assumptions, vested interests in institutions and inequality provides the opportunity to develop culturally sensitive practice (Houston, 2002). Supervision can illuminate the correlation between culture, power, how knowledge is reproduced and how this may have implications in social workers'

professional interaction with service users. Mary described some structural and cultural issues that require critical analysis in supervision:

> *It's about being able to identify the structural constraints on both yourself and your client's lives in terms of race, class, gender, ability, and sexuality … the broader structural things like 99 per cent of my clients are solo mothers so what does that tell us about gender, poverty etc.*

Cultural considerations for Māori and the impact of colonising cultural practices are central to the wider context for social work in Aotearoa New Zealand. The social work profession has a commitment to bi-cultural practice and ethics, revealed in the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW) Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice and SWRB competencies. In Aotearoa New Zealand, Māori continue to be over-represented in marginalised areas of society from the ongoing effect of colonisation from a dominant Pākehā discourse (Keddell, Stanfield, & Hyslop, 2016). In particular, dominant cultural practices surrounding parenting, care arrangements and family life are normalised and enforced by the state. This is a fundamental tension in community-based child welfare social work. For Bourdieu, misrecognition of the culture of individuals and groups is something to be combated and requires ongoing analysis of the perceptions held by professionals and influencing supervision processes (Egan, 2012b; Houston, 2002). Reflective supervision in community-based child welfare social work can incorporate a critical examination of socio-cultural and socio-political factors that influence marginalised and disadvantaged groups. Bridget identified supervision time for:

> *[B]ringing in what's happening for Māori and different views about a way forward. It's that whole systems theory going out … how it relates to relationships, child protection, the Children's Action plan and how things might be "fixed" in our society?*

Bourdieu assists in the analytic discussion of the key informant data to re-think and re-position itself in the accumulation of professional capital (that includes social, cultural and symbolic capital) through education, critical reflection and the revisiting of its core ethical values. It is at this juncture that social work educators have an important role in building professional capital for social work and promoting the "critical intellectual" through ongoing training of social workers (Houston, 2002). Fundamental to the development of capital within social work, is the use of supervision for critical reflection on practice and providing alternative strategies to assist the most disadvantaged in society. Ongoing training in supervision, greater understanding of critical

analysis and the value of reflective supervision is essential in the development of the social work profession. Key informants also held strong, aspirational views towards the development the social work profession and the important role of supervision:

> *[More] supervisors [need] to be trained. Some are supervisors because they have been around for a long time and they haven't had the training … Supervisees [require] training on how to be a supervisee and more time to have reflective practice.* (Bridget)

> *A lot of work needs to be done on how to be a good supervisee. I think getting people to think about what can be shared, how to share it, how to make sense of it and how to feel safe in supervision. [Social workers need to understand more about] the theories and models of supervision.* (Bryan)

In addition, Mary had clear expectations that social work supervisees needed to have an ability to critically reflect:

> *I'd expect a good supervisee well trained in critical reflection to be able to articulate and say "I know I'm drawing on a stereotypical view of men" and … also able to talk about an issue like poverty as impacting on the family and thinking beyond a micro level.*

The exploration of power and structural imbalances within supervision allows social workers a greater understanding of how to work within the complexity and different elements of capital. Bourdieu's concepts then assist in the analysis of the data with the identification of alternative strategies through scrutiny of the position of community-based child welfare social work and examination of dominant discourses (Garrett, 2007b). For Rose, reflective supervision for social workers needs to be pragmatic in order to move forward:

> *Part of [reflective supervision] is a pragmatic approach that supervisees and supervisors need. It's no good wishing for ideals, we have to be pragmatic and use what we've got and have. We have to be brave and speak up when we can and strategise.*

Conclusion

In this chapter, the key informants' perspectives on reflective supervision within community-based child welfare services have been explored. Analysis of the key informant interviews has provided their aspirations for reflective supervision as well as the reported current realities in community-based child welfare.

The key informants articulated reflective practice and critical reflection as a layered process with different stages towards critical transformation in thinking. From the analysis of the key informant data, three attributes were identified as central to reflective supervision. These attributes included the skills of the supervisor to interrupt and explore the supervisee's practice; a good connection; and the navigation of different elements and perspectives. Finally, the key informants commented on the particular issues facing community-based child welfare services and the impact these issues have on reflective supervision. These issues were analysed and the espoused theory was contrasted with the key informants' theory-in-use. Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field and capital were utilised in the analysis of the findings. Reflective supervision within community-based child welfare social work provides the practitioner with an opportunity to develop their personal and professional *habitus* through examination of self-awareness and role in the current context. The *fields* provide critical analysis of professional relationships considered in reflective supervision and the tensions inherent in these relationships. The concept of *capital* revealed the impact of funding and resourcing on community-based child welfare services and a social work profession that is relatively weak from state-controlled agendas. Analysis of the key informant data highlighted a lack of critical analysis, and the importance for reflective supervision to re-establish professional social work values and build professional capital.

The next chapter provides analysis of how reflective supervision is utilised in community-based child welfare by supervisory dyads.

Chapter Six: Findings from phase two data

Introduction

Bourdieu's theoretical concepts of habitus, field and capital were central in the analysis of the key informant findings (phase one of the research) as presented in the previous chapter. Utilising a Bourdieusian lens, reflective supervision within community-based child welfare social work provides the practitioner with the possibility of examination of their personal and professional habitus in changing times. Bourdieu's "field" assists in the analysis of a variety of working relationships considered in reflective supervision including supervisors/supervisees, clients, colleagues, social service agencies, government, society and the tensions associated with these relationships. The use of Bourdieu's concept of "capital" in the data analysis revealed the fragility of the community-based child welfare social work from funding and resourcing constraints controlled by state agendas as an overarching concern within reflective supervision. However, reflective supervision was also seen as providing practice alternatives, the opportunity to shape critical reflection, restore social work values and build social work's professional capital.

The second research aim is to describe how reflective supervision is utilised and demonstrated in a session and strategies on how reflective supervision can be supported (see Table 4.1). This chapter presents findings from the supervisory dyads within community-based child welfare services, and conceptualises their theories-in-use (Argyris & Schön, 1974; Schön, 1983, 1987) related to reflective supervision through their supervision and participatory reflection sessions.

As highlighted in Chapter Four, eight supervisory dyads (the supervisor and supervisee) participated in phase two of the study. Participants were selected via volunteer sampling from several community-based child welfare services across Auckland. Each dyad that volunteered already had a pre-existing supervisory relationship. The participants had considerable experience from freshly qualified practitioners to social workers with over 30 years' practice experience in community-based child welfare, statutory child welfare and other distinct areas of social work practice. Many were members of ANZASW and the SWRB and have had multiple roles as practice assessors, social workers, managers and external supervisors.

In phase two, two separate recorded sessions with participants took place: the supervision session and participatory reflection session (refer to Figure 2). The purpose of the two sessions with each supervisor/supervisee dyad was to allow the process of deconstructing assumptions and dominant discourses in the supervision session; and reconstructing practice with innovative strategies in the participatory reflection. The recorded supervision session provided a backdrop of a "typical" session between the supervisor and supervisee and the process for deconstructing practice. The researcher read the supervision session transcripts line-by-line and established some initial codes by reflecting on the subject essence every two to three lines of the transcript. These codes then assisted facilitation of the recorded participatory reflection session for the researcher and aided participants to reconstruct their practice by "thinking aloud" (see Figure 3). The supervisory dyads were asked specific questions by the researcher in relation to their supervision session to assist in the exploration of their theories-in-use. The participatory reflection session was important for deeper analysis of the content of the supervision session by the supervisor and supervisee and allowed for the reconstruction of their practice through new strategies. During the process, each participant had a copy of the transcript available and this was sequentially reflected on from start to finish. At the end of the participatory reflection, a feedback and review process was undertaken by the researcher. Data was analysed using thematic analysis (described in Chapter Four) and the use of NVivo™ (QSR International Pty Ltd. Version 10, 2012) software (see Figure 5). Key words were also identified from the data that led to further examination and analysis of the transcripts.

The researcher has applied the Bourdieusian key concepts of habitus, field and capital used in phase one with the key informant interviews (See Chapter Five) and also applied these with the analysis from the supervisory dyads' data. Key findings revealed reflective supervision practices in community-based child welfare operate in a complex and changing field of forces. Social workers utilised reflective supervision to develop self-awareness and an examination of their personal and professional habitus, their professional relationships and wider political and societal influences, and the uncertainties related to organisational restructuring, disempowerment and the struggle to accumulate capital (see Table 4.5). The analysis of reflective supervision lacked a deeper analysis and critical examination of wider structural and environmental factors impacting on social work and community-based child welfare.

Habitus

> *I just had an "a-ha" moment … that actually I'm bringing everything of myself to supervision and wholeheartedly.* (Ohaki)

Bourdieu (2002) has described habitus as individuals identifying who they are and how this is internalised. In Chapter Five, the link was made between the personal and professional habitus of the social worker. In order to begin a reflective process in supervision and consider transformation in practice, the social worker needs to begin with an understanding of themselves. Unlike other professions, social workers *are* the "tools of their trade." Within the context of reflective supervision in community-based child welfare social work, the analysis of the supervisory dyads' data revealed habitus as having similar elements to the key informant findings. Social workers utilised reflective supervision for the development of their self-awareness, self-care and an ongoing examination of their professional role.

The concept of habitus assists in the socialising practices and conditioning of an individual in order to survive in their environment (Bourdieu, 1989). Supervision is an important aspect of the social work habitus that assists social workers to regulate and assess their well-being. Reflective supervision involves the supervisor supporting the social work practitioner to develop self-awareness and maintain their self-care. Self-awareness is regarded as vital for effective practice so that the practitioner can make links between personal issues impacting on professional practice (Mandell, 2008; Yip, 2006). The impact of working within community-based child welfare and demanding caseloads (as discussed in Chapter Five) requires the social worker to consider their personal safety and safety of others in order to fulfil their role. Within the supervision and participatory reflection session, Susan acknowledged the importance of using her supervisor to develop her self-awareness and maintain self-care strategies:

> *I've had a pretty tough year with my mum passing away … so I need to talk about those things and not just think that it's separate from my work…I also think that it's important for Jock [the supervisor] to be aware of … the stress that I might be feeling so that he can assess things differently... it's important for my safety and my client's safety … You'd be silly to think that your personal life doesn't impinge on your work life.*

The extract from Susan and Jock's supervision session highlighted the theory-in-use of maintaining self-care. Susan raised the family commitments that she had to manage after her mother passing and juggling a busy work schedule. As supervisor, Jock supported Susan

through acknowledgment and reiterated the importance of her to ask for assistance in work related tasks when she required this:

Jock: OK so how are you?

Susan: Yeah good, pretty good. Making progress with the worst stuff but it's slow progress. So that's good, positive.

Jock: And you're getting support to do that, apart from your girls, your family?

Susan: No apart from calls. I'm catching up with my brother in the school holidays. I'm hoping we will meet in [location]. I'm taking a couple of leave days.

Jock: Haha OK so there might be a leave approval request coming in.

Susan: Yeah having a long weekend so hopefully can cover some stuff there.

Jock: OK so in terms of how you are feeling, I'm also aware that we will be talking about the attestation, talking about cases and Strengthening Families [programme]. How is that making you feel also?

Susan: I guess it's juggling. The [caseload and programme] is quite intense over short periods of time so I feel a bit guilty putting my other stuff to one side to try and concentrate on that.

Jock: Yeah absolutely. The commitment to the programmes we really have to be there so it will be…. I recognise that pressure of juggling your cases as well. But you need to talk to me and tell me how I can support you particularly when you're feeling pressured or stressed.

For Bourdieu, habitus and social meaning for an individual is developed on an ongoing basis through the production of practices and schemes (Bourdieu, 1989). Self-care and self-awareness within supervision is a continually emerging process. Analysis of the supervisory dyads data revealed the importance of an integration of learning between personal and professional principles over time:

> *I think that what I've noticed with Grace, that you [are using] supervision for … the personal journey [and] the professional journey. So it's about that integration … of ideas and values and life philosophy with the work. You carry your consciousness … this is a steep learning time for you.* (Jessica)

Habitus provides an understanding of "one's place" and the positioning of place of "others" (Bourdieu, 1989). In Chapter Five, key informants saw reflective supervision as an opportunity to consider changes in the community-based child welfare social work role in recent times and

re-think expectations of others. In order to be effective, social workers need to have a clear understanding of their professional values and the work to be undertaken within their role with families (Sanders & Munford, 2010). The analysis from the supervisory dyads' data concurred that, through discussion and reflection in supervision, the social work supervisee is able to critically examine perspectives and develop confidence in their professional position:

> *I'm really clear about where I stand on this and where it needs to go...To express without being judged around what I'm thinking.* (Jackie)

> *It just gave me the opportunity to put the whole thing in perspective, see myself as a person in the middle of something complex and with many interactions. And that I did not have to hold it all, it could be put into a perspective.* (Grace)

Susan also provided her reflections that supervision could put into perspective what she could realistically change in the work she did with service users:

> *As a new social worker you want to go and fix everything! Then the realities are that you are probably not going to make [these] changes. I'm feeling like I'm being listened to but also it's nice having Jock [the supervisor] supporting me and … giving me different ideas about how I could practice as well.*

Habitus can assist with acknowledging the perceptions and actions of individuals in society and gain greater insight into embedded doxic ways of living and practising (Garrett, 2013b). Key informants in Chapter Five identified the importance of reflective supervision as a part of the social work habitus to facilitate a deeper exploration of practice. From the supervisory dyads' data, Grace, Susan and Jane recognised the importance of reflection and exploration of practice was central to role development:

> *I think it's a slowing down of the person involved in the work. The time and having those questions enables you to slow down and re-imagine yourself. [The] conversations have helped in other situations since then so it is really important to me that there's that ability to talk, reflect, go back and try again.* (Grace)

> *I think that it's just added to the learning process of supervision, and reflecting…but do I act on my reflections? Am I still using the same processes or have I learned from those? That's the important thing I think.* (Susan)

For Jane, reflective supervision also provided her with the opportunity to continue to critically consider her practice after the session:

> *My supervisor has got a raft of knowledge and a skill set that allows her to ask questions about what I'm thinking ... And often I go away from supervision thinking … about one little question that she's asked … about something that's happened. And it's that small.*

Bourdieu et al. (1999) refer to the "social suffering" that disadvantages many in society and maintains the power and control of dominant neoliberal policy. Within habitus, privilege and disadvantage is reproduced and impacts on individuals and a group's ability to perform in that environment (Houston, 2002). The habitus of social work interacts with disadvantaged groups and deeply influences the emotions and subsequent conversations of social workers. Previously, in Chapter Five, reflective supervision was identified in the data as having an important role in alleviating stress, uncertainty, "stuckness" and the experience of oppressive dynamics for supervisees. Reflective supervision creates a space to "slow down" reactions and foster acceptance of strong feelings (Bond & Holland, 2010; Hawkins & Shohet, 2012). This requires the supervisor to create a place of safety so the supervisee can express themselves and explore their emotions in the session (Scaife, 2010). The venting and unpacking of personal feelings in a safe supervisory environment assists the supervisee to separate, and place in perspective, work-related tensions. Having a place for safe expression of emotions within the social work habitus featured prominently in the supervisory dyads' data. Grace and Rangi provided examples of discussing their feelings in supervision:

> *I personally was … concerned about the impact that that would have on my own practice … there was someone else to support me [the supervisor] in any decision making. There's still even now a sense of grief and loss around that and a feeling of being a pawn on a chessboard really, as the workers. There was all this managerial stuff going on up there and we were down here. I work with my heart – so people's feelings and emotions impact greatly on the way that I work so … it help[ed] with some of the healing processes.* (Rangi)

> *I can remember at the time that [supervisor] was separating out. I remember the feeling of containment "Okay so this is what you were feeling" and getting information about process … so there were two things going on at the same time. It was very helpful because there was a separating of feeling anxious [from the practice]. That was my stuff.* (Grace)

The social work habitus of the practitioner may be triggered by the histories of disadvantage and abuse when working with service users. Given the nature of community-based child welfare social work, the feelings that supervisees bring to supervision may be parallel processes from working with clients. The supervisor's role is to name these processes and associated understandings related to strong emotions that are expressed in the session. The following extract from Jen and Alice's supervision session demonstrated the supervisor's naming of the parallel process and the acknowledgment of the emotion on the supervisee's work with a young mother who had a new-born baby removed due to child maltreatment issues:

Jen: So what I'm really aware of Alice, is that that's a really massive chunk of work. It's over and above what's already on your caseload and on top of all the restructure and all the sort of fears and changes …

Alice: I know. I mean the thing is that I'm just really conscious of the fact that I've known her since she was … [crying]

Jen: I know. You've been a massive support to her. I'm very conscious we've reached the point … where it's about the loss …

Alice: Yeah it's about the loss…

Within the participatory reflection session afterwards, the importance of supervision to discuss complex information and create a safe space for the supervisee to express intense emotion was acknowledged in the dyad in order to alleviate the oppressive situation:

Researcher: What were you feeling as a supervisor with your supervisee crying in the session?

Jen: I'm okay with that … I just allowed her some space to deal with that. We did … talk about the very deep care that Alice has for that particular client. We probably took about five or ten minutes to sit with that and we just started talking about some of the issues with the baby ... I totally acknowledge that it can be really difficult to be vulnerable and cry in front of people so I just try my best to make sure that it's a really safe space ... I hope I do that for Alice.

Alice: I have quite a strong care for this particular young person and … when we found out some of the detail about the situation, it was quite shocking … I was frustrated, and I was better after I talked.

From a Bourdieusian perspective, an exploration of the social work habitus involves an understanding of specific rituals and practices in order to perform appropriately in an environment. The awareness and normalising of emotions in reflective supervision allows for

non-judgemental ownership of feelings, resolution and resiliency in complex and emotionally draining social work (Davys & Beddoe, 2010). Jock highlighted the value of supervision to "park" emotions, examine information and "make a fresh start":

> *It's a human thing that we get attached to the people that we're tasked to work with. And our emotions then kick in and there can be a co-dependence … We are emotionally attached to people we're trying to help and support, and for me, supervision is the vehicle to actually help us contain, cope and park our emotions when we get attached. We do want the best for the families … I think [supervision] is a really good vehicle to think things through in a positive, safe way … so that's where you can rejuvenate yourself and get a fresh start.*

Support systems within social work, such as supervision, are one of the most successful strategies for coping in a complex environment (Collins, 2008). A nurturing environment in supervision allows for practitioners to feel a sense of significance and develop coping strategies for the emotional demands of the work undertaken (Gibbs, 2001; Harvey & Henderson, 2014). In order to build coping strategies and avoid stress, good self-esteem and self-control needs to be encouraged in a social worker. All of these attributes are essential in order to tackle assumptions and doxa in a Bourdieusian sense, effect change, tackle oppression and support disadvantaged groups. For Bourdieu, habitus also provides the opportunity for innovation and change in one's position in society (Houston, 2002). The key informant data in Chapter Five revealed the importance supervision had to refreshing supervisees' negative views on their habitus and explore a different narrative. Analysis of the supervisory dyad data also acknowledged the importance of reflective supervision to illuminate strengths and build resiliency for social workers:

> *[I]t was like trying to find a way of helping Grace to think about what other strengths and resources she's got available to her, to get in touch with those. And that needed to be something that she came up with – not me telling her how I thought she could've handled it.* (Jessica)

For Rangi, her supervision session was extremely powerful for her to locate newly found strength in her practice:

I've been affirmed in what I do, a sense of enlightenment that I've talked about it, I feel I've been supported [and] advised. I come in with cement boots and I go out … with wings!

Field

I do come back to relationship being one of the things that is the very foundation of the work. So if I don't have that relationship then the work cannot be done. (Grace)

Field has been introduced by Bourdieu as a structured social space or a field of forces (Bourdieu, 1998) between individuals or groups of individuals. The relative positions of those individuals or groups define them within the social space (Garrett, 2013b). The fields influencing reflective supervision within community-based child welfare services are the professional relationships that the social worker has with others. The ability of the social worker to maintain effective working relationships is essential to their practice and the well-being of children whom they work with. Within the professional relationships explored in reflective supervision (and impacting on the space being reflective) there are competing tensions and discourses that are complex and at times, contradictory. The critical analysis of the key informants' accounts in Chapter Five revealed a variety of relationships and social systems that the social worker navigates. These included the supervisor/supervisee relationship, interaction with clients, colleagues, social service agencies, government, society and the associated tensions with these relationships. The analysis of the supervisory dyads' data also identified key relationships canvassed in reflective supervision as the supervisory relationship, the interaction with children and their families, colleagues, other professionals in the child welfare sector, the wider risk environment and public stigma.

The quality and significance of the supervisory relationship is a powerful determinant towards reflective supervision (Davys & Beddoe, 2010; Egan, Maidment, & Connolly, 2016). Bourdieu's concept of field is helpful towards the understanding of the structured space of supervision and the necessary ingredients for this to be a positive socialising process for the social worker. The key informant data in the previous chapter described the particular aspirational attributes required for reflective supervision and the roles of a supervisor and supervisee. The importance of an effective supervisory relationship was also underpinned by the specific roles and skills of the supervisor and supervisee in the supervisory dyads' data (see Figure 5), as highlighted by Jane and Susan:

I also believe that my relationship with Debbie is sufficiently honest enough – if Debbie thought there's a complete lack of connection here she would ask a question that would lead into a conversation about that. And trust in a relationship is not something that's probable or see-able but it's certainly a connection. (Jane)

I think we have a good, open, honest relationship … I feel like if I have something I'm concerned about I can talk to Jock about it …You know, I always feel that I've been listened to and that's really important that I'm supported. (Susan)

Two contradictory fields of forces were identified in Chapter Five that influence the supervisory relationship. The organisational and professional forces of social work influence how knowledge is reproduced within the supervision session, the discourses, agendas, and the responsibilities of the supervisor in developing a social worker's practice. For Bourdieu, these opposing forces represent the struggle for fields to remain autonomous from the organisational forces of neoliberalism (Garrett, 2013b). In addition, fields are also susceptible to competition and the struggle to accumulate resources. As such, community-based child welfare social work has changed to meet the tensions and opposing demands between organisational and professional contexts. The struggle to combat neoliberal and organisational pressures within the structure of supervision can be seen with the value placed on external supervision. External supervision has been promoted in some agencies to provide balance between organisational imperatives and professional practice (Beddoe, 2011; Morrell, 2008). External supervision also assists in meeting the requirements of maintaining social work registration in Aotearoa New Zealand and meeting professional obligations relating to practice. Key informants previously identified the importance external supervision had in representing a professional discourse that facilitated reflective practice. Several of the supervisory dyads in this study were external supervision arrangements. It was evident from analysis of the findings that the supervisor in external supervision had an important role to facilitate reflection and display key attributes:

I've always seen my role as just being a very compassionate listener and I feel really strong in myself that whatever comes to the table, it's going to be okay. So I relish the thought when you come Rangi, because I'm like "I can sit back and we're going to go on this journey" … I had to be really quiet and I need to let her have a lot of the talk time. (Ohaki)

The supervisees in the dyads were also highly acquainted with the value, purpose and the importance of external supervision towards their professional growth:

The fact that Jessica is outside the organisation, I take this time – it's all about me. Whereas in the organisation, it's about the cases and how the cases are moving … and how they're going to move. So there's a different focus. (Grace)

I'm really lucky in that I do have external supervision which means that when I have things I want to work through, that I know that they don't come back to the organisation. So that's really important, particularly as I hold things that should not be reflected back to the organisation. (Jen)

For some social workers, like Rangi, external supervision was the only type of supervision they had received:

I needed to get out what I felt I'd been holding in because I hadn't had any type of supervision … we've had none for a long time and I think that's what I carried was all of that … and my [external] supervisor copped it all really.

Using a Bourdieusian perspective highlights the contradiction and the struggle of competing fields of forces impacting on the supervisory relationship. Previously in the analysis of the key informants' data, the variability of supervision between community-based child welfare services was highlighted. As highlighted above, external supervision contributes towards the maintenance of professional social work registration and meeting requirements for regular, reflective supervision. For some community-based child welfare services there is a commitment by the organisation to pay for this type of supervision for the social worker. However, the struggle for community-based child welfare services to accumulate capital is exacerbated by ongoing additional expenses associated with providing external supervision for social workers. This dilemma was highlighted by Jane:

Looking at our increasing numbers of registered social workers, what is growing is that part of the payment belonging to professional bodies and … meeting the criteria for supervision …The cost to the organisation is huge. This organisation has always had a very strong drive in the last ten years for our social work staff to have regular external supervision. It's just that our team has grown.

The financial pressure for social workers to have a space for reflection from external supervision has created a wondering from managers whether the service is getting value from this interaction – a further example of dominant neoliberal agendas in community-based child

welfare organisations permeating the space of reflective supervision and undermining its relevance for professional social work.

> *It's something the organisation's paying for, and when you are paying for the results, how do you know you're getting value? … What we were batting around in our session was about that feedback loop and accountability around external supervisors … But also contracting with supervisors who are willing to work with the vision and values of that organisation.* (Debbie)

Traditionally, social work supervision has been "in-house" to the organisation. Internal supervision tends to have an over-emphasis on participant's accountabilities to the organisation policies where the supervisor and supervisee are both employed (Bradley et al., 2010). As a consequence, the focus on accountability to the work (driven from the dominant group ideologies) impacts on the supervisee's ability to reflect and how the space is utilised for reflection. Instead, the dominant discourse of managerialism is seen as infiltrating the space for reflective supervision with an overemphasis and pre-occupation on organisational context. The doxic dominant traditions are reproduced in such internal supervision arrangements to maintain control of the supervisee's work. The supervisor in such an arrangement has responsibilities for checking the supervisee's work to ensure targets and outcomes of the organisation are met. In the following extract, the internal supervisor listened to the supervisee's concern relating to staffing issues at work and mentioned the link between the upheaval in staffing and working with the children. However, the supervisor's response appears to be more concerned about meeting compliance of staff ratios by the organisation.

Tracey: There's like no staff. There's me and [colleague's name] and then all casuals.

Yvonne: How come?

Tracey: Because [ex-colleague's name] is no longer here, [colleague's name]'s not here, ever. He's on sick, sick, sick leave!

Yvonne: Extended sick leave?

Tracey: Yeah, for months and months. And [colleagues' name], she's come in to cover for [colleague's name]. So she's just started yesterday. And [colleague's name] has just injured himself. He's got a bad sprain so he's off for a few days. So now there's only me and [colleague's name].

Yvonne: And obviously that's going to impact on the behaviour of the children if they always have changes.

Tracey: They don't know them and they're like "Do it now" and then they're like "No."

Yvonne: That's not good. But at least if you've got someone that's there all the time, then they can get used to it.

Characteristically, the internal supervisor is positioned within a complex field of forces influenced by organisational expectations of reproducing service outcomes, risk for the organisation and navigating vertical management structures (Beddoe, 2011) and often maintaining dual roles with social workers relating to supervision and line management. For Bourdieu, fields are multidimensional (Bourdieu, 1985) and the internal supervisor is an example of a neoliberal socialising structure embedded in community-based child welfare to ensure boundaries are managed and maintained. Often the internal supervisor is buffeted between managing organisational expectations and negotiating dwindling resources. For Yvonne, this can feel like a disempowering process:

> *When you talk about staff being away on sick leave and staff leaving, I take that to management. But then what I've been told I can't share everything [budgets, funding] because what I get told from management is also confidential. How much can I actually say?*

With internal supervision, the focus tends to be on tasks and casework (Beddoe, 2011). Typically, this is at the expense of reflection where supervisees spend the majority of the supervision time to check in with their supervisor over case updates and information. Reflective supervision is stifled in such an arrangement, where the supervisee reports back information as a mechanism to measure compliance. Bourdieu has referred to such arrangements as a means to ensure that dominant discourses are maintained, unchallenged, reproduced, and serve to silence other discourses (Garrett, 2007b). Within the analysis of the key informants' data in Chapter Five, the managerial tensions impacting on the space for reflective supervision meant the focus was on meeting targets and outputs. The supervisory dyads data also revealed that internal supervision was a mechanism of being told what to do. As an internal supervisor, Yvonne raised that her understanding of supervision was different to the theory-in-use she had noticed:

> *For me social work is about helping people and enabling them to do things. So supervision is exactly that – enabling the supervisee to do things, to do their work and to advocate for the supervisee but also to get the supervisee to have the feeling that they*

have the power to do things themselves. Because I find [instead] that supervisees come to me and want the answer from me. "Tell me."

Bourdieu's concept of field provides analysis of relationships the social worker has with service users. Significant to effective work in community-based child welfare, is the development of relationships between the social worker, parents, primary caregivers, children and other significant family members (Adams, 2009). Time is needed by the social worker to build relationships with families, in order to explore the family's unique circumstances and dynamics, and engage in effective assessment and intervention work (Healy, 2012). In Chapter Five, the analysis of the data identified the uniqueness of community-based child welfare services in working with others. A Bourdieusian analysis of field allows for opportunities for the social worker to examine a family's situation and provide creative solutions. Reflective supervision offers the supervisee an opportunity to consider different perspectives when working with service users.

> *I think that Jock has given me different ideas ... when I'm talking about the grandmother that I'm working with and the problems that she's having. Jock's looking at it from a different perspective. So it's giving me other ideas. Just coming at it from a different angle.* (Susan)

In the extract from their supervision session, Jock is attentive to the Susan's description concerning the contributing factors impacting on a grandmother's care of her grandson. Through the conversation, Jock offered other solutions to assist Susan's work:

Susan: I just had an e-mail from the school saying they're concerned not so much about [child] but [Grandmother]. She's struggling and I spoke to her on the phone for quite some time. I felt like we've slipped back 6 months. This reflects in [child]'s behaviour, he just plays up, reacts and it's gone back. She spends time keeping him busy, taking him to soccer, ten pin bowling but not actually doing things with him.

Jock: So what emotional bond do you see between them? It would be good to actually observe that. If she's calling herself Mum but there is that different relationship…

Susan: Well the way she shows her love to [child] is through trying to keep him in line. She's tired and worn out by him. She doesn't spend that much time with him.

Jock: Well not quality time. I guess if she's tired and feeling low it makes it even harder for her … I guess it comes back to a sleep routine. If the routine was better without being disturbed.

Susan: Yeah I said to her can you now keep him up until 7.30pm?

Jock: But the language there is "keeping him up."

Susan: Yeah also [child] tells me that he needs to go to bed. She uses the language that the child is in charge.

Jock: Turn the sentence into one where he will respond to it.

Susan: You mean something like "let's play snakes and ladders and go to bed after that'"?

Jock: See if he stays in bed the extra hour in the morning and work at that. Do you see the link? If he stays in bed longer, she might get more sleep. If he stayed up a bit later…

An important element for Bourdieu is providing a voice for disadvantaged groups (Bourdieu, 1998). A central aspect to working in community-based child welfare for social workers is considering the needs and wishes of the children as the clients. Community-based child welfare social work is often in the best position to represent the voice of a child when there are other dominant voices and agendas. Jen described child welfare work as "often not thought through" in casework and that "the focus [needs to be on] the best interests of the child." The centrality of the child and their wishes towards planning in community-based child welfare work is an essential aspect in reflective supervision:

> *I guess it's really …for me to have the information [and] what's going to benefit for that child … rather than those two adults … I really felt that both of them are focusing on the adult issue rather than the child and that was one of my goals – to discuss this with my supervisor [and] find a way to help them to bring the focus back on the child rather than themselves.* (Jackie)

The work that social workers complete with children and young people has many successes. Given the complexity of community-based child welfare work in a field of forces, reflective supervision has importance towards the affirmation of the supervisee's practice and acknowledging the positive interactions between social worker and service user (Collins, 2008). Social work connects with Bourdieu's theorisations when working within complex fields: "we must work instead with the multiple perspectives that correspond to the multiplicity of co-existing, and sometimes directly competing points of view" (Bourdieu et al., 1999, p. 3). The supervisor has a key role towards enhancing the potential, multiple perspectives and the power of co-working with clients:

> *[Supervision] allows us to think about the skills that Susan has employed and I feel it's a really positive piece of social work where … you've actually helped in influencing that*

young person to look at different ways and safety …This was more of a task-centred,
cooperative working partnership … But real social work where you are standing
alongside her and actually helping her come to informed choices. (Jock)

Bourdieu has identified fields of forces as unequal where power struggles exist (Bourdieu, 1998). The child welfare system comprises many agencies and professionals. Previously, in Chapter Five, key informants identified the position of community-based child welfare social work as a disadvantaged field of practice when compared to the power of statutory social work and other professional groups. A Bourdieusian analysis of differing professional fields emphasises the dominant discourse relating to child welfare held by the state, to manage risk and uncertainty. The state's notion of "partnership working" within professional agencies to strengthen the child protection system and ensure vulnerable children are identified earlier through the Vulnerable Children Act (New Zealand Government, 2014). The Act has promoted speculation in many social work areas (Keddell, 2014). Conflict, working in isolation and miscommunication are key concerns by professionals working in child welfare (Davys & Beddoe, 2010). For community-based child welfare social workers, the liaison with professionals in statutory agencies, understanding of practitioners' responsibilities and discourses on keeping children safe present a common challenge (Rose, 2011). Reflective supervision provides the opportunity for supervisees to discuss their disillusionment and disempowerment associated with not being heard. Alice expressed working relationships as "banging my head up against a wall" with other professionals in a statutory child protection agency:

> *My concerns were just about how it was managed from some of the external agencies. I*
> *… spoke to a lady from [name of agency] and she was very laid back … When it comes*
> *to dealing with things like suicidal comments I expect a response that makes you feel*
> *like the concerns are being heard and that you are putting everything in place that you*
> *possibly can. I didn't get that feeling from [name of agency].*

Cheyne et al. (2008) and Kenny (2011) have criticised partnership working with government departments as "tokenistic" consultation due to the power that is still held in decision making by the state. From a Bourdieusian lens, community-based child welfare social workers are seen as agents of the state in working to maintain and reproduce dominant discourses regarding children and families in society. Analysis of the supervisory dyads' findings emphasised the common concern held within community-based child welfare social work and supervision of how to challenge dominant agendas and procedures relating to child welfare:

*It's a big issue in terms of how do we get [name of agency] to respond or to engage …
but I can't myself think of a solution … It's like a train wreck at times, it's horrible and I
think the issue is that with [name of agency] holding the guardianship and the custody
orders is that at times they just don't think they need to engage … or that someone else
is going to have any useful input. They just do their own thing.* (Jen)

The struggle for power and for the social worker to navigate dominant managerial discourses
may also be a parallel process that also exists within the community-based child welfare service
itself. Using a Bourdieusian perspective allows for the examination of unequal fields within the
organisation. This requires critical examination of the internal relationships between different
staff operating within teams and at different structural tiers within the organisation. Hierarchies
and dynamics can be analysed within the organisational structure that privilege some and
disadvantage other groups. This was an aspect not highlighted from analysing the key
informants' data. However, analysis of the supervisory dyads data stressed the internal power
struggles due to different staffing positions and levels of management responsibility in different
community-based child welfare services. This disempowerment led to feelings of frustration by
the social workers "on the ground" in their supervision:

*I think it's a challenge to work with a big team of different professions. There's decisions
that are made at a hierarchical level, higher up, that don't know the children as well and
they're making the decisions without talking to you ... like we've found what works and
what doesn't work with the children and they're disrespecting that. I think our
communication could be stronger ... but they've already made up their mind in
leadership so they do what they want … nothing changes.* (Tracey)

The following extract from Rangi's external supervision session allowed her to vent her
frustration of suddenly losing her manager for several months on leave, taking on new
responsibilities in the team and preparing for a meeting between her and her manager with her
returning. As the supervisor, Ohaki used the opportunity to notice Rangi's resilience and
maintaining her professionalism in her role:

*Rangi: One of the things my colleague and I decided we needed to talk to once our Manager did
come on board. We needed to sit down with her and tell her the impact her walking away has
had on us.*

Ohaki: What do you want from her if you have that meeting?

Rangi: I want to know that her position is a Manager. That she chose to take on herself and that there's responsibilities to us as a Manager. But she should have sent us an e-mail, not disappear. Then she rocks up out of nowhere and flicks us an e-mail and expects us to be OK with that. For me it's around that professionalism as a Manager.

Ohaki: You were abandoned. You've stepped into this and realising that somebody does need to step up. That's what you've had to do because there wasn't anyone else there.

Rangi: Yeah definitely.

Ohaki: You've stepped in to fill a great big gap and you've thrived.

Rangi: We believe we have. I personally will request that she spends a couple of days with us. So we can explain to her what's been going on. Talk about being abandoned and just being able to carry on.

Ohaki: You talk a lot about professionalism. I feel a lot of aroha for the Manager. It must be very bad to act like that. It's been bad for some time. What do you think would happen if she did come kanohi ki te kanohi [face to face] and you talk about being abandoned, what is it that you need from her?

Rangi: I don't think I need anything from her. We just want to be able to say so there's no misconceptions with things that have happened. We're hopeful that it puts the changes we've needed to make into context with her not being there.

Tennant et al. (2008) identified changes in community-based child welfare social work over the years from a voluntary to a more professionalised role. From the state's devolution of services, community-based child welfare has the added complexity of being more aware of risk and following procedures from multi-agency working (Rose, 2011). Within community-based child welfare, the social worker manages risk, identifying potential child abuse and notifying statutory services. Susan identified that now in community-based child welfare social work, "we're actually the professionals on the ground with the eyes that bring safety. So I think that cannot be underestimated." Supervision is an important forum to also reflect on the process of cross-agency partnerships and the supervisee's navigation of several systems towards the protection of children and young people:

> *It actually takes a lot to work because there are joint responsibilities that are owned by several parties … So making a report to CYF is so loaded for people that they put up a wall of "I don't want to engage with you anymore because you've done something bad to our family." So that's why I speak first to the parent … to let them know this is what we have had to do because of my responsibilities to the organisation but wanted to just affirm that that doesn't mean that we stop anything that we are doing …* (Grace)

In the next extract from Jessica and Grace's supervision session, Grace highlighted her uncertainty regarding a child protection disclosure and the management of relationships within the agency, statutory provider and the family. As supervisor, Jessica provided reassurance and commented on the important relationships Grace had considered in her decision making:

Grace: Was I overstepping the line was the actual thing.

Jessica: I don't think you did. I think the information you got from the children was enough. You wouldn't want to go any further with questioning them because that's part of an evidential interview. So I think when it stopped, it wasn't life threatening but you needed to do something about it. But the children were safe for now. That's why you consult with your Manager.

Grace: Yes OK.

Jessica: It wasn't a decision on your own.

Grace: No that's true.

Jessica: [Name of manager] has plenty of experience. If she had thought it was a mistake to go and talk to the grandmother, she would have said so. If you were at school and the children were going home that afternoon, you might have needed to ring CYF immediately and say I don't think it's safe for these children to go home this afternoon.

Grace: The process with [the manager] was that CYF were always going to be brought into this. It was a matter of should we have done it half a day earlier and still gone out and visited the family. I don't know. But we talked about the need to maintain relationships.

Jessica: Some agencies have policies that say wherever possible if we are going to make a notification to CYF, we will advise the family of what we are going to do.

Grace: Yeah which is why I went.

Jessica: I mean you had very limited information. Social work is full of grey areas and having to make decisions about things. That's one of the reasons why we consult with somebody. I guess if you're working in CYF, would you be thinking about the long term or the immediate safety?

Grace: My impression is that their job is to look at their immediate safety and immediate care and protection.

Jessica: That question about maintaining the relationship is something that is always a sticking point. Should we take action and that might jeopardise that relationship? If it's not going to put the child at risk, then the social worker would go and discuss with the family. It wouldn't be safe for them to go home if they had been going home. But because they were in care, you were able to go that afternoon, I think it sounds like a fair decision that you came to.

The broader fields that influence reflective supervision and community-based child welfare social work are political, societal and community attitudes. These wider constructs also maintain and reproduce dominance and subordination (Bourdieu, 1985). The impact of wider, structural issues is central to Bourdieu's theorisations and makes important connections for social workers in their understanding of the relationship people have with their environment. Pivotal to social work is the examination of these constructs within existing structures and how they impact on social justice and maintain oppression in contemporary society. In Chapter Five, the key informants in the study articulated the espoused theory that reflective supervision should provide the opportunity for critical thinking in relation to dominant discourses held in society and identification of alternative solutions through the social workers' ethics and practice standards. However, the theory-in-use revealed in the key informant data was quite contrary in that a lack of deeper examination of the wider factors within community-based child welfare work were common in supervision. Analysis of the supervisory dyads data also revealed a lack of connection that social workers had to their core professional values of advocating for social justice and addressing oppressive structures for disadvantaged groups. The spaces for reflective supervision to consider the wider structural and cultural factors and professional development were almost non-existent within the supervisees' everyday practice. The supervisor has a key role in reiterating the systemic links related to the supervisee's practice with service users. However only one supervisor in the dyads made the following link:

> *So when you're asking that question of yourself ,"Am I doing the right thing?" … you've got your practice that you know but if you suddenly feel that you don't know then where do you go next? So you go to things like your organisational policy and if that doesn't give you the answers then you go to your wider social work ethics, the law of the land. So it's about stepping back.* (Jessica)

Within the broader political and societal fields of forces the dominant neoliberal agenda of the state becomes obvious. Principles of social justice and human rights core to the social work profession are silenced and displaced in favour of the accountabilities an organisation has in maintaining outcomes for ongoing state funding. This tension is acknowledged by Jane:

> *You've got your social work ethics which underpin the whole relationship and professional practice, but you've also got your accountability to this organisation.*

The wider environment impacting on community-based child welfare has led to uncertainty and anxiety for social workers (Gibbs, 2009). The impact of risk and public stigma identified in the previous chapter promote reactive practice and a sense of powerlessness from social workers to promote change for service users with the diminishing resources available. This reactive practice has reduced the ability for social workers to connect theory to their practice and the impact of wider systemic issues. The continual changes within community-based child welfare have led social workers towards compromising their professional practice and the space for reflective supervision. There is potential for erosion of critically reflective practice and reflective supervision characteristic of professional social work and these being replaced with supervision intent on case management and compliance in a risk-averse system.

> *[W]hat we talk about in supervision there's so many tasks that we do here as social workers and a lot of stuff that doesn't sit best in the social work role. It takes a lot of time. It takes time away from things that actually do sit in the social work role.* (Alice)

The environment that encapsulates community-based child welfare work has led to a sense of busyness by social workers to meet targets for ongoing state funding and manage risk with disadvantaged children and families (Baines et al., 2014; Beddoe, 2010a; Garrett, 2014). Kath commented that, "I think that in terms of the time factors, we're always under time pressure." Feelings of despondency, deficit-based thinking and distance from government decision making on practice has crept into community-based child welfare social work and supervision:

> *We've got external pressures coming from government [and social workers] are not actually looking at practice, they're not looking at theory, they're not looking at anything other than that whole emotional cycle that they are caught up in.* (Jane)

Managerialism as a dominant discourse has also altered the perceptions of community-based child welfare social workers in the community. From the key informant data analysis, community-based child welfare social work was often labelled the same as statutory social work. This factor was also present in the supervisory dyads' data. Negative perceptions from the public included the perceived power and authority of social workers:

> *Grandma wants me to alert Mum to the consequence of what she is doing and so she sees me having the power but for me I don't see I have the power … my own beliefs and values can't override theirs, I can only encourage them and they are the people to make [a] decision.* (Jackie)

Alternatively, the stigma associated with social workers working within child welfare may lead to families not engaging with a service – a common occurrence in community-based child welfare services in that there is no mandate for families to engage with the service. This non-engagement may stem from fear of negative judgement and scrutiny of a family's parenting capacity by the social worker:

> *I closed this family through non-engagement .... [Mum] was never very open about her life. I think the way that I got involved – they didn't ask for help – they had a [statutory agency] meeting and I got invited … they got landed with me in a way. I tried to give them a whole lot of ideas of how I could support them but they didn't engage.* (Susan)

Capital

> *A lot of the work is about keeping the organisation operationally working in a really positive way and thinking through lots of staffing and systems issues that are often tied in with the changes in direction of the organisation [due to the funder of the organisation], of how that is then implemented, [and] how then that is communicated with staff.* (Debbie)

According to Bourdieu, capital is the influence an individual or group has over others in society (Bourdieu, 1985). Capital can be measured in its volume and the relative weight of different types of capital (such as economic, social and cultural capital) accumulated over time (Garrett, 2013b). In Chapter Two, Beddoe (2010b) has also described "professional capital" as the qualifications and attributes of having social work status and its connection to weak social and cultural capital of the profession. From a Bourdieusian perspective, the habitus of community-based child welfare social work has a lack of economic, symbolic and professional capital. Within Aotearoa New Zealand, the community-based child welfare service is strongly influenced by government departments' and central government's objectives; these provide funding and the resources for services. This creates tension for each community-based child welfare service in obtaining enough economic capital to ensure its survival. The tightening of funding and resources from the state has presented as challenging for those engaged in community-based child welfare work. These constraints on practitioners in community work reduce power, increase redundancies and uncertainty in role and ability to make decisions (Chenoweth & McAuliffe, 2012). Financial and resourcing constraints were identified by the key informants as controlling all aspects of the service and resonating within the space for supervision. An

analysis of community-based child welfare social workers' lack of capital in the supervisory dyads' data revealed the impact of managerial discourses on social work professional practice. For Tracey and Debbie, constant changes in service delivery and staff changes was a huge feature of their supervision:

> *I really value team, so to not have a good team frustrates me … We have a really high turnover of staff. So what can you do about that? How can you build a solid team when your team's always changing? So I think that's just something that I have to consider if I want to stay here or not.* (Tracey)

> *It is a theme that runs through a lot of supervision work at the moment because of the broader context of which we are operating in and the fact that … the goalposts have been changed … So it is part of a bigger picture and the result is that negative deficit talk about resourcing and not enough staff … and downsizing.* (Debbie)

A reduction in funding for some community-based child welfare services has led to redundancies and restructuring of different jobs. The loss of professionals within the team has had a huge impact on those left behind in an organisation and has increased workloads. Data analysis from the key informants recognised the role that unqualified workers had within community-based child welfare services performing social work tasks. For social workers in the community-based child welfare environment, exploration of feelings related to recent restructuring and redundancies had become a common feature in reflective supervision. Jen and Rangi emphasised the confusion and uncertainty related to role:

> *It's just about absolutely ensuring that she's aware that …she has that space [in supervision] to talk about it because, the restructure has implications and it might mean people have different thoughts and feelings about others in the organisation, or the organisation [itself].* (Jen)

> *We're only a small organisation and it wasn't just impacting on me ... As much as we were going "We've just got to get on with the work," there was always this thing hovering behind us, this uncertainty about the organisation, changes within, us as workers. Are we going to cope with any changes that happen? Is the manager going to stay? There were all these things going on. It was important to come in and be able to talk to my supervisor about it.* (Rangi)

From a Bourdieusian perspective, unequal distribution of capital ensures the maintenance of doxa (taken-for-granted assumptions) and disadvantage to marginalised individuals and groups (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000). The levels of oppression disadvantaged groups experience (and the doxa that has been created as a result) are also apparent in how social workers operate. Social work has been undermined with a lack of resources, skill base and social connections. A lack of capital has created an undesirability of the social work profession as a whole. For many social workers, operating as agents of the state (Bourdieu et al., 1999) has led to a mindset of disillusionment and disempowerment. Within community-based child welfare social work, analysis of the supervisory dyads' findings suggested the lack of capital in agencies consumed social workers and their supervision time with a sense of powerlessness. This was an important topic in Debbie and Jane's supervision:

> *[For some staff] their thinking is poisonous and we've got these young, energetic grads that are coming through with enthusiasm, lots of wonderful vibrant ideas about how to work with children in context of a residential placement … And so instantly you can see these people that come in with these amazing spirits … and then they catch on to that train of …"We don't have enough" deficit type … negativity. That's why I … can't have [the new staff] poisoned.* (Jane)

> *It's easy to go "We don't have enough resources." That is the external impact it's having on the cultures of teams generally … I think that you work very hard to establish an organisational culture [that is positive]. But the challenge is how you get those staff thinking about a mindset that then changes the culture of doing things …To be the role of a leader in management is about holding the hope and holding the vision.* (Debbie)

In the following extract, Jane spoke in her supervision session with Debbie, about an approach she piloted in a team meeting to assist the group re-discover solutions and skills in their work:

Jane: It's all the teams, and it's often ended up like a dump session and everybody is whinging about not having enough resources. It's been the same thing – never enough resources, not enough staff, staff are sick, staff aren't here, and it's been debilitating because it kind of grows that negativity in everybody else rather than reflecting on what we've done well, what we would like to do again. So I separated the group up and got them to come up with their lists...

Debbie: And what belongs in which area.

Jane: And we came up with quite a good list and I thanked everybody and said this is part of a project that I'm working on. Often people don't separate it out into feelings and thoughts and it all comes out in this garbled irrational emotive conversation. So I wanted them to actually pull

their feelings out, then pull their thoughts out, then think about what didn't go well, think about what else they could've done, what the outcomes might have been and what you've learned to do differently … It made them truly focus on the tools, techniques and things that worked. And things that they had attempted to do, or things that they actually didn't do, things that were omitted and things that they would try again next time.

Debbie: When you say that, do you mean things that they had forgotten to do? Like that theory to practice stuff?

Jane: It's theory to practice. So things that in hindsight that they realise they may well have tried or things that they could've done but didn't do, for whatever reason. So they weren't so much as blaming ... you know the blame's gone out of it, and so has that heated and emotional sort of behaviour because they've separated it out, they've worked it out within their team and what they're bringing to the whole team is a more constructive, reflective process.

Debbie: So you trialled this?

Jane: We did.

Debbie: So you went through the trial and what was the actual feedback about this? Did anyone make any comment?

Jane: It instantly took less time because rather than everybody griping and people felt heard and that it framed things in a way that they could take the learnings into their work with the children.

Debbie: So it was more solution...

Jane: Solution focused.

Debbie: Solutions and ideas that could be used in the future.

Using reflective supervision to discuss the supervisee's concerns related to a lack of funding, the impact of organisational change and loss of professional capital is necessary to maintain a healthy level of functioning within community-based child welfare social work. However, both the key informant findings and the supervisory dyads identified a need for social workers to develop and maintain a deeper critical analysis of wider structural and environmental factors. Pivotal to Bourdieu's theorisations is also the contradictory nature of social work operating in a state-driven environment: the opportunity to strategise, critically examine and explore the impact of capital influencing institutions (Bourdieu, 2001). Supervision can provide the space to critically explore alternatives to practice within institutions. The extract from Selena and Kath's supervision session highlighted Kath's pre-occupation in meeting targets ahead of an audit. As

supervisor, Selena's questioning and summarising assisted Kath with identifying feelings, support and potential strategies towards building resiliency in stressful times:

Selena: What is the checklist for? Is it for you to be able to say "OK I've done this.""

Kath: Yeah a checklist for me in terms of the important bases I need to cover. There's a list in what the auditors are looking for. That gives me a list that I can tick off as I go.

Selena: Yeah I agree with you around the list. What I'm seeing is you're quite heavy with the whole responsibility and wondering how much of that you can share and get people above you involved. Because I'm hearing that you're quite burdened with it.

Kath: Yeah. I guess I'm slightly anxious because there's a bit to do. There's quite a bit to do and I need to make sure that I've dotted my "i"s and crossed my "t"s because the audit is quite important for our ongoing funding. So I do feel burdened in light of the fact that the contract is…

Selena: Struggling a bit.

Kath: Both managers are run off their feet. The actual audit is around the social work practices so it falls into my responsibilities. So I'm trying to over think and think out how much I need to do.

Selena: How much are you thinking after work?

Kath: All that stuff including all my responsibilities that fall around the audit I feel more anxious about getting up in the morning and thinking "oh no, I've got to go to work." I don't like to operate like that really because I left my previous job because I didn't want to be too burdened with it all.

Selena: Just a reflection when you were at your other job, do you feel like you are stuck in that position again of taking work home? You talked about it being overwhelming at times and not being able to sleep properly. Were there some strategies that worked and helped you move through that stuff?

Kath: I think it became really, really hard and I became really, really stuck.

Selena: Is there anything you would consider doing differently from then and now that might be able to make a difference at a busy intense time?

Kath: I think having the opportunity to talk about all this is really great. To even think about all that is really different to last time. Last time in my other work, it was so crisis driven, it was really difficult to step out of that and reflect in a really healthy way.

Bourdieu's argument of the immersion of people within their own culture and the relationship this has to the cemented dominant ideologies in society are important factors for critical social work (Bourdieu et al., 1999). Bourdieu assists in the analytic discussion of how social work can operate with service users in an anti-oppressive way and to re-position its dwindling

professional capital. Houston (2002) has developed a culturally sensitive practice model for social workers that utilise Bourdieu's concepts. Such models develop critical awareness and examination of oppression and leads to the development of strategies in tackling disadvantage. In addition, highlighted in the key informant chapter, was the importance reflective supervision has to understanding the taken-for-granted socio-cultural factors to ensure community-based child welfare social workers support the interests of marginalised and disadvantaged groups. Cultural differences related to parenting and family life provide contradictions for the community-based child welfare social worker within the Aotearoa New Zealand context, particularly in relation to areas such as child protection and family violence law. Jackie provided an example in the supervisory dyads' data of the assistance reflective supervision gave to the promotion of culturally sensitive interactions with families:

> *Some of the difficulties that I've experienced working with a Chinese family … they believe arguments in relationships [are] quite common ... But from [a] professional perspective, if we don't get this addressed then this can actually harm the … child. But it doesn't seem to be a very obvious thing to be aware of. They just think, "It's just us arguing … why you think that's going to harm..?" Supervision helps [to honour] the cultural difference that we have, Bridget actually helped me … be more aware of the difference between the Western culture and my own culture – to make my practice better.*

Cultural capital is an important facet influencing how supervision provides support and remains an accountable process to social work (Egan, 2012b). The existence of a dominant culture has created a traditional approach to social work and supervision where one way to practise has been reproduced within the work with service users (Beddoe, 2015b). Within an Aotearoa New Zealand context, social work has made a professional commitment to bi-cultural practice and ethics but yet there is an ongoing struggle within Western Pākehā structures for Māori to have an equal voice. The participants within the supervisory dyads and those providing key informant data strongly represented a dominant discourse and different aspects of culture did not feature prominently (see Table 4.2 and 4.3). This particular aspect of the study reflects the invisibility of marginalised groups and cultures within the current framework of supervision of social workers and illuminates how existing structures continue to reproduce a dominant "one size fits all" discourse. Bourdieu reminds social work of the importance of multiple voices and how professionals can challenge existing doxa through critical examination of practice (Bourdieu, 2001). Unpacking the significance of culture and cultural narratives in the supervisory

relationship allows for the recognition of different ways of working. Ohaki and Rangi as one supervisory dyad in the study provided an example of this:

> *I started actively drawing on some Māori models of supervision, about trying to connect really deeply with whanau because we've talked about whanau and leadership before … we're both Māori and that's important to us. That has to start being active and integrated into our supervision.* (Ohaki)

Bourdieu's concept of capital assists with a closer inspection of existing structures and colonising processes that impact on social work and supervision. Moreover, choices can be explored that enhance professional capital of the social worker, their identity and how they work with others. Reflective supervision for Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand is underpinned by cultural meanings and knowledge that are fundamental to the relationship and the identity of the supervisor and supervisee (Walsh-Tapiata & Webster, 2004). Walsh-Tapiata and Webster (2004) refer to culture in the supervision session shapes its process and is "something not left at the door" (p. 16). Indeed, a deeper understanding and acknowledgement of identity, culture and the existence of co-creative practices within supervision assist in the facilitation of critical practice (Hair & O'Donoghue, 2009):

> *It's the sense of being able to connect with my ahua [character], my wairua [spirit] and Ohaki has that sense; I really feel a strong sense. She's happy to let me finish just whatever that looks like. I don't feel I've just got to cut off … It really affirms for me that there is a place for Māori doing supervision together because I have a Pākehā [internal] supervisor and … it's a very different feel … a whole lot of stuff gets unsaid.* (Rangi)

Conclusion

In this chapter, data from the phase two supervisory dyads have been analysed in relation to how reflective supervision is utilised in community-based child welfare. Data were collected from the dyads' supervision session and the follow-up participatory reflection. Similarities were revealed between the two phases of the research in that social workers utilised reflective supervision for the development of their self-awareness and examination of their personal and professional habitus. Social work and reflective supervision was identified as operating in a complex field of professional relationships and wider systemic influences. The struggle to accumulate capital within community-based child welfare social work has led to a weak professional identity and a negative perception related to its role in society. Key informants and

supervisory dyads made reference to how social work and reflective supervision could be used to identify alternatives to existing dominant discourses and structures. However, a deeper analysis and critical examination of wider structural, political, cultural and environmental factors was not evident.

From a Bourdieusian perspective, both phases of the data illuminated the need for a more critical examination by the supervisor and supervisee of the social work habitus, its interrelationship with other fields and the impact of dominant discourses on practice. In the next chapter, these findings will be discussed further as well as strategies to support reflective supervision within community-based child welfare social work.

Chapter Seven: Discussion

Introduction

In the previous chapters, the utilisation of reflective supervision in community-based child welfare was highlighted by the findings from both the key informants and the supervisory dyads. Bourdieu's concepts have assisted with the analysis of the two data sets. Table 7.1 provides a summary of the comparative analysis between the key informant and supervisory dyads' data. Findings from both phases of the data revealed similarities about reflective supervision practices in community-based child welfare. Reflective supervision was identified as essential for the development of a social worker's self-awareness and examination of their personal and professional habitus. Social work and reflective supervision were identified from the findings as operating in a complex field of professional relationships and wider systemic influences. Social work was revealed as a profession struggling to maintain its identity in community-based child welfare. The aspirations (espoused theory) and realities (theories-in-use) of reflective supervision within community-based child welfare from the two data sets offered contrasting information. Analysis of the key informant and supervisory dyad data stressed how social work and reflective supervision could be used to identify alternatives to existing dominant discourses and structures. The findings emphasised the need for further critical analysis by the supervisor and supervisee of the social work habitus, the interrelationship with other fields and the influence of dominant discourses and practices on professional social work.

Table 7.1: Comparative analysis of reflective supervision in community-based child welfare from key informant and supervisory dyads' data

Bourdieu's key concept	Key informants	Supervisory dyads
Habitus	- Developing social workers' self-awareness. - Exploration of social workers' personal triggers relating to practice. - Promotion of social workers' self-care. - Discussion of changes and uncertainty in community-based child welfare role. - Social workers relieving "stuckness"', negative self-talk and building resilience.	- Social workers' self-care and developing self-awareness. - The importance of reflecting as part of supervision. - Safe expression of social workers' emotions. - Developing confidence in social work role. - Importance of illuminating social workers' strengths and building resiliency.

Field	• The supervisory relationship influenced by organisational and professional obligations. • An effective supervisory relationship revolves around specific roles. • External supervision favours a professional discourse. • Supervision more about monitoring performance and meeting outcomes. • Variability of supervision between community-based child welfare services. • Building positive relationships with service users. • Power dynamics between "disadvantaged" community-based child welfare social work and statutory social work. • Supervision should critically consider the impact of dominant discourses and advocating for social justice. • Theory-in-use relates to a lack of critical examination of the wider forces of community-based child welfare work. • Negative perceptions of community-based child welfare social work by public.	• Organisational versus professional fields of forces. • Effective supervisory relationship underpinned by specific skills and particular roles. • Value of external supervision to enhance professional practice vs internal supervision and meeting organisational requirements. • Different perspectives can be explored when working with service users – including the voice of the child. • Power relations between community and statutory child welfare. • Internal power struggles within the community-based child welfare service. • The complexity of multi-agency working. • Lack of connection with professional core values – social justice, etc. • Tensions related to organisational accountability. • Negative perceptions of community-based child welfare social work by public.
Capital	• Managerial discourses on community-based child welfare social work. • Preoccupation of funding and resources. • Community-based child welfare social work is often associated with low pay, lack of resources and high casework. • The number of unqualified staff undertaking social work tasks has led to the erosion of practice values. • Opportunity to dissect the capital disadvantage and explore alternatives to working. • Critical reflection related to structural and socio-cultural factors impacting on practice is needed.	• Managerial discourses on services – constant change and lack of funding. • Feelings of uncertainty, negativity and sense of powerlessness from social workers. • Deeper analysis of wider, structural issues is required. • The importance of promoting culturally sensitive practice and exploration of cultural narratives in supervision. • Enhance professional capital through critical examination of existing structures and professional identity.

The first section of this chapter outlines the tensions impacting on community-based child welfare social work and the practice of reflective supervision. The findings of this study suggest community-based child welfare social workers need to employ a deeper analysis within reflective supervision and the promotion of social-justice-informed strategies in their work with service users. Greater exploration is needed in supervision towards the socio-cultural and political factors affecting the social worker's work, organisational issues, relationships with others and the social worker's self-awareness.

The next sections of this chapter will focus on elements of the second aim of the research, namely strategies on how reflective supervision can be supported (see Table 4.1). Two strategies are discussed further in this chapter that support reflective supervision: a thinking aloud process and a four-layered practice model. Thinking aloud was used by the researcher with the supervisory dyads in the follow-up participatory reflection sessions. As an activity, thinking aloud assisted the supervisors' and supervisees' learning through the researcher's use of open-ended questioning and inquiry. Dialogical content from the supervisory dyads' evaluation of the thinking aloud process has been included. This strategy assisted the supervisor and supervisee to articulate deeper insight from the analysis of skills, style used and content of the session (see Chapter Four). In particular, the process of thinking aloud provided the supervisor and supervisee with an opportunity to critically evaluate, reconstruct and develop their future practice. The thinking aloud process with the supervisory dyads provided a methodological contribution towards the use of critical reflection within qualitative research approaches.

A second strategy introduced in this chapter to support reflective supervision is the four-layered practice model. From a Bourdieusian perspective, a multi-layered framework enables social workers and supervisors to critically explore the interrelationship of habitus, field and capital. The purpose of the four-layered practice model is to assist with the agenda, task and process of supervisory dyads towards critical reflection of practice. The significance of each layer of the four-layered practice model and the thinking aloud process will be discussed in more detail.

Tensions impacting on community-based child welfare

A complex field of professional relationships and wider systemic influences impact on community-based child welfare social work and the implementation of reflective supervision. Bourdieu's key concepts have assisted in the analysis of the data and understanding how dominant societal discourses are reproduced in community-based child welfare social work. As a profession engaged with disadvantaged groups and maintaining practice values of social justice, social workers need to engage in reflective supervision to advance their practice and improve services for families, children and communities. Internationally, and within Aotearoa New Zealand, social work has established ethical codes that support service users and disadvantaged groups to self-determination, human rights and social justice (ANZASW, 2008; International Federation of Social Workers and International Association of Schools of Social Work, 2004; SWRB, 2016). These social work principles and values should sit at the heart of reflective supervision and assist in the wider examination of events that individuals and groups find themselves discriminated against within society. Therefore, conversations related to how to best address issues of social justice should be woven into supervision conversations in social work, day-to-day practice and decision making (Hair, 2014a).

Supervision has become heavily influenced by organisational agendas concerning the practice of social workers that ensure the survival of services in a competitive market. Increasingly, child welfare social work involves working with risk, acting within procedure and legislation, and as agents of the state. These neoliberal ideologies have encroached upon the space for reflective supervision ensuring the supervisor and supervisee are pre-occupied with managerial practices related to key performance indicators, targets, technically rational systems and identified thresholds for services (Baldwin, 2004). Such practices devalue reflective supervision and the professional knowledge of social work.

Community-based child welfare social work is at a point of critical self-examination in a very challenging time. As a profession, social work practitioners require critical thinking dispositions and skills to change society for the better (Gray & Webb, 2013b). The tension for social workers working in a neoliberal context is which "master" to follow: the ethics and values of the social work profession or an organisational mandate controlled and funded by the state (Garrett, 2013b). Within supervision, the social worker needs to critically develop their understanding of the wider socio-cultural and political factors impacting on social work practice; examine power

relationships between agencies, disadvantaged groups and structures; and maintain a level of self-awareness. These will be discussed further below.

Structural and wider factors

The structural and wider factors that influence reflective supervision and community-based child welfare social work are situated within the political and socio-cultural context. Although espoused practices from the key informant data identified the need for consideration of wider structural factors, the analysis of the theories-in-use (Argyris & Schön, 1974) of the supervisory dyads' data revealed a lack of critical examination of the wider factors influencing community-based child welfare work in reflective supervision. This lack of critical examination of wider structural, political and cultural factors also highlighted that social workers rarely addressed core professional values such as social justice and the identification of discrimination related to their work with service users. A reduction in critical reflection and in making the connection between individual and the wider structural factors impacts on professional development in social work (O'Donoghue & Tsui, 2012). Within this structural arrangement, the supervisor is seen as the expert with privileged knowledge and supervision itself is seen as a mechanism for accountability around performance and organisational objectives. The knowledge of the social worker is largely discounted and the wider social and political context ignored (Hair & O'Donoghue, 2009).

According to Bourdieu, wider ideological constructs maintain and reproduce privilege and the subordination of individuals (Bourdieu, 1985). Cuts to public welfare services have led to an 'ideological assault' on the rights of citizens within society to have basic services and this has had an important impact for social workers advocating with vulnerable groups with less resources in a neoliberal context (Ferguson & Lavalette, 2013). Bourdieu's theorisations make critical connections for social workers in understanding the engagement individuals and groups have with their environment. Socio-cultural and political factors have led to minority groups in society being disadvantaged in socio-economic status, poverty, and being susceptible to discrimination. These factors are particularly visible in community-based child welfare social work and the work with service users. Key informants and supervisory dyads discussed the disadvantages facing service users and also the social workers working within the community-based child welfare environment. Meeting these needs has required social workers to adjust their practice and to possess more critical knowledge and become more flexible in their

approaches. Supervisors, too, have a vital role and a responsibility for the development of supervisees and for providing further attention towards the wider structural factors and a social justice focus in supervision (Chang et al., 2009). It is also important to recall that supervision occurs within broader structural, socio-cultural and political contexts too. These shape the supervisory relationship and the conversations that take place within it (Hernández & McDowell, 2010). The task of the supervisor is to facilitate for the supervisee a deeper examination of the interrelationship between the political, social, cultural systems and seek to expose the privilege and disadvantage of various groups.

In community-based child welfare, the wider socio-political factors have led to uncertainty and disillusionment for social workers. This powerlessness was apparent in the supervisory dyads' discussions and feelings associated with the community-based child welfare social work role. These feelings from social workers relate to the lack of professional identity and capital that social workers experience in the current environment. In Aotearoa New Zealand, the Children's Action Plan stemming from the VCA and legislative and policy changes have also created uncertainty and confusion for child welfare social workers regarding professional responsiveness to child abuse. This has included a growing scepticism that professional responsiveness increases the adoption of further surveillance tools introduced by the state for resource-depleted community-based child welfare services to follow (Keddell, 2014).

Austere funding of services by the state has also impacted on social work's professional capital (Beddoe, 2010b), esteem and knowledge claim within community-based child welfare. Community-based child welfare social work is associated with negative outcomes, low recognition as a worthwhile position and a passive role in providing funded services. This impact of weak professional capital was described in the study by key informant and supervisory dyads as community-based child welfare social work being an underprivileged and highly demanding role. Moreover, there is also the ongoing threat of redundancies and reduced staffing levels in many community-based child welfare services. Risk, deficit-based approaches to practice, redundancies and managing negative public perception have concerned community-based child welfare social workers and compromised both the ability to critically consider their professional practice and the space for reflective supervision.

Bourdieu et al. (1999) reminds social workers of the paradoxical nature of their role as agents of the state who support disadvantaged groups but who are also employed to manage risk and minimise child protection in state-funded services. This posed a dilemma for some supervisory

dyads, seen in such as Grace and Jessica's conversation in supervision in Chapter Six. The preoccupation with the management of risk by community-based child welfare services has become a primary focus of social work assessments with service users. In turn, supervision has also become focused on the management of risk and scrutiny of social workers' practice (Beddoe, 2010a). Negative perceptions held by the general public regarding child welfare social workers has also assisted in the fracturing of relationships that community-based child welfare social workers may have previously had. This fracturing of relationships has weakened social workers' ability to advocate on behalf of different groups – a core characteristic of community social work practice (Alston, 2009). The closer aligned 'partnership' working with the state has resulted in community-based child welfare services being labelled by the public as a similar operation to statutory social services.

The acknowledgement of identity and culture was highlighted by a Māori supervisory dyad in the study and as important to the facilitation of critical practice. A social constructionist framework that identifies the relevance of narrative, alternative approaches to knowledge and multiple viewpoints needs to be adopted in social work and supervision (Hair & O'Donoghue, 2009). Socio-cultural factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality and spirituality, can also interpose into inappropriate use of authority in social work and supervision if these factors remain unacknowledged (Beddoe & Davys, 2016). Bourdieu's notion and the examination of the "social structures" of habitus can assist with unravelling the engrained social work practices and how supervision also reproduces embedded assumptions (Beddoe & Davys, 2016; Houston, 2002). Working within the tradition of critical realism also provides social justice approaches to be mobilised in practice. As a profession, social work acknowledges diverse contexts from a social justice framework and challenges marginalisation and power imbalances experienced by individuals, groups and communities (Pease, 2013). In supervision, challenges and alternatives to traditional empiricist knowledge are needed in order to honour diversity and multiple perspectives (Hair & O'Donoghue, 2009; O'Donoghue & Tsui, 2012). An acknowledgement of identity and culture in supervision provides a focus on learning and reflection by the supervisor and supervisee where meanings are co-constructed and solutions can be generated.

Significant to Aotearoa New Zealand has been the delivery of indigenous social work with iwi social services and Māori teams in mainstream agencies. In Aotearoa New Zealand, the social work profession has been shaped through a bi-cultural association and has been important in the recent development of specific culturally responsive practices and supervision that support Māori (Hair & O'Donoghue, 2009). Although key informants acknowledged the importance of bi-

culturalism to social work in Aotearoa New Zealand, the relationship that bi-culturalism had with practice featured sparingly with the supervisory dyads (Argyris & Schön, 1974). Only one (Māori) supervisory dyad in the study identified the significance of culture and indigenous practices for Māori within the supervisory relationship. This highlights the invisibility that still exists of marginalised groups and cultures within Aotearoa New Zealand and the current practices of reflective supervision. Bi-culturalism is important for challenging oppressive colonising structures and dominant ideologies surrounding community-based child welfare social work and practices imposed by the state (Munford & Walsh-Tapiata, 2006). Bi-cultural practice has also assisted with the emergence of kaupapa Māori supervision (Eruera, 2007, 2012) and the seeking of cultural expertise and meanings when working with Māori as service users or staff of the organisation. Supervision has an important role in developing the well-being of social workers from indigenous and minority groups and in the development of cultural competence for all social workers. Supervisors have a responsibility to address multiple worldviews, facilitate discussions relating to culture, incorporate culturally relevant assessments and interventions and evaluate the supervisee's competence (Beddoe & Davys, 2016). Moreover, it is an ethical imperative of all professional social workers "to harness the potential of supervision to bring about change to structural issues" (Beddoe & Davys, 2016, p. 52) that represent dominant monocultural, Western views.

Power relationships

The community-based child welfare social worker is dependent on effective working relationships with others. In Chapters Five and Six, a variety of relationships have been identified from the key informant and supervisory dyads' data such as working relationships with supervisors/supervisees, with service users, with colleagues, with other social service agencies, with government departments and with the wider public. Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field and capital have provided a framework for analysis of the positioning of different individuals and groups in society and how this positioning impacts on social workers' practice in community-based child welfare. Managerial forces influence the relationships in professional social work. These forces set agendas and how knowledge is reproduced in community-based child welfare social work and in reflective supervision.

The supervisory relationship is important for the social worker to develop their practice in an Aotearoa New Zealand context, and to understand organisational expectations and accountabilities (ANZASW, 2008; Davys & Beddoe, 2010). The supervisor holds power and

authority as the facilitator of the supervision process and has an important accountability to the supervisee's practice and mandate within the organisation (Hair, 2014b). In Chapter Five, the supervisory relationship that the key informants had espoused was also dominated by organisational and managerial accountabilities. A lack of adequate supervision with a focus on professional development and support was identified as common within community-based child welfare social work and may lead to strained relationships between the supervisor and supervisee.

The recent emergence of different supervision modes in social work (such as external or cultural supervision) have assisted with countering the inadequacies to provide supervision in organisations and in maintaining the importance of a professional discourse. The comparative analysis of the key informant and supervisory dyads' data stressed the value that external supervision has in promoting relational work between the social worker and service user. External supervision may supplement other supervisory relationships or be the only form of supervision available for the social worker (Beddoe & Davys, 2016). External supervision supports reflective practice and reduces power inequalities between the supervisor and supervisee (Beddoe, 2011). However, the tension that was highlighted in the data was the variability of external supervision taking place for social workers within community-based child welfare services. In addition, matters related to the external supervisor's responsibilities for the supervisee's work and the relationship with the supervisee's organisation can be complex and inconsistent (Beddoe & Davys, 2016).

The prevalence within many community-based child welfare services is for supervision to only be arranged internally to the organisation. The focus on risk and meeting targets was featured by participants as a key facet in community-based child welfare social work and internal supervision. This focus was evident in some supervisory dyads such as that of Yvonne and Tracey. Relationships within internal supervision ensure organisational imperatives are met and these conditions are unlikely to foster reflection and a social worker's professional development. Supervisors become more concerned with surveillance of a social worker's caseload and providing solutions. As evidenced by some of the dyads, supervisees too expect that their supervisor will provide answers. Analysis from a Bourdieusian perspective identifies the supervisory relationship as operating within a structured social field. Within this structured field, power is significantly skewed towards maintaining oppressive factors within the supervisory relationship. Aspects associated with power, culture (such as gender and age), location, the different forms of capital and managerial constraints will all impact on a supervisory relationship

(Beddoe, 2015a). According to Ruch (2007), organisational systems value the "what" and "when" of casework in order for tasks and actions to be completed. Wilkins et al. (2016) argue that placing a lower value on the how and why to practice leads social workers to struggle to explain *why* they complete certain tasks and *how* they build relationships with service users. In order for supervision to be reflective, an ongoing analysis of the relational dynamics within supervision needs to occur. The balancing between professional and organisational tensions is "the essential dilemma of any supervision arrangement" (Beddoe & Davys, 2016, p. 114) which requires transparency and ongoing review in the supervisory relationship. Supervision within community-based child welfare requires creativity, vision and a social justice focus that values relationships with service users.

Whether the supervisory relationship is internal or external to the organisation, the supervisor needs to have appropriate attributes to maintain a reflective space in the session. These aspiring appropriate attributes have been raised in the key informant data as having a range of skills and knowledge and exploring different facets of practice. From the supervisory dyads' data, the establishment of an open and honest working relationship founded on trust was essential for reflection to occur. Moreover, the supervisee needs to utilise the time to explore themselves in relation to their work structures and the communities where they practise (Beddoe, 2015a; Hair & O'Donoghue, 2009). Earlier in the thesis, in Chapter Three, the traditional Western approach of one-size-fits-all supervision was argued as an impossible construct due to the environment in which it takes place (Beddoe, 2015a). Therefore, the examination of different contexts and multiple supervisory relationships are needed to balance the professional and organisational demands of community-based child welfare social work.

Reflective supervision is crucial towards building important relationships with children and families. Key informants noted the uniqueness of community-based child welfare services and the hopes they held for social work supporting various groups and communities. Central to community-based child welfare work is the social worker's consideration of the needs and wishes of children amid other dominant voices and agendas. The dedication of the social workers towards child focussed practice was evident in the data. Analysis of the key informant and supervisory dyads' data also highlighted how reflective supervision was utilised towards the exploration of different perspectives, strengths and planning towards solutions with families. Reflective supervision for community-based child welfare social workers provides the support practitioners need for enhancing their potential and providing opportunities for creative practice (Collins, 2008). Supervision that is reflective and explores multiple perspectives provides a

dialogical space to openly question power relationships between the social worker and service user and opportunities for alternative discourses to be deliberated (Hair & O'Donoghue, 2009). Bourdieu (1998) highlights the importance of a multiplicity of perspectives when working within complex fields and the importance of capturing the voice of disadvantaged groups. Central to professional social work practice, these are the same concepts that promote social justice and, from a child welfare perspective, hearing the voice of children.

The relationship between the community-based child welfare social worker and statutory providers featured strongly in the study as a contested area. The comparative analysis of the two phases of data in the study identified the power relationships that exist between social workers working in the community-based child welfare context and other statutory professionals. Supervisees within the supervisory dyads often felt "unheard" and insignificant within hierarchical structures that "know best" when it comes to working for the best interests of children and their families. Reflective supervision can provide an important space to raise the challenging relationships the community-based child welfare social worker has with other professionals and how to promote collaborative working relationships.

Working in collaboration and sharing knowledge with other agencies in order to promote high ethical standards of practice is central to the social work profession in Aotearoa New Zealand (ANZASW, 2008; SWRB, 2016). On the surface, the state's notion of partnership working between professional agencies through the Vulnerable Children Act (New Zealand Government, 2014) and commitment to strengthening a child welfare system appears to align with social work practice principles. However, between the key informants' ideas and the realities for the supervisory dyads was the complexity and difficulty of working in partnership with other professionals. A Bourdieusian analysis offers a probing lens into partnership working for community-based child welfare where, within the child welfare sector as a whole, NGOs may have less power. Where agencies are unequal, dominant discourses are reinforced. As such, these dominant discourses are replicated in the relationships and interactions between community-based child welfare social workers and statutory social workers. Community-based child welfare is seen as disadvantaged through limited funding and competition for resources, compared to the statutory power of CYF. Therefore, partnership working with statutory organisations becomes superficial and tokenistic (Cheyne et al., 2008; Kenny, 2011). These dynamics then filter through to the experiences of social workers.

The conversations in reflective supervision strongly feature the frustration and dissatisfaction of community-based child welfare social workers when working with other professionals. The source of this frustration is the inability to build consistent and meaningful relationships that will ultimately benefit service users when decision making is maintained by the state and statutory services. Community-based child welfare social work also struggles with being an indirect agent of the state due to practice constraints enforced within the organisation and its obligation to deliver a specifically statutory funded service. Within the community-based child welfare organisation itself, different cultures exist and internal power dynamics are also reproduced. An analysis of the supervisory dyads data revealed the internal power struggles within different community-based child welfare services resulting from hierarchical positions and levels of managerial responsibility. Typically, the social worker was identified by some supervisees, such as Tracey, as being at the bottom of the organisational structure, resulting in feelings of isolation and disempowerment. For Bourdieu, such symbols represent how dominant neoliberal discourses are maintained and reproduced whilst others are marginalised and oppressed (Bourdieu et al., 1999). Reflective supervision provides an important space for the community-based child welfare social worker to analyse power relationships with other professionals, to navigate complex and contradictory systems and re-evaluate their professional capital. To do so requires skill and commitment from the supervisor and supervisee to engage in a critically reflective process and consider alternative strategies to practice.

Self-awareness

Self-awareness is a recurrent process connected to reflective practice and is essential for practice development of social workers (Adamovich et al., 2014). The comparative analysis of the two phases of data in the study has identified the aspirations from the participants for the development of self-awareness in reflective supervision. A protected space within supervision provides the ideal opportunity to examine the underlying assumptions of the social worker to explore personal and contextual factors influencing practice and identify practice alternatives. Critical reflection (Fook & Gardner, 2007) and critically reflective practice (Taylor, 2013) concerning the social, political and cultural influences on a social worker's role also impact on the development of values and practice with service users. Thus, the recalling of previous situations and personal knowledge of the social worker, and professional knowledge is important for rigorous reflection in current practice situations (Yip, 2006).

Supervisors fulfil a role towards encouraging supervisees to develop reflexivity. Reflexivity locates the social worker in relation to the influences on their knowledge and values and the impact this has on their practice (Ingram, 2013; Taylor & White, 2001; White, 2015). According to Houston (2002), social workers need to enhance their professional reflexivity through continual examination of assumptions related to culture in its broadest sense and develop culturally sensitive practice before they intervene with service users. A social worker's self-awareness needs to include an awareness of their cultural biases and wider values in order to develop social justice principles and agitate for change (Chang et al., 2009). The danger of not doing so is to replicate biases that are embedded within a habitus of managerial discourses, structures and organisational context. Through the interrelationship of habitus, field and capital, social workers need to examine their values, socialisation, class, attitudes and how this reproduces privilege and disadvantage and the culture in which social work operates (Houston, 2002). Supervision requires ongoing examination towards inculcating social justice principles, cultural identity and promote critical alternatives within existing supervision frameworks (Beddoe, 2015b). In a Bourdieusian sense, social workers who can reflexively identify and scrutinise their own personal and professional habitus have the potential to become the "critical intellectual" and challenge existing practices (Garrett, 2013b).

In order for reflective supervision to nurture self-awareness, the organisation needs to hold a commitment towards this. The organisational context within many community-based child welfare services produces unfavourable conditions for social workers to develop self-awareness (Baines et al., 2014). Particular environmental conditions can be highly destructive of reflective practice and a social worker's development. These inappropriate conditions include working within an organisational context where there is insecurity related to employment, constant change, oppressive dynamics within teams, power relationships and an emphasis on managerial rather than professional frameworks (Yip, 2006).

All of these conditions appeared within the key informant and supervisory dyads' data and permeated the conversations in supervision. Therefore, the aspirational use of reflective supervision was disconnected from the current theories-in-use within organisations (Argyris & Schön, 1974). Supervision, as highlighted in previous chapters, is part of the socialising process of the social work habitus and is influenced by the environment in which it takes place. The key purpose of supervision within a managerial discourse is its role in containing and managing risk, uncertainty and anxiety within social work practice (White, 2015). For Yip (2006), oppressive

circumstances within the organisation maintain supervision as a mechanism to monitor and maintain power, rather than to develop self-awareness:

> In an oppressive environment, social workers may be obliged to disclose their weaknesses and shortcomings or their unpleasant practice experiences to supervisors within the agency; such disclosure may then be used against the worker as an excuse to abuse, to exploit, to undermine and even to dismiss them. (p. 783)

In addition, developing a social worker's self-awareness also demands energy and space in order for reflection, analysis and evaluation of practice to occur. For many social workers in the study, the concentration on huge caseloads in a demanding managerial environment was a noticeable feature. Supervision is then seen as a tool of accountability towards completing a job and moving on, as also stressed by O'Donoghue (2015). In a procedurally driven and stressful environment, social workers may struggle to find space to reflect and consider the emotionally charged aspects of their work (Ingram, 2013). The supervisory dyads' data in phase two acknowledged the importance reflective supervision has towards the exploration of alternative narratives that illuminate strengths and build resiliency for social workers. Self-care should not only be about surviving in a demanding environment but also the development of strategies for promoting resilience in practice.

Confusion and anxiety associated with recent role changes in community-based child welfare social work featured prominently in the key informant and supervisory dyads' data. These emotions were central in supervision with social work supervisees raising negative feelings and unhappiness associated with their professional identity, competence and ability to undertake their role. These negative feelings showcase the pressure that social workers experience in delivering increasingly austere services to frustrated service users whilst receiving a lack of support by their employers (Baines & van den Broek, 2016). Anxiety also leads to the stifling of practice (Beddoe, 2010a) where procedurally driven practice influences professional behaviour (Turney & Ruch, 2015). Such negative pre-occupation related to the social worker's role impinges on the promotion of self-awareness (Yip, 2006). Supervision needs to be the space to explore the emotional impact of social work practice and the preservation of practitioner self-awareness and confidence within the organisational context.

This chapter now moves on to describe, in the last two sections, strategies on how reflective supervision can be supported: the value of using a thinking aloud process and the four-layered practice model of reflective supervision.

The 'thinking aloud' process as a strategy

The findings in this study strongly indicated the impact that managerialism and organisational agendas had on reflective supervision within community-based child welfare. However, data also identified reflective awareness from the social workers in their supervision session. A central aspect missing from supervision literature is the value of reflection on the examination of practice between the supervisor and supervisee (Beddoe et al., 2015; Carpenter et al., 2012; O'Donoghue, 2015). Reflective awareness was noted by the supervisory dyads in phase two from the follow-up participatory reflection using a thinking aloud process after their recorded session. Thinking aloud was an activity that assisted learning gained from the supervision session through the researcher's use of open-ended questioning and inquiry to articulate deeper meaning and insight from the supervisor and supervisee (see Chapter Four and Figure 3). Reviewing the session at such a deeper level provided an analysis of skills, style used and content of the session. Ruch et al. (2015) have underlined the need to expand research approaches and designs using critical reflection. The thinking aloud process guided critical reflection with the supervisory dyads and has provided a methodological contribution towards the use of critical reflection within qualitative research approaches and how thinking aloud can be developed in supervision practice. This valuable information promoted the second aim of this research (see Table 4.1) and provided supervisory dyads with further strategies that support reflective supervision. The discussion relating to the thinking aloud process begins with a description of this activity within the study.

At the conclusion of the participatory reflection session with the supervisory dyads, the researcher asked the participants to evaluate the thinking aloud process (see Figures 2 and 3). This information was also recorded. This evaluative feedback was gathered distinctly from the data collection and specific quotes from participants are used to describe their experience of the thinking aloud process in the section below. The feedback from all the participants was very positive in that the process assisted in the stimulation of reflection and development of solutions (see Figure 5). For supervisees, the process was helpful to track their thoughts and identify learning from the issues raised in supervision. Thinking aloud, as a process, affirmed for supervisees the importance of getting what they want from supervision and a wider appreciation

of the supervisory relationship for professional development. For supervisors, the process allowed them to reflect on the range of interventions they were making, their style of supervision and consideration of other possibilities. Many supervisors also appreciated the process of bringing a 'fresh pair of eyes' to their supervision and prompted consideration towards reviewing the supervision session more regularly for professional development. The process of thinking aloud provided the chance for the supervisor and supervisee to learn, critically evaluate, reconstruct and develop their future practice.

The evaluative feedback

Critical examination of the supervision session and studies that engage with supervisors and supervisees through their participation in interviews and observation of their session is very limited (Beddoe et al., 2015; O'Donoghue, 2015).Thinking aloud, as a cognitive interview technique, encouraged participants to vocalise their understanding and the information they drew from in the examination of the transcripts (Priede & Farrall, 2011). The process assisted supervisees in the dyads to identify their learning from the supervision session and the connection reflective supervision had with their development as social workers. Kath and Susan highlighted the importance of the process for them:

> *I think this is a really useful process because it's taking you back to where you were at and it makes you look at how you use supervision, how you can better use that time, what other things that you can do. It opens up just more questions to ask … I think it's hugely valuable.* (Kath)

> *It's really advantageous to be able to see it written down…this shows how important [supervision] is to my work … to my personal and my professional development and safety. I think it reaffirms for me that the things that I wanted out of supervision is what I'm getting.* (Susan)

As already highlighted by Bourdieu's concepts throughout the study, crucial to a social worker's development is their ability to engage in reflexivity and self-awareness. This level of scrutiny is important towards a critical examination of the social work habitus and the development of culturally sensitive practice with others (Houston, 2002; Ingram, 2013). The space to do this in reflective supervision requires ongoing examination in order for this to assist transformation in practice. The thinking aloud process provided the opportunity to articulate areas for

development in the space between the recorded supervision session and the participatory reflection session. Grace reflected how the learning from supervision had started a journey and been transported into other areas of practice for her:

> *I got so much out of it and also I've continued to carry it – from when it was recorded to today and then revisiting it again. It wasn't just an isolated incident; it's actually had impact further on … I think that it's growth and self-awareness.*

The importance of exploring a multiplicity of perspectives is central to Bourdieu's theorisations and to professional social work (Bourdieu, 1998; International Federation of Social Workers and International Association of Schools of Social Work, 2016). Emerging from the thinking aloud process for supervisees was the ability to track their thinking through the discussion in supervision, to challenge existing assumptions they held and develop different perspectives. For Alice, it was identifying her frustration in supervision and realising she needed to channel her energies and "figure out a different way" when collaborating with other professionals and navigating power relationships. For Tracey, there was the realisation that her internal supervisor saw things differently to her and had other accountabilities that she was not initially aware of. Developing a more meaningful and transparent process to the supervisory relationship became more apparent:

> *Just hearing where different perspectives were coming from and realise we're not really thinking about the same thing ... I guess just being more open where we come from too. Like if I knew where you were coming from I might be more willing to explore that.*
> (Tracey)

Thinking aloud affirmed the importance of the supervisory relationship in allowing reflective practice to emerge. Some of the supervisees commented on the structure of the session and the skills used by the supervisor to support reflection:

> *I'm really fortunate that I have a supervisor that really does understand the organisation and my thinking style, the way that I put things out there. Because Debbie has a really good innate understanding and the questions she asks always make me think more.*
> (Jane)

> *I can see from this we have quite successful supervision sessions that I'm reflecting and Jock's looking at my personal development as well as my professional development …*

it's nice having Jock supporting me and giving me the confidence but also giving me
different ideas about how I could practice as well. (Susan)

For supervisors in the dyads, the thinking aloud process allowed them to recognise their role
and responsibilities. In particular, the process was useful to re-align with the necessary
attributes of a positive, professional supervisory relationship and less with the supervisor being
seen as an expert that traditional discourses to supervision reinforce (Beddoe, 2015a). Ohaki
realised her strengths and how the process has assisted her to consider the relationship with
the supervisee differently:

I feel I get a lot out of it too, it's really shaping my practice … and coming back to korero
… it's let me let go of being in control ... I've re-paced myself … So I don't see our
supervisory relationship as just being about me sitting and listening but I get as much out
of it as you.

The thinking aloud process was useful in reinforcing the vital role supervisors have to facilitate
reflective methods for supervisees in the session. Supervisors were able to identify the structure
they were providing and consideration of other questions useful to stimulate further reflection
with the supervisee. For Jen it was "quite good to get a sense of if there were things I could
have summarised better or gone down a different track with." For other supervisors, like
Jessica, the reflective cycle in the session could be identified clearly:

It's given me an overview of the session so when I read [the transcript] and I thought
"Well I can see how the whole thing flowed and the sense of moving through that cycle."
It was really clear which isn't something that I probably always have a sense of, in the
busyness. (Jessica)

Supervision as part of a socialising process for the social worker, can reproduce dominant
discourses related to organisational agendas (Beddoe, 2015a). In particular, supervision is a
confidential space that is 'unchecked' and not regularly evaluated in practice. The supervisor
has little opportunity in such an environment to review their supervisory skills and practice. The
thinking aloud process provided an additional lens and an evaluative quality for supervisors to
consider how they supervise. This was particularly powerful for supervisors to review their style
of supervision and consider alternative interventions with supervisees. Many supervisors
commented that the process brought a 'fresh pair of eyes' to their supervision. Yvonne
commented that at the time of supervision, "you're kind of in the middle of it … and don't have

that perspective coming from the outside." The opportunity to think aloud was viewed as scarce in practice:

> *I like getting [the transcript] back and reading it and it's just really good for my professional development … I haven't done that since I was doing my supervision post grad diploma so it's actually been a really nice process … and think about "Why am I doing this? What am I doing here and where am I going? What is it I am trying to achieve?"* (Bridget)

For Selena, the process was affirming towards the reflective style she was trying to create in the session:

> *It's actually been really good to reflect on supervision because I work a lot on my own and… you don't have anyone to bounce off how you're doing … Just to see it written down and see the actual process that happens – it's been really neat … It's good to reflect and have a look and see some of the tools and skills that I use … in regards to my learning and practice.*

The supervisor was also able to review their role in supervision and ensure accountability to the space being reflective and meaningful for the supervisee.

> *For me, it's really good because it keeps me accountable and … the role of the supervisor and how much you say and how much you don't say … I tend to over talk, so I was reasonably happy with some things I read … Being able to be more concise in what I will say. I think it's incredibly useful. It's a continual kind of learning.* (Debbie)

> *It's made me think there is another way that I could review my supervision … I feel like I've been on a journey … it's shown me that there's actually quite a lot of structure to our supervision. I was really struck at just how awesome we were with our conversations.* (Ohaki)

Bourdieu's key concepts allow social workers to become aware of the impact and distraction of neoliberalism and ensure the importance of professionalism in all aspects of their practice (Bourdieu, 1998; Garrett, 2007b). The process of thinking aloud as a practice strategy provides the opportunity and space within reflective supervision for the supervisor and supervisee to learn. As busy professionals, it is the stopping of a hectic work schedule to think about practice in a professional setting that has allowed the deconstruction and reconstruction of critical

reflection to occur. Susan realised the value of thinking aloud as "good for everyone to be able to reflect and learn and how you can do better." The participation of the dyads also assisted them to consider the transformative potential of thinking aloud and develop strategies towards maintaining this process in their supervision. In particular, the process made supervisees and supervisors consider how they could replicate the process as part of future supervision sessions for learning and development:

> *I think if that [thinking aloud process] can happen more frequently, it will be definitely another resource for our professional learning.* (Jackie)

> *It'd be really nice to do something like this once a year or six monthly, to put aside the time and do something a wee bit different.* (Kath)

As the supervisor, thinking aloud as a practice strategy offered a refreshing learning opportunity. In doing so, the supervisor reviewed their skills and interventions and different approaches with supervisees.

> *I think it needs to be used more regularly as a learning tool and an opportunity to keep refreshed, to keep looking at what you're doing and how you're doing it and whether you as a supervisor have become stagnant or have blind spots … It's just an extra pair of eyes on the dynamic that's going on … I've been thinking about the value added of supervision and what difference is it making.* (Debbie)

> *I think it would be hugely beneficial to do it for every single supervisor and supervisee relationship because what I would do is different with each of the supervisees (what they bring in, what their social work practice looks like and where their strengths and weaknesses are). So it would be different in a different session. That would be interesting for me too, to reflect how I shift and change my responses based on who I'm working with.* (Jen)

The evaluation of supervision in the session, and as a whole process, is an area seldom considered and actioned by the supervisor and supervisee. Experienced supervisors, such as Jessica, had often wondered how effective she was in her own supervision practice. The thinking aloud process had generated for her how supervision could be evaluated on an ongoing basis:

> *It's making me think about how I review the work, how we do supervision reviews, whether I should from time to time be recording sessions and going back over them – for*

myself at least … I've been on a bit of a journey recently about how we evaluate
*supervision so it's contributed to that a lot.* (Jessica)

The thinking aloud process as part of the data collection with supervisory dyads in phase two of the study provided an additional lens and a deeper appreciation of how supervision between the supervisor and supervisee was used to reflect on practice. The feedback from all the participants involved yielded very positive comments. For supervisees, the process aided reflection and learning and the value of the supervisees getting what they want from supervision. Supervisors found the participatory reflection helpful to reflect upon their supervisory interventions and the process brought another perspective to their supervision. Supervisors and supervisees considered the process important towards reviewing the supervision session and provided opportunity for professional development. Such opportunities allow the social worker to place the individual within context of environmental influences. The process of thinking aloud provides the supervisee and supervisor the prospect of developing critical conversations and grow a wider understanding of systemic factors on practice.

The final section presents a four-layered practice model of reflective supervision. The purpose of this model is to provide another strategy for developing critical thinking and core professional values of social work within the community-based child welfare context.

A reflective supervision practice model as a strategy

The literature for social work supervision has tended to focus on its importance within the current climate of balancing organisational and professional accountabilities in which supervision is practised. A lack of examination of actual supervision practice and what reflective supervision 'needs to do' has been identified (Beddoe et al., 2015; O'Donoghue, 2015). The participants throughout this study described the aspirations or espoused theory of reflective supervision as different to the theory-in-use of how reflective supervision is implemented in practice. The findings revealed an uncertainty towards how community-based child welfare social workers develop their own theories-in-action by analysing their own experiences in reflective supervision (Argyris & Schön, 1974). In order for supervision to be used as a space for developing theories-in-action, supervisors and supervisees need to become more self-conscious of their own experiences and exposing gaps between theoretical concepts and how they are applied in practice (Fook & Askeland, 2006, Schön, 1987).

Figure 8: The four layered practice model of reflective supervision
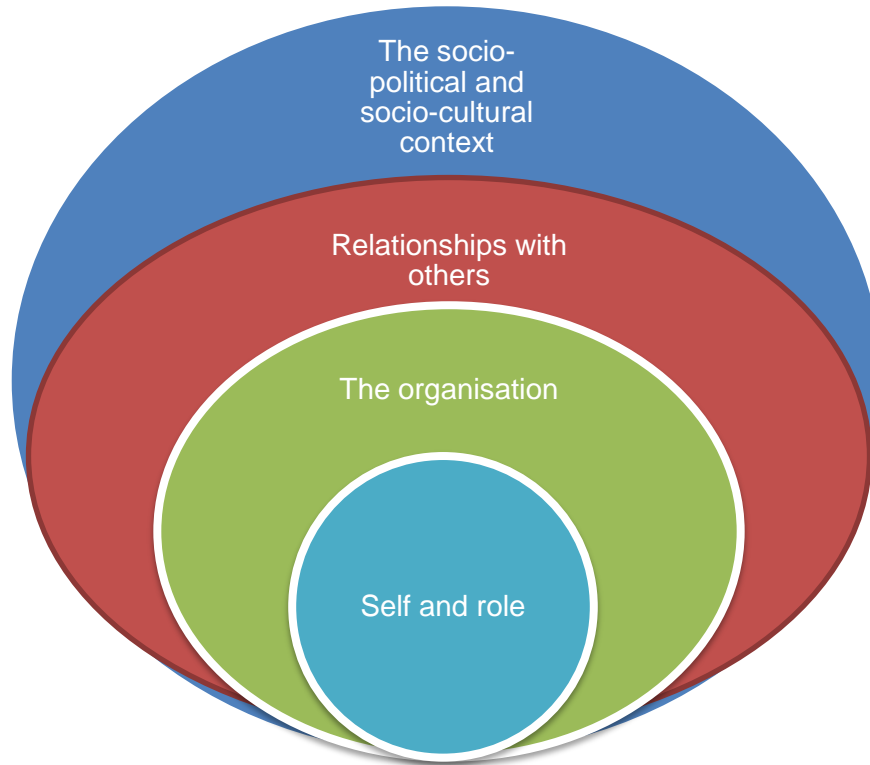
In this section, the four-layered practice model of reflective supervision (Figure 8 and Table 7.2) provides connection between the individual community-based child welfare social worker, the organisation, important relationships with others, and the systemic contexts where practice takes place. The fundamental premise of the model places the importance of critical thinking and professional social work at its centre, with community-based child welfare as the context. The essence of reflective supervision is that it is a lifelong learning process and provides the opportunity to explore multiplicity and complexity related to practice (Davys & Beddoe, 2010). A multi-layered framework enables community-based child welfare social workers and their supervisors to critically explore the interrelationship of habitus, field and capital and how action can then be taken in practice.

The four-layered practice model has been developed by the researcher from the findings in this study. Using Bourdieu's concepts, the data revealed particular themes. These themes related to

Table 7.2: The four-layered practice model of reflective supervision

Layer	Supervisee's agenda	Supervisor task and process
Layer 1: Self and role	Self-care Expression of emotion Cultural identity and reflexivity Role clarity	• To identify with supervisee self-care strategies. • To facilitate safe exploration of feelings. • To explore previous experiences and triggers. • To assist the supervisee to understand their culture, values, beliefs, assumptions, identity and the connection with their role. • To explore the parameters of supervisee's role.
Layer 2: The organisation	Function and purpose Funding Resources Meeting criteria Organisational culture Understanding tensions	• To facilitate and support the process of supervision. • To identify with the supervisee the purpose and function of the organisation to meet a service need. • To locate the context of the service, criteria and parameters. • To highlight protocol and policy of the organisation. • To understand organisational culture and internal dynamics. • To explore and understand tensions inherent in working in the organisation and develop appropriate strategies.
Layer 3: Relationships with others	Discussion of supervisory process with supervisor The use of supervision – internal and external Work with clients Work with other professionals Work with colleagues Exploration of power, difference and cross cultural identities	• To identify supervisee's supports and lines of accountability in supervision. • To assist the supervisee to examine aspects of all working relationships including the tensions and successes. • To encourage supervisee's deeper examination of power and difference in relationships. • To assist the supervisee to explore diversity and critically examine the impact of cross-cultural interactions.
Layer 4: The socio-political and socio-cultural context	Public perception Power of social worker Socio-political and socio-cultural context Examination of dominant discourses and their impact on wider discourses Bi-culturalism Social justice Human rights	• To explore the positioning of social work as an agent for change and also a profession that can maintain oppression. • To assist the supervisee to critically reflect on the broader perspectives and influences from social, cultural and political contexts. • To examine the Aotearoa New Zealand context, bi-culturalism and working with Māori. • To examine the social work profession, theory, knowledge, research, standards, protocols. • To understand the impact of dominant discourses and structures with an exploration of alternative discourses. • To challenge existing assumptions and consider alternative actions.

the social work practitioner, the organisation, their relationship with others and the systems surrounding practice. The researcher identified the importance of each area being critically addressed within reflective supervision as well as the interrelationship between each area. In order to address each theme in reflective supervision effectively, the agenda, task and process for supervisory dyads need definition for critical reflection to be maintained. Both the supervisee and supervisor have important roles towards this level of critical reflection occurring in the session. The supervisee has the responsibility to bring the agenda for further discussion and reflection in the session. In addition, the supervisee needs to commit to the thinking and solutions that emerge from the reflective supervision session (Beddoe & Davys, 2016). The supervisor has an important role in the facilitation of the session through the provision of specific tasks and processes related to the supervisee's agenda. The espoused theory from literature highlights the supervisor's curiosity and inquiry as crucial skills in this facilitation (Davys & Beddoe, 2010). The supervisor's role allows for critical analysis of the supervisee's agenda and social-justice-informed strategies related to their practice. In addition, the supervisor maintains a 'helicopter' position that supervision operates at many different levels and each layer of the model is interconnected. Therefore each layer offers a unique perspective in relation to the supervision issue. The significance of each layer of the reflective supervision practice model will be discussed in more detail.

Layer One: Self and role

The first layer of the four-layered practice model of reflective supervision relates to the social worker's use of self and her/his particular role. Supporting a social worker's use of self in relation to their work is an essential task of supervision (Davys & Beddoe, 2010). Understanding self-care and building resilience in supervision is a developmental process and the supervisor also needs to consider the practitioner's career stage when choosing the appropriate skills to use (Beddoe & Davys, 2016). As identified earlier, and throughout this study, a social worker's self-awareness is an ongoing reflective process and important towards the recognition of personal links with professional practice and development (Adamovich et al., 2014; Grant et al., 2012).

Reflective supervision within social work should provide the opportunity for social workers to reflect on their self-care and develop strategies towards well-being. Beddoe et al. (2014) discuss supervision being an important buffering space between the strengths and vulnerabilities of the social worker and the impact from the practice setting. Acknowledged

within the key informants' and supervisory dyads' data was the importance of reflective supervision to illuminate strengths of the social worker and build resiliency. However, the disjointed relationship between the espoused theory and the theory-in-use (Argyris & Schön, 1974) in the data identified the dominance and oppression of organisational agendas on professional development. The findings revealed an uncertainty over how community-based child welfare social workers develop their own theories-in-action by analysing their own experiences in reflective supervision (Argyris & Schön, 1974).

Strategies to avoid stress, develop effective coping and maintain positive self-esteem are essential for the community-based child welfare social worker to support disadvantaged groups and effect change. For the supervisee, revisiting self-care and placing this regularly on the agenda that they bring to supervision is essential. In turn, the supervisor needs to be aware of the supervisee's self-care plan and understand their patterns of stress. The supervisor's task is to offer support and encourage coping strategies to develop resilience. This may present as a tension for the internal supervisor who is also required to have managerial oversight of the supervisee's practice in meeting organisational targets. The supervisor's position needs transparency and review with the supervisee to ensure support and self-care is a dedicated aspect of the supervision session.

The supervisory dyads' data highlighted how social workers can be susceptible to trauma, and triggered by histories of disadvantage when working with children and families. The venting and unpacking of personal feelings was important for several supervisees in the supervisory dyads. Feelings of being overwhelmed and confused are a prominent feature of child welfare (Gibbs, 2009). Understanding and managing strong emotions is an important element of the social worker's role in order to develop capacity and overcome obstacles in their thinking (Morrison, 2006). Reflective supervision encompasses the safe expression of the social worker's emotions, fears and frustrations relating to practice without judgement by the supervisor (Beddoe et al., 2014). Without the opportunity to discuss emotion, the social worker learns to suppress and remove its significance from experiences within practice (Ferguson, 2011). Such suppression of emotion leads to mechanistic practice and potential burnout. Vital to a social worker's longevity in their role is their understanding of supervision being a safe space to discuss emotion.

The challenge for supervisors and supervisees is to create a supervisory environment where there is sufficient mutual trust and respect to ensure reflective practice (Davys & Beddoe, 2010). The supervisor requires the attributes to ensure an appropriate environment is available for the

supervisee to connect with their feelings. Important supervisory attributes were espoused by the key informants in Chapter Five: the skills of the supervisor to interrupt and explore the supervisee's practice, a good connection between both parties, and the navigation of different perspectives. In order for supervision to be the cornerstone for reflective practice, supervisors need to understand the purpose of reflective supervision, to be trained as a supervisor and have an awareness of adult learning. Particularly in relation to creating a safe space, supervisors need to maintain appropriate and ethical boundaries with the supervisee (SWRB, 2011). In addition, a range of facilitative skills by the supervisor are important for the supervisee to feel comfortable so that they can reflect upon their work (Bond & Holland, 2010). Such skills include the confidence to ask critical questions, explore different perspectives and encourage the supervisee to engage in solution finding. Both the supervisor and the supervisee also have a dual responsibility towards developing an awareness of their emotions so they can be explored more closely in the session for further meaning (Davys & Beddoe, 2010).

A crucial connection for social workers to make is the developing awareness of how their knowledge and values impact on their practice. This connection was made by several participants in the study. Regularly accessing, and using, reflexivity provides the professional with rich information regarding the affective and performative elements of their work (Elliot et al., 2012). This reflexivity is enhanced through supervision that provides the supervisee with the opportunity to critically examine their cultural assumptions and develop culturally sensitive practice (Houston, 2002). Aspects of culture and diversity in supervision (such as race, class, religious, spiritual and political beliefs) can pose challenges and insights. A Bourdieusian perspective promotes a critical examination of all these aspects and the importance of scrutiny of a social worker's personal and professional habitus (Garrett, 2013b). This examination is paramount to understanding how attitudes, values and social systems can influence and reproduce oppression in the social worker's practice and how social justice principles can be developed. Beddoe and Davys (2016) also mention that "when we meet in supervision we bring ourselves … we work with assumptions and expectations about what this thing called 'supervision' is" (p. 42).

In the early stages of establishing the supervisory relationship, it is critical for conversations related to culture and identity to occur (Beddoe & Davys, 2016; Hair & O'Donoghue, 2009). The supervisee has a responsibility to regularly develop reflexivity and consider their cultural identity in supervision. As well as accountability to the supervisee's practice, the supervisor's task is to assist the supervisee to understand their values, beliefs, assumptions related to their identity

and culture and the connection this has with their professional role. The unsettling of these assumptions requires supervision to be a safe space to undertake this exploration.

Layer one of the reflective supervision practice model also addresses the role of the social worker in community-based child welfare. Bourdieu's concept of habitus has provided a sense of understanding 'one's place' and this positioning of place alongside others (Bourdieu, 1989). In order to effectively work with children and families, social workers need to have a clear understanding of their professional position and role. The changes in the operationalisation of community-based child welfare services and the social work role has led to greater accountabilities associated with assessment of risk and decision making in child protection and tighter packages of service provision for service users. These realities currently associated with the role require social workers to re-think their professional practices and manage the contradictions and complexity associated with their work. Participants in this study agreed that reflective supervision provides an opportunity for the community-based child welfare social worker to consider changes in role and re-define their parameters associated with working in partnership with service users and other professionals. For some supervisees in the supervisory dyads, this also meant re-learning their position and coming to the realisation that they cannot fix everything. Recent research has reported that supervision has great significance in developing and sustaining a social worker's professional identity (Saltiel, 2016). Through discussion and reflection in supervision, the community-based child welfare social worker can critically examine perspectives and develop confidence in their professional position.

Layer Two: The organisation

The second layer of the four-layered practice model of reflective supervision connects the social worker to the community-based child welfare service. Bourdieu's concepts have provided a critical analysis of community-based child welfare services operating within highly bureaucratic systems where the parameters of the service are controlled by central government. These bureaucratic systems have overwhelmed the purpose of community-based child welfare social work and reduced services to meeting regimented criteria established by government departments within assessment tools and tight timescales. An awareness of the impact of the organisational structure on professional social work and the practice of supervision requires critical exploration. For reflective supervision to take place, the supervisee needs to discuss in the session, the function and purpose of the community-based child welfare service. The supervisor's task is to assist the supervisee to engage in this process in order to locate the

context of the service, its criteria and parameters. Such exploration assists in understanding the social worker's position, the range of services or programmes offered, methods employed relating to practice, interaction with service users and the specific needs related to the locality of the service.

The supervisee is also encouraged by the supervisor to critically consider their issues brought to supervision from the perspective of the policies and protocols of their organisation. The assumptions and tensions between social work practice and organisational policy can then be illuminated against other possible ways of working and further solutions. The analysis of the data identified the uniqueness of community-based child welfare services in working with others. Key informants held high aspirations of community-based child welfare social workers having the space to build positive working relationships with others. In particular, reflective supervision offered supervisees in the dyads an opportunity to consider different perspectives when working with service users and the navigation of cross-agency partnerships.

The culture within an organisation has a major impact on the social worker's learning and the effectiveness of supervision in the workplace (Davys & Beddoe, 2010). This requires critical examination in reflective supervision. Common to community-based child welfare is a risk-averse culture that has permeated practice, policy and the supervision of practitioners (Beddoe, 2010a; Stanley, 2007). From the findings, the unfortunate reality for many supervisees in the supervisory dyads was that supervision was often used to discuss meeting targets for service delivery and auditing expectations. Familiar to such a culture is the "sink or swim approach" (Gibbs, 2009) that does not develop skills for critical reflection and managing complex situations for social work practitioners. Often, in these unhealthy workplace cultures, the social worker will share information with their supervisor and then be 'told what to do next.' However, the data demonstrated that some of the supervisors had a range of skills to support the supervisee, build their resiliency and explore alternative ways of working.

Hawkins and Shohet (2012) recognise that the first step to shifting an organisation's culture is developing an awareness and understanding of a particular culture. In Layer two of the practice model of reflective supervision, the supervisee has the responsibility of raising the organisational culture as a topic on their agenda for further reflection in supervision. The supervisor has the task of creating a conversational space to explore the impact of organisational culture on work dynamics and learning. The supervisor's use of questioning can assist in the development of generative learning from the supervision session (Hawkins &

Shohet, 2012). In doing so, reflective supervision becomes fundamental towards assisting social workers develop healthier ways of learning in their organisation.

Funding for contracted services by the state and diminishing resources is a theme that resonated within the supervision dyads and the associated pressure placed upon social workers in community-based child welfare. Bourdieu has emphasised the impact of neoliberalism and the state's devolution of responsibility on social services (Bourdieu, 1998). For community-based child welfare social workers, the pressure is to meet targets to ensure ongoing state funding and to manage risk with disadvantaged children and families (Baines et al., 2014; Beddoe, 2010a). Recently, the reduced level of funding and resources from the state has tightened a managerial focus on most community-based child welfare services. This has led to further consequences for social work practitioners.

The key informants and supervisory dyads in the study described concerns related to restructuring, redundancies and the introduction of unqualified workers within the service undermining professional practice. Social workers expressed in supervision their feelings of despondency, deficit-based thinking and distance from governance decision making on practice. These attitudes and feelings are considerably different from the aspirations of the profession and critical social work. The reality for social workers in the data were feelings of 'stuckness' in relation to organisation change and negative self-talk. Using reflective supervision to discuss the impact of organisational change, loss of resources and lack of funding is necessary to maintain a healthy level of functioning within the organisation. However, ongoing negative discussions can lead to corrosive practice over time that hampers the effectiveness of reflective supervision and the analysis of decision making (Gibbs, 2009; Hanna & Potter, 2012; Munro, 2008). The supervisory dyads in the study revealed a lack of deeper critical analysis of the organisation in the supervision session. Without this, supervision too, runs the risk of reproducing an organisation's oppressive and deficit-based culture that a supervisor can unwittingly be a co-conspirator in. Supervisors need to be committed to exploring solutions related to lack of resourcing and restrictions in organisations with supervisees. Strengths based practice and an emphasis on multiple perspectives can assist in the exploration of language used in the session and the removal of potential barriers to practice (Beddoe & Davys, 2016). With this commitment, supervisors provide an important role model for social workers in reflecting valuable theoretical and ethical ways to practise with others. Instrumental to community-based child welfare social work is a strong ethic of social justice and how to respond best to service user needs. Supervisors and supervisees need to critically explore the tensions inherent in working within

the community-based child welfare organisation in order to strategise and identify alternatives to practice within institutions.

Layer Three: Relationships with others

The third layer of the four-layered practice model of reflective supervision highlights the relationships the community-based child welfare social worker has with others. Social work has a diverse knowledge base and maintaining professional relationships is core to its function. An analysis of supervision reveals that it is a contested space with competing narratives from the supervisor, supervisee, service users, and other professionals (Saltiel, 2016). The exploration and discussion of the social worker's professional relationships in an honest and open way needs to be a priority in reflective supervision. This allows for a wider understanding of community-based child welfare social work and the competing fields of organisational and professional pressures on the practitioner.

The supervisory relationship was identified as fundamental to professional social work practice by participants in the study. From a Bourdieusian perspective, the relationship between the supervisor and supervisee is a structured and important socialising process that determines other professional working relationships for the social worker. This is because of the isomorphic nature of supervision in that it should parallel how the supervisee builds other relationships with professionals and service users (Beddoe & Davys, 2016; Westergaard, 2013). Baines and van den Broek (2016) have identified that NGO services contracted by the state have become technical where control and coercion have been central to working relationships. Supervision needs to avoid coercive practices representing part of the relationship and inculcate the values, culture and importance of relationships in social work.

Supervisory dyads described the importance of trust, openness and honesty in the supervisory relationship. Establishing and maintaining the relationship is a fundamental requirement of the supervisor. From a process point of view, the supervisor is able to develop a positive relationship with the supervisee through the negotiation and review of the supervision contract, how sessions commence and end and the importance of feedback (Davys & Beddoe, 2010). A supervisor's skills and personal attributes are also important to the success of the relationship. A supervisory relationship that is built on empathy, unconditional positive regard and congruence is central for the growth of the supervisee (Westergaard, 2013). As noted by the key informants and supervisory dyads in this study, the supervisor's position (as external or

internal supervisor) is also a determining factor in how the supervisory relationship will be used by the supervisee. External supervision promotes a professional discourse and allows the social worker to choose (and leave) their supervisor, reflect on their practice and on relationships outside the organisation (Beddoe, 2011; Busse, 2009). Several of the supervisory dyads in the study were external arrangements and described the value and purpose this type of supervision had to professional growth. In particular, the dyads in the data highlighted the value of external supervision in discussing organisational issues and personal and professional development. Alternatively, internal supervision that occurs within the organisation may have more of an emphasis on accountabilities to the organisation policies (Bradley et al., 2010). The internal supervision dyads focused on casework and ensuring compliance to organisational tasks. Splitting the functions of supervision has become a useful mechanism for addressing the professional and organisational agendas for the practitioner (Beddoe & Davys, 2016). However, the findings from the supervisory dyads noted huge variability in social workers accessing external supervision due to the cost to the organisation. The practice realities for participants in the study noted reflective supervision, or regular supervision for that matter, was not always evident in community-based child welfare work. Irrespective of the supervisor's position and for reflective supervision to occur, transparency, consistency and ongoing review in the relationship are needed (Beddoe & Davys, 2016). It is the responsibility of both the supervisee and supervisor to discuss the parameters of their working relationship, accountabilities, potential solutions and how the process is meaningful to reflection.

Community-based child welfare social work provides unique and challenging experiences for practitioners. These social workers have opportunities to work with service users creatively and to promote social justice (Ife, 2008). The key informants and supervisory dyads in the study concurred on the value of community-based child welfare social work in building strong networks and relationships with families and the contribution towards a safer community. In particular, supervisory dyads noted the importance of examining a family's situation more thoroughly in supervision and creatively finding solutions towards their intervention planning. Supervisors can provide the space for supervisees to reflect on their successes and build positive relationships with children and families (Collins, 2007).

Central to community-based child welfare is the focus on the needs and wishes of the child. The needs of children were raised by supervisors and supervisees in the study and the criticism that this can be overlooked in practice due to other pressing organisational agendas. Bourdieu (1998) reinforces the importance of obtaining alternative discourses when working within

complex fields and capturing the voice of disadvantaged groups when dominant discourses are heard. Reflective supervision is the opportunity for the supervisor and supervisee to discover 'the voice' of children often hidden by other dominant agendas.

The social worker also requires space in supervision to reflect on the challenges associated with working alongside other colleagues and professional groups. Analysis of the two phases of data identified community-based child welfare social work as a field of practice that struggled amongst different power relationships. A sense of not feeling heard or that nothing was changing was typically raised by social workers in their supervision. The liaison with statutory professionals, understanding of practitioners' responsibilities and discourses related to risk and keeping children safe present a common challenge (Rose, 2011). Hierarchies and power dynamics within the community-based child welfare organisation itself also reproduce dominant managerial discourses, privilege some and disadvantage other staff according to their position. The effective relationships related to community-based child welfare work with service users that were espoused by the participants in the study are also delivered by organisations where disadvantages and imbalances exist in the current climate. Reflective supervision can provide an important space to raise the challenging relationships that the community-based child welfare social worker has with other professionals and can promote collaborative working relationships.

The supervisor's task is to assist and encourage the supervisee to critically examine power and tensions within all working relationships. By doing so, the social worker can develop a deeper understanding of systems, forces and power that impact on the social worker's role in community-based child welfare, relationships with service users and the position of the service user within society. The supervisee is also encouraged by the supervisor to explore diversity and critically examine cross-cultural interactions. Hair and O'Donoghue (2009) suggest a curious and questioning stance be taken by the supervisor, one that does not assume expert knowledge. Supervisory conversations should include an examination of the many aspects of culture and the influence of this on the social worker's relationships. Within current supervision practice, culturally competent supervision that enhances cross-cultural relationships is becoming more prominent in literature and an essential focus (Tsui et al., 2014). Dialogue related to similarities and differences in power and privilege are important towards developing greater understandings of equity and justice in supervision and social work practice (Hernández & McDowell, 2010).

Layer Four: The socio-political and socio-cultural context

The final layer of the four-layered practice model of reflective supervision is the socio-political and socio-cultural context of community-based child welfare social work. The socio-political and socio-cultural context also influences all the previous layers in the model in varying degrees. Key informant data identified the need for social workers to critically consider wider structural factors in their work. However, critical examination of the theories-in-use (Argyris & Schön, 1974) related to the wider factors influencing community-based child welfare work and reflective supervision was missing from the supervisory dyads' data in this study. Instead core professional social work values related to social justice and an emphasis on discrimination appeared to be submerged by neoliberal structural, political and cultural factors. Several supervisees from the dyads in the study indicated the lack of time in their day-to-day practice to consider wider factors and being caught up in "an emotional cycle." In the previous chapters, community-based child welfare social work has been described as lacking professional capital in terms of resources, status and professional knowledge. Reflective supervision needs to integrate the wider systemic influences on the professional and organisation contexts of community-based child welfare social work for the development of suitable theories-in-action (Argyris & Schön, 1974).

As part of their agenda, the social work supervisee and supervisor should be prepared to discuss the socio-political and socio-cultural context of their work. Bourdieu et al. (1999) remind community-based child welfare social workers of the precarious nature of their practice acting as agents of the state but, paradoxically, supporting the most disadvantaged children and families as well. For many social workers in the study, this has led to disillusionment, disempowerment and uncertainty towards their position within the neoliberal and managerial environment. The changes resulting from managerialism have altered the habitus of community-based child welfare services towards managing risk and safety of children, similar to statutory services. In this environment, social workers are fearful of the public's negative reactions and judgements when working on risk-adverse interventions with service users (Stanford, 2010). The media's public shaming of failed child welfare cases and specific agencies have also contributed to the negative discourses related to the effectiveness of social work services (Ferguson, 2004). From the supervisory dyads data, supervisees indicated the difficulties engaging with some service users due to this stigma impacting on their ability to offer them

support. The supervisor's task is to assist the supervisee to critically reflect on the broader perspectives and influences from social, cultural and political contexts on individual practice. An examination of these contexts provides important connections regarding the relationship that people have with their environment and how dominant discourses are maintained in society (Garrett, 2007b).

Reflective supervision needs to not only manage the impact of the wider neoliberal context but to remind social workers of their core values, theory, knowledge and connection with communities. These core values and knowledge are important to social work's professional base and consideration of the principles of social justice, equality and freedom. This scrutiny of professional practice promotes the opportunities for the critical intellectuals that Bourdieu has highlighted in his work. Throughout this study, the unique and relational perspective that community-based child welfare social work brings towards collaborative, effective working with children and families has been stressed. In current neoliberal times, thinking critically in social work is essential to moving the profession forward and providing high quality services (Gray & Webb, 2013b; Pease, 2013). The supervisor is important in engaging the supervisee in critical conversations related to injustice and inequality of individuals arising from socio-cultural and structural factors. Moreover, the significance of exploring embedded and taken-for-granted socio-cultural factors within supervision are significant to ensure community-based child welfare social workers support the interests of marginalised and disadvantaged groups.

Layer Four of the practice model of reflective supervision can provide the space for supervisees and supervisors to explore diverse cultural narratives and discourses. Significant to Aotearoa New Zealand is the connection that community-based child welfare social work has with Māori and the importance of bi-culturalism in challenging oppressive structures and dominant discourses (Munford & Walsh-Tapiata, 2006). Although part of the key informants' aspirations towards community-based child welfare social work in Aotearoa New Zealand, the aspect of *culture* and what this comprises did not strongly feature within the practice of the supervisory dyads in this study. This disparity between the two data sets reflects the ongoing marginalisation that is reproduced within society and the supervisory space. The acknowledgment in supervision of cultural histories and colonising processes assists in the examination of privilege and oppression in society (Hernández & McDowell, 2010). Issues relating to bi-culturalism and other aspects of culture should feature as part of the supervisee's agenda in their supervision.

Professional social work has a commitment to bicultural practice, ethics, and responsibilities to support the interests of marginalised and disadvantaged groups (ANZASW, 2008b; SWRB, 2016). The supervisor has an accountability to ensure these conversations occur in supervision and that the supervisee's competence in this area is developed and regularly evaluated. Within Aotearoa New Zealand, supervisors need to respectfully explore indigenous discourses, beliefs and the value of traditional knowledge for supervisees and service users (Beddoe & Davys, 2016). The supervisor has a responsibility to use a social constructionist framework to address multiple worldviews and consider discourses separate from the dominant cultural norm. A critical exploration of culture and diversity provides culturally sensitive practice and the identification of alternative strategies to working within community-based child welfare.

Conclusion

Bourdieu's key concepts were utilised in the comparative analysis of key informant and supervisory dyads' data in this study. The comparison of the two data sets also highlighted the disjointed relationship between espoused theory from the key informants and the practice realities of reflective supervision by the supervisory dyads. The data revealed the need for community-based child welfare social workers to critically reflect within supervision and identify strategies for action in practice. Central to this analysis are the organisational and professional tensions impacting on community-based child welfare social work and how reflective supervision is currently used. This chapter explored the need for community-based child welfare social workers to utilise reflective supervision for critical analysis and identifying social justice informed strategies in their work with service users. In particular, the social worker's understanding of the wider structural factors, examination of power relationships and the development of self-awareness were identified as needing greater attention in current supervision.

Reflective supervision needs to be central to professional social work and be supported within community-based child welfare. To develop theories-in-action in supervision, supervisors and supervisees are required to develop a critical awareness of their own experiences and discrepancies between theories and how these are applied in practice. This chapter has also provided strategies for how reflective supervision can be supported through the implementation of the thinking aloud process and the development of a four-layered practice model.

The thinking aloud process illustrated a methodological contribution towards how critical reflection can be applied within qualitative research approaches and within the practice of

supervision. As part of the data collection, the process with supervisory dyads in the study provided an additional lens and a deeper analysis of the style of supervision, skills and content of the session between the supervisor and supervisee. For supervisees, thinking aloud assisted reflection and learning and emphasised the value of the supervisees getting what they want from supervision. Supervisors found the process helpful in reflecting upon their supervisory interventions and how their practice could be developed in the future. Supervisors and supervisees considered the process invaluable for reviewing their session and professional development.

The four-layered practice model of reflective supervision provided connection between the individual community-based child welfare social worker, the organisation, important relationships with others and the systemic contexts where practice takes place. Each layer offered a unique perspective and provides opportunities for practice discoveries and solutions. Crucial to this model is that reflective supervision is a learning process that explores complexity and contradictions in practice and develops responses to these. The supervisee has the responsibility to raise particular issues in supervision for further discussion and reflection. Through this discussion, the supervisee is committed to critically examining the issue and seeking solutions that emerge from the session. The supervisor holds the responsibility to facilitate the reflection of the session through specific tasks and processes. Essential to reflective supervision is the supervisor's ability to navigate the supervisee through different layers of the model in relation to their agenda items. This is achieved through a position of curious inquiry and utilising a range of interventions and attributes that assist critical analysis and social justice informed strategies.

The following chapter provides recommendations from this project and concluding comments to the thesis.

Chapter Eight: Conclusions and recommendations

Introduction

Community-based child welfare social work within Aotearoa New Zealand has undergone major alterations in service delivery in response to neoliberal and managerial-driven agendas from the state. Services are driven by organisational procedures and the social work practitioner has struggled to develop their practice professionally. Reflective supervision provides social workers with the opportunity to analyse and critically examine their practice. This is essential for developing professionalism, providing support to communities and building positive practice outcomes for and with service users. Rose acknowledged the current situation and the importance for reflective supervision to build optimism in community-based child welfare social work:

> *We are seeing an increasing devaluing of community-based child welfare services. A shift away from a social justice focus to a more narrowed focus on the job … I think in supervision we have got to encourage our supervisees to make the connections … there is increasingly fewer resources and the most we bring to situations is hope and energy. I want social workers to be effective. I want them to be part of changing lives and … see clients empower themselves.* (Rose)

For this study, critical theory and Bourdieu's key concepts have been the overarching theoretical lenses applied to community-based child welfare social work and the espoused theory and theories-in-use of reflective supervision. Through an awareness of habitus, field and capital, social workers can critically analyse the structures that influence people, an individual's position in society, the inequalities and also the potential for change.

Reflective supervision practices within the context of community-based child welfare services in Aotearoa New Zealand have been explored in this study, how these are currently utilised and the development of potential strategies that support reflective supervision. A qualitative critical reflection methodology was used to gather a detailed understanding of reflective supervision in community-based child welfare through two phases of data collection from the perspectives of

key informants and supervisory dyads. An examination of the theoretical aspirations versus the practice realities exposed the tensions associated with reflective supervision practices in community-based child welfare. Thinking aloud and the four layered practice model of reflective supervision provided practice strategies to support reflective supervision within the context of community-based child welfare. This final chapter synthesises the key issues that have been highlighted from the study and further recommendations.

Key issues from the study

Most published research on supervision has focused on statutory social work and child protection where effective practice has been viewed as under threat from an emphasis on managing risk and organisational and public surveillance (Carpenter et al., 2012; Frey et al., 2012). An important strength of this study is the exploration of reflective supervision and existing discourses around practice within community-based child welfare. Bourdieu's work has provided a useful tool in this analysis. The research also contributes to the growing evidence base of supervision research within the context of Aotearoa New Zealand. Differences related to location and alternative practice provide scope for innovation in meeting service users' needs as well as service requirements (Beddoe, 2016). Analysis of the data highlighted the importance reflective supervision has to the identification of community-based child welfare social work's potentially unique position as a field of practice advocating for social justice with children and families. This included the social worker's ability to explore in reflective supervision different perspectives, utilising strengths and planning with families in a child-focused manner. There were similar issues to statutory social services also identified in the findings – a key feature being the threat of risk management and technologies of practice overriding professional values within the organisation. In parallel to what has been described in the statutory social services sector, reflective supervision in community-based child welfare was often identified as a place for managing casework and practitioner surveillance by supervisors. The study also revealed complexities for social workers associated with working in this environment. Social workers expressed their powerlessness and disillusionment of working in the community-based child welfare context where hierarchies and dominant structures controlled by the state influence what is in the best interests of children and their families. Reduced funding packages and resources are a daily concern for social workers and the community-based child welfare service. Low salaries, reduced staffing levels, and service closures were also prominent discourses within supervision for the community-based child welfare social worker.

This study has highlighted the need for further research regarding reflective supervision within different fields and locations of social work practice. Common for social workers in this study was the accessing of alternative forms of supervision. This seemed particularly significant to community-based child welfare practice where five of the eight supervisory dyads were engaged in external supervisory relationships. Many of these external relationships were in addition to the social worker's internal supervision. Alternative forms of supervision, such as external and cultural supervision, which supplement other relationships, have assisted in the importance of maintaining a professional discourse, critical reflection and addressing power inequalities in the supervisory relationship (Beddoe, 2011; Beddoe & Davys, 2016). Such external relationships in an austere neoliberal climate have also been challenged by managers in organisations as to their value and risk being cut from professional development budgets for staff. This was noted by participants in the study. If this were to occur, reflective supervision for social workers in community-based child welfare services would be further compromised in relation to a professional niche for developing practice. Evaluative research of external supervision arrangements therefore becomes more imperative in order to further understand the value these sessions bring to enriching social work practice (Beddoe, 2016).

Relationships and communication are fundamental to social work and are also essential to supervision (Hawkins et al., 2001). One would expect that the supervision session between the supervisor and supervisee and how reflection is used to improve practice would receive considerable attention in research. However, previous scholars have identified that there are limited studies observing supervision in practice and evidencing its importance to practitioners (Carpenter et al., 2012; Davys & Beddoe, 2010; Maidment & Cooper, 2002). This study has analysed the data from the supervisory dyads within community-based child welfare services and how reflective supervision is utilised and demonstrated in a session (see Chapter Six). Studies need to empirically examine the importance of supervision practice between the supervisor and supervisee through recorded interviews and observation of their session (Beddoe et al., 2015; O'Donoghue, 2015).

This study supported claims found in the literature regarding the impact of neoliberalism and managerialism on social work and the tensions associated in creating a space for reflective supervision. Although the findings strongly indicated the impact of managerialism and organisational agendas on supervision within community-based child welfare, there was also evidence of reflective awareness on the part of the social workers in the supervision sessions.

Reflective awareness was particularly noticed by participants when given the unique opportunity to engage in the follow-up participatory reflection using the thinking aloud process after their recorded session (see Chapter Seven). This valuable information provided supervisory dyads with further strategies that support reflective supervision.

The utilisation of Bourdieu's concepts is a significant component applied to a supervision context within community-based child welfare. Little has been written regarding Bourdieu's theorisations and how these connect with social work theory and practice. Writing that has drawn on Bourdieu's work has been limited to several social work authors such as Beddoe (2015a), Garrett (2007a, 2007b), and Houston (2002). Bourdieu's recognition of dialogic practice and pluralism has a vital connection to social work and reflective supervision. The importance of the relationship people have with their environment, multiple perspectives and the importance of ongoing critical discussion are core themes for Bourdieu that are clearly associated with critical social work (Garrett, 2013b). With the development of neoliberalism, Bourdieu's concepts have resonance with social work in identifying societal dominant discourses and for social work as a profession to critically analyse its position. To not maintain such a critical stance and analysis would ensure social work is regulated and controlled as a profession by such discourses. Using Bourdieu's conceptualisations in the data analysis develops a greater understanding of social work practice: the structural and power issues and the location of opportunities for change in their work with service users. Bourdieu's theorisations need to be extended and explored further in their relevance towards social work theory and practice.

In the study, the paradox of social workers being state agents as well as supporting and advocating for change is clearly reflected in the tensions between professional social work values, the organisational values and the environment of the community-based child welfare service to provide a state-funded service (Garrett, 2013b). Community-based child welfare social work was described as struggling to maintain its identity, status and capital. The use of Bourdieu's concepts highlighted the need for community-based child welfare social workers to re-engage with their professional values in reflective supervision for the development of practice and the improvement of services for families, children and communities.

Like social work, supervision is defined by a context of competition for resources and wider fields of contradictory forces. As a result, supervision can reproduce dominant discourses and practices (Beddoe, 2015a). An analysis of the data using Bourdieu's concepts revealed

supervision dominated by organisational agendas and the state's reproduction of doxa through a lack of critical exploration of the wider systemic contexts. This lack of critical exploration of the wider context is contradictory to professional social work and has importance with linking the individual to their environment. The findings of this study identified reflective supervision for community-based child welfare social workers needed deeper critical analysis of the social worker's self-awareness, relationships with others, organisational structures, the socio-political and socio-cultural environment of Aotearoa New Zealand and the promotion of social justice informed strategies in their work with service users. What this analysis exposed was the imperative that social workers needed to harness reflective supervision for discussing multiple worldviews, professional values and cultural and structural issues – a view contrary to a state-driven, organisational agenda. A deeper awareness of cultural privilege and power relationships can become central factors in supervisory discussions. These factors are important to critical reflection and exploring alternative avenues to practise in a culturally sensitive way.

Important to the study was the use of critical reflection as a methodology. Ruch et al. (2015) have emphasised the need to expand research approaches in critical reflection. The demonstration of critical reflection in the study presented how it can be used as a methodological approach and support practice strategies in diverse settings. Thinking aloud has provided a methodological contribution towards the use of critical reflection within qualitative research approaches. Thinking aloud is also a valuable learning tool that assists critical reflection through the use of open-ended questioning and inquiry to articulate meaning and gain insight. Opportunities to review supervision at such a deep level of analysis are uncommon and provide analysis of skills, style and content of the session (Rankine & Thompson, 2015). The strength of the process allowed a deeper appreciation of how the supervisor and supervisee used their session to reflect on practice and how it can be used as a tool in supervision practice. The feedback from the dyads had been that the thinking aloud process was helpful in stimulating reflection and developing solutions to the key issues discussed in the supervision session. For supervisees, this process provided an opportunity to track their thoughts and was transformative in that they could recognise areas for development of their practice. The process for the supervisors enabled them to identify the structure they were providing to the session and to review their style and range of interventions used. The process of thinking aloud provides the opportunity and space for the supervisor and supervisee to learn, critically evaluate, reconstruct and transport this into future practice – core principles of critical reflection.

There is a lack of empirical evidence involving outcomes related to supervision and practice. Research regarding supervision needs to include the connection supervision has to improving practice and outcomes for children and families (Beddoe et al., 2015; Wilkins et al., 2016). The four-layered practice model of reflective supervision (described in Chapter Seven) enables community-based child welfare social workers and supervisors to critically examine the interrelationship of habitus, field and capital. The practice model is multi-dimensional and supports core social work values related to critical thinking and learning. In order for the supervision to be effective, there is recognition that the supervisory relationship is a co-constructed endeavour through the supervisee's and supervisor's responsibilities attached to the agenda, task and process of the session. The supervisee is responsible for the agenda and their learning from the session. The supervisor is responsible in their role as a facilitator for reflective learning to occur. As a result, the supervisor is seen less as an authority or an expert figure, which assists in reflective supervision (Davys & Beddoe, 2010). Due to the model supporting reflective supervision, it is also flexible and adaptable with other models or approaches used in supervision by the supervisor.

In addition, the model allows for the development of social justice informed strategies and action to be transferred to practice. Apparent in the findings of the study was a lack of critical analysis by community-based child welfare social workers in their supervision. This was particularly noted in the lack of critical conversations related to organisational structures and the socio-political and socio-cultural environment of Aotearoa New Zealand. The supervisor needs to demonstrate "critical social awareness and cultural humility" (Hernández & McDowell, 2011, p. 29) and, with the supervisee, engage in an analysis of relationships, power dynamics and wider socio-political and socio-cultural considerations. The four-layered practice model of reflective supervision explicitly connects the individual community-based child welfare social worker with their self, the organisation they work for, relationships with others and the wider systemic context of practice. Each layer of the practice model offers a unique perspective and needs to be considered holistically in relation to the supervision issue. The supervisee is encouraged to balance their feelings with deeper thinking related to professional social work, the context and location of community-based child welfare and how best to support disadvantaged children and families. Models based upon reflective supervision offer scope for practitioners to reconsider options in the ever-changing context of practice (Davys & Beddoe, 2010). Although the four-layered practice model has been developed by the researcher related to community-based child

welfare services, there are opportunities for the model to be adapted to other social work fields of practice and other human services professions.

Recommendations

This study has captured participants' perspectives regarding reflective supervision in community-based child welfare services. In particular, these perspectives have been gathered at a time where globalisation impacts on social work and services provided to service users. While there were some differences noted across participants in the study, there were more commonalities and similarities emerging from the data. The study has revealed the challenges for social work and for the use of reflective supervision to maintain a professional commitment to practice. However, the study also identified how reflective supervision can be used to galvanise critical approaches and social justice strategies in community-based child welfare social work. This chapter ends with recommendations from this study for future practice and research (see Table 8.1).

Within Aotearoa New Zealand, community-based child welfare social work and reflective supervision are caught up in the competing organisational, environmental and professional discourses that influence current practice. It is clear from this study that reflective supervision in community-based child welfare social work is dominated by organisational and state-controlled agendas. The preoccupation in supervision is for social workers to ensure that risk is minimised in their practice, targets are met and outcomes fulfil the organisation's requirements to ensure further funding. The concern for social work as a profession is the erosion of core values related to social justice, ethics and the ability to critically reflect on practice and improve services for service users. In this current climate, social work is at a point of critical self-examination. Bourdieu's habitus, field and capital have provided an important contribution to the analysis of community-based child welfare social work and supervision representing and reproducing dominant discourses and wider influences in society. The application of critical thinking and utilisation of a theoretical framework, such as Bourdieu's concepts, assists in understanding both the current situation of social work as a profession and critical exploration of practice.

Table 8.1: Recommendations for the development of reflective supervision

The current situation	Moving forward	Recommendations
Practice Supervision dominated by organisational agendas and meeting targets in community-based child welfare. Professional capital of social workers is weak due to staff shortages, funding restrictions, and low salaries.	• Supervision in community-based child welfare that is integrative of social work values. • Greater exploration of the impact of socio-cultural and socio-political factors on community-based child welfare social work in supervision. • Stronger professional identity and networks with ANZASW and SWRB. • Skilled, registered social workers with supervision qualifications and knowledge of reflective supervision.	• Promotion of reflective supervision by managers in services including alternative forms of supervision. • Promotion of reflective supervision that supports critical reflection and innovation. • ANZASW and SWRB to advocate for supervision, professional standards and develop stronger relationships with services. • Development of reflective models in supervision by supervisor and supervisee. • Promotion of supervision as essential professional development with social work educators.
Research Empirical research regarding social work supervision with a strong focus on statutory work. Limited studies regarding supervision in diverse contexts, observation in practice and relationship to improved practice. Critical reflection and its application as a research methodology still in infancy.	• Deeper analysis in research of reflective supervision (and different forms of supervision) in diverse contexts of social work. • Strong connection between supervision in practice, its importance to the social work profession and outcomes for children and families. • Critical approaches to supervision and social work in research approaches and contributions to alternative practice frameworks.	• Research related to reflective supervision (and its different forms) within different fields and locations of social work. • Studies that examine the practice of supervision through supervisor/supervisee participation and observation of their session. • Further research related to supervision, improving practice and positive outcomes for children and families. • Development of critical reflection within qualitative research approaches related to supervision.

Throughout this study, the value of reflective supervision for community-based child welfare social work has been clearly recognised. Managers within these services need to promote the importance of reflective supervision for social workers and understand how instrumental this is for positive outcomes with children and families. Commonplace within community-based child welfare is a lack of adequate internal supervision with a focus on professional development and support. In settings like community-based child welfare, a shift away from traditional line management and internal supervision to external supervision arrangements has been identified. Such supervisory relationships provide opportunities for innovation and critical reflection but are also under pressure to co-exist alongside organisational frameworks and funding cut-backs. The ongoing support of alternative forms of supervision, such as external and cultural supervision, for practitioners in community-based child welfare needs to continue. Managers in community-based child welfare services need to advocate strongly for the reflective supervision of social workers as part of their professional development and support.

The SWRB, as the Crown agency in Aotearoa New Zealand responsible for developing and promoting competent social workers to work with vulnerable communities, and professional social work bodies (such as ANZASW) needs to advocate for the importance of reflective supervision to develop professional social workers and build stronger relationships with community-based child welfare services. The SWRB and ANZASW have actively promoted professional expectations and codes of conduct (ANZASW, 2008a; SWRB, 2011) for practising social workers. However, mandatory registration of social workers in Aotearoa New Zealand is still to be introduced by the state and this requires ongoing lobbying by social workers and professional bodies. Many community-based child welfare social workers are unregistered or positions remain held by unqualified workers. Stronger connections between the social work community and professional bodies can assist social workers in developing their own theories-in-action (Argyris & Schön, 1974) and maintain professional practices related to social justice and pro-active work with vulnerable groups.

In order for reflective supervision to be effective in practice, the supervisory relationship needs to be co-constructed where the supervisee and supervisor have responsibilities towards this being a successful partnership. Reflective supervision as part of professional development in social work is essential. Within this study, participants identified the tensions associated with supervision remaining a reflective space in community-based child welfare when contradictory

organisational agendas dominated the supervision session. Social workers need to understand the purpose of reflective supervision and their role within the supervision process as the supervisee or supervisor. The four layered practice model described in this study supports critical thinking and learning and allows for the development of strategies to be transferred to practice for the supervisee. Reflective models such as the four-layered practice model provide an important tool that social workers can utilise in practice and assist supervisory dyads with the agenda, task and process for their session. The four-layered model is also versatile in that it can be used within a number of practice settings within community-based child welfare. Social work educators within tertiary institutions have a valuable role to play in the promotion of reflective supervision in social work programmes and developing trainee supervisors through training in reflective models of supervision. Equally, managers in community-based child welfare services need to promote the importance of social work practitioners attending supervision programmes as part of their professional development and career advancement.

Internationally, and from an Aotearoa New Zealand perspective, empirical research regarding social work supervision has a focus on statutory work. The primary focus of such research has been the professional concern that supervision has become dominated by compliance and managerial agendas (Beddoe, 2010a; Noble & Irwin, 2009). In statutory environments like child protection, supervisors have formal organisational requirements to provide oversight and responsibility of the supervisee's caseload. Limited literature has focused on the use of supervision by social work practitioners in different community contexts such as community-based child welfare services. Recent changes to legislation in Aotearoa New Zealand demanding an increase in professional responsiveness to child welfare make this context a compelling field of practice for the exploration of current social work practice. What is noted in this study has been the potential uniqueness of community-based child welfare social work to work alongside disadvantaged families and promote the voice of children in the current social and political context of Aotearoa New Zealand. Disadvantaged groups and their discourses require further promotion within reflective supervision. Further studies related to the location and fields of practice where supervision operates is an important area to develop and broaden in social work research.

At present, there are limited studies observing supervision in practice and evidencing its importance to practitioners. The actual practice of supervision needs demystifying and evaluating by exploring its positive contribution to practice outcomes. In developing a research agenda for supervision, more needs to be understood about the process of supervision and its

relevance to professional work (Beddoe et al., 2015). Through this observation of the supervision session, further opportunities surface for professional development and reflection for the supervisor and supervisee. Social workers can develop their own theories-in-action by analysing their own experiences in reflective supervision (Argyris & Schön, 1974). Moreover, the value of reflective supervision as a place for renewal, replenishment and discovery towards practice is given deeper deliberation within a neoliberal context. Beddoe (2016) has argued that, currently within the Aotearoa New Zealand social work profession, there is very limited funding for research and evaluation for areas like supervision. Such a lack of resourcing for future research threatens to undermine the importance of maintaining reflective supervision in current austere times where professional standards of social work are slowly being eroded. Reflective supervision is essential to professional learning and requires growing evidence as to the skills, interventions and outcomes obtained in the sessions.

Critical reflection is powerful as a research approach in gathering and engaging with information, developing knowledge and facilitating change. Critical reflection needs further consideration as to how it is captured in research as a holistic process experienced by practitioners and for outcomes with service users (Ruch et al., 2015). From a supervision perspective, recent literature from O'Donoghue (2015) and Beddoe et al. (2015) also highlights a lack of examination of what reflective supervision 'needs to do' to support social work practice. The findings in this study also revealed an uncertainty in how community-based child welfare social workers develop their own theories-in-action in reflective supervision (Argyris & Schön, 1974). Supervisors and supervisees need to develop strategies that assist critical analysis of their experiences and expose gaps between theoretical concepts and how they are applied in practice (Fook & Askeland, 2006; Schön, 1987). A practice strategy to support reflective supervision in this study was a thinking aloud process used with the supervisory dyads. Thinking aloud approaches stimulate reflection and assist in the development of solutions to items discussed in the supervision session. Critical reflection within qualitative research approaches has vast potential and needs development in a number of practice areas. Thinking aloud provides an example of how knowledge can be co-constructed between participants within practice and how critical reflection can also be captured within qualitative research.

The social work habitus internationally, and from an Aotearoa New Zealand perspective, is caught within economic, cultural and social factors influenced by globalisation. The space for

supervision is also impacted by such factors and needs to be responsive to these challenges and to facilitate learning (Beddoe, 2016). Within Aotearoa New Zealand, important steps have been taken over the last decade towards the exploration of indigenous approaches and cultural supervision. Exploration of cultural complexities and identities should be at the forefront of experiential learning and reflective supervision (Beddoe, 2016). Reflective supervision needs to promote a social constructionist and critical perspective in order to fully comprehend the complexity and multiplicity of the wider environment in which community-based child welfare social work operates. To do so, the supervisor and supervisee are required to understand their specific professional roles and responsibilities in the supervision session. The four-layered practice model of reflective supervision provides space for critical reflection of practice and strategies for supporting social justice within community-based child welfare social work. Further models that support reflective supervision need to be developed that are context-specific and which foster greater exploration of socio-cultural and socio-political factors impacting on social work and service users. Moving forward, social work within community-based child welfare and in different contexts of practice needs space to consider the wider factors impacting on practice. Reflective supervision that considers these factors assists the social worker to understand dominant discourses and develop a critical perspective in their work with others as eloquently expressed by one of the participants:

> *I'm learning a lot more [in supervision] to look at people's environments, their backgrounds and the effect that it's had on their lives and parenting, not just go straight to a solution … I'm looking at how has this person got to this place right now and why this is happening?* (Susan)

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Appendices

Appendix One

<u>Key informant interviews</u>

The interviews were semi-structured and followed a set of nine open-ended questions to stimulate discussion and build knowledge of the espoused theory related to supervision, reflective practice, and theory-in-use in the context of community child welfare services.

Could you describe to me what good supervision means?

What is your understanding of the term *reflective practice*?

What is your understanding of the term *critical reflection*?

What are the particular issues facing community child welfare services?

How do these issues impact on reflective practice, critical reflection and use of supervision?

In community child welfare services, how is reflective practice within the supervision session being used?

How could it be different?

If you were studying reflective practice within the supervision session, what would you be noticing?

Any other comments?

<u>The participatory reflection</u>

For the participatory reflections, the researcher developed semi-structured questions in relation to the transcribed supervision session. For example:

From analysing the transcript, what are your thoughts in relation to the supervision session?

What particular techniques or examples of language can you identify that assisted in reflective practice?

Why was this technique used and do you think this was effective in assisting reflection?

What were your thoughts/feelings/assumptions at the time?

What are your thoughts and feelings now?

What have been the gains in reflection for you since the session?

What have you learnt from the participatory reflection?

What were the positives in using a 'thinking aloud' process after the supervision session?

What are your reflections on the participation in the research overall?

What worked well and what could be different?

Any other comments?

Appendix Two

Office of the Vice-Chancellor
Research Integrity Unit

UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

04-Jul-2013

MEMORANDUM TO:

Assoc Prof Christa Fouche
Counselling, HumServ & SocWrk

Re: Application for Ethics Approval (Our Ref. 9371)

The Committee considered your application for ethics approval for your project entitled **What are we thinking? Supervision as the vehicle for reflective practice in community social work.**.

Ethics approval was given for a period of three years.

The expiry date for this approval is 04-Jul-2016.

If the project changes significantly, you are required to submit a new application to UAHPEC for further consideration.

In order that an up-to-date record can be maintained, you are requested to notify UAHPEC once your project is completed.

The Chair and the members of UAHPEC would be happy to discuss general matters relating to ethics approvals if you wish to do so. Contact should be made through the UAHPEC Ethics Administrators at humanethics@auckland.ac.nz in the first instance.

All communication with the UAHPEC regarding this application should include this reference number: **9371**.

(This is a computer generated letter. No signature required.)

UAHPEC Administrators
University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee

c.c. Head of Department / School, Counselling, HumServ & SocWrk

Office of the Vice-Chancellor
Finance, Ethics and Compliance

The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Auckland, New Zealand
Level 10, 49 Symonds Street
Telephone: 64 9 373 7599
Extension: 87830 / 83761
Facsimile: 64 9 373 7432

UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE (UAHPEC)

05-Aug-2014
MEMORANDUM TO:

Assoc Prof Christa Fouche
Counselling, HumServ & SocWrk

Re: Request for change of Ethics Approval Ethics Approval (Our Ref. 9371):
Amendments Approved
The Committee considered your request for change for your project entitled **What are we thinking?**
Supervision as the vehicle for reflective practice in community social work. and approval was granted for
the following amendments on 05-Aug-2014.

The Committee approved the following amendments:
1) Alter Phase 2 of the study to include 8 supervisory dyads to participate in the study instead of up to 6
supervisory dyads.
The expiry date for this approval is 04-July-2016.

If the project changes significantly you are required to resubmit a new application to the Committee for further
consideration.
In order that an up-to-date record can be maintained, it would be appreciated if you could notify the Committee
once your project is completed.

The Chair and the members of the Committee would be happy to discuss general matters relating to ethics
approvals. If you wish to do so, please contact the UAHPEC Ethics Administrators at roethics@auckland.ac.nz
in the first instance.

Please quote reference number: **9371** on all communication with the UAHPEC regarding this application.
(This is a computer generated letter. No signature required.)
UAHPEC Administrators
University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee

Appendix Three

Participant Information Sheet

School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET
(Key informant interviews)

Project title: **What are we thinking? Supervision as the vehicle for reflective practice in community child welfare services**

Name of Researcher: Matt Rankine

Matt Rankine is undertaking this study for a PhD in Social Work at the School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work at The University of Auckland. He is also employed as a part time Professional Teaching Fellow at the same School.

Project description and invitation

The aim of the study is to explore reflective practices in social work supervision within the current context of community child welfare services and to describe potential strategies to enable reflective practice in supervision. The research has two distinct and sequential phases. The first phase explores perspectives on reflective practice in social work supervision within the context of community child welfare services from key informant interviews. The second phase will describe how reflective practice is utilised in the supervision session from participatory reflection of supervisor/supervisee dyads and strategies on how reflective practice in supervision can be supported.

You are invited by the researcher to participate in the first phase of the research as you have been identified as a key informant on this topic. Key informants include all individuals who have experience as academic social work staff, with existing knowledge of professional supervision and community child welfare services. To ensure ethical conduct, no immediate colleagues or current students of Matt Rankine will be able to participate in this study.

You are invited to participate in an individual face-to-face interview that will take no longer than 90 minutes at a mutually convenient location. A schedule of semi-structured questions will be asked by the researcher to facilitate discussion in the interview and will cover topics on supervision, reflective practice and how this is demonstrated within community child welfare services. Participation is voluntary and you can choose not to answer any particular question. In addition, you can choose to withdraw your involvement from the research and any information you have contributed up to one month of commencing your participation.

The interviews will be conducted by the researcher and will be audio recorded. Assistance in the preparation of transcripts will be sought from a professional transcribing service. The transcriber will sign a confidentiality agreement. Participants will be given the option of reviewing the transcript for accuracy and be invited to amend or edit the transcript if they wish.

Data storage/retention/destruction/future use
Once the researcher and participants have verified the accuracy of the transcripts, all recordings will be erased, and electronic files deleted. Transcripts will be securely stored for six years in a password-protected computer file at the University of Auckland. Data files will be accessible by the researcher and their supervisors only. Hard data will be stored in a locked cupboard at the University of Auckland. After that time all hard copy data will be shredded and electronic files deleted. Results will be used in the doctoral thesis and may be published in peer reviewed academic journals and disseminated at social work conferences. A summary of findings of the study will be made available to participants by e-mail. Participants can indicate on their consent form if they wish to receive a copy of this. The PhD thesis will be publically available through a digital repository.

Right to Withdraw from Participation

Participants have the right to not answer a particular question or stop the audio recording at any time during the interview. Participants will be given the right to withdraw their data from the research up to one month after participating in the research.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Each participant will have the opportunity to choose a pseudonym to protect their identity. However, due to the nature of the small size of the academic community, there is still a possibility of being identified. This information will be included in the consent forms.

Please feel free to contact the researcher Matt Rankine (m.rankine@auckland.ac.nz)**, the supervisor (A/Prof** Christa Fouche, c.fouche@auckland.ac.nz) **or the Head of School Phil Harington (**p.harington@auckland.ac.nz) **for further information regarding this study or about your participation.**

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 extn. 87830/83761. Email: humanethics@auckland.ac.nz.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 4/7/2013 for (3) years, Reference Number 9371

Participant Information Sheet

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET
(Supervisor/Supervisee dyads)

Project title: **What are we thinking? Supervision as the vehicle for reflective practice in community child welfare services**

Name of Researcher: Matt Rankine

Researcher introduction

Matt Rankine is undertaking this study for a PhD in Social Work through the School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work at The University of Auckland. He is also employed part time as a Professional Teaching Fellow at the same school.

Project description and invitation

The aim of the study is to explore reflective practices in social work supervision within the current context of community child welfare services and describe potential strategies to enable reflective practice in supervision. The research has two distinct and sequential phases. The initial phase explores perspectives on reflective practice in social work supervision within the context of community child welfare services from key informant interviews. The second phase will describe how reflective practice is utilised in the supervision session from participatory reflection of supervisor/supervisee dyads and strategies on how reflective practice in supervision can be supported.

Supervisor and supervisee dyads involve both the supervisor and supervisee who work within community child welfare services. External supervision arrangements are also sought. To ensure ethical conduct, no immediate colleagues or current students of Matt Rankine will be able to participate in this study.

You are invited to participate in participatory reflections from your supervision session. This will involve recording of a supervision session between the supervisor and the supervisee and a recorded follow up discussion with the researcher at a later scheduled date that will take no longer than two hours at a location that is convenient to you. A schedule of semi-structured questions will be asked by the researcher to facilitate discussion in the interview. Participation is voluntary and you can choose not to answer any particular question. An assurance from the Chief Executive officer has been given that staff participation or non-participation in this research will in no way impact upon their employment status in the organisation.

Both the supervision session and the follow up discussion with the researcher will be audio recorded and transcribed. Assistance in the preparation of transcripts will be sought from a professional transcribing service. The transcriber will sign a confidentiality agreement. Participants will be given the option of reviewing the transcripts for accuracy and be invited to amend or edit the transcript if they wish.

Data storage/retention/destruction/future use

Once the researcher and participants have verified the accuracy of the transcripts, all recordings will be erased, and electronic files deleted. Transcripts will be securely stored for six years in either a locked cupboard or a password-protected computer file at The University of Auckland. Data files will be accessible by the researcher and their supervisors only. After six years, this data will be destroyed.

Right to Withdraw from Participation

Participants have the right to withdraw their participation and stop the audio recording of the interview at any time. Participants can choose to end an interview or not answer a particular question. Participants will be given the right to withdraw their data from the research up to one month after participating in the research.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Each participant will have the opportunity to choose a pseudonym to disguise their identity. However, due to the small size of the professional community, there is still a possibility of being identified. This information will be included in the consent forms.

Information that participants provide will be used for the thesis findings. A summary of findings of the study will be made available to participants by e-mail. Participants can indicate on their consent form if they wish to receive a copy of this. The PhD thesis will be publically available through a digital repository. Results may be published in peer reviewed academic journals and disseminated at social work conferences.

Please feel free to contact the researcher Matt Rankine (m.rankine@auckland.ac.nz)**, the supervisor (A/Prof** Christa Fouche, c.fouche@auckland.ac.nz) **or the Head of School Phil Harington (**p.harington@auckland.ac.nz) **for further information regarding this study or about your participation.**

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 extn. 87830/83761. Email: humanethics@auckland.ac.nz.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 4/7/2013 for (3) years, Reference Number 9371.

Appendix Four

Participant Information Sheet

School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work
Gate 4, 60 Epsom Avenue, Epsom, Auckland
96238899

The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Auckland, New Zealand

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET
(Chief Executive Officers)

Project title: **What are we thinking? Supervision as the vehicle for reflective practice in community child welfare services**

Name of Researcher: Matt Rankine

Researcher introduction

Matt Rankine is undertaking this study for a PhD in Social Work through the School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work at The University of Auckland. He is also employed part time as a Professional Teaching Fellow at the same school.

Project description and invitation

The aim of the study is to explore reflective practices in social work supervision within the current context of community child welfare services and describe potential strategies to enable reflective practice in supervision. The research has two distinct and sequential phases. The initial phase explores perspectives on reflective practice in social work supervision within the context of community child welfare services from key informant interviews. The second phase will describe how reflective practice is utilised in the supervision session from participatory reflection of supervisor/supervisee dyads and strategies on how reflective practice in supervision can be supported.

Matt Rankine is approaching your organisation to seek permission to ask regional managers to assist in the distribution of an advertisement for participants in this research. Specifically, this advertisement is to participate in the second phase of the research involving both the supervisor and supervisee. Staff interested in participating in the research may contact the researcher of their own free will. To ensure ethical conduct, no immediate colleagues or current students of Matt Rankine will be able to participate in this study.

This phase of the research will involve recording of a supervision session (existing practice) between the supervisor and the supervisee and a recorded follow up discussion with the researcher. The follow up discussion will be scheduled at a later date and will take no longer than two hours. Recordings will be made only with the agreement of those recorded.

In approaching you as the Chief Executive Officer of (organisation's name), Matt Rankine is seeking an assurance from you that staff participation or non-participation in this research will in no way impact upon their employment status in the organisation.

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Anonymity and Confidentiality

The participants' identities will be protected through the use of a pseudonym that they will be asked to choose. However, due to the nature of the small size of the professional community, there is still a possibility of them being identified. The participants will be informed of this possibility.

Information that participants provide will be used in the thesis findings. A summary of findings of the study will be made available to participants by e-mail. Participants can indicate on their consent form if they wish to receive a copy of this. The PhD thesis will be publically available through a digital repository. Results may be published in peer reviewed academic journals and disseminated at social work conferences

The researcher and their supervisor will have access to the recorded and transcribed information. The data will be stored securely at The University of Auckland in either a locked cupboard or on a password-protected computer. After six years, it will be securely destroyed.

Please feel free to contact the researcher Matt Rankine (m.rankine@auckland.ac.nz)**, the supervisor (A/Prof** Christa Fouche, c.fouche@auckland.ac.nz) **or the Head of School Phil Harington (**p.harington@auckland.ac.nz) **for further information regarding this study or about your participation.**

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 extn. 87830/83761. Email: humanethics@auckland.ac.nz.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 4/7/2013 for (3) years, Reference Number 9371.

Appendix Five

ADVERTISEMENT KEY INFORMANTS

What are we thinking? Supervision as the vehicle for reflective practice in community child welfare services

You are invited to participate in this study by an individual interview that will take no longer than 90 minutes at a location that is convenient to you.

ABOUT THE STUDY

Matt Rankine is undertaking this study for a PhD through the School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work at The University of Auckland. The aim of the study is to explore reflective practices in social work supervision within the current context of community child welfare services and describe potential strategies to support reflective practice in supervision. Matt wishes to explore perspectives from key informants who are academic social work staff, have experience supervising others and have an existing knowledge of community child welfare services.

The research has been approved by the University of Auckland's Research Ethics Committee.
If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact Matt for further information.

Researcher:

Matt Rankine
Phone: 96238899 ext 48500
E-mail: m.rankine@auckland.ac.nz

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 extn. 87830/83761. Email: humanethics@auckland.ac.nz.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 4/7/2013 for (3) years, Reference Number 9371

ADVERTISEMENT PARTICIPATORY REFLECTION OF SUPERVISOR/SUPERVISEE DYADS

What are we thinking? Supervision as the vehicle for reflective practice in community child welfare services

You and your supervisee/supervisor are invited to participate in this study through a participatory reflection exercise between the supervisor and supervisee. This will involve recording of a typical supervision session and one follow up discussion with the researcher and your supervisee/supervisor. The discussion will take no longer than two hours at a location that is convenient to you.

ABOUT THE STUDY

Matt Rankine is undertaking this study for a PhD through the School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work at The University of Auckland. The aim of the study is to explore reflective practices in social work supervision within the current context of community child welfare services and describe potential strategies to enable reflective practice in supervision. Matt wishes to describe how reflective practice is utilised in the supervision session from supervisors and supervisees who work in community child welfare services and strategies on how reflective practice in supervision can be supported.

The research has been approved by the University of Auckland's Research Ethics Committee.
If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact Matt for further information.

Researcher:

Matt Rankine
Phone: 96238899 ext 48500
E-mail: m.rankine@auckland.ac.nz

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 extn. 87830/83761. Email: humanethics@auckland.ac.nz.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 4/7/2013 for (3) years, Reference Number 9371