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Social Work Leadership for Aotearoa New Zealand

Michael John Webster

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work, the University of Auckland, 2017
“Speak out on behalf of the voiceless/and for the rights of all who are vulnerable.” (Proverbs 31: 8, Common English Bible)
Abstract

From the late 1980s, the social work profession in Aotearoa New Zealand experienced transformational changes amounting to a revolution. Neo-liberal policies introduced by Labour and National governments in the late 1980s and early 1990s applied private sector management thinking to social work organisations and services. Social workers and social work leaders underwent intellectual and emotional dissonance as their professional values were challenged by neo-liberal organisational philosophy and practice. These developments created the need for social work leadership research to make sense of this river of change. Literature informing the research comprised leadership and management; the contexts of New Zealand’s welfare policy; international business and public sector leadership including what has become known as new public management; social work ethics and identity; and indigenous leadership models and their connections with biological complexity thinking.

The aim of this study was to provide social workers from frontline practitioner level to senior managers with an Aotearoa New Zealand model of social work organisational leadership. The study is informed by the research question: What are the fundamental elements of organisational leadership within social work in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand? Research objectives included exploring how social work practitioners who hold, or have held, leadership or management responsibility in New Zealand conceptualise leadership; and to describe participants’ experiences of social work leadership.

A constructionist, qualitative paradigm was employed, using semi-structured interviews. A theoretical symbolic interactionist perspective depicting social work’s practice value of empathy was applied. A descriptive/exploratory methodology was used and data were analysed thematically via NVivo software. Purposive sampling limited participants to registered social workers (RSW) and acknowledged that the researcher interpreted the meaning assigned by research participants. Twenty-three registered social workers drawn from diverse hierarchical levels, ethnicities, practice and management longevity, organisational functions, and state sector and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) were interviewed twice.

Four overarching themes emerged. The first identified core beliefs and values underpinning organisational social work leadership actions. These values comprised leaders’ identity and
integrity; ethical leadership; human rights and social justice; systems thinking; spirituality and authenticity; and a society informed by the Treaty of Waitangi. The second theme identified leadership actions, comprising leadership and management; advocacy; communication as networking and story-telling; the use of power and authority; worker motivation and outcomes; and communication as thought leadership. The third theme described the influence of three contexts on leadership and leadership influences on those contexts: the public sector, NGOs and multidisciplinary settings. Drawn from these findings a summative social work model of leadership for Aotearoa New Zealand emerged.
Acknowledgements

This doctoral journey originated in 1993 with postgraduate management courses at Massey University, Albany campus. The stories of colleagues who have traversed the same route have reinforced some common experiences, to which I will return.

Using a mixed metaphor, this journey became the capstone in a semi-circular archway that we see in archaeological excavations. The capstone’s function is to bind the archway together, to provide the strength and integrity to preserve the structure. On a personal level, that capstone is represented by our family’s experience living and working as part of a minority ethnic group overseas. Despite the historical dominance of European identity overseas, I caught a glimpse of what it might mean to be part of a marginalised population: the very groups that social work is committed to serve.

Those thoughts lead me to acknowledge the part my wife Anna has played in this odyssey. When I started in 1993, our (now) adult children Matthew, Jane and Lucy were at different developmental stages: Anna quite simply took on an increased level of parental responsibility as I spent endless hours in front of a computer monitor. A friend welcomed her to the doubtful status of a “PhD widow.” Of course, Anna is far more than that. She has given me wisdom and extraordinary love and support over these years. That support intensified once enrolment in a PhD was initiated. I owe her an incalculable debt. To Anna and our children (and now grandchildren), let me say: You are treasures.

Memories of the journey bring back names. To Dr Andy Asquith, my first supervisor at Massey Albany (before transferring to Auckland): my thanks for getting me under way. I have two enduring memories from our initial contact: your Massey website which said: “Fanatical supporter Barnsley Football Club” and the health and safety sign on your office door which stated: “Beware of this Yorkshireman. He may bite.” That sense of humour attracted me.

In 2011 my own school (Counselling, Human Services and Social Work at the University of Auckland) established a social work PhD and I transferred my candidacy to Auckland. Once there, several individuals became part of the process. At the end of the provisional candidacy, Dr Jan Wilson and Dr Margaret McLean reviewed my proposal and provided invaluable feedback. Later, Jan and I became neighbours with our offices next door to each other. Jan, thank you for your affirmations. They have been like gold.
Associate Professor Christa Fouché (now Professor) and Dr Carole Adamson became my supervisors. To you both let me say this: I would never have completed the thesis without your extraordinary knowledge and skills. Christa and Carole made a friendly but formidable team. Christa’s incisiveness and Carole’s illustrations (yes, actual drawings to depict the discussion or argument) were a simultaneous challenge and safety haven. “Yes, you can do it,” even when I doubted if the journey would ever be over. You helped me make sense of the whole marathon.

To Dr Jan Duke at the Social Workers Registration Board I owe hours of work processing the requests to registered social workers inviting participation. Jan, thank you for making the whole project possible. A labour of love!

Along the way others made their unique contributions. Dr Ian Hyslop, a stimulating colleague who became a friend took the time to chew over social justice—and even gave me informal feedback on earlier drafts—was a welcome port of call when I was assailed with doubts, and equally when I felt things were going well. Thank you Ian. Associate Professor Mike O’Brien was for a while the third member of the supervision team. I remember Mike’s assessment of the proposal: “I sense that you are trying to do too much. This is not the completed thesis!” Mike, your commitment to the social work profession and to mentoring people like me is appreciated. To Dave Wood, a practitioner colleague I owe a listening ear and insightful statements. Dave, you kept me grounded in the practice world. Thank you. The kind words I received from another colleague on his own doctoral journey, Andrew Thompson, will never be forgotten. Andrew, I greatly appreciate you. Matt Rankine, who finished his thesis a few weeks ahead of me, has become a valued person in my professional life. And to John Darroch, a student who has just completed his MSW thesis on social justice: John, I have enjoyed our conversations on matters of mutual interest. I wish you well in advancing your career pathway.

To Sue Osborne and Andrew Lavery: thank you for the editing work which made the thesis readable.

Analysing data was an enormous task. In early 2016 Christa’s advocacy with Professor Graeme Aitken the Dean of our faculty (Education and Social Work) secured me Graeme’s approval for six weeks’ special leave to focus on that task. Graeme, I appreciated that leave.
My profound thanks go to the participants in the research. Ethical considerations prevent their identification; but you all gave me two interviews of up to 90 minutes each in the midst of practice and leadership demands. More than that, you gave me unique contributions which, from time to time, became words of wisdom. The perspectives I gleaned from your discourses led to this modified statement in the thesis which serves as an appropriate conclusion:

“[You] demonstrate a depth of thinking into the whole purpose of social work organisational leadership which warrants cautious optimism for the future of leadership in the profession.”

Finally, my own world view leads me to believe that we are not able to do anything of true value for humanity without the help and wisdom of the One who gives us the gifts in the first place.
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Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 Setting the scene

The aim of this study is to develop a New Zealand model of social work organisational leadership, underpinned by the research question: What are the fundamental elements of organisational leadership within social work in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand? The purpose of this introductory chapter is to introduce the study and provide the reader with a map of what to expect and where it is located in the thesis.

This chapter will therefore set forth, in abbreviated form, the knowledge base informing the project and the research design and methodology. The location of the gap in our current knowledge is identified, and organisational, professional and personal perspectives are offered. Key arguments—including definitions of core concepts—are woven into this overview. In the light of ongoing debate among leadership scholars, how the study will treat leadership and management is of central importance in that conceptual presentation.

1.2 Organisational, professional and personal perspectives

Personal motivation for the project emanates from a long-standing interest in social anthropological concepts of culture, first generated by Professor of Social Anthropology, Ralph Piddington, in my undergraduate days (see, for example, Peoples & Bailey, 2003; Piddington, 1960). The analysis of organisational culture applied to leadership and management scholarship derives from social anthropology (e.g., Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). Additionally, I am motivated by personal experience of managerial change leadership responsibilities in a dynamic social work public sector organisational environment; teaching leadership and management to undergraduate and postgraduate organisation and management social work, allied health and human service students; facilitating face-to-face and virtual “communities of practice” (Moore, 2008; Wenger & Snyder, 2000); engaging in human, health and social work leadership and management-related research as an individual (M. Webster, 2010, 2014, 2016;) and in academic and
academic-practitioner collaborations (McNabb & Webster, 2010; Webster & Tofi, 2007; Webster, McNabb, & Darroch, 2015; M. Webster & McNabb 2016).

I suggest that a need exists to provide practitioners at diverse organisational levels (Gardner, 2006; Oshagbemi & Gill, 2004) with a social work leadership model to make sense of the transformative changes since the 1980s. These changes arose in large measure out of the neo-liberal “Rogernomics” era in which private sector management thinking was applied to social work services (O’Donoghue, Baskerville, & Trlin, 1999; Tennant, 2007). The term “Rogernomics”—named after Roger Douglas who served as the fourth Labour government’s finance minister from 1984-1988—was a populist title for New Zealand’s equivalent of the new right policies in the United States and the United Kingdom implemented by the Reagan and Thatcher governments. This application created powerful constraints on formally appointed social work leaders as well as peer-recognised informal, or organic, leaders. Social workers underwent intellectual and emotional dissonance as their professional values were challenged by neo-liberal organisational thinking. A seminal examination of how legitimate leadership should be expressed took place in social work agencies as a “power-over” (Follett, 1995) model of leadership assumed organisational pre-eminence. The notion that leadership relates to motivating people, securing commitment and changing how people feel (Bass & Avolio, 1993; Hiller, DeChurch, Murase, & Doty, 2011) was undermined. Follett’s ability to articulate leadership as operating from a balcony view (and therefore able to project a vision of followers becoming leaders (Kanter, 1995)), was replaced by a tangible sense of powerlessness. Social workers found themselves living in the operational reality of marginalisation as a parody of their espoused ethical code of empowerment in practice. Carey captures this reality in his discussion of market philosophy influencing and even “colonising” the hearts and minds of state sector social workers (Carey, 2008, p. 919).

These developments create an urgent and increasing need for social work leadership research. The requirement to produce new knowledge at a doctoral level remains the prime focus for this research; but the provision for practitioners of a leadership map to navigate the “river of change” (Boeree, 2000) is also in view. The need for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to develop “management capability” (Tennant,
2007, p. 214) is self-evident. The capability to lead organically, using systems theory (Attwood, Pedler, Pritchard, & Wilkinson, 2003); acquire culture change leadership skills (Schein, 2010); and maintain a commitment to “values-based leadership” (O’Toole, 1996) for social work is also required. Social work connects with each of these leadership capabilities. Systems, or ecological, thinking is a core practice model of the profession (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) and is described in a previous international definition of social work as the points where people interact with their environments (Sewpaul & Jones, 2005). Cultural identities are recognised as critical elements in direct client practice and in relation to leadership actions (Pearlmutter, 1998). The profession’s values as expressed in codes of ethics (Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers [ANZASW], 2008; International Federation of Social Workers [IFSW], 2004) simultaneously underpin the delivery of services to consumers and organisational leadership (Sewpaul & Jones, 2005).

For me, the themes identified in this section of the thesis are not merely theoretical. They were the canvas on which six turbulent years of middle and frontline management responsibilities were painted, following the restructure of the Department of Corrections in the mid-1990s (Hughes & Pengelly, 1997). During that experience, engaging in postgraduate management study began a sense-making exercise by which these processes of change were gradually understood. As I examined the processes by which organisational leadership changed the workplace environment, literature strands and models stood out as eureka moments of discovery. Arguably the most significant insights derived from cultural analysis: organisations, professions, nation-states, and ethnic groups all carry distinctive cultures (e.g., Abbott, 1999; Agbényiga, 2011; Ashkanasy, Trevor-Roberts, & Earnshaw, 2002; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005; House, Javidan, Hanges, & Dorfman, 2002; Jaskyte & Dressler, 2005; Schein, 2010). As a practitioner who became a researcher, mapping the cultural territory (Martin, 2002) presented as a jigsaw to be pieced together from which the eureka events emerged. In the literature review for this project, I propose that culture—“the way we do things around here” (Sheard & Kakabadse, 2004)—is the most pervasive influence in determining leadership actions. I further propose that mapping culture is the field for
which social work is the best equipped of all the helping professions to explore by virtue of its ecological model of practice (Green & McDermott, 2010; Jarvis, 2009).

Using a mixed metaphor, the journey described in this project became the capstone in a semi-circular archway that we might see in archaeological excavations. The capstone’s function is to bind the archway together, to provide the strength and integrity to preserve the structure. On a personal level, that capstone is represented by our family’s experience living and working as part of a minority ethnic group overseas. Despite the historical dominance of European identity overseas, I caught a glimpse of what it might mean to be part of a marginalised population: the very groups that social work is committed to serve.

Constructing a social work leadership model is conceptually similar to building the archway because I am part of the structure—a social constructivist qualitative statement. Leadership integrity is a non-negotiable ethical construct (Appleton, 2010; Banks, 2010). A Māori whakataukī (proverb), well known to social workers, expresses the significance of being part of that building endeavour:

    He aha te mea nui o te ao?
    He tangata! He tangata! He tangata!

    What is the most important thing in the world?
    It is people! It is people! It is people!

I propose that social work leadership is an ethical commitment to empower, enable and serve people. Perhaps Bertrand Russell sums up this ethical mandate best from my personal Christian perspective, recalling that many early social work endeavours sprang from a Christian worldview (Bowpitt, 1998). In his discussion on “democracy and scientific technique,” Russell comments:

    The root of the matter is a very simple and old-fashioned thing, a thing so simple that I am almost ashamed to mention it, for fear of the derisive smile with which wise cynics will greet my words. The thing I mean—please forgive me for mentioning it—is love, Christian love, or compassion. If you feel this, you have a
motive for existence, a guide in action, a reason for courage, an imperative necessity for intellectual honesty. (Russell, 1952, p. 114)

Qualitative enquiry acknowledges that the researcher becomes an interpreter in collecting and analysing data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). That interpretation includes a set of values which, in this project, come from two sources. First, the ethical codes and identity of the social work profession; and second, for this researcher, Russell’s encompassing statement of “Christian love, or compassion,” a phrase described by C. S. Lewis (1960) as seeking the highest well-being of the other. That quality is Russell’s motive, guide, reason and imperative for this project.

The literature review is set out in four strands. The unique configuration of these strands constitutes my thinking which underpins the entire project and from which new perspectives will emerge.

1.3 Leadership in the social work profession: International perspectives

Leadership thinking in the social work profession dates from the 1920s when Mary Parker Follett, a social worker in the profession’s formative years in the United States (US), enunciated power-with rather than power-over notions of managerial leadership (Follett, 1995). In that statement, Follett articulated the notion of shared leadership, rediscovered 70 years later (Houghton, Neck, & Manz, 2003). On that basis Peter Drucker, who made a seminal contribution to management scholarship in the 20th century, described Follett as a “prophet of management” (Drucker, 1995). This project thus draws upon a 90-year conceptual history of social work thinking on management and leadership, practically contemporaneous with the “classical” management theorists such as Lyndall Urwick in the United Kingdom (UK) (Brech, Thomson, & Wilson, 2010), Henri Fayol in France (Fayol, 1967), Frederick Winslow Taylor (Taylor, 1967) in the US, and Max Weber (Weber & Tosi, 1987) in Germany. The literature review for this project will demonstrate how major theorists have influenced social work leadership and management.

The re-emergence of interest in professional social work leadership and management over the last 30 years was signalled in 1977 by the first issue of the US journal,
Administration in Social Work. The journal identified its primary aim and scope as the improvement of management in social agencies. In 2014 the journal was “rebranded” (Edwards & Austin, 2014) as *Human Service Organizations: Management, Leadership & Governance*, thus setting out its editorial objectives. Leadership themes are addressed *inter alia* by special issues; in the 40 years of publication, 858 articles have made reference to leadership by title, abstract or keyword. In 2004 the International Federation of Social Work (IFSW) and the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) recognised management as a “core purpose of social work” (Sewpaul & Jones, 2005, p. 219). This professional recognition usefully connects scholarly research with management as a legitimate field of social work practice and, *ipso facto* this project, which aims to explore conceptualisations of social work organisational leadership. Inkson and Kolb (2002) comment that Fayol (1967) originated the notion that management includes a leadership function. Citing Bennis and Nanus (1985), the social work educator Mary (2005) proposes a distinction between leadership and management. Mary (2005, p. 106) defines management as “ contractual exchanges,” ensuring completion of activities and organising routines; but leadership as influencing people and empowering for change, an interpretation which expresses social work’s values and standards (Sewpaul & Jones, 2005). This research, while informed by Mary’s leadership definition, identifies the exercise of leadership as occurring within organisations and thereby carrying managerial overtones. The profession’s statement of management contained in IASSW’s “core purposes” declaration equally embraces the leadership notion of empowerment and the managerial idea of organisation, thus bridging the two concepts.

The IFSW and IASSW describe management as the capacity to “plan, organise, administer and manage programmes and organisations dedicated to any of the [core purposes [of social work]” (Sewpaul & Jones, 2005, p. 219). These core purposes, set out in Appendix 1, give expression to the international definition of social work. The current definition of social work adopted by the IFSW in July 2014 states that:

Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights,
collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing.

The above definition may be amplified at national and/or regional levels. (IFSW, 2014)

Social work services reflecting these core purposes are delivered through statutory agencies or non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Leadership and management of service delivery set professional, ethical and organisational imperatives which exert overarching influences on practice and practitioners (Webster, 2010). The literature suggests that commitment to ethical codes and integrity by managers and leaders creates trust and more productive organisations (e.g., Cho & Ringquist, 2011). Conversely, Coffey, Dugdill, and Tattersall (2009) report on a “staffing crisis” in UK social services caused by organisational factors such as management of change contributing to mental distress among workers. These diverse organisational milieux provide the context for this research.

Social work’s US leadership discourse has been extant for decades longer than in Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia or the UK. In a special edition of the UK journal Social Work & Social Sciences Review addressing critical issues in management and leadership, the British social work academics, Hafford-Letchfield and Lawler (2010), noted that “research and debate in the area of social work management and leadership is still in its infancy” (p.5.) Hafford-Letchfield and Lawler suggest that “more recognised professional pathways to foster better [social work organisational] leadership” are being developed (2010, pp. 5 - 6). The Australian social work academics McDonald and Chenoweth (2009, p. 105) identify a “glaring absence” of leadership research in the profession. The paucity of social work scholarship on leadership—in the UK and Australia as well as more noticeably in Aotearoa New Zealand—constitutes one aspect of the raison d’être for the study.
1.4 Unique configuration of the literature: Making a case for this project

Leadership has established itself as a distinct field of study vis-à-vis management (Jackson & Parry, 2011). The rationale for the proposed configuration derives from identifying the literature on which a distinctive social work leadership model in Aotearoa New Zealand stands. For the purposes of the project, leadership is located in organisations which may be either dedicated social work agencies or entities in which social work functions alongside other professions. For that reason, the term organisational leadership will be commonly used.

To develop a conceptual base for the project, I propose drawing from four strands identified in the literature which will serve two functions. The first is to inform the substantive literature review and set the research problem in its historical context, initial formulation and range of enquiry (Yegidis & Weinbach, 2009); the second function is to present an argument that the research data to be gathered emerge as fresh perspectives distinct from, but built on, these strands. I suggest that these strands present as a unique configuration of the leadership literature. How I have interpreted and structured this configuration underpins the entire project from which new knowledge will emerge. Each strand informs a social work conceptualisation of leadership which will contribute to the aim of the research: to develop a New Zealand model of social work leadership. The connection between these strands and the knowledge gap which the research aims to address is dealt with under the heading, “Importance of the project,” below.

To lay down an introduction to the substantive literature review, the four purposively selected literature strands are identified below, and the rationale for their selection briefly canvassed.

Leadership in the context of management

Tensions between leadership and management (see, e.g., Jackson & Parry, 2011) call for an exploration to determine how this project will treat the two terms and respond to the question: are they interchangeable? Conceptualising this tension underpins the entire research project. Following Patton (2002, p. 11), clarity of understanding is
needed for the primary audiences to whom the findings of this qualitative research will be directed: the academic community; the researcher; and other parties with an interest in the phenomenon under investigation. These interested parties are, broadly, the professional social work community; and more specifically, social workers in leadership roles, or who aspire to leadership roles.

The literature review proposes that leadership is people-related and creates the culture of the organisation in which social work leadership is exercised (Bass & Bass, 2008; Schein, 2010). Citing MacKenzie (1969), Bass and Bass (2008, p. 655) argue that, by contrast, management relates to things such as job descriptions, organisational structures and the like.

The historical and current New Zealand welfare context as it relates to organisational leadership

Following the determination over how leadership and management will be addressed, the literature review considers the contexts in which social work leadership actions occur. These contexts are, simultaneously, philosophical and practical. Ideas, cultures and perspectives have consequences (Weaver, 1984) and give rise to models. In the social work context, models also exert influence on ideas. Payne (2005, p. 8) proposes that social workers’ actions—what they do—become social work theory, suggesting therefore, that theories are the product of the environment in which those actions occur. I suggest that leadership thinking and leadership actions become a reinforcing loop, evident in this and the remaining literature strands.

The second strand comprises two elements. The first represents Aotearoa New Zealand’s historical and current philosophical commitment to voluntary and public welfare (Tennant, 2007). It is in this context that social work activity occurs. The implications for social work conceptualisations of organisational leadership arise from state welfare policy and interactions between public sector and NGO social work agencies. I argue that these interactions represent the reinforcing loop: the profession’s commitment to welfare policy has become so pervasive that it exerts a decisive influence on leadership actions. Those actions are mediated through the philosophical commitment to welfare as underpinning policy and practice (e.g., Sanders, O’Brien,
Tennant, Sokolowski, & Salamon, 2008), a requisite component in researching social work leadership.

The literature is not confined to welfare policy and practice. The thesis will also explore diverse fields of social work leadership practice located within the broader canvas of welfare. The egalitarian nature of Aotearoa New Zealand culture noted by Kennedy (2008, pp. 399 - 400) is arguably nowhere better represented than in this field and in the low “power distance” attitude towards the exercise of authority described by Hofstede (2001). Analysing the nature of leadership in Aotearoa New Zealand must, of necessity, take this egalitarianism into account.

Welfare policy and practice and the culture of social equality in Aotearoa New Zealand provide an essential background to the second element in this strand: the influence on—or, arguably, encroachment into—social work leadership exerted by international business and public sector organisational leadership thinking. Since the 1980s, social work leadership models of practice have been so profoundly impacted by this wider field that transnational approaches have become inextricably woven into leadership exercised in the context of welfare (see, e.g., O'Donoghue et al., 1999). Social work organisational leadership exercised in the welfare environment is treated as the overarching milieu within which the influence of international theory and practice takes its place. I address these international influences by considering three critical organisational leadership discourses: Western, and specifically US leadership research and practice; private sector, that is, business, leadership; and public sector leadership, particularly new public management (NPM) which is derived from the century-old scientific management model advocated by Frederick Winslow Taylor (Pollitt, 1990; Taylor, 1967).

Organisational leadership in its widest context essentially draws from Western sources, in particular the US. Private sector leadership and management thinking has influenced state sector NPM and its associated policies; together they have, in significant measure, determined organisational design, culture and practice in social work agencies. The predominance of the US in leadership research (Jackson & Parry, 2011) and its pervasive
influence on the organisational leadership field, including social work, mandates its exploration in the literature including the Aotearoa New Zealand setting.

Organisational business and public sector leadership literature therefore provides an essential element in the second literature strand. As noted, this study sets leadership actions within organisations. In this managerialist environment, the question emerges: how are leadership actions predicated on social work ethics, identity, standards and the “core management purpose of the social work profession” (Sewpaul & Jones, 2005, p. 219) exercised? The tensions between professional ethics as informing social work leadership and NPM as the underpinning approach to organisational design and managerial leadership in social work agencies are explored. In order to understand NPM, an extensive public sector management literature describing reforms introduced since 1980, primarily in the US, UK, Canada, Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand will be examined. The literature acknowledges that the Aotearoa New Zealand reforms took place in “unique circumstances” demonstrating a remarkable lucidity (Hood, 1991; Schick, 2001). The public sector reforms in Aotearoa New Zealand therefore set a benchmark of radical thinking amounting to a revolution (Hughes & Smart, 2012; Scott, 2001). In effect, that revolution became another discourse which together with the welfare perspective has moulded the public sector since the introduction of post-1987 managerialist ideology in Aotearoa New Zealand (Boston, Martin, Pallot, & Walsh, 1996).

The turbulence to which these reforms in no small way contributed became an intrinsic element of my personal journey as a public sector social work manager. The consequential cultural transformation at the professional and organisational levels carried a greater impact on my professional identity and personal wellbeing than any other influencing factor over six years of middle and frontline management responsibilities. Reflections on these themes were offered in a 2010 paper (M. Webster, 2010).

**Social work ethics, identity and standards as relevant to organisational leadership**

The third strand, building on the second, has been selected because social work has developed as an internationally recognised profession since the early part of the last century. Ethics in the profession, although contestable, have been under consideration
for a century (Flexner, 1915). The profession’s international identity is recognised through the IFSW Code of Ethics (IFSW, 2004). Current standards were adopted in 2004 (IFSW & IASSW, 2005): the management standard reported in Sewpaul and Jones (2005), already cited, applies to leadership and management. Although Aotearoa New Zealand has developed its own professional social work Code of Ethics (Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers [ANZASW], 2008), not all registered social workers are ANZASW members. As described by Banks (2004), non-members may accept the ANZASW Code as a normative statement of right actions, character and values expected of practitioners designed to create trust in the profession by the public and service consumers. They may, however, opt to apply the Code of Conduct issued by the Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB) (2008) as a more specific guide to practice, similar to an employment code of conduct.

Analysing these professional documents is essential to determine the values underpinning social work and, explicitly, its attitude towards management and leadership, and therefore the aim of the project. The substantive literature review will explore potential connections between social work organisational leadership, ethical standards, attributes such as authenticity, spirituality, servant leadership and, as Appleton (2010) points out, personal and professional integrity. Although one step removed from the organisational immediacy of leadership actions, I suggest that examining how leadership is exercised in the light of the ethical requirements of the profession is arguably the prime consideration in the project. The literature review in full will explore the tensions already emerging in the context identified by Appleton’s integrity research. Adams (2011), for example, responds to the sensitive issue posed by the question: “Does private conscience trump professional duty?” This aspect of the literature review carries profound weight. Debates on ethics and the literature associated with ethical codes have in recent years become an increasing focus in social work—and also the wider field of the helping professions (see, for example, Gray & Webb, 2010).

Discussion on social work leadership in the context of ethics, integrity and conscience is closely connected to issues associated with organisational political power and its influence on decision-making. The profession has long been concerned with the
systemic consequences of power in society in relation to marginalisation and oppression of client populations through critical theorists such as Fook (2002), as cited in Gardner (2006). More recently, critical theory has been applied by social work to its own agencies where leadership is exercised. Gray (2010), for example, identifies the tensions between ethical practice and organisational imperatives. Gardner (2006, p. 82) draws attention to the value of a critical framework to analyse social structures in terms of power, advantage and disadvantage. As already noted, Follett (1995, 2005) articulates power-over and power-with thinking to this theme, placing her writing at the heart of social work leadership understandings.

Follett’s (1995) notion of jointly developed power immediately suggests a connection with the strengths perspectives in social work practice described by Saleebey (1996, p. 297) as viewing people and communities “in the light of their capacities, talents, competencies, possibilities, visions, values, and hopes.” Roff (2004, p. 203) suggests that a strengths approach may be applied to organisations as a “unique opportunity.” The literature review will explore the potential for such thinking to organisational leadership in a continuum represented by Follett’s power-over vis-à-vis power-with leadership lenses. In particular, appreciative enquiry—based on the premise that every organisation contains positives capable of generating change (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2008)—will be examined as a management approach carrying organisational affinities to strengths practice. Ethical practice espoused by the social work profession may be seen as capable of expression in managerial leadership philosophy and practice.

Indigenous leadership models and connections with biological complexity thinking

As noted in the previous section, this research proceeds from the underpinning premise that in Aotearoa New Zealand, professional social work practice and organisational leadership will work from an ethical base, be it from the ANZASW Code of Ethics (2008) or the SWRB Code of Conduct (2008). I also strongly advocate the notion that, in considering ethical values which determine leadership actions in Aotearoa New Zealand social work agencies, an indigenous perspective to the profession—introduced by virtue of an acknowledgment of the Treaty of Waitangi principles—must never be marginalised. (For Aotearoa New Zealand-specific references, including the Treaty and
its principles, the reader is referred to the Glossary of Aotearoa New Zealand terms in Appendix 2. An asterisk inserted hereafter against a term indicates its inclusion in the Glossary.) In Aotearoa New Zealand, professionally and legislatively required social work competency and registration obligate practitioners to demonstrate bicultural knowledge and skills (SWRB, 2011).

In fact, the bicultural nature of the Code of Ethics offers a uniquely distinguishing mark of the profession in New Zealand, while also noting that the IFSW recognises the rights of indigenous populations in professional practice. Conceptual connections with indigenous leadership models and thence to Western management’s discovery of biological complexity thinking also emerge.

In its Statement of Ethical Principles, the IFSW (2012) connects United Nations human rights declarations and conventions to social work practice and action. In this context, the rights of indigenous populations are validated by the IFSW through the International Labour Organisation’s (ILO) Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (ILO, 1989). Approaches to indigenous social work practice are increasingly emerging in the literature, for example, Briskman (2007) and Gray, Yellow Bird, & Coates (2008). In the Aotearoa New Zealand context, indigenous Māori perspectives on “living” organisations (Te Whaiti Nui-a-Toi, 2001) connect with organic, or emergent, complex adaptive systems theory. Hannah, Lord, and Pearce (2011, p. 216) propose that “effective leadership maximizes the human potential of the group at large, thereby expanding the pool of complexity the group can generate.” The suggestion by these authors that biological and systems complexity thinking essentially intersect will be explored in the literature review. A further example is found in De Geus’ (1999) notion of the living company, depicting an organisation in terms of the people who work in it rather than the charts showing lines of authority with which we have become so familiar. In this way, the third and fourth strands of the literature review are essentially two sides of one coin: Aotearoa New Zealand bicultural social work ethics require an indigenous expression if authentic social work leadership actions are to be consistent with professional values. These synergies underpin the literature strands selected to conceptually inform this research.
A schematic depiction of these four strands as informing a social work conceptualisation of leadership and the desired end-product of the project is offered in Figure 1.1. The literature review will explore the strands and their connections with the research aim and existing literature.
1.5 Importance of the project: Location of knowledge gap

The rationale for—and importance of—the project emanates from the currently limited research and conceptualisation of leadership in Aotearoa New Zealand social work organisations from the unique Treaty perspective as integral to social work’s ethical base (ANZASW, 2008). Additionally, organisationally based social work leadership has been profoundly influenced by NPM thinking. The tensions between Treaty perspectives on social work leadership and the pervasive influence of NPM are integral to the research. Social work leadership cannot be conceptualised without reference to these tensions, nor can it be treated in isolation from organisational management thinking. How management has influenced leadership and how leadership is exercised in a managerial environment is uniquely examined in the New Zealand context of a pure, ideologically driven NPM (Chapman & Duncan, 2007; Hood, 1991; Schick, 2001).
These management influences on social work, including social work leadership, were the subject of a jointly authored paper published in 2007 in which I explored “management premised on social work values ... whereby social work managerial philosophy determines organisational design and thus practice” (Webster & Tofi, 2007, p.50). The current project integrates the three professional, academic and practice social work communities in a way that underpins and informs the whole study design, worldview, and theoretical lens. Integrating these three social work communities is validated by the conceptualisation of management as a core purpose of social work by the IFSW and IASSW thus explicitly placing management in the context of organisations “dedicated to the core purposes of the social work profession” (Sewpaul & Jones, 2005, p. 219).

Leadership occurs in that managerial organisational context. The aim of the research (to develop a New Zealand model of social work leadership) identifies the gap in our current knowledge. A search reveals minimal literature in social work leadership in Aotearoa New Zealand. Dale (2006) examined “Probation practice, leadership and effective service delivery” in his qualitative doctoral thesis exploring those themes from “the perspectives of probation officers and service managers in the New Zealand Probation Service.” Dale’s exploration took place in the context of “the impact of public sector reform” as representing “forces of change from 1985-2001” (Dale, 2006, p. 32). Dale and Trlin (2007, 2010) have subsequently published on leadership in the Probation Service. Dale’s focus on leadership exercised in the NPM environment will constitute a valuable resource for the current project from an organisational perspective.

Matthewson’s (2007) research paper explored professional social work leadership in the Aotearoa New Zealand mental health field. The study noted leadership ambiguity, a lack of organisationally derived power and opportunity for organic influence based on professional knowledge and skills. Matthewson drew particular attention to “a level of vagueness and lack of clarity about the [professional social work leader] role” (2007, p. 45) but suggested that the leadership role requires a proactive, action-oriented stance rather than formal job prescription or being “told what to do.” These observations will contribute to the current study; however, Matthewson acknowledges methodological limitations precluding generalisations.
Matthewson’s (2007) paper usefully connects with a co-authored paper (McNabb & Webster, 2010) in which I examine a social work contribution to interdisciplinary leadership in mental health settings, addressing gaps in social work leadership resulting from organisational structure changes. Noting limited research on these changes, the paper explores how social work professional leaders applied Kouzes and Posner’s (2007) “exemplary leadership” using action learning. This exploration—again integrating Māori and Western leadership approaches—identifies themes which appear in the literature review in this project. Participating social workers articulated hope that, despite the potentially constricting organisational context, their enthusiasm for collegial support and concern for a dysfunctional organisation remained (McNabb & Webster, 2010, p. 55). The tensions between management structures and social work practice values noted in this paper appear in the conceptualisation of this project.

In a paper exploring social work values in frontline team manager-worker relationships (M. Webster, 2010), I argue for the potential of high performance in a “managerialist world,” suggesting that social work management philosophy can influence organisational structure and practice in the face of quantitatively driven NPM derived from scientific management. The article draws on critical social work literature, indigenous Māori approaches to organisation thinking and leadership, workplace tensions between ethics, the organisation and the individual, and pathways to exercising leadership through systems and complexity theory. These themes provide a platform for three of the proposed conceptual strands in the literature review: organisational leadership theory, professional social work identity, and indigenous models of leadership.

A subsequent paper (Webster, 2011) articulates leadership as a journey characterised by practitioners’ identity and values through which authentic leadership is exercised. The journey model is set in post-1987 transformational changes introduced by neo-liberal management thinking in the organisational and policy contexts of New Zealand social work services. These changes coincided with recognition of Treaty principles in social service policy and practice. Change agency leadership integrates Māori approaches with biological complexity thinking emerging in Western leadership literature. The model synthesises tensions from these conceptual influences and proposes that it comprises
authenticity, personal mastery and proficiency; ethical values; self-management; and servant, shared and exemplary leadership. I suggest that these qualities constitute ethical leadership, or leadership of integrity consonant with the social work profession (Appleton, 2010).

In a conceptual paper (Webster, 2014), I propose that social justice and ecological systems thinking offers unique perspectives to frame a vision for social work leadership. I argue that leadership is underpinned by the profession’s values in its ethical codes: social justice; authenticity; spirituality; servant leadership; personal and professional integrity. An indigenous leadership perspective derived from the bicultural code of ethics (ANZASW, 2008) connects with organic perceptions of leadership and whole systems and complex adaptive approaches. Tensions between ethics, organisational imperatives, and pervasive NPM requiring future attention are identified.

This brief survey suggests that the gap in the Aotearoa New Zealand social work leadership research literature is therefore located in the absence of an overarching model of social work leadership for Aotearoa New Zealand. The four strands make a solid contribution to the literature identified in this section. The wider organisational leadership literature (e.g., Kouzes & Posner, 2007) informed much of the conceptual thinking in all these papers; professional social work identity (e.g., Gray, 2010) and indigenous models of leadership were likewise integral to discussion (e.g., Te Whaiti Nui-a-Toi, 2001), and the Aotearoa New Zealand welfare context (e.g., Tennant, 2007) contributed to an understanding of policy influences on social work leadership. However, the four strands do not create in their own right a model of social work leadership. Herein stands the potential contribution to knowledge.

1.6 Study aims, objectives and research design

In this project, the central phenomenon (Creswell & Clark, 2011) which the researcher seeks to understand is captured in the research question:

What are the fundamental elements of organisational leadership within social work in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand?
The wording of this question sets the parameters of the research aim and research objectives. The question relates specifically to social work leadership in Aotearoa New Zealand organisational settings. The social work profession is in view, not generic social services which include the overarching human services/social care organisational field. Research data were therefore solicited from social workers able to respond to interview questions which relate to leadership in organisations whose function is to deliver social work services. Those responses will address the research aim, which is:

To develop a New Zealand model of social work organisational leadership

How the project will achieve this aim generates its research methodology, described in chapter 6. Research objectives, expressing how the goals of the project will be achieved, form two groups.

The first group of objectives explores the four purposefully selected strands of leadership from the literature already identified in order to determine how, or if, they contribute to the aim of the research project. These strands are social work leadership in the contexts of [1] management; [2] welfare policy and practice and the influence on social work leadership exerted by international business and public sector organisational leadership thinking, including NPM; [3] social work ethics, identity and standards; and [4] indigenous leadership approaches—largely developed in North America, Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand—and their connections with biological complexity thinking.

I propose that these strands represent a unique configuration of the literature, and suggest that their exploration and synthesis will provide a conceptual underpinning for the second group of research objectives which are directed at the data to be gathered for analysis:

- to explore how social work practitioners who hold or have held leadership or management responsibility in Aotearoa New Zealand conceptualise leadership;

- to describe participants’ experiences of social work leadership in Aotearoa New Zealand.
The literature review does not drive the study, but explains it by an overview of the gaps in current knowledge (Padgett, 2008, p. 206). The data gathered and their subsequent findings constitute the addition to knowledge which this project seeks to reveal.

The study employs a constructionist, qualitative paradigm in which participants will engage in a sense-making exercise using semi-structured interviews. A descriptive/exploratory methodology will be used and data analysed thematically via NVivo software. Purposive sampling limits participants to registered social workers (RSW) and acknowledges that the researcher interprets the meaning assigned by research participants. These elements, summarised in Figure 1.2, are the subject of Chapter 6, which addresses the research design and methodology.

Figure 1.2
Research Design

| Epistemology: Constructionism Qualitative | Theoretical perspective: Symbolic interactionism | Methodology: Descriptive/exploratory Narrative approach | Methods: Purposive sampling Semi-structured interviews Thematic analysis |

Source: Adapted from Crotty (1998, p. 4)

1.7 Structure of thesis chapters

The current chapter introduced the project by setting the scene, describing organisational, professional and personal perspectives; provided a transnational overview of social work leadership from the US, Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia and the UK; introduced in brief the literature strands whose unique configuration underpins and makes a case for the entire project. Having laid that conceptual foundation, the significance of the study in terms of the current gap in our knowledge has been described and leads logically to a succinct statement of the aims, objectives and design of the research. The intention of Chapter 1 has been to introduce to the reader an overview of the thesis capable of being opened up into the substantive content to follow.
Chapters 2 to 5 will set forth the literature informing the study. The overarching theme is to address social work leadership in the context of the four strands. Chapter 2 deals with the first strand by exploring social work leadership in the context of management. It aims to respond to two questions: first, how will the project address conceptual tensions between leadership and management?; second, are those terms interchangeable? Chapter 3 addresses the second strand encompassing two elements: social work leadership in the context of historical and current welfare policy in Aotearoa New Zealand and the influence on social work leadership exerted by international business and public sector organisational leadership thinking, including NPM. Chapter 4 considers how social work leadership is exercised in the light of the ethical requirements of the profession. Leadership actions are exercised in the context of organisational political power. The profession is ethically committed to addressing marginalisation and oppression in society. How does it apply that commitment to its own agency structures and decision-making? In addition, ethical recognition of indigenous peoples in social work is expressed in Aotearoa New Zealand as reflecting the unique place of Māori. The SWRB (2011) and ANZASW (2008) mandate a bicultural practice model, thus naturally connecting to the content of Chapter 5: social work leadership actions as consistent with biological complexity thinking. Indigenous leadership perspectives resonate with emergent Western application of biological approaches to organisations.

Chapter 6 addresses the research study aims, objectives and research design. An essential statement has already been offered. The chapter will provide detailed consideration of conceptual and professional issues, specifically in respect of how professional practice is integrated with the research purpose. The interactions set forth in Figure 1.2 are unpacked. The epistemological basis of the qualitative constructionist paradigm to be used is explained. The symbolic interactionism theoretical perspective, descriptive/exploratory methodology, semi-structured interview method and thematic analysis of data using NVivo10 software are presented as an integrated statement. In other words, the iterative nature of qualitative research signalled by the two-way arrows in Figure 1.2 is clearly stated. The basis for sampling population parameters, how participants will be recruited and ethical considerations are set forth.
The remaining four chapters, 7 to 10, present the findings and analysis of data (chapters 7-9) and the model of social work leadership developed as the project’s summative statement. Chapter 7 reports research findings on the values informing social work leadership; Chapter 8 reports the findings on leadership actions; Chapter 9, the context in which leadership takes place. Chapter 10 presents the model of social work leadership, the aim of the research.
Chapter 2
Social work leadership in the context of management

A conceptual base for the project will be developed by exploring themes found in the four identified strands in the literature. The first strand examines leadership in the context of management and asks whether the terms leadership and management are interchangeable. Determining this issue will inform the subsequent review of relevant literature and therefore presents as a crucial construct. The second strand addresses the broad historical and current Aotearoa New Zealand social service and health policy context and international and Aotearoa New Zealand organisational leadership theory; the third, international and Aotearoa New Zealand professional social work ethics and identity; and fourth, indigenous models of leadership from North America, Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand and their connections with biological complexity thinking.

The literature review critically engages with the “key contributions to leadership studies” (Collinson, Grint, & Jackson, 2011, p. xix). Figure 2.1 presents an integrated approach applying relevant literature designed to flesh out the four literature strands which inform the project and thereby offer a framework for the qualitative researcher’s voice. Silverman (2010) points out that, prior to data collection and analysis, the purpose of the initial literature examination require responses to these questions: What is already known? What is the researcher’s critique of that knowledge? Has another researcher carried out the same research? What research is related? How does the project fit with prior work, and why is it worth doing (Silverman, 2010, pp. 327 - 328)? Data analysis and findings require a re-evaluative critique of that initial review (Silverman, 2010, p. 325).

The literature review in this chapter is therefore designed to offer a conceptual framework in which the research question, aims and objectives were located.
2.1 Leadership in the context of management

At the outset of the literature review, the tensions associated with the terms *leadership* and *management* are explored in order to address two critical underpinning issues: how does this research propose to treat the two terms, and are they interchangeable? How will the project conceptualise the tension found in the literature between these two constructs (Jackson & Parry, 2011)?

This issue has occasioned a range of strongly held perspectives in the literature, occupying multiple points on a continuum. At one end of the spectrum we find

Note. Lines indicate conceptual connections between the strands and the research literature.

Source: Webster (2014, p. 82) (Reproduced with permission)
unequivocal statements that the two terms are interchangeable (e.g., Coulshed, Mullender, Jones, & Thompson, 2006). At the other end, they are perceived as radically different (e.g., Zaleznik, 2010). A conditional perspective is found at an intermediate point in the continuum between these divergent views.

I suggest that the most common intermediate perspective draws on the functional division of management into planning, organising, leading and controlling (Jackson & Parry, 2011, p. 19). By endorsing Drucker’s (1955) argument that managers exercise organic, or informal, and positional, or formal leadership in organisations, Jackson and Parry (2011, p. 19) suggest that to separate leaders and managers is to ghettoise them. It must be noted that this ghetto perspective focuses on the person, rather than the exercise of organisational leadership which this research seeks to examine.

This intermediate point of definition in the continuum may be viewed through a social constructivist lens, recognisable to the social work profession by virtue of its appropriation of Bronfenbrenner (2005) and to the methodology adopted for this research. This approach proposes that leadership actions are socially constructed by the problems and challenges that organisations face. Grint (2005) suggests that tame or familiar problems are appropriately addressed by management actions, but that wicked problems, with no ready solution, require leadership actions. Critical problems provoked by a crisis with a short time frame for resolution require command actions. Grint argues (2005, p. 1473) that these leadership actions require collaborative processes employing, for example, appreciative enquiry which is based on the premise that every organisation contains positives capable of generating change (Cooperrider et al., 2008). The management of change as a leadership action will be addressed in the thesis literature review. Grint further proposes that management as an expression of authority emanates from certainty, whereas leadership is required in an environment of “uncertainty” (Grint, 2005, p. 1473). Operating within a context of ambiguity is therefore seen as inimical to management, calling instead for leadership which, Grint suggests, asks the right questions rather than determines the right answers.

The notion of decision-making in a context of ambiguity creates conceptual connections with complexity leadership (Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007). These writers propose
that leadership is not seen as *individual* but occurs as *interactions* between interdependent agents—defined as a complex adaptive system. Such interactions are suggestive of the collaborative processes identified by Grint (2005), expressing an enabling leadership model congruent with social work’s ethical commitment to empowerment. Creating an environment of empowerment is to perceive leadership as influencing the culture of an organisation, pre-eminently the domain of beliefs, values, perceptions and worldviews (Schein, 2010). The notion that management and leadership occupy distinct domains—that management is essentially transactional in nature whereas leadership operates transformationally—is the position espoused by a number of leadership scholars of whom the pre-eminent examples are, perhaps, Bass and Bass (2008); Bass and Avolio (1993); Bennis and Nanus (1985) and Burns (1978). In this view, transformational leaders build or change culture but transactional leaders operate within existing cultural norms (Bass & Avolio, 1993).

The tension between transformational and transactional leadership brings a further dimension to the debate. Bass and Avolio (1993, p. 112) perceive both as genres of leadership but bridge the leadership/management divide by depicting transactional leadership as using conditional rewards: management-by-exception. Arguably, transactional leadership may therefore be interpreted as managerial in nature, recalling the division of management into four functions of which one is leadership (Jackson & Parry, 2011). Bass and Bass (2008, p. 653) suggest that, from this perspective, leaders tend towards transformational actions, managers towards transactional. Leaders focus on essential actions to achieve their goals; managers focus on due process (Bennis & Nanus, 1985).

Drawing from these considerations, the project takes into account Mackenzie’s (1969) proposition, as cited in Bass and Bass (2008, p. 655), that the plethora of management activities—essentially the familiar functions, *inter alia*, of planning, organising, and controlling—are concerned with things: managing executive details; decision-making; exercising judgment; allocating work to achieve the organisation’s objectives; designing organisational structure and job descriptions; determining lines of accountability and the like. Leadership by contrast is seen as interacting with people, requiring communication skills to influence people to achieve desired objectives; purposeful action; motivating;
conflict resolution; managing change; selecting, training and developing people and so on (Mackenzie, 1969, pp. 81-86).

The results of both leadership and management actions in this approach may be equally transformational. Restructuring or redesigning organisations, rewriting job descriptions and line management accountabilities—all management functions according to Mackenzie—may in fact produce greater transformation in the working environment than the person-to-person or person-to-persons interactions of the leader. The distinction between leadership and management in this research is, therefore, not determined by organisational outcomes but by the nature of the actions undertaken and the problems which give rise to those actions (Grint, 2005). Managers as leaders have profoundly affected the ways in social workers exercise their professional duties, as the public sector literature review will demonstrate. Leadership as the exercise of influence and power operates to a far greater extent on creating or changing the culture of the organisation where conditions of uncertainty are seen, as Grint (2005) and Uhl-Bien et al. (2007) observe. Organisational culture is pre-eminently created by people rather than things. Leadership actions therefore fit naturally into that domain.

2.2 Culture, leadership and organisation

Organisational leadership as located in people-related activities immediately suggests that it cannot be understood without taking into account organisational culture. Connections between leadership actions, organisational culture and a systems approach expressed by a number of authors (e.g., Attwood et al., 2003; Jaskyte & Dressler, 2005; Schein, 2010) are a major constituent of the current project. The overarching approach used by the GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organisational Behaviour Effectiveness) research project (House et al., 2002) proposes sets of interrelationship which encompass societal and organisational culture, leadership attributes and behaviours, organisational strategic considerations, and leader effectiveness and acceptance (Figure 2.2). The GLOBE project also assesses “implicit leadership theories” in the context of national and ethnic cultural identities (House et al., 2002, p. 3). The GLOBE project draws extensively on Hofstede’s (2001) power-distance studies which examine the influence of national cultures on the degree of acceptance of power differentials in organisations. As part of
the GLOBE study, Kennedy (2008) articulates a culturally derived Aotearoa New Zealand leadership model characterised by a participative team-based commitment to sharing success drawing on the country’s egalitarian beliefs. Kennedy’s analysis illustrates the influence of societal culture on organisational form and practices and thence to leader attributes and behaviour.

The GLOBE project’s overarching approach proposes interrelationships between no less than 13 attributes including societal and organisational culture, leadership attributes and behaviours, organisational strategic considerations, and leader effectiveness and acceptance. These interrelationships—numbered and summarised as follows—are inserted in Figure 2.2 to facilitate understanding:

1. Societal cultural values and practices affect what leaders do.
2. Leadership affects organisational form, culture and practices.
3. Societal cultural values and practices also affect organisational culture and practices.
4. Organisational culture and practices also affect what leaders do.
5, 6. Societal culture and organisational form, culture and practices both influence the process by which people come to share implicit theories of leadership.
7. Strategic organisational contingencies affect organisational form, culture and practices and leader behaviours.
8. Strategic organisational contingencies affect leader attributes and behaviour.
9. Relationships between strategic organisational contingencies and organisational form, culture and practices will be moderated by cultural forces.
10. Leader acceptance is a function of the interaction between CLTs [culturally endorsed implicit leadership theories] and leader attributes and behaviours.
11. Leader effectiveness is a function of the interaction between leader attributes and behaviours and organisational contingencies.
12. Leader acceptance influences leader effectiveness.
Leader effectiveness affects leader acceptance. (House et al., 2002, pp. 8, 9.)

The notion of *culture* enunciated in the GLOBE research needs analysis to set its parameters. The term derives from social anthropology from where it migrated to organisational psychology and leadership and management studies. The anthropologist Ralph Piddington (1960, p. 4) described the culture of a people as comprising three components: material objects, or artefacts; a body of knowledge, beliefs and values constituting the spiritual, social economic and political systems—including accepted morality, law and appropriate behaviour; and their codified magico-religious beliefs and practices.

Schein (2010) draws on these anthropological components to inform his organisational culture schema. Schein proposes that worldviews—assumptions about fundamental perceptions of how human communities relate to the world around them—inform values and beliefs which, in turn, give meaning to visible behaviour and physical objects, i.e., artefacts. Observable behaviour cannot be understood unless worldviews and values are appreciated. Schein’s (2010, p. 17) definition of organisational culture has been frequently cited:

> A pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems.

Cultural influences on leadership emanate from diverse origins. To understand those influences requires critical appreciation of the variant ideas of culture. Schein (2010) argues that leadership is exercised through a cultural lens. Congruent with the GLOBE study, this research adopts King’s (2008) five-level perspective of culture as an analytical framework: national culture; organisational culture; organisational climate; sub-unit culture and organisational subcultures; and team climate.

The first level, national culture, is a social anthropological construct, defined by Clark (1990, p. 66) as “the pattern of enduring personality characteristics found among the
populations of nations,” thus connecting with Hofstede’s model. To merely apply this perspective in a society comprising multicultural and diverse ethnicities is simplistic; critical reflection is required, for example, to evaluate Kennedy’s (2008) observations about Aotearoa New Zealand leadership.

King’s second perspective, organisational culture, offers four diverse lenses. An integrationist view proposes a single, unified organisational culture emerging from assumptions, values, and artefacts (Schein, 2010). Martin (2002, p. 94) suggests the metaphor of a solid monolith for this perspective: a single picture regardless of the observer’s diverse viewing angles. A differentiated view puts forward the notion that cultural consensus occurs at lower levels (subcultures). Subcultures may reflect organisational structure, professional occupations, task assignments, ethnic values, rank, or technologies (King, 2008, p. 38). In respect of this project, the relationship between organisational structures—the product of managerial thinking—and professional social work values may be the organisational cultural arena in which leadership actions are mediated most profoundly. Martin’s (2002, p. 94) subcultural metaphor is evocative: “islands of clarity in a sea of ambiguity.” Sub-unit cultures relate to designated work departments; organisational subcultures apply to shared values independent of the formal structure. Increasing placement of social workers in multidisciplinary teams, for example in the health sector, provides the context for these situations. They are also the environment in which professional ethical codes may influence leadership actions. As will become apparent in the findings, the size of an organisation influences the emergence of a subculture, as for example where social work is represented as a minority identity.

King (2008, pp. 38-39) conceives his last perspective, team climate, as a snapshot manifestation of culture: attitudes shared by team members vis-à-vis decision-making, tasks understanding and rewards. King observes that:

When groups of individuals work collaboratively as when a team pursues a focused objective, there is no question that something resembling a climate forms. This has been recognized in terms of the “team cognition” of the group. (Mathieu, Goodwin, Heffner, Salas, & Cannon-Bowers, 2000)
Climate is less enduring than culture, but is likely to be a more accurate descriptor of senior management surveys to assess current morale and the like in the organisation.

Organisational culture and its relationship to leadership actions is so pervasive that it is an arguable proposition that every dimension in the literature informing the four conceptual strands (Figure 2.1) is ultimately a cultural issue. Schein (2004, p. 132) applies the term ideology, *inter alia,* as the “conscious component of the assumptions that make up the culture.” In the political arena, ideology is exhibited in legislation and policy and sets the parameters for state sector organisational designs and expected outputs. The NPM revolution (Boston et al., 1996) is a prime example of such influence on leadership; but no less so is the Māori renaissance (Walker, 1990) which is also situated in the social work bi-cultural code of ethics in Aotearoa New Zealand (ANZASW, 2008).
Figure 2.2
Reciprocities Between Culture, Leadership and Organisation

Note. a Indicates an interaction between two arrows.

Source: Adapted from House et al. (2002, p. 8)
Historical and philosophical perspectives on leadership and the place accorded to followership in more recent years reflect the societal ethos of the times. Avolio et al. (2009), for example, adopt a time-based framework in their examination of the authentic leadership literature; perspectives based on cognitive science; “new genre” notions of complexity and shared leadership approaches. They see leadership as a developing field of practice. Organisational social work leadership, the subject of this thesis, is exercised in all these philosophical and ethical contexts. How social workers as respondents will conceptualise leadership with these diverse considerations in mind will be instructive.

2.3 Defining leadership

This research argues that defining leadership is mediated by the lens through which it is viewed. The strands (Figure 2.1) which are informed by the leadership literature constitute those lenses. Defining leadership for the purposes of this project is set forth in Table 2.1.

The purpose of the project is to articulate a research-based model of Aotearoa New Zealand social work organisational leadership. The pathway to this objective is appropriately charted by considering the conceptual lens identified above. The discussion is predicated on the approach already identified—that the strands are not treated as silos, but as carrying organic connections.

Leadership as people-related and ipso facto concerned with the creation, preservation or changing of organisational culture connects with diverse perspectives in the schema in Figure 2.1 and Table 2.1. Cultural influences emanate from multiple origins and are evidenced in multiple locations—a theme captured by Hofstede’s (2001) phrase, “culture’s consequences.” Weymes (2001), for example, suggests that the primary purpose of leadership is to influence the feelings and emotions, and thus the actions, of those associated with the organisation, an argument based on his perception that successful organisations are maintained by relationships, not leadership. Using a sports team to illustrate this process, Weymes notes that:

As staff became passionate (emotional) about the dream, they in turn acted as inspirational players for those around them, thus spreading the dream throughout the organisation. (2001, p. 328)
Following Schein (2010), this research adopts the notion that, to understand the values, beliefs and observable artefacts of a community of any size or nature the observer must equally understand the unexamined assumptions, or worldview, of that community.

Table 2.1
Defining Leadership From Diverse Perspectives

- People-related and therefore connected to cultural influences
- Exercised in the context of
  - Legislation, policy, organisation, politics
  - Transformational new public management
  - The Māori renaissance
- A process
- Centred on the perspectives of
  - The leader
  - The follower
  - Cultural analysis
  - Distributed leadership
  - Ethical, authentic or spiritual leadership
- Inseparable from ethical perspectives:
  - Authenticity, spirituality, servant leadership
  - Personal and professional integrity
  - Indigenous approaches
  - Biological complexity thinking

With that approach in mind, I advance the notion that cultural assumptions are located, for example, in political philosophies of which the prime example in this project is NPM, embraced by both major political parties in New Zealand in the 1980s and 1990s. The influence of that revolution was demonstrated by the adoption of private sector leadership and management practices in social work agencies (Boston et al., 1996; O'Donoghue et al., 1999). Simultaneously, the Māori renaissance* (Moon, 2009; Walker, 2004)—coinciding with political and professional social work recognition of institutional racism in the Department of Social Welfare (Ministerial Advisory Committee on a Māori Perspective for the Department of Social Welfare & Rangihau, 1986)—created an indigenous perspective to social work organisational policy and practice with profound cultural implications for leadership actions.
Not least of these implications was leadership exercised from a collective perspective, quite distinct from individualistic Western thinking (Sveiby, 2011). Furthermore, indigenous thinking coincided with notions of shared, distributed leadership (Barker & Floersch, 2010), spirituality and servant leadership (Freeman, 2011), and leadership authenticity (Leonard, 2009; Luthans & Avolio, 2003). In the specific context of Aotearoa New Zealand, Tipu Ake* brings a Māori perspective by depicting organisational leadership as exercised biologically through the metaphor of a living tree (Te Whaiti Nui-a-Toi, 2001). In recent years, Western complexity leadership and metaphorical organisational thinking has embraced biological models (Morgan, 2006; Uhl-Bien et al., 2007).

This brief overview flags the interconnectedness between the literature strands for fuller treatment in the thesis. An overriding theme in the project is found in social work systemic, or ecological, thinking whereby practitioners operate in a person-in-society paradigm drawing on such non-social work theorists as Bronfenbrenner (2005) and Jarvis (2009). Analysing organisational culture has even made its way as a tool to predict practitioner performance in a social work agency (Agbényiga, 2011). Leadership exercised in these multiple dimensions cannot to be confined to a single definition.

A conceptual canvas has been drawn which defines, first, the parameters of leadership and management; and, second, which considered the relationship of leadership with culture. A formative statement defining leadership was offered: whether participants identify with it will be revealed through data analysis. Social work leadership was presented as influencing and influenced by three dimensions of culture—national culture, drawing on Hofstede’s work since 1980; organisational culture, derived largely from Schein’s (2004; 2010) analytic tool and definition; and organisational climate, seen by King (2008) as a snapshot manifestation of culture. Culture as originating in social anthropology from where it migrated to organisational psychology and leadership and management studies was discussed. I suggested that the relationship between organisational culture and leadership actions is so pervasive that, arguably, the literature which informs the four conceptual strands (Figure 2.1 and Figure 2.2) is ultimately a cultural issue. Social work places great value on cultural constructs by virtue of its commitment to diversity, as noted in earlier discussion.
This canvas informs the next chapter which explores leadership literature in the context of historic and current welfare policy and international and New Zealand business and public sector organisational leadership.
Chapter 3
Contexts of social work leadership: Welfare policy, international and New Zealand business and public sector organisational leadership

3.1 Introduction

Having canvassed those conceptual issues, Chapter 3 turns its attention to the organisational and policy context in which social work leadership is exercised. It is in this environment that social work practice and organisational leadership takes place. Figure 3.1, an extract from Figure 2.1, focuses attention on the subject matter for discussion in this chapter.

3.2 Historical and current New Zealand welfare context of organisational social work leadership

The contexts in which social work leadership actions occur are simultaneously philosophical and practical. Ideas, cultures and perspectives have consequences (Weaver, 1984) and give rise to models. In social work, models also exert influence on ideas. As noted in Chapter 1,

Figure 3.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literature strands contributing to research aim</th>
<th>Leadership research literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strand 2</td>
<td>Leadership in the context of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare policy context</td>
<td>Legislation, policy, organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International business/ public sector leadership</td>
<td>Ideology and politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New public management (NPM)</td>
<td>Transformational NPM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Lines indicate conceptual connections between the strands and the research literature.

Payne (2005) suggests that social work actions become theories: those theories are the product of the context in which those actions take place. I suggest that social work leadership thinking and leadership actions become a reinforcing loop, evident in this and the remaining literature strands.
The second literature strand to be canvassed in Chapter 3 comprises two elements. The first is Aotearoa New Zealand’s enduring commitment to welfare in both not-for-profit and public sectors (Tennant, 2007). It is in this context that social work activity occurs. The implications for social work conceptualisations of organisational leadership arise from state welfare policy and interactions between public sector and NGO social work agencies. I argue that these interactions represent a reinforcing loop: the profession’s commitment to welfare policy has become so pervasive that it exerts a decisive influence on leadership actions. Those actions are mediated through the philosophical commitment to welfare as underpinning policy and practice (e.g., Sanders et al., 2008), a requisite component in researching social work leadership.

Welfare policy and practice and the culture of social equality in Aotearoa New Zealand (Kennedy, 2008) provide an essential background to the second element in this strand: the influence—or, arguably, encroachment—onto social work leadership exerted by international business and public sector organisational leadership thinking. Since the 1980s, social work leadership models of practice have been so profoundly impacted by this wider field that transnational approaches have become inextricably woven into leadership exercised in the context of welfare (see, for example, O’Donoghue et al., 1999). Social work organisational leadership exercised in the welfare environment is treated as the overarching milieu within which the influence of international theory and practice takes its place. I address these international influences in section 3 of this chapter by considering three critical organisational leadership discourses: Western, and specifically US, leadership research and practice; private sector, that is, business, leadership; and public sector leadership, particularly NPM, which is derived from the century-old scientific management model advocated by Frederick Winslow Taylor (Pollitt, 1990; Taylor, 1967).

Social policy as a context for the exercise of social work leadership will be treated under three headings. The first is social policy in the context of legislation; the second in the context of three transformational epochs of welfare reform history (the 1890s, 1930s and 1980s) (Belgrave, 2004); and the third in the context of NGOs as a “significant economic force,” that is, large budgets and asset bases (Sanders et al., 2008; Statistics New Zealand, 2007). As will become evident in the discussion to follow, these elements are not isolated silos but diverse faces of an integrated whole, the welfare policy context.
3.3 Social work leadership in the context of social policy and legislation

Citing Cheyne, O’Brien, and Belgrave (1997), Tennant (2004, p. 9) defines social policy as involving activities directed towards the “well-being of members of society” through the distribution of and access to goods and resources. Tennant also throws the market and the interaction of the community sector with government into the mix of how social policy is developed (2004, p. 9). Tennant suggests that social policy is typically seen as social service provision in such endeavours as health, housing, education and income maintenance (2004, p. 9) but also draws attention to a macro picture in which social policy encompasses economic activity, land settlement and public works, as cited in Oliver’s (1988) contribution to “The April Report,” the 1988 Royal Commission on Social Policy. For the purposes of this project, these perspectives offer a holistic canvas on which social work leadership is exercised. Social work is concerned with societal well-being, with equity of access to resources, and with policy directions designed to put those concerns into operation (Sewpaul & Jones, 2005). In that endeavour, social work leadership will be committed to social justice (see, for example, Chu, Tsui, & Yan, 2009; Leonard, 2009). I propose that the realisation of that commitment must be mediated through precisely those fields identified in the social policy literature cited in this paragraph. Marsh’s (2005) values-based statement sums up this commitment:

Social workers are trained to understand the political, economic, and social factors that shape the development of social programs and the work they do to implement them. Identifying that social and economic justice is the organizing value of the social work profession is essential to their future, to their capacity to survive and thrive as a profession. (p. 293, emphases added)

In the same way that social workers’ activities contribute to social work theory and vice versa (Payne, 2005), legislation and social policy are also reinforcing loops. In his discussion on community development—a “core component of social work practice” (Mendes, 2009, p. 248)—in Aotearoa New Zealand, Chile (2006, p. 407) proposes “concurrent processes” involving state-initiated statutory work within a systemic framework of legislation and organisational social service provision. Chile further suggests that these initiatives take place in conjunction with “social change processes undertaken primarily through the collective action of individuals, groups and organizations that give voice to marginalized groups and
communities” (2006, p. 407). Chile essentially lays out a process of interdependent actions involving grass roots activism, policy and legislation. Similarly, Chile, Munford, and Shannon (2006) draw attention to political reforms: for example, the adoption of a mixed member proportional (MMP) electoral system, as carrying implications for community development.

Consistent with the ecological framework in which social work operates (Jarvis, 2009), the leadership of the profession will therefore be exercised within the processes identified by Chile (2006) and Chile et al. (2006). To apply the profession’s ethical mandate to “challenge unjust structures” that produce marginalised communities, social work leadership actions must, of necessity, operate in the policy field and thus contribute to legislatively based programmes providing access to resources for those communities. Ethical practice is based on values to which the profession subscribes. As these policy and legislative actions are developed, the leadership focus turns to the organisational context in which service delivery occurs, while also enabling the voice of community organisations to be heard. As I will shortly observe, such activities require advocacy knowledge and skills.

Interactions between social work leadership, policy and legislation are thus seen to include ethical and organisational considerations. Additionally, specific advocacy skills are required thus illustrating the holistic perspective embracing social policy as a whole noted above.

3.4 Social work leadership through three social policy epochs: The 1890s, 1930s and 1980s

Tennant usefully points out (2004, p. 9) that social policy is historically interpreted. Social work leadership as exercised in the context of policy, legislation and political activities therefore requires an historical perspective. Leadership actions are not initiated in a vacuum. In his case study of the New Zealand Treasury under two transformational chief executives—Henry Lang (1969-1976) and Graham Scott (1986-1993)—Wallis (2010, pp. 23-24) argues that the policy conditions under which these two leaders operated were strikingly different. Their leadership actions reflected those conditions. I apply this concept to historical social policy conditions in which social work leadership was forged.

In considering the diverse historical environments in which social work leadership developed, this study applies Belgrave’s (2004) analytical framework of three epochs in Aotearoa New Zealand welfare reform history as “successful, even revolutionary, transformations” (2004, p.
— the 1890s, 1930s and 1980s. He suggests (2004, p. 23) that the 1890s gained New Zealand the early reputation of “the social laboratory of the world” by virtue of the passage of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1894; its old age pension in 1898, the first in the world; and most significantly, the passage through Parliament of women’s suffrage in 1893, likewise the first sovereign country to do so. It is worth noting that these seminal events occurred at the same time as the skills required for charitable work were recognised, and the functions delivered by charity workers were effectively social work roles (Tennant, 2007, p. 59).

The last decade of the 19th century witnessed the emergence of the interrelationship between the voluntary and state sectors, and supervisory skills needed to manage entities such as residential services for women were recognised (Tennant, 2007, p. 60). In addition, independent advocacy by voluntary organisations for social reform was initiated, addressing such issues as the age of consent and the criminalisation of incest. Tennant observes that these early advocacy efforts foreshadowed “later, more critical approaches to government” (2007, p. 60) to be featured in the 20th century. They also coincided with political advocacy, as noted, for women’s suffrage.

In respect of social work leadership, the development of voluntary/state sector interactions, supervisory skills and advocacy over 100 years ago as identified by Tennant represent the beginning of a stream of thinking and action in evidence today. Advocacy applies to the profession’s ethical mandate to “engage in action to change the structures of society that perpetuate injustice” (ANZASW, 2008, p. 4), to be addressed in Chapter 4. Advocacy is also recognised as a leadership function in leadership/management (London, 2010) and social work literature (Veeder & Dalgin, 2004). Veeder and Dalgin define advocacy as activities which:

[C]onsist of convincing other individuals or systems to produce something that is needed by an individual, family, group, organization or community for whom one is advocating. (2004, p. 35)

Veeder and Dalgin also suggest that advocacy requires personal abilities of “communication, persuasion, exchange, and organizational political savvy” (2004, p. 35), seen in this study as leadership action falling in the organisational culture domain. Connections are readily evident
between these abilities and the voluntary/state sector agency interactions noted by Tennant (2007). Communication skills and political savvy also draw attention to the post-1987 obligation on social work agency leaders to negotiate with the Crown in developing principal-agent contractual relationships by virtue of public funding of agency programmes, to be explored later in this chapter. Those contractual obligations extended NPM practices to social work NGOs.

Pfeifer and Love’s (2004) Aotearoa New Zealand-based research found that leadership is deeply rooted in broader cultural contexts. I suggest that the transformational 1890s established a significant and enduring ethos for social work leadership in Aotearoa New Zealand. That ethos is wider than an ethical code. In effect, I argue that the nature of the society that New Zealand embraced over a century ago was integrated into the social work profession. A professional commitment to equity, social justice and social innovation was established, illustrated in the wider leadership literature by Kennedy’s (2008) study on Aotearoa New Zealand leadership and culture. Kennedy notes, *inter alia*, that leadership in Aotearoa New Zealand is marked by expectations of “high performance” while also being committed to a collectivist approach to resource sharing and leadership action. Egalitarian attitudes are demonstrated by a low power-distance orientation—respect for leadership by virtue of rank is not a characteristic of Aotearoa New Zealand society. Kennedy also notes (2008) that leadership is exercised in the context of a commitment to collective action, producing a tension between egalitarianism and expectations of high performance. Data analysis will reveal perceptions of these findings by participants.

Tennant (2007) additionally notes that, in the 19th century, welfare policies drew from the colonial “British inheritance” perspective employing notions of moral reformation—typically church-based—and public charity supplying income support. Although 20th century social work has largely been underpinned by a humanist discourse (Agbényiga, 2011; ANZASW, 2008), Tennant also comments on “personal spirituality” (2007, p. 18) in the shape of a Christian charitable involvement in welfare at an individual level of motivation although this did not preclude an organisational response by the churches embodying a mandate for social justice. A Christian social work discourse has emerged in recent academic literature (see, for example, Bowpitt, 2000; Cree, 1996); in constructing a social work leadership model, spirituality as an overarching narrative within which a Christian value base is located might
emerge from data. Spirituality is addressed as part of the bicultural ethical code in Aotearoa New Zealand and indigenous perspectives on leadership, located in Chapter 5.

Belgrave sees the second epoch, in the 1930s (2004, p. 23), as a selective experiment by the country of universal social security and integrated social services a decade in advance of post-war Europe. That said, an objective review of Belgrave’s assessment of the iconic first Labour government of Michael Joseph Savage suggests a nuanced rather than radical change. Comparing the “cradle to the grave” (Gustafson, 1986) inauguration of the welfare state against “nineteenth-century liberalism,” Belgrave suggests (2004, p. 25) that:

Nineteenth-century liberalism allowed for only minor intervention on behalf of individuals and focused on limited physical needs ... based on narrow moral judgments. When the first Labour government introduced its social security, full employment and state housing policies in the late 1930s, need had broadened to include psychological aspects of well-being, but the primary focus was on the domestic world of the family. Need was differentiated by gender and ethnicity, rather than based on universal human rights.

A human rights approach to welfare provision was not to come for another 30 or more years (Belgrave, 2004, p. 25). It is worth noting that Savage identified the 1938 Social Security Act as “applied Christianity” (Stenhouse, 2005, p. 19), not a term that would be applied in the human rights approach to welfare. Tennant (2004, p. 12) comments that a perception of the 1930s as a “golden age” for welfare do not take into account the “continued moralism and means testing” which affected such groups as unmarried, separated or divorced women who did not “fit the ideal family construct underpinning Labour’s welfare state.” Ideological considerations were intrinsic to welfare provision at that time and remained a contestable theme in future years. To exercise social work leadership within contested ideologies is to operate in the domain of worldviews, beliefs, values and behaviours (Schein, 2004)—in brief, from a cultural perspective. Although “culture wars” (Salzman, 2008) were not to come for a generation or more later, their origin may be traced back to this second transformative epoch.

In the context of operating in a complex political environment, Tennant (2007, p. 122) raises a significant identity issue by posing the question: “Partnership or entanglement?” The welfare
state in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s was consolidated but, from the 1960s on it was subjected to political critique from both the left and the right. The left drew attention to social control and alienation; the right to welfare dependency. The latter gained political traction in the 1980s and will be addressed in the next section of this chapter. Navigating these ideological currents requires leadership skills. Ideological conflict was to emerge in later years as a human rights basis for welfare provision was challenged by the neo-liberal agenda. Social work leadership incorporates an ideological dimension (Mumford, Antes, Caughron, & Friedrich, 2008) but not necessarily in party political terms. Ideology may be couched in terms of human rights and social justice.

Moving beyond the value base, Tennant notes (2004, p. 12) that the effects of the First and Second World Wars and the interwar depression resulted in legislative and organisational changes as welfare became increasingly complex. Tennant (2004, p. 12) describes this complexity in relation to three policy analysis levels: first, the macro-level which addresses welfare regimes including state–NGO interactions; second, in ideological and political conflicts; and third, welfare implementation. State involvement in welfare provision increased, as did that of NGOs. Government support for a range of NGOs became a characteristic feature of welfare organisational life as paid, rather than volunteer, social workers were engaged. Tennant sees the First World War and the Depression as witnessing the “expanding role of the state” (Tennant, 2007, p. 67).

In terms of social work leadership, I suggest that the macro influence of the 1930s may be demonstrated as developing the capacity to work in complex, political environments. Although NGOs remained influential service providers, the expansion of the state’s role in welfare provision noted by Tennant (2007) perforce required social work leaders to operate in both worlds. In fact, the neo-liberal revolution fifty years later in the 1980s enabled NGO providers to strengthen their capacity as contracts for service were ideologically embraced (Martin, 1995). In addition, an increasingly paid workforce requires managerial and leadership skill development (Austin, Regan, Samples, Schwartz, & Carnochan, 2011). By 1930, university training for social workers was being advocated (Tennant, 2007, p. 81), although the first such course was not inaugurated for another twenty years at Victoria University of Wellington, in 1949.
Belgrave describes the third epoch, the 1980s (2004, p. 23) as “a new experiment in reforming [Aotearoa New Zealand’s] welfare state.” More strikingly, Tennant (2007, p. 193) refers to the late 1980s and beyond as the “contract crunch,” a term which brings to mind the title of Boston’s edited text describing the period under review, *The State Under Contract* (Boston, 1995). Neo-liberal policies and practice in the shape of new public management introduced by the fourth Labour government of 1984–1990 began to influence social work organisations post-1987 (Boston, Martin, Pallet, & Walsh, 1996; Scott, 2001). Simultaneously, a culture change was initiated as the Māori “renaissance” (Walker, 2004) gathered pace, contributing to a rediscovery of a spiritual dimension to social work theory and practice and a contrary discourse to the profession’s discourse of secular humanism. Claims for distinctive services for women, consumers with disabilities, immigrants of diverse ethnicities and faith traditions, and differing sexual orientations have contributed to this contrary discourse.

Moon (2009) suggests that the Māori renaissance which emerged with the active support of the fourth Labour government was arguably a watershed moment in the history of Māori development. He notes that “the emphasis on greater Māori self-determination and development” celebrated at a conference dubbed “Hui Taumata” (Economic Summit) was not only a “spontaneous gesture on behalf of the Government” (2009, p. 23). It also represented:

> [A] reaction to the culmination of forces for change that had been building up for at least a decade. Its immediate paternity included the rise of activist groups such as Ngā Tamatoa [“The Warriors”] in the early 1970s, increased Maori politicisation in general, the inception of the Waitangi Tribunal in 1975, a growing Maori population, and the emergence of a strong and articulate Māori intelligentsia. (2009, p. 23)

Ngā Tamatoa originated from a conference organised by Ranginui Walker, an academic who coined the term Māori renaissance (Walker, 1990; 2004). As noted above, a prime political feature of that renaissance was the establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal described by the Ministry of Justice as:

> a standing commission of inquiry. It makes recommendations on claims brought by Māori relating to legislation, policies, actions or omissions of the Crown that are alleged to breach the promises made in the Treaty of Waitangi. (Ministry of Justice, 2017, np.)
The influence of ideas promoted by Māori perceived to be radicals in 1984 has become mainstream social policy at the time of writing. The call for Te Tiriti ō Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi) rights, active restoration of Te Reo Māori (Māori language) and legislative recognition of the “principles of the Treaty*” (Moon, 2009, pp. 29-30) enjoy bipartisan political endorsement. In addition, they have exercised a seminal influence on social work and its leadership in Aotearoa New Zealand. That influence will be explored in Chapter 5.

Belgrave (2004) sums up the social policy changes of the three epochs as reflecting differing perspectives of need. As noted in earlier discussion, the narrow morality-based judgments which underpinned the last decade of the 19th century were continued under Labour’s 1930s’ social security, but with the added recognition of psychological well-being (Belgrave, 2004, p. 25). Policy was family-oriented and needs were defined by gender and ethnicity rather than “universal human rights” (2004, p. 25). Belgrave describes these policy shifts in values-based terms. The early family-based policy gave way in the 1960s and 1970s to one reflecting individual citizenship rights to participate in society. An increasingly diverse society and complex understandings of personal identity challenged the state’s capacity and legitimacy as a centralised planner and provider of social well-being. Belgrave comments that these shifts:

... from a morality state, to a race protection state, to a family welfare state, to a rights-based welfare state and finally into a targeted consumer welfare state were never complete. Aspects of the older paradigms remained. (2004, p. 25)

The emergence in the 1980s of the consumer welfare state coincided with the public sector “revolution” (Hughes & Smart, 2012) and is of prime significance to this study. It is addressed in section 3 of this chapter as warranting separate treatment.

### 3.5 Leadership and management: Implications of large budgets and asset bases

Changes in cultural values precipitated by these epochs of welfare policy reform are not the sole consideration in the literature for assessing organisational leadership actions. The implications of the size of the not-for-profit sector are also relevant. In October 2005 the NGO social services sector employed 31,480 people (29.9% of the total in the NGO New Zealand sector) (Statistics New Zealand, 2007). New Zealand statistics of the not-for-profit sector as a whole are described by Sanders et al. (2008, p. 10) as representing a “significant economic
force” with operating expenditure in 2004 of $6.5bn and a volunteer force valued at $3.3bn. Over 200,000 people work in the not-for-profit sector, of which volunteers numbered 95,000; social services constituted the largest single group in the not-for-profit sector (Statistics New Zealand, 2007). More people work in not-for-profit New Zealand organisations than in construction and transport together, and numbers compare with the manufacturing sector (Sanders et al., 2008, p. 22).

Sanders et al.’s (2008) not-for-profit study is wider than a social-work-specific investigation. That said, the scale of the cited statistics demonstrates that by virtue of falling into the social service sector, NGO social work leaders and managers are obligated to discharge the four traditional managerial functions identified by Fayol (1967): organising, controlling, leading and planning. Managing assets, accounts and staff may be typically seen as managerial rather than leadership in nature, but Hopkins and Hyde (2002) note that current social work management practices and expectations call for more visionary and innovative responses—in a word, leadership actions. Citing Shin and McClomb (1998), Hopkins and Hyde suggest that, to effectively manage internal and external environments, managers need to move from a problem-solving task orientation to one of visionary leadership (2002, p. 3). Managing large budgets and staff numbers requires more than administrative processes. Senge suggests (1992, p. 206) that building a shared picture of the future is a collective endeavour—“What do we want to create?”. As noted by Holosko (2009, p. 454), a collegial process implied by Senge’s shared picture fits a social work leadership model.

### 3.6 Social work leadership in the context of international and New Zealand business and public sector organisational leadership

#### International business leadership

Western approaches to leadership and management have exercised enormous influence on social work organisations in Aotearoa New Zealand. Leadership and management as an academic discipline arguably originated in the US (Taylor, 1967), and US academics and practitioners have been the primary originators and disseminators of research in the field (Jackson & Parry, 2011). Influences from the UK, for example, Handy (1991), France (Fayol, 1967) and Germany—in particular Weber’s (1987) pervasive model of bureaucracy—are also evident. Generic Western economic predominance (Ferguson, 2011) exerts an inescapable influence on New Zealand.
Early 20th century approaches to leadership studies focused on the “great man,” or trait thinking (Northouse, 2010). Leadership was also conceptualised as an element in management (Fayol, 1967 as cited in Inkson & Kolb, 2002). In the latter half of the last century, leadership as a distinctive field of research has emerged; as noted in the introduction to this project, Rothstein and Burke (2010) suggest that leadership may be the single largest subject of enquiry in the management field. It is noteworthy that Rothstein and Burke see leadership as an element in management studies. Boundary tensions between leadership and management remain.

Northouse (2010, p. 2) suggests that “as many as 65 different classification systems have been developed to define the dimensions of leadership.” Northouse proposes 14 approaches to define leadership: trait; skills; style; situational; contingency; path-goal theory; leader–member exchange; transformational; authentic; team; psychodynamic; women and leadership; culture and leadership; leadership ethics (2010, pp. v-xii). He further argues (2010, pp. 2-3) that conceptualisations of leadership require these elements: “(a) leadership is a process, (b) leadership involves influence, (c) leadership occurs in groups, and (d) leadership involves common goals.” These components give rise to his definition of leadership:

\[
\text{Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. (Northouse, 2010, p. 3)}
\]

In recent years, case study examinations of organisational leadership have shifted from trait approaches analysing the qualities and attributes of leaders to an emergent process-orientation of leader–follower relationships. Taylorist scientific management and top-down directions from leaders as Weberian-legitimated authorities have been critically re-evaluated by complexity theorists proposing a perspective of leadership actions from an organic view of organisations. This shift focuses attention on the leader–follower dynamic, and also argues that leadership actions may be initiated from individuals at diverse levels in the organisation, characterised as complexity theorists (McMillan, 2008; Plowman et al., 2007; Uhl-Bien et al., 2007).

As noted in Chapter 2, this shift has coincided with recognition of a transformational approach to leadership, distinguished from transactional understandings (Avolio, Waldman, & Yammarino, 1991; Bass & Avolio, 1993; Burns, 1978; Jung, Yammarino, & Lee, 2009; Mary,
These authors propose that transformational leaders build or change culture but that transactional leaders operate within existing cultural norms (Bass & Avolio, 1993; Bass & Bass, 2008; Bennis & Nanus, 1985). Transformational leaders have been identified by four characteristics denoted as the “4 ‘I’s’” of transformational leadership (Avolio et al., 1991, p. 9): “idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration.” Bass and Bass (2008, p. 653) suggest that, from this perspective, leaders tend towards transformational actions, managers towards transactional. Leaders focus on essential actions to achieve their goals; managers focus on due process (Bennis & Nanus, 1985).

Bass and Avolio (1993) suggest that transformational leaders integrate creative insight, persistence and energy, intuition and sensitivity to the needs of others to connect strategic leadership with organisational culture. In contrast, transactional leaders are characterised by contingent reward and management-by-exception styles of leadership. Essentially, transactional leaders develop exchanges or agreements with their followers, pointing out what the followers will receive if they do something right as well as if they do something wrong. They work within the existing culture, framing their decisions and actions based on the operative norms and procedures characterising their respective organisations (Bass & Avolio, 1993).

The connection between leadership actions, organisational culture and a systems approach expressed by a number of authors (e.g., Attwood et al., 2003; Hardina, Middleton, Montana, & Simpson, 2007; Jaskyte & Dressler, 2005; Northouse, 2010; Schein, 2004; Yukl, 2010) is a major constituent of the current project (compare Figure 2.2, Chapter 2). Social workers are trained to think systemically, operating in a person-in-society context (Jarvis, 2009). This service delivery practitioner approach with consumers is congruent with systems thinking.

**Public sector leadership**

In contrast to the private sector, the literature locates public sector leadership within management. Management is seen as the context in which leadership actions take place; the literature gives disproportionate reference to management vis-à-vis leadership thus conceptually linking leadership to Fayol’s (1967) framework in which leadership is seen as a function of management. It is in this context that earlier discussion of tensions associated with the terms leadership and management becomes germane. Leadership as a significant
element in international and New Zealand public sector organisational theory is minimal; by contrast, management abounds.

The transformational changes of 1984 through 1993 introduced by neo-liberal policies of Labour and National governments rewrote the context for leadership actions in state sector and NGO social work agencies alike. Organisational culture change—the natural sphere in which leadership functions (Mackenzie, 1969)—became equally applicable to formal and informal leaders. Boston et al. (1996) and Belgrave (2004) alike use transformational as a term in their analysis of the NPM revolution. The effects of this transformation rippled through social work agencies. Welfare policy, organisational culture change, leadership actions, tensions between the social work profession and NPM effectively coalesced to create social work agencies which in organisational design and accountability terms would have been unrecognisable to a previous generation of practitioners.

In this changed environment, Tennant (2007, p. 193) draws attention to public funding of social work services by NGOs as “the contract crunch.” Tennant succinctly expresses the prevailing NPM ideology—with a marginal leavening of social work understandings of “empowerment” and “bicultural journeys”—in her description of:

Consultants and change managers, mission statements, brand identities and empowerment models, bicultural journeys, quality assurance and assertions of excellence: the mantras of the late 1980s and 1990s [as] striking to anyone studying the records and annual reports of voluntary organisations. (Tennant, 2007, p. 193)

In order to understand NPM an overview of the extensive public sector management literature describing reforms introduced since 1980, primarily in the US, UK, Canada, Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand is offered. The literature acknowledges that the Aotearoa New Zealand reforms took place in unique circumstances demonstrating a remarkable lucidity (Hood, 1991; Schick, 2001). The public sector reforms in Aotearoa New Zealand therefore set a benchmark of radical thinking amounting to a revolution (Hughes & Smart, 2012; Scott, 2001). In effect, that revolution became another discourse which, together with the welfare perspective, has moulded the public sector since the introduction of post-1987 managerialist ideology in Aotearoa New Zealand (Boston et al., 1996).
Critical analysis of public sector management literature since the watershed neo-liberal revolution of the 1980s suggests that the overall impact of neo-liberal thinking on public sector organisations was nothing less than transformational (Boston et al., 1996). This literature review will therefore propose that the culture of public sector entities was profoundly changed by the policies of the “new right.” Culture change is arguably the hardest process for managers to achieve (Kotter, 1995; Schein, 2010). I propose that the transformational change noted by Boston et al. (1996) is, by definition, the consequence of leadership actions, albeit presented in management language. Kim (2002) uses the term management leadership in reference to the public sector, and social work has also appropriated the term (see, for example, Fisher, 2009; Hafford-Letchfield & Lawler, 2010; Lawler & Bilson, 2010). From where those leadership actions originate becomes a critical question. A top-down rather than a bottom-up view is espoused by Scott (2001).


These building blocks were pivotal in the transformation of the policies, practice and culture of public sector organisations. Their adoption resulted in the replacement of an input budgeting approach by the public sector, including social work agencies, by output and outcome expectations by government. Inputs, which include salaries and wages, refer to the resources used to produce outputs. Outputs include policy advice, administration of statutes and regulations and the delivery of particular services such as supervision of offenders or social work services to children. Outcomes represent the results in society of outputs produced. An example would be reduction of offending. The reforms intended that government would select desired outcomes, use policy advice to prioritise those outcomes, and opt for appropriate outputs (Boston et al., 1996).
New public management (NPM)

Scott (2001) analyses the NPM reforms of 1987-1993 in the context of four underpinning theories: public choice theory; principal–agent theory; transaction-cost economics; and new public management (Boston et al., 1996). For the purposes of this study, the detail of these theories is subsumed under a generic treatment of NPM. Leadership actions in public sector social work agencies take place within, and are constrained by, NPM. Pollitt (1990) and Boston et al. (1996) propose that NPM’s theoretical informant is Taylor’s “scientific management” of a century ago. Principal–agent contractual relationships between the Crown and social work agencies funded by public moneys extend NPM practice to social work NGOs (Lane, 2005). The idea of a contractual relationship produced a profound shift in management thinking and practice expressed in the phrase, “the state under contract” (Boston, 1995). Management’s focus shifted from control of inputs to accountability for outputs, which were seen as direct contributors to outcomes. This new approach included the notion that management would be decentralised by delegation to, and monitoring of, responsibilities to middle and frontline managers (Scott, 2001). This monitoring process carried transactional leadership implications for managers at all levels in public sector organisations.

NPM has attracted analysis, critiques, negativity and affirmation from academics and managers alike. The weight of academic contributions presents as carrying a more sceptical assessment (see, for example, Gregory, 2001, 2003; Pollitt, 1990; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2004) than endorsement (Hughes, 2003). The literature written by senior state managers who implemented the revolution in New Zealand such as Graham Scott (2001) espouses the model as necessary and inevitable. Others, of which the US writers Osborne and Gaebler (1992) and Osborne and Plastrik (1997) are perhaps the prime examples, adopt an advocacy approach which brooks no alternatives. Other academics and commentators (for example, Easton, 1999; Jesson, 1999; Kelsey, 1995) critique Aotearoa New Zealand public sector management reforms, of which NPM is a component, as inimical to the Aotearoa New Zealand psyche and espouse alternative models. The field has generated enormous discussion since Niskanen (1971) arguably initiated the debate around the OECD world, but more specifically, the Anglo-American part of that world.
Boston et al. (1996) suggest that, in its broadest terms, NPM proposes that private sector management should be applied to the public sector by focusing on accountability for results rather than process. Management responsibility is devolved; emphasis is placed on management information systems for monitoring purposes. Contracting out services to the private sector, or in the case of social work services, to not-for-profit organisations is preferred in pursuit of the notion that policy advice and service provision should be separate functions—the funder–provider split (Chapman & Duncan, 2007, p. 2). Contracts are characterised by specificity. The paraphernalia of private sector management practices such as employment contracts, strategic plans and mission statements, performance-related pay, key performance indicators (KPIs) for the organisation and its managers and a concern for corporate image constituted the visible changes. Incentives were financial rather than ethical; cost cutting in the guise of efficiency became a prime management focus.

Boston et al. (1996, p. 6) (Table 3.1) capture these changes in public sector management in their description of “the remarkable transformation of public management in New Zealand.” This transformation was characterised by a “new language of discourse.” “Administration” was replaced by “management” (management of change, financial management, performance management, management of risk, management development, and so on). This terminology created a seismic cultural shift for social workers, their managers and leaders (Heffernan, 2006), well documented in social work academic literature in the UK, Australia, Sweden and Aotearoa New Zealand (see, for example, Burton & Van den Broek, 2009; Carey, 2009; Coffey et al., 2009; Fitzgibbon, 2008; Höjer and Forkby, 2011; M. Webster, 2010). These authors analyse “Taylorist managerial control” and deskilling of practice; staffing implications of the drive for efficiencies, effectiveness and economies; ethical implications for social work practice caused by NPM; and professional–bureaucratic tensions. Further comment on these themes is offered shortly.

In the Aotearoa New Zealand context, leadership actions and conceptualisations by social workers must be seen through the lens of these seminal organisational changes to which NPM has contributed in the last 25 years.
Table 3.1

Essential NPM Features

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>Public and private organisations should be managed on more or less the same basis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>A shift in emphasis from process accountability to accountability for results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>An emphasis on generic management skills rather than policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>Devolution of management control coupled with ... improved reporting, monitoring and accountability mechanisms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>Separation of policy advice from delivery and regulatory functions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>A preference for private ownership, contestable provision, and the contracting out of most publicly funded services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g</td>
<td>A shift from long-term and generally poorly specified contracts to shorter-term and much more tightly specified contracts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>Adopting certain private sector management practices such as short-term labour contracts ... strategic plans, corporate plans, performance agreements ... mission statements ... performance-linked remuneration systems ... new management information systems ... greater concern for corporate image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>A preference for monetary incentives rather than non-monetary ... such as ethics, ethos, and status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j</td>
<td>A stress on cost-cutting, efficiency, and cutback management</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Source: Adapted from Boston et al. (1996, p. 26)

New public management: Influence on social work organisational leadership

Schein’s (2010) cultural diagnostic tool offers a useful analytical framework by which the influence of NPM on social work leadership may be assessed (Figure 3.2). Schein proposes (2010 p. 24) that the *artefacts* of an organisation—that is, visible organisational structures and processes—are hard to decipher without reference to espoused beliefs and values comprised of the strategies, goals and philosophies used to justify the purpose of the organisation. In turn, the source of values and actions is located in underlying assumptions or worldview.
A growing literature from Aotearoa New Zealand and elsewhere explores the influence of NPM on social work practice in general and social work leadership in particular. In the Aotearoa New Zealand context, O’Donoghue et al. (1999) consider that the “new managerialism” in New Zealand public sector social service agencies resulted in a transformation of “professional practice and management” of those agencies (pp. 8, 9). This transformation was marked by management accountability for measuring outputs and performance targets replacing the primacy hitherto of accountability for social work processes via professional supervision (O’Donoghue et al., 1999). Professionals were made accountable to managers who rationalised their market solutions’ approach by the need for economy, efficiency and effectiveness (Beckmann & Cooper, 2004; Kemshall, 1995). The ethics and culture of social work were challenged by NPM’s domination and the subordination of social work values such as respect for and trust in clients’ self-determination and equality of opportunity to the economic base of NPM. Writing in the Australian context, Healy (2009) unequivocally sees NPM as exercising a “corrosive” effect on social workers’ identity and influence.

The influence of NPM on social work is explored by McDonald and Chenoweth’s (2009) analysis of social work leadership in the context of neo-liberal “workfare” regimes in the Anglophone welfare states. They argue that governments have driven institutional change by virtue of their control of resources, and, further, in a relevant perspective for the current project, that “the logic of neo-liberalism has taken on a hegemonic status” (2009, p. 104) in welfare bureaucracies. McDonald and Chenoweth also suggest that social work exhibits ambivalence towards leadership. Indeed, they argue (p. 105) that the profession considers
the notion of transformational leadership (Burns, 1978) as inimical to social work values and philosophy:

Transformative leadership inevitably happens within the context of competition and conflict. We tentatively suggest that this characteristic represents one of the core reasons why social workers exhibit ambivalence about leadership—to engage as leaders inevitably means engaging in competition and conflict, processes which are counter-intuitive to the (probably learned) dispositions of social workers. (McDonald & Chenoweth, 2009, p. 107)

These are perceptive insights. I suggest that they go the heart of the tension as perceived by social workers between the exercise of leadership or managerial power—what McDonald and Chenoweth describe as “engaging in competition and conflict”—and the profession’s commitment to empowerment of marginalised or disadvantaged groups. This tension represents another example of a polarity to be managed (Johnson, 1992) rather than a problem to be solved. In the organisational leadership context of the current project, this tension applies equally to service recipients and workers (see, for example, Boehm & Yoels, 2009). How this tension is managed will be influenced—or even determined—by the profession’s culture.

Using Schein’s (2004) cultural diagnostic framework, I suggest that language used—NPM’s “new discourse” noted by Boston et al. (1996)—in the organisational social work context offers insight into the values, beliefs and ultimately worldviews of the profession. Investigations by Heffernan (2006) and McLaughlin (2009) into the significance of word usage in both historic and NPM social work environments illustrate this perspective. Writing in the UK context, Heffernan explores the term service user as preferred NPM terminology. She argues that NPM’s goal “appears to be the transmogrification of public sector culture to mirror that of the private sector” (2006, p. 141). To achieve that purpose, Heffernan suggests, social work practice in an organisational context has taken on a “quasi business” (2006, p. 141) identity by focusing on such terminology as customer services, performance standards, cost-effectiveness, accountability and user involvement. Drawing on Bourdieu’s (1997) notion of language and symbolic power, and the work of “labelling theorists” such as Stager, Chassin, and Young (1983), Heffernan analyses the potential power of a service user label on its recipients. She proposes (2006, p. 141) that the term is akin to consumer which is to place
Care management into a market framework. Labelling has been addressed in the context of risk elsewhere in the social work literature; a recent paper by Pollack (2010) explores the issue of labelling risk in clients in terms of the function of social work to translate state power to individuals, families, groups and communities (Pollack, 2010, p. 1263).

McLaughlin (2009, p. 1101) discusses how the terms “client, customer, consumer, service user and expert by experience”—used by social workers in reference to recipients of services—have developed in England. In the context of the election of Thatcher’s new right government in 1979, of which the equivalent in Aotearoa New Zealand was the fourth Labour government from 1984 to 1990, he identifies the emergence of an emphasis on economy and efficiency, the institution of market conditions and the “need to regard clients as customers” (McLaughlin, 2009, pp. 1103-1104). McLaughlin traces how social workers became care managers and clients became consumers or customers. For the purpose of this study he makes a crucial observation:

“Consumers” signify a relationship in which welfare is seen as a product for the consumer, managed by a case or care manager who is accountable to the state and their manager much more so than to their profession or those using the service. “Customers”, on the other hand, signified a marketization of social care wherein welfare was a commodity for the customer. The worker became more of a broker, accountable to management. (McLaughlin, 2009, p. 1104)

The analyses offered by Heffernan (2006) and McLaughlin (2009) offer useful starting points for considering the significance of language as an observable artefact in order to assess the culture in which social work leadership is exercised. Commonly used NPM terms are listed in Table 3.2 and their potential inferential meanings based on values, beliefs and worldviews that they project are suggested.

The implications of NPM ideology vis-à-vis social work service delivery—and by extension, social work team leaders—have been addressed by such writers as Carey (2009); Fitzgibbon (2008); Coffey et al. (2009); and Höjer and Forkby (2011). Carey (2009, p. 569) addresses Taylorist managerial control, a reference to the deskillling of workers by placing work planning into management hands (Inkson & Kolb, 2002, p. 54). Fitzgibbon (2008, p. 85) draws attention to “Taylorisation” in probation practice in England, again equated with deskillling of workers.
Coffey et al. (2009, p. 421) argue that the NPM drive towards greater efficiencies, effectiveness and economies is contributing to a “staffing crisis” in the UK public sector. They also suggest that consumerism is a leading contributor to stress in social services (2009, p. 423). Höjer and Forkby’s research (2011) examines NPM policies associated with the “market and individual care plans” in the context of Swedish child care social work. They found that social work practice “diverge[s] substantially” from NPM regulation between “buyers and sellers”—that is, the operation of the market—and that professional practice and bureaucratic logics “seem to compete with the NPM agenda” (2011, p. 107). The title of their paper is suggestive: “Care for sale: The influence of new public management in child protection in Sweden.” I suggest that the notion of a market operation in such a sensitive practice area as child protection is not only ethically questionable, but carries organisational cultural implications for the profession which will influence the exercise of its leadership.

The application of NPM policies in social work is now more than a quarter of a century old. Practitioners who have entered the profession in Aotearoa New Zealand since 1987 might, in effect, have no alternative paradigm to the cultural assumptions on which NPM is based. The exercise of organisational social work leadership has had no option but to come to terms with NPM ideology as both “espoused theory” and “theory in use” (Schön, 1983 as cited in Gardner, 2006, p. 109). How research participants perceive this issue may be influenced by individual memory of pre-NPM practice against which current reality is compared and contrasted. Participants’ ages and the cultural contexts in which they have functioned as practitioners, managers and leaders might exercise significant influence on their views.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NPM term (alphabetically ordered)</th>
<th>Values, beliefs</th>
<th>Assumptions/Worldview</th>
<th>Inferential meaning for organisations and their workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accountability for results/ Effectiveness</td>
<td>Responsibility to achieve designated purpose of social work services is important</td>
<td>Organisation and its workers deemed responsible for client buy-in to programme’s purpose as the criterion for its continuation</td>
<td>Ongoing funding for workers and organisations is dependent on programme results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer</td>
<td>Welfare is a product</td>
<td>Welfare must be targeted and fit for purpose</td>
<td>Focus on product’s purpose more important than worker-client relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contestability</td>
<td>Competition between potential providers is good</td>
<td>Competition provides qualitative and quantitative advantages for funders and service consumers</td>
<td>Workers and managers need to be constantly aware of competitive environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contracting out</td>
<td>No guarantee of long term principal-agent relationship a good thing</td>
<td>Contract for services system is superior to in house programme provision</td>
<td>Contractual obligations for services and their negotiation become the focus of the organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer</td>
<td>Welfare is a commodity</td>
<td>Worker’s accountability is to management and organisation</td>
<td>Commodification suggests that clients as customers do not need ecological consideration by social workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy and efficiency</td>
<td>Outputs should be produced on basis of most efficient use of resources</td>
<td>Economy as defined is a virtue</td>
<td>Resources allocated to social work services should always be justified by empirical data: that is, a ‘business case’ is required, especially for new initiatives or programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual employment contracts</td>
<td>Managers and staff prefer to negotiate their own employment conditions</td>
<td>Collective bargaining is not preferred because individualist cultures are superior</td>
<td>Individual workers and managers possess as much power as the employing organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPM term (alphabetically ordered)</td>
<td>Values, beliefs</td>
<td>Assumptions/Worldview</td>
<td>Inferential meaning for organisations and their workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key performance indicators (KPIs)</td>
<td>Workers and managers are able to control most or all the variables that contribute to outputs</td>
<td>An organisation consists of outputs over which workers and managers exercise significant power</td>
<td>Remuneration and career prospects are dependent on achieving KPIs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>Social work organisation outputs are a prime factor in achieving government-mandated societal outcomes</td>
<td>Professionals (social workers in this instance) are responsible for individual client decisions which contribute to desired outcomes</td>
<td>Achieving generic outcomes as determined by government is a constant expectation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outputs</td>
<td>Numbers are vital</td>
<td>Funders value numerical as much as qualitative measurements</td>
<td>Workers and managers must achieve numerically as much as qualitatively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance-linked remuneration</td>
<td>Workers and managers are motivated by financial reward</td>
<td>Money is more important than other motivators</td>
<td>Workers and managers must achieve numerically as much as qualitatively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare as a commodity</td>
<td>Social work services are stand-alone events</td>
<td>Context of services is of less importance than achieving closure</td>
<td>Social work as a professional task is subsumed in piece-work management thinking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 4
Ethics, leadership and social justice

4.1 Introduction: Identity and leadership of the social work profession

Previous chapters have focused on the environment in which organisational social work leadership functions, and the influences which have shaped its development. Chapter 4 attends to those components which actually constitute the identity and leadership of the profession, expressed in social work’s ethical codes internationally and in Aotearoa New Zealand (Gray & Webb, 2010). Environments discussed earlier comprise welfare policy—in particular the watershed periods of the 1890s, 1930s and 1980s—and second, the influences derived from international business and public sector leadership scholarship and practice. The “revolutionary transformations” (Belgrave, 2004) of those three defining social policy periods set the tone for social work practice and leadership. Liberal social policy enactments of the 1890s such as in industrial relations arbitration, old age pensions and women’s suffrage created the perception of Aotearoa New Zealand as the world’s social laboratory at the same time that charity workers were beginning to function recognisably as social workers (Tennant, 2007). Forty years later, cradle to the grave (Gustafson, 1986) social security introduced by the first Labour government established an increasing role for government in organisationally based service delivery. Policy and delivery were collapsed into one, setting the tone for social work thinking and leadership actions.

The 1980s were equally transformational. One purpose of the neo-liberal agenda embodied in NPM was to roll back the state (Easton, 1999). The attempt to change the ethos of public sector provision of social services, so contrary to the long-term influence of Michael Joseph Savage’s 1930s social security policy, set the scene for a large measure of cognitive and emotional dissonance experienced by social workers and social work leadership (Webster, 2011). The significance of this shift has been reflected in the literature and in practice (Hughes & Smart, 2012). More importantly, the NPM revolution represents the current environment in which social work organisational leadership is exercised. By identifying Taylor’s scientific management (Taylor, 1967) as the antecedent to NPM, Chapter 3 introduced into the discussion the influence of Western, and particularly US, models of leadership (Jackson & Parry, 2011). Western economic and political hegemony (Ferguson, 2011) has exercised profound influence on New Zealand, its welfare sector and thereby on social work leadership.
Over 25 years have passed since the legislative building blocks (Scott, 2001) of the public sector reforms were initiated by David Lange’s Labour government, furthered by the first three years of the Bolger National government (1990-1993). For a generation of social workers and leaders the culture change represented by those reforms has become the norm. To assess that change, I applied Schein’s (2010) analytical tool which, by exploring visible artefacts—in this instance, NPM’s new language of discourse (Boston et al., 1996)—seeks to determine what values and beliefs inform it. This analysis, presented in Table 3.2 (Chapter 3) tabulates the values, beliefs and assumptions which may be legitimately inferred from that language. In addition, potential inferential meanings for the organisation and its workers of the beliefs, values and assumptions of each NPM language term are suggested.

The purpose of that exercise was to set down a tentative interpretation of the NPM revolution against which emerging data findings can be viewed. Table 3.2 is an analytical tool drawing on relevant literature and the personal experience of the author through those turbulent years. Although as a qualitative descriptive/exploratory project this research is not testing any hypothesis, it will be of interest as to whether these perceptions are reflected in the views of research participants.

4.2 Ethics: A foundation for leadership

A useful overarching introduction to social work ethics is found in Gray and Webb (2010). These authors couch their discussion in terms of practice tensions, contradictions and diversity which call to mind Payne’s (2005) notion that practice informs social work theory. If the profession is inextricably connected with practice realities, so too, I argue, is social work leadership. Although ethics and values are typically treated as synonymous terms in the literature (Congress, 2010), an alternative perspective proposes that values inform ethics, and that “unexamined assumptions” (Schein, 2010), or worldviews, inform values. Borrowing from organisational culture analysis, this approach opens up diverse considerations on ethical social work leadership actions by exploring the assumptions that underpin those actions.

Table 4.1 sets out four perspectives of social work ethics proposed by Gray and Webb (2010). Drawing on these perspectives, I argue that a rationale for treating ethics as foundational to social work leadership is found in the purpose and values of ethical codes. The values of the profession give rise to certain “key ideas” (Congress, 2010, pp. 20-23) which inform practice and leadership actions. I propose that human rights and social justice are the profession’s
most distinctive characteristics, and inform our codes of ethics—in particular for this project, the New Zealand code (ANZASW, 2008). I therefore make a case that organisational social work leadership must, at the least, be exercised in harmony with, or preferably express, the values of human rights and social justice. In short, the premise of Chapter 4 is that ethical values underpin leadership actions.

The premise that human rights and social justice inform social work’s ethical codes and therefore the profession’s leadership sets the scene for the remainder of Chapter 4. Starting with Gray and Webb (2010), I set out the literature exploring social work and social justice before considering leadership ethics from such seminal authors as Ciulla (2004) and Burns (1978, 2004) in the wider leadership literature. Connections between the social work and leadership literatures will be noted where appropriate.

Table 4.1
Four Perspectives of Social Work Ethics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional</th>
<th>Moral</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Spiritual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Codes of ethics</td>
<td>Ethic of care</td>
<td>Anti-racist practice</td>
<td>Islam and ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Codes of conduct</td>
<td>Ethics of responsibility</td>
<td>Human rights and social justice</td>
<td>Christianity and ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical decision-making</td>
<td>Discourse ethics</td>
<td>Anti-oppressive practice</td>
<td>New age ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical dilemmas in practice</td>
<td>Virtue ethics</td>
<td>Participation and citizenship</td>
<td>Conclusion:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith-based approaches</td>
<td>Postmodern ethics</td>
<td></td>
<td>Practising values in social work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Gray and Webb (2010, pp. v-vi).

4.3 Social work ethics, social justice and leadership

The social work literature comes in part from authors contributing to the volume edited by Gray and Webb (2010), as well as the editors’ chapters. Social work ethics are presented from four perspectives: professional ethics and moral, social and spiritual viewpoints—although the editors reject any claim to “overarching comprehensiveness” (p. 7). The work of Sarah Banks (2004, 2008, 2010) is also considered.

As already indicated, Chapter 4 shifts the discussion from the context to the components which collectively constitute the identity and leadership of the profession, expressed in social work’s ethical codes internationally and in Aotearoa New Zealand (Gray & Webb, 2010).
Figure 4.1 sets out the connections between the research literature and strands 3 and 4 of the overall project.

**Figure 4.1**  
*Conceptualising Social Work Ethics and Indigenous Leadership Literature*

---

**Literature strands contributing to research aim**

- **Strand 3**  
  Social work ethics, identity, standards

- **Strand 4**  
  Indigenous leadership models  
  Connections with biological complexity thinking

**Leadership research literature**

- Leadership in the context of  
  Māori renaissance  
  Ethical, authentic and spiritual leadership

- Ethical Leadership in the context of  
  Authenticity  
  Spirituality  
  Servant leadership  
  Personal and professional integrity  
  Indigenous approaches  
  Biological complexity thinking

*Note.* Lines indicate conceptual connections between the strands and the research literature.

Making sense of, and critically assessing this discourse for relevance to leadership ethics will be addressed over chapters 4 and 5, using in part Gray and Webb’s (2010) four perspectives of social work ethics (Table 4.1). That assessment will refer to ethical codes at three levels: global (IFSW/IASSW), Anglophone (US, UK, Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand) and finally, on a more focused consideration of Aotearoa New Zealand’s bicultural code. The reader will note that Chapter 4 is concerned with social justice and its consequential values. It is not a philosophical treatment of ethical theories, that is, deontology, teleology, utilitarianism and consequentialism (Gray & Webb, 2010, p. 1).

**Human rights, social justice and leadership**

A logical process by which social work leadership should legitimately be said to express human rights and social justice starts with the IFSW’s (2014) definition of the profession:

> The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the
points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work [emphasis added]. (IFSW, 2014)

Social work’s commitment to human rights and social justice as explored by Jim Ife (2010) draws from the seminal 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1948 without a single dissenting vote—in itself, an extraordinary event given the divisions created by the onset of the Cold War (Glendon, 2000, 2001; Malik, 2000). The significance of the UDHR for social work and its leadership is profound. Of the historical antecedents to the UDHR, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s (FDR) famous “four freedoms” speech of 1941 has particular relevance for the social work profession. Glendon notes that the speech “linked future peace and security to respect for freedom of speech and expression, freedom to worship God in one’s own way, freedom from want, and freedom from fear” (2001, p. 10).

Charles Malik who, according to Glendon, exercised the pre-eminent role in the drafting of the UDHR and its passage through the General Assembly, stated in 1947 that “people’s minds and consciences are the most inviolable things about them” (Malik, 2000, p.49). This seminal understanding surely underpins the commitment by the social work profession to human rights. Moreover, FDR’s “freedom from want” is to commit to social security and provision for core human needs. The values which inform social work and its leadership are therefore located in some of the most important political statements of the last century. Roosevelt’s freedom from want is a social justice statement, later enshrined in the UDHR. A month after FDR’s death, Eleanor Roosevelt wrote:

> Freedom without bread has little meaning. My husband [FDR] always said that freedom from want and freedom from aggression had to go hand in hand. (Glendon, 2001, p. 43)

The statement, “Freedom without bread has little meaning,” should perhaps be laminated on the wall of every registered social worker.

Figure 4.2 conceptualises human rights as underpinning social justice which together inform the core purposes and domains of social work (Sewpaul & Jones, 2005). This schema also
Figure 4.2
*Human Rights, Social Justice and The Core Purposes of Social Work*

1. Include marginalised groups
2. Challenge barriers/injustices in society
3. Network/mobilise to advance well-being
4. Educate to access services and resources
5. Policies and programmes for people’s well-being
6. Work towards protection of people unable to do so themselves
7. Advocate for change in policies maintaining marginalisation
8. Promote respect for traditions, cultures, ideologies and religions
9. Encourage advocacy for pertinent concerns
10. Act socially/politically by critiquing inequalities
11. Enhance stable harmonious and respectful societies
12. Advocate policies ethically consistent with the profession
13. **Plan/organise/administer/manage programmes and organisations dedicated to any of these purposes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core purposes and domains of social work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>(Sewpaul &amp; Jones, 2005)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social justice</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Human rights</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(IFSW, 2012; Ife, 2010)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Webster (2016, p. 6).

Integrates the IFSW’s (2012) defining statement that social justice and human rights are “fundamental to social work”—alternatively expressed as constituting the profession’s worldview, or underpinning assumptions (Schein, 2010, p.24). How, then, does social justice inform management and leadership, as one of 13 such purposes, or domains?

Sewpaul and Jones (2005, p. 219) note that, in 2004, the IFSW and the IASSW recognised management as one of 13 core purposes of social work. These elements are presented in Figure 4.2. I propose that, in turn, the purpose of management and leadership is to actualise the other 12 domains: in fact, to serve them. Such thinking is designed to address the power dimension which inevitably forms part of the exercise of leadership by casting it into a social work frame of reference.
The Aotearoa New Zealand Code of Ethics (ANZASW, 2008) defines social justice by requiring that practitioners “learn from specific instances of need, to inform society at large about the injustices in its midst, and to engage in action to change the structures of society that create and perpetuate injustice” (2008, p. 4, emphasis added). The ethical commitment to social justice has been taken up in recent years within the literature. Bisman (2004), for example, argues that the profession must return to the “moral imperative” to care for society’s most disadvantaged (2004, p. 109), associating that imperative with the UN’s “human dignity and social justice” declaration. Marsh (2005) proposes that social work, uniquely among the professions, places social justice as its “central organising value” (2005, p. 293).

O’Brien (2011) makes a thoughtful contribution by discussing how social justice is practically reflected in social work practice. He argues that, although social justice is applicable at the policy level, its primary arena is in direct service delivery. O’Brien (2011, p. 175) cites Craig’s (2002) definition of social justice as a summative statement. Social justice, Craig argues, is:

- a framework of political objectives, pursued through social, economic, environmental and political policies, based on an acceptance of difference and diversity, and informed by values concerned with: achieving fairness, and equality of outcomes and treatment; recognising the dignity and equal worth and encouraging the self-esteem of all; the meeting of basic needs; maximizing the reduction of inequalities in wealth, income and life chances; and the participation of all, including the most disadvantaged (pp.671-672.)

In the context of leadership actions, Craig’s statement plainly sets out a 360° application: social justice is to be expressed through “social, economic, environmental and political policies” (Craig, 2002, p. 671). The notion that leadership in the profession may be political inevitably begs the question: political as in organisational politics; or as in policy platforms of political parties; or in some other unforeseen arena? How these issues are viewed by research participants as distinct from the academic literature will be of interest. In a personal communication to the author, Mike O’Brien indicated that examining social justice in the organisational and leadership context offers a fertile area for research.

Chu et al. (2009) critique Western social work—by which they mean the US and UK—of effectively abandoning the profession’s commitment to social justice. They cite the charge laid by the influential authors, Specht and Courtney (1994) that social work has abandoned its
mission and has become “unfaithful angels.” Not only that, say Chu and his colleagues, the profession has succumbed to the “plague” of the UK’s New Labour NPM, so overwhelmingly focused on outcome measurements. Their paper suggests that the moral and political base of Western social work has withered away; but that the global standards for the education and training of the profession (Sewpaul & Jones, 2005) represent a re-assertion of human rights and social justice as non-negotiable values.

In a revealing sentence, Chu et al. (2009, p. 288) propose that “social justice must be contextualized and take into account the related goals of social harmony, stability, human rights and individual well-being.” This proposition may be interpreted as a statement integrating social justice, collectivist values (social harmony, stability) and individualist, that is, Anglosphere (Hannan, 2013), ideas of “human rights and individual well-being.” As a global profession with increasing influences from the “two-thirds world” (Mohanty, 2003, p. 505), Chu et al.’s call offers promise as an overarching declaration of social work’s defining element.

Congress (2010) observes that commitment to social justice and human rights is prominent in the Canadian and Australian ethical codes; is referred to in the US code as pertaining to individual clients; and notes that the Aotearoa New Zealand code sets out a dual focus encompassing individual solutions and working to change society’s structures. Chu et al. (2009, pp. 287, 288) define social justice and human rights as challenging barriers, inequalities and injustices in society; taking action to include marginalised groups, promoting human rights; policy advocacy on behalf of vulnerable people; and encouraging respect for diversity. Those actions, they suggest, are inherently political.

Are these defining values and actions applicable to organisational social work leadership? I suggest that, if personal and professional integrity (see Appleton, 2010) means anything, social workers as appointed or peer-recognised leaders will seek to express those values and actions in their organisational lives. Pauline Leonard’s (2009) “journey” towards personal and professional authenticity offers such an expression by capturing essential ethical properties with a vision of social justice:

As a human being, I am responsible to the community for the creation of a just, caring, equitable, democratic society. Any aspects of my professional identity must be congruent with this aspect of my being ... I believe I tell the truth, as I know it, in
striving for authenticity. Becoming authentic is a process, a journey, not an end in itself; it ... requires a continual examination of one’s multiple identities within the context of the communities in which one lives, works and interacts [emphasis added]. (Leonard, 2009, pp. 253, 255)

In his discourse on social justice, Ife (2010) observes that human rights function in specific contexts, including agencies and bureaucracies (2010, p. 158). He adds that more recently the exploration of human rights in social work practice has been “marginalized by managerialism” with its focus on outcomes, evidence and predictability (p. 158). Ife’s (2010) position that human rights and social justice are legitimately expressed in agencies and bureaucracies places the profession’s “central organising value” of social justice at the heart of organisational structures. This is precisely the context in which organisational social work leadership is exercised. If the ANZASW code requires the profession to engage in actions designed to challenge injustice, and if management as one of the core purposes of social work as defined by the IFSW is located in organisations, I suggest that the profession’s leadership is political in nature. The potential implications of this position are wide ranging, not the least of which is the arguable proposition that social work leadership is ethically obligated to address policies perceived to be organisationally unjust. Two questions emerge from that statement: [1] perceived by whom? and [2] how are policies evaluated as ‘unjust?’

The first of those questions may be addressed by research participants. The second may at least be explored through the 12 core purposes of social work (other than management), but which management as a core professional activity is required to facilitate. I propose, consistent with Banks (2008) that ethical considerations require that organisational activities including leadership actions must be integrated with professional practice ideals. In brief, ethical integrity applies equally to leadership, management and direct service delivery. To suggest that in some way organisational leadership occupies a unique and different ethical position to the other 12 domains is to create an artificial divide in the profession. In addition, the “domain of the social worker” as defined by the IFSW (Sewpaul & Jones, 2005, p. 221) integrates leadership with the “critically self-reflective practitioner ‘who shares responsibility with the employer’ for their well-being and professional development, including the avoidance of ‘burn-out’” (emphasis added). The power-with leadership thinking of Follett (1995) could not be more clearly stated.
The role of leadership in facilitating organisational social justice

To examine leadership as facilitating each of the 12 core purposes is beyond the scope of this chapter, although for future research such an examination offers a fertile sphere for investigation. I argue, however, that, in the light of an NPM worldview which has influenced the organisational expression of social work services so significantly since 1987, leadership of the profession is ethically bound to address those core purposes. Table 4.2 sets out the potential implications of such an exercise with five selected purposes.

Table 4.2
Leadership Actions and Organisational Social Justice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selected core purposes</th>
<th>Implications for organisational leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Facilitate the inclusion of marginalised, socially excluded, dispossessed, vulnerable and at-risk groups of people. | Identify employees in these groups with a view to enabling their voice to be heard and integrated into policies and organisational practices, e.g.,  
  - Contract workers  
  - Casual workers  
  - Workers with disabilities.                                                                                                                   |
| Address and challenge barriers, inequalities and injustices that exist in society.       | Exercise authentic leadership (“walking the talk”) in order to:  
  - Influence organisational culture to change unexamined assumptions which feed into such barriers  
  - Set demanding managerial requirements to proactively address cultural and policy barriers in conjunction with authentic leadership actions. |
| Form short- and longer-term relationships with and mobilise individuals, families, groups, organisations and communities to enhance their well-being and their problem-solving capacities. | Create and engage in project teams comprising diverse hierarchical levels to design and mobilise strategies for problem-solving.  

Assist and educate people to obtain services and resources in their communities. |

Mentor self-selected employees with a view to empowering access to organisational resources, for example to advance career pathways. |

Encourage people to engage in advocacy with regard to pertinent local, national, regional and/or international concerns. |

Ensure that training for advocacy skills are provided to enable workers to influence organisational policy and practice. |

Source: Webster (2014, p. 85) (Reproduced with permission)

The notion that organisational leadership should be exercised from a social justice premise has been taken up in Aronson and Smith’s (2011) examination of organisational practices at odds with a commitment to serving “marginalised communities” (2011, p. 433). These
authors draw attention to the contradiction between policies and practice that social workers as appointed leaders are paid to implement but which they may see as jeopardising those communities. The dichotomy identified by Aronson and Smith stands at the centre of the leadership vision and model that I seek to articulate. How can socially just leadership be constructed in a quantitatively driven and measured output context?

To develop a response to that question, I turn to Banks’ suggestion (2004, p. 123) that recent movement of social work ethical codes towards a “new professionalism” stresses a commitment to social justice, anti-discrimination and recognition of service user participation. Empowering consumers in the organisational context is to engage in shared or distributed leadership (Hannah et al., 2011; Konu & Viitanen, 2008; Sweeney, 1996), a theme addressed in Chapter 2. The core purpose is designed to create public and service user trust in professionals.

Banks (2008) defines social work ethics as:

> a specialist area of professional ethics comprising the study of the norms of right action, good qualities of character and values relating to the nature of the good life that are aspired to, espoused and enacted by social workers in the context of their work. (2008, p. 1238)

This definition arguably proposes that social work ethical values cannot be separated from the practitioner’s personal integrity—that is, their “good qualities of character.” They are two sides of the same coin, a position also expressed in Appleton’s (2010) research into social workers’ perceptions of integrity. Ethical standards in social work are therefore inseparable from the practitioner and his/her professional practice as exercised in an organisational context. Such a view of ethics integrates the use of self, long perceived as underpinning professional practice (Davies, 1994; Reupert, 2007), with direct service delivery and therefore organisational requirements as the vehicle by which practice takes place. These elements combine to define the “moments of truth,” (Grönroos, 2007), that is, the quality of the interactions between practitioner and client. I propose that ethically influenced knowledge and skills are reflexively integrated into that moment of interaction expressing the values and beliefs of the profession—and indeed the worker’s employing organisation—which make up their culture (Schein, 2010). Organisational culture is, of course, the domain of leadership as noted in Chapter 2.
4.4 Ethics in the wider leadership field

Having considered social work ethical codes in particular, attention is now given to ethical issues in the wider leadership field. The two streams will be woven together in order to facilitate conceptual connections between them. The section immediately following presents the writing of recognised scholars in the wider ethical leadership field—that is, outside social work literature. Ciulla’s edited text (2004) includes contributions addressing the essential nature of leadership (James MacGregor Burns), a survey of the leadership field (Joanne Ciulla), and the conundrums and dangers of transformational leadership (Michael Keeley, Bernard Bass, and Paul Steidlmeier). Within the overall social work context, the scholarship of ethical leadership (see, for example, Ciulla, 2004) is applied where appropriate. In particular, consideration is given to the questions: “Does leadership have to be ethical to be valid? (Bass & Steidlmeier, 2004; Collins, 2001). In what way, or ways, do the leadership ethics articulated by writers such as Ciulla (2004) inform social work ethics? How will this project treat the perceived ethical risks of transforming leadership (see, e.g., Keeley, 2014) which may be at odds with social work commitments, for example, to social justice and empowerment? This exploration seeks to present an integrated offering encompassing both disciplines, but in which social work takes primacy.

Ciulla (2004, p. xvi) articulates three “facets of ethics and leadership”:

1. The ethics of the means: What do leaders use to motivate followers to obtain their goals?

2. The ethics of person: What are leaders’ personal ethics? Are they motivated by self-interest or altruism?

3. The ethics of the ends: What is the ethical value of a leader’s accomplishments? Did his/her actions serve the greatest good?

Burns (2004) proposes three leadership values: “ethical virtues – ‘old-fashioned character tests’ such as sobriety, chastity, abstention, kindness, altruism ... [i.e.] rules of personal conduct; ethical values such as honesty, integrity, trustworthiness, reliability, reciprocity, accountability; and moral values such as order ... liberty, equality, justice, community” (2004, pp. ix-x). It is worthy of note that Ciulla’s ethical leadership facets and Burns’ leadership
values integrate personal and professional dimensions—a holistic approach which I will later argue is a social work ethical value.

Social work literature makes a distinction between codes of ethics and codes of conduct. Citing Clark (1999), Paul Webster (2010) comments that ethical codes may be seen as a “lighthouse” which serve as a guide allowing for some professional autonomy. They are unable to tell us how to act in a given ethical dilemma (P. Webster, 2010, p. 33). In contrast, a code of conduct “simply and forcefully tells us what we must do and not do” (P. Webster, 2010, p. 33). Proceeding from this distinction, I suggest that ethics are not a prescription but an attitude, a worldview—Schein’s (2010) “assumptions”—expressed in beliefs and values and made visible in artefacts such as staff actions and language, office architecture, bureaucratic forms which we require our clients and consumers to complete: they all tell a story of what is important to us as professional workers. Ciulla argues (2004, pp. 17-18) that “ethics [are] at the heart of leadership,” and the defining question is not, “What is leadership?”, but “What is morally good and effective leadership?”

**Two normative leadership theories: transforming leadership and servant leadership**

In her treatment of ethical leadership, Ciulla (2004) selects two normative theories for illustrative purposes. These are transforming leadership as articulated in the landmark study by Burns (1978) and servant leadership described by Greenleaf (1977). I suggest that both leadership characterisations connect to social work values of respect for persons, self-determination and autonomy. Ciulla puts forward Burns’ theory of transforming leadership as being predicated on mutual moral benefit for leaders and followers (2004, pp. xv-xvi). Burns himself (1978) describes transforming leadership in terms of raising followers’ awareness to the value of achieving outcomes for the collective good. Outcomes to be achieved are located at the level of Maslow’s (1954) higher order of self-actualisation. Ciulla (2004, p. 16) sees the most appealing aspect of Burns’ theory as being the leader’s intention to transform followers into leaders.

Greenleaf’s (1977) servant leadership shares several values with transforming leadership (Smith, Montagno, & Kuzmenko, 2004). Ciulla (2004, p. 17) recounts the story of Leo as told in Hermann Hesse’s (1956) *Journey to the East* from where Robert Greenleaf received his insights:
Hesse’s story is about a spiritual journey. On the journey, a servant named Leo carries the bags and does the travellers’ chores. There is something special about Leo. He keeps the group together with his presence and songs. When Leo mysteriously disappears, the group loses their way. Later in the book the main character, HH, discovers that the servant Leo was actually the leader.

Ciulla notes (2004, p. 17) that the story radically shifts the emphasis of followers serving leaders to the reverse. The similarity between servant and transforming leadership, Ciulla suggests, is that the leader “elevates people” or to use Maslow, seeks to facilitate followers’ self-actualisation. Trust in the leader is the vital quality that enables this process. I propose that Greenleaf’s (1970) question as cited in Graham (1991, p. 112) defines servant leadership in a way that places it within social work’s ethical code:

...do those served grow as persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will he [sic] benefit, or, at least, will he not be further deprived? (Italics in original; bold added)

Servant leadership as presented by Greenleaf expresses conceptual connections to at least two core social work values. His reference to autonomy reminds us of the profession’s commitment to respect for persons, self-determination and autonomy, described by Biestek (1957). Even more strikingly, Greenleaf identifies the effects of leadership actions on marginalised groups in society—the “least privileged”—as the keystone for evaluating their worth. I will shortly make the case for social justice as the most distinctive underpinning element in the social work profession; suffice to state at this point that servant leadership is critically concerned with the marginalised and oppressed. Ciulla (2004) observes that the notion of leaders serving followers is an ancient, and normative, view of leadership. Although Ciulla does not cite an example, one such ancient leadership perspective is found in the New Testament: “I [the Messiah] am among you as the One who serves” (Luke 22:27).

**Transforming leadership: authentic or pseudo?**

Burns’ (1978) vision of transforming leadership was further developed by Bass and Avolio (1993) by articulating four component elements: idealised influence, also known as charisma; inspirational motivation; intellectual stimulation; and individualised consideration. In assessing the ethical dangers in transforming leadership, and particularly in the charismatic
element, Keeley (2004, p. 158) argues that “zealots—armed by moral inspiration, mobilised and purposeful” might create problems for those who disagreed with them. Bass and Steidlmeier (2004) acknowledge egoism and manipulation as ethical risk factors associated with charisma. Social work leadership is concerned with authentic empowerment to “facilitate the inclusion of marginalised, socially excluded, dispossessed, vulnerable and at-risk groups of people,” perhaps the primary value espoused by the profession in its statement of core purposes (Sewpaul & Jones, 2005). If exercising charismatic leadership tends towards a concentration of organisational power at the expense of minority groups, social work has very good reason to be wary of it.

The issues associated with leadership power occasioned by this discussion of charismatic leadership have been the subject of innumerable historical and current studies. Perhaps the most frequently cited leadership power taxonomy is that of French and Raven’s (1968) five “bases of social power,” described by Johnson (2015) in these terms:

- **Coercive power** is based on penalties or punishments such as salary deductions.
- **Reward power** depends on being able to deliver something of value to others, whether tangible (bonuses) or intangible (praise, trust).
- **Legitimate power** resides in the position, not the person. A boss can require us to carry out certain tasks at work but in most cases he or she has no say in what we do in our free time. In contrast to legitimate power, **expert power** is based on the characteristics of the individual regardless of that person’s official position. Knowledge, skills, education, and certification all build expert power. **Referent (role model) power** rests on the admiration one person has for another. (Johnson, 2015, p. 11, emphases in original)

I will later explore social work attitudes to the use of authority and power through Gambrill (2001) and Smith (2008): suffice to state at this point that French and Raven’s five bases apply to our profession as much as any other context.

I now return to the concerns associated with transformational leadership identified by Bass and Steidlmeier (2004). These authors address these concerns by identifying the “pseudo-transformational leader” (2004, p. 184) as standing in contrast to “authentic leadership.” Bass takes an interesting journey in his own understanding of transforming leadership in answering the perennially thorny question: “Was Hitler a leader?” Having initially (Bass, 1985) ascribed transformational status to people such as Hitler, Bass subsequently changed his
position. The reasoning which led to that conclusion is that Hitler and others of his ilk were “inauthentic.” They may be transformational but, by virtue of wearing the “‘black hats,’ of villainy are not ‘truly transformational [but] are the false messiahs and tyrants of history’ (Bass & Steidlmeier, 2004, pp. 180-181). The critical point that emerges out of that discourse is that to be transforming, leadership must be authentic—ethically good—to qualify for inclusion in that category.

In brief, authenticity and goodness must be demonstrable. Statements of intent are insufficient. Bass and Steidlmeier (2004) suggest that, to qualify as a transforming leader (Burns, 1978), an individual commits to certain attitudes and behaviours in the four identified elements. These are set out in Table 4.3, contrasted with pseudo-transforming behaviours. Values and behaviours in Table 4.3, it must be stated, are not purist. I take the perspective that leadership actions are likely to occupy diverse positions on a continuum. Authentic leaders will sometimes fall into inauthentic behaviours; pseudo-transforming leaders will sometimes rise to ethically transparent, even noble attitudes and actions of integrity. Case studies exist of authentic leaders who have become destructive, and vice versa (Johnson, 2015).
Table 4.3  
*Leadership Dynamics: Authentic and Pseudo-Transforming Values and Behaviours*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership dynamic</th>
<th>Authentic transforming leadership values and behaviours</th>
<th>Pseudo-transforming leadership values and behaviours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Idealised influence     | ▪ Envisioning/confident/high standards for emulation  
 ▪ Spiritual and moral dimensions  
 ▪ Promote ethical policies, procedures, processes  
 ▪ Committed to ethical conduct and organisational culture | ▪ “We-they” attitudes: stigmatising the other  
 ▪ Seek and fantasise about power, success and position  
 ▪ Inconsistent and unreliable behaviour resulting in lack of trust in them by others  
 ▪ Narcissistic self-displays |
| (charisma)               |                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                 |
| Inspirational           | ▪ Challenging, meaningful engagement in shared goals  
 ▪ Harmony  
 ▪ Empowerment as motivational and enabling transformation of person | ▪ Focus on the worst in others: plots, conspiracies, unreal dangers, excuses, insecurities  
 ▪ Offer empowerment but treat people as dependent children: ‘forked tongue’ syndrome  
 ▪ May give impression of seeking the group’s good but actually continue to seek control for their own ends |
| motivation               |                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                 |
| Intellectual            | ▪ ‘Open architecture dynamic’ in processes of evaluation, vision casting and implementation  
 ▪ Question assumptions/generate creative solutions to problems  
 ▪ Breaking organisational and leadership cultures that ignore fundamental issues eg altruism/  
 ▪ Persuasion on merits of the issues eg leader’s ideas and mission to followers’ ultimate benefit | ▪ Exploit followers’ feelings to maintain deference  
 ▪ Overweight authority and underweight reason  
 ▪ Take credit for others’ ideas but scapegoat failure  
 ▪ Set and control the agenda  
 ▪ May create impression of doing the right things but abandon those actions if they conflict with narcissistic interests  
 ▪ Less likely to listen to conflicting views and more likely to be intolerant of differences of opinion |
| stimulation              |                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                 |
| Individualised          | ▪ Treating each follower as an individual  
 ▪ Provide coaching, mentoring and growth opportunities  
 ▪ Help followers to become competent with a view to succession planning  
 ▪ See power in terms of socially constructing serving others | ▪ More concerned about maintaining dependency  
 ▪ Different public (“saviours”) to private persona (deceptive, domineering, egotistical): wear different masks |
| consideration            |                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                 |

4.5 Social work leadership and the exercise of power

I suggest that Burns’ (1978; 2004) authentic transforming leadership fits social work’s commitment to empowering marginalised and oppressed communities—in other words, a commitment to social justice—and also offers a useful framework for organisationally delivered social work leadership. It must also, regrettably, be noted that the pseudo-transformational leader’s characteristics may also be called upon to discern narcissistic or even intimidatory leadership styles—the “dark side of leadership” (Johnson, 2015, p.2).

The transforming leadership literature also carries clear affinities with Greenleaf’s (1977) servant leadership thinking. Indeed, I argue that conceptual links between servant leadership and social work’s values of respect for persons and social justice are more self-evident than authentic transformative leadership. That said, the leadership thinking of both Burns and Greenleaf provide a most appropriate platform to round off these formative comments by a brief consideration of how social work leadership exercises power. For this, we turn first to Gambrill’s (2001) essay on the authority base of social work, and second, to Smith’s (2008) treatment of power in organisationally based social work practice.

Eileen Gambrill (2001) presents a stark, even discouraging, critique of the profession. Although her comments focus on frontline service by social workers, they apply equally to social work leadership. Gambrill addresses tensions between the profession’s commitment to empowerment and what she describes as “hiding coercion in the name of helping [and] negative reactions to criticism which reflect an authoritarian base” (2001, p. 167). Her rationale for such a disturbing assessment is located in a failure to draw on evidence-based practice (EBP), evaluate the effectiveness of social work services and “involve clients as informed participants” (2001, p. 172). Gambrill’s advocacy for EBP includes drawing attention to its “emphasis on transparency” (p. 173), an observation which could also be made of ethical leadership. In a powerful conclusion couched in organisational language relevant to this project, she proposes that:

Good intentions and pseudoscience are not ethical grounds on which to rely. They do not protect the rights of clients or concerns of taxpayers; nor do they honour the values of social workers who are sincerely interested in discovering whether they do more good than harm. Most of the claims we make have no evidentiary base. Excuses
used for not honouring ethical guidelines include constraints by bureaucracies in which social workers are employed: “We must go along with what they want.” We cannot claim that we are professionals with special values, knowledge, and skills, who honour a code of ethics, and then jettison these claims when we encounter barriers. Certainly, there are and will be strains. Just as certainly, there are routes and ethical mandates to advocate for policies and practices compatible with our code of ethics. If there is no evidence that services claimed to be helpful are helpful, we should get busy and critically test these claims. (Gambrill, 2001, pp. 172-173)

I suggest that social work leadership reflects its practitioners: their values, ethics and authenticity. Gambrill advocates transparency, client empowerment by way of participation in evaluating the service they have received, and recognition of client and taxpayer rights; but she argues pre-eminently and forcefully for ethical practice which embraces agency policies as much as frontline worker-client interactions. Those concerns belong in the leadership domain. What impresses this researcher is Gambrill’s honesty and her perception that frontline practice and agency policy (and therefore leadership) cannot be artificially separated into silos. She might even be said to have endorsed Specht and Courtney’s (1994) “unfaithful angels” charge. To maintain authenticity, integrity and ethical practice social work and its leadership must see itself as constituting a systemic whole.

In his analysis of power, professionals and organisations the British social work academic Roger Smith (2008) draws on French and Raven’s (1968) typology and Wilding’s (1982) analysis of power. From Wilding, Smith notes that the role of a professional confers power in terms of “expertise, authority and wisdom” (2008, p. 105). The authority is derived from the legislatively mandated position of social workers acting on behalf of the state’s concern for “personal and social problems” which become public issues, a reference to C. Wright Mills’ well known “personal troubles and public issues” (Mills, 1959, p. 8). Expertise in addressing societal dysfunctionality adds to that power. In what could be seen as a chilling comment, Smith refers to this power in the following terms:

Their [social workers’] expertise provides legitimacy for interventions on behalf of the state, which may serve the purpose of exerting or maintaining social control over deviant elements [of society]. (Smith, 2008, p. 107, emphasis added)
Determining the nature of deviancy as the rationale for social control assumes common ground which may not, in fact, be readily found, even among social workers. That is not a debate for this chapter; but the notion of social control as the state’s exercise of power must give social work and its leadership reason to pause and consider what we are doing.

The capstone to Wilding’s three sources of power as reported by Smith (2008, p. 107) is self-interest. In a startling phrase, Smith suggests that the welfare professions are “elitist” in that their specialised education and distinctive disciplinary pathways to employment result in “ideological claims to authoritative roles and status” (2008, p. 107). In the final analysis, this inherent power, privilege and freedom lead to a self-interested “maintenance of the system which supports them” (2008, p. 107).

Smith places a metaphorical finger on the heart of the dichotomy with which social workers are faced whenever they reflect on their function. At one end of the continuum we find “hierarchy, distance and control”—in other words, coercive agents of the state; at the other end, “caring, helping and empowerment” (2008, p. 108). In addition to these power sources, and as described in Chapter 3, the advent of pervasive NPM compliance measures by way of KPIs set out to achieve government-mandated outcomes in society creates “checklist” social work practice (Lymbery, 2004, p. 164). Smith suggests that the net effect of these influences has been seen in a “changing pattern of management and control shift[ing] the balance of power away from the independent practitioner and towards the agency” (2008, p. 112).

I propose that social work leadership thinking must be continually mindful of Gambrill and Smith’s respective analyses of authority and power. Arguably, the ethics of leadership in our profession are never more needful than in the potentially frightening levels of power that accrue to social workers by virtue of legislation, expertise and the temptation to self-serving preservation of undoubted privilege. Ciulla’s (2004) reminder that ethics are at the heart of leadership must become an integral quality in organisational social work leadership. How that leadership is exercised by way of Smith’s call to caring, helping and empowerment as balancing hierarchy, distance and control is a tension, or polarity (Johnson, 1992), to manage. Managerial problem-solving is not the issue: addressing Grint’s (2005) “wicked problems” located in the domain of leadership is required.

The purpose of this chapter has been to weave the implications of ethical practice in the wider leadership literature with those of social work. In particular, the argument in this
Chapter sought to establish social justice as the profession’s most distinctive characteristic. Codes of ethics require that organisational activities including leadership actions are integrated with professional practice ideals (Banks, 2008). The nature and quality of leadership thinking as embracing transforming servant and authentic leadership in the wider leadership literature resonates with social work’s commitment to empowerment and social justice. The defining point that I seek to make in this chapter’s review is that social justice, with all that it implies, is validly expressed in social work organisational leadership. I argue further that it is not merely validly expressed, but constitutes an underpinning value in the organisational sphere.

Chapter 5 will apply social work’s codes of ethics from three levels, as noted earlier: global (IFSW/IASSW), Anglophone (US, UK, Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand) and finally, on a more focused consideration of Aotearoa New Zealand’s bicultural code. The purpose of this exploration is primarily to make connections between statements in these codes and the lens through which the indigenous world perceives social work leadership. The development by Western scholarship of complex adaptive systems of thinking about organisations and leadership is allied to this exercise. The end result of these considerations will be to offer a holistic view of the project.
Chapter 5
Indigenous leadership approaches and complex adaptive systems thinking

5.1 Introduction: Connecting social work ethics, indigenous approaches and complexity thinking

As noted in the concluding paragraph of the previous chapter, Chapter 5 explores social work codes of ethics from three sources: global (IFSW/IASSW), the Anglophone nation-states; and the local, that is, Aotearoa New Zealand’s bicultural code. The purpose of this exploration is to make conceptual connections between these codes and the lens through which the indigenous world perceives social work leadership. The development by Western scholarship of complex adaptive systems of thinking about organisations and leadership is allied to this exercise. The end result of these considerations will be to offer a holistic view of the project.

Figure 4.1 (Chapter 4) set out conceptual connections between strands three and four which contribute to the research aim (“To develop a New Zealand model of social work organisational leadership”) and the extant leadership research literature. Chapter 4 established a rationale for social justice as underpinning the profession’s leadership. This thinking was essentially based on the notions, first, that managing and leading organisations is a core purpose or domain of social work (Sewpaul & Jones, 2005) and second, that managerial leadership exists to facilitate the other 12 core purposes. I argue that the pathway for leadership as integrating social justice in the organisational context becomes a defining element of this whole project. Equally of interest—although as already observed, this study is not testing any hypothesis—whether research participants identify social justice as informing professional leadership.

This chapter aims to develop a logical argument that the profession’s ethical codes mandate an indigenous dimension to social work service delivery. The rationale for this argument is derived from several sources. These include the four perspectives of social work ethics outlined by Gray and Webb (2010) (Table 4.1, Chapter 4), the connections made by the IFSW (2012) between social work ethics and United Nations human rights declarations as relevant to social work, including the “Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention” setting out indigenous rights (ILO, 1989). By virtue of its bicultural statement, a connection is equally
made between the ANZASW Code (2008) and indigenous approaches to organisational leadership thinking.

Developing this theme, and referring to Figure 5.1, I propose that leadership in the profession is exercised in the context of the Māori renaissance (Moon, 2009; Walker, 2004). It is equally exercised through ethical, authentic and spiritual dimensions of leadership (see, for example, Bass & Steidlmeier, 2004; Černe, Jaklič, & Škerlavaj, 2013; Ferguson & Milliman, 2008; Luthans & Avolio, 2003; Woolley, Caza, & Levy, 2011). Ethical leadership is seen as the overarching framework for the exercise of authenticity, spirituality, and servant leadership (see, for example, Freeman, 2011; Greenleaf, 1977; Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008), personal and professional integrity (Adams, 2011; Appleton, 2010; Banks, 2010). It is worthy of note that, in the same vein as the growth of ethical considerations in leadership studies (Ciulla, 2004), servant leadership has assumed global dimensions as evidenced, for example, in its application to the People’s Republic of China (Han, Kakabadse, & Kakabadse, 2010) and Islamic servant leadership thinking (ElKaleh & Samier, 2013). As already observed, Ciulla (2004) identifies servant leadership as a normative model alongside transforming leadership (Burns, 1978).

Indigenous leadership ideas—such as Tipu Ake (Goldsbury, 2004; Te Whaiti Nui-a-Toi, 2001)—carry conceptual connections with an increasing literature associated with biological complexity thinking and complex adaptive systems (Lord, Hannah, & Jennings, 2011; Uhl-Bien et al., 2007; Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2009; Webster, 2013). These connections will be developed in this chapter: essentially, the literature cited proposes that organisational leadership may be interpreted as organic in nature, that is, exercising leadership is not confined to Weberian lines of authority as the basis for leadership (Weber & Tosi, 1987). Indigenous thinking proposes that organisations are better understood as organisms. They comprise people, not command-and-control structures and, despite the human propensity to follow rules (Oberfield, 2010), leadership can be viewed as originating from diverse hierarchical levels (Asquith, 1998; Oshagbemi & Gill, 2004). In other words, leadership does not depend on formal position, and it may be collectively exercised. In a fascinating application of such indigenous thinking, Senge (1999) points out that, because companies are composed of people, conventional Western notions that shareholders own part of the enterprise implicitly suggest that the people are owned. Social work ethical codes are unlikely to find accord with such a notion.
To unpack these ideas, this chapter employs three themes. I will first set out the place of indigenous leadership within the profession’s codes of ethics. I will argue that biological complexity thinking is intrinsic to indigenous leadership and demonstrate that organic, collective and spiritual notions are part and parcel of the indigenous leadership discourse. This theme will be developed through an exploration of indigenous perspectives from North America, Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. Emerging research on complexity leadership will be described as carrying close affinities with the timeless and unique qualities of organic indigenous thinking.

Finally, an attempt will be made to develop a formative statement to integrate cultural aspects of indigenous leadership with social work ethics and the political dimensions to which indigenous leaders aspire, or have already achieved.

5.2 Social work ethics, key ideas and indigenous leadership

In order to locate indigenous leadership in terms of social work ethics, Table 4.1 (Chapter 4) introduced Gray and Webb’s (2010) four perspectives. As noted above, the starting point will be the IFSW “Statement of Ethical Principles” (IFSW, 2012) and the “Global Standards for the Education and Training of the Social Work Profession” (IFSW; IASSW, 2005). As these documents are examined in terms of their applicability to leadership, connections with the perspectives articulated by Gray and Webb (2010) will be made. The same format will be used for the national codes.

Gray and Webb’s introduction (2010) offers an overarching treatment of the social work ethics field. These authors couch their discussion in terms of practice tensions, contradictions and diversity which call to mind Payne’s (2005) notion that practice informs social work theory. If the profession is inextricably connected with practice realities, so too, I argue, is social work leadership. Although ethics and values are typically treated as synonymous terms in the literature (Congress, 2010), an alternative perspective might propose that values inform ethics, and that “unexamined assumptions” (Schein, 2010), or worldviews, inform values. Borrowing from organisational culture diagnosis, this approach opens up diverse considerations on ethical social work leadership actions by exploring the assumptions that underpin those actions.
Examining social work values brings into view social work’s “key ideas” (Congress, 2010, pp. 20-23). These derive from the seminal work of Felix Biestek (1957) whose thinking on the profession’s values influenced social work education for two decades, including my own formative years as a practitioner. Whiting (2010) points out that Biestek’s perspective “explicitly affirm his Christian faith” (p. 197) and for that reason his voice was discredited by Jordan (1987)—thus placing the debate about which values are applicable to social work centre-stage. In her definition of values and ethics respectively, Congress (2010) in effect adopts a cultural diagnostic approach. She proposes (2010, p. 20) that values are “relatively enduring” professional beliefs of what is “right and proper,” and that ethics are behaviours deriving from those values.

Congress (2010) lists the commonly accepted core values of the profession as articulated by Biestek (1961), Timms (1983), and Abbott (1999). These key ideas are: respect for persons (from which the principle of individualisation derives); self-determination; confidentiality; social justice; human rights, professional integrity, non-discrimination and cultural competence (Congress, 2010, pp. 20-22). Of these key ideas, social justice formed the discourse in Chapter 4. Core values relevant to indigenous leadership will be discussed and their implications for, and connections with, the indigenous leadership literature are explored. The purpose of this approach is to provide a coherent schema for the overall debate.

**Statement of Principles (IFSW) and the core purposes of social work**

The global expression of ethical principles for the profession is located in the IFSW’s (2012) statement. The statement notes that its starting point is the definition of social work, jointly devised with the IASSW. Although already cited in chapters 1 and 4, the definition is reproduced here:

> The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work. (IFSW, 2012, p.1)

This definition and the statement of principles are usefully interpreted through the core purposes of the profession. These documents were adopted by the IASSW and IFSW in their
general assemblies in 2004 (Sewpaul & Jones, 2005). The core purposes statement, also reproduced in Appendix 1, articulates both professional practice expectations and political advocacy with potentially wide-ranging implications. Banks (2008, p. 1244) argues for “conscious linkages between social work ethics and politics” in that professional decisions do not occur in a policy or political vacuum. In the same vein as Payne’s (2005) statement that theory informs practice and vice versa, Banks suggests (2008, p. 1244) that the actions and decision-making of practitioners are integrally linked to ethical judgments. She proposes that, because these actions and decisions occur in organisational and policy contexts, professionals are both influenced by, and contribute to, ethical discourses in their employing organisations and policy development—a perspective offering a systems approach to this project. This study proceeds on the underpinning premise that social work ethics, practice, organisation, policy, and related legislation are specific expressions of the whole professional enterprise.

The IFSW’s statement of principles (2012) comprises five sections. Section 1, the preface, recognises that because ethical issues are frequently country-specific, the statement confines itself to general principles based on the definition of social work cited earlier. The definition itself comprises section 2. Section 3 lists the relevant international human rights declarations and conventions, leading to section 4 which contains two parts: (i) human rights and human dignity, and (ii) social justice—the subject matter of Chapter 4. Section 5 offers general guidelines for professional conduct. I focus on those statements in this document that present as relevant to this project, and subsequently discuss them in the context of the core purposes of the profession.

The preface to the statement draws attention to societal conflicts impacting on the function of social workers—specifically, that practitioners are simultaneously “helpers and controllers.” This statement expresses the tension, identified in Chapter 4, between empowering clients as a practice philosophy (Fook, 2002) and the role of the worker as a coercive agent of the state (see, for example, Braye & Preston-Shoot, 2006). An apparent dichotomy emerges, although the overriding attention of the remainder of the statement is given to such themes as client empowerment, human rights, and challenging negative discrimination. I apply these considerations equally to face-to-face service delivery and organisational/policy levels.
In its “Statement of Ethical Principles,” the IFSW (2012) connects United Nations human rights declarations and conventions to social work practice and action. In this context, the rights of indigenous populations are validated by the IFSW through the International Labour Organisation’s (ILO) Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (ILO, 1989). Approaches to indigenous social work practice are increasingly emerging in the literature (e.g., Briskman, 2007; Gray et al., 2008). In the New Zealand context, indigenous Māori perspectives of “living” organisations (Te Whaiti Nui-a-Toi, 2001) connect with organic, or emergent, complex adaptive systems theory (Hannah et al., 2011).

In this way, the third and fourth strands of the literature review (social work ethics, identity and standards; indigenous leadership models and connections with biological complexity thinking) are essentially two sides of one coin: New Zealand bicultural social work ethics require an indigenous expression if authentic social work leadership actions are to be consistent with professional values. Further, Māori notions of organisations as living beings connect with organic, complex adaptive thinking in Western leadership and management theory (Lewin & Regine, 2001). These synergies underpin the literature strands selected to conceptually inform this research.

Among social anthropologists, indigeneity is a contested concept (Barnard, 2006). For that reason, this study employs the ILO’s “Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention,” which I interpret as a political rather than anthropological statement, albeit one with cultural rights of self-expression and identity. The following section of the Convention defines the identity of indigenous people, who in Aotearoa New Zealand are Māori, the people of the land, “Tangata Whenua”*:

**Article 1(b)** Peoples in independent countries who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonisation or the establishment of present state boundaries and who, irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions.

**Article 2** Self-identification as indigenous or tribal shall be regarded as a fundamental criterion for determining the groups to which the provisions of this Convention apply. (ILO, 1989, p. 2)
This wording is consistent with social work’s commitment to human rights and social justice enunciated in the IFSW’s (2012) definition of the profession. In addition, self-identification in article 2 carries affinity with the IFSW Code’s expectation that social workers respect the right to self-determination. Although this expectation is set within the context of “physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual integrity and well-being” (2012, p. 3), it arguably carries a political dimension—and indeed, article 1(b) refers to indigenous people retaining “some or all of their own political institutions.” Later discussion in this chapter explores a political expression of self-determination in Canada where the Inuit nation has a measure of autonomy in their homeland, Nunavut.

**Respect for persons, self-determination and autonomy**

The global dimensions of the social work profession may in fact paper over some significant cultural differences inherent in the espoused core values. Congress (2010) observes that the “core values convey an aura of certainty about what the profession stands for, but they belie controversy in their interpretation and application by practitioners in particular circumstances” (p. 20). I suggest that respect for persons, self-determination and autonomy is an example of Congress’ comment. It may even represent an illustration of the distinction made by Argyris and Schön (1996) between espoused theory and theory in use. Social work practitioners may endorse client self-determination and autonomy, but an alternative discourse offers a contrasting perspective of relevance to indigeneity as a collective culture (see, for example Sveiby, 2011). That “alternative discourse” follows.

Respect for persons typically refers to the inherent worth, dignity and uniqueness of every individual—from which individualisation arises—and connects to the second core value of self-determination and the practitioner’s commitment to client autonomy. Huxley, Evans, Beresford, Davidson, and King (2009) define these terms, which originate from Biestek (1957) as meaning that “in all instances, people want to be treated as an individual and not as a category (individualisation), [and] make their own decisions and choices (self-determination [or autonomy])” (Huxley et al., 2009, p.102.)

Congress (2010) cites Ejaz (1991) in observing that autonomy as a value may not sit comfortably with collectivist cultures. In a study of Indian social workers’ application of self-determination in direct client work, Ejaz (1991) comments that seeking advice of “elders or educated persons” (p. 134) is in accord with Indian culture. While Ejaz does not use the term
**collective**, she does refer to Indian culture as “gregarious”—defined as “living communally” by the Encarta dictionary—and therefore practically synonymous with collectivist values. In this context, seeking and following the advice of an educated social worker may well lead to dependency, a state of being in opposition to the whole value of self-determination.

Ejaz’s reservations in relation to autonomy in a collectivist culture are strikingly affirmed by Ewalt and Mokuau (1995). These social work academics contrast the high value assigned to autonomy in the US, an individualist culture, with the perspective of group-oriented cultures such as Pacific peoples. Self-determination is seen, in Ewalt and Mokuau’s paper, as a discordant value when viewed in terms of group well-being (1995, p. 169). These authors apply collective values to the exercise of leadership in these words:

> When there is a gathering of families and a decision is not made, a chief may indicate that he has to consult with his family before he can decide his answer. Each family member works for the benefit of the entire extended family, which sometimes may be as large as an entire village. (1995, p. 171)

In a balanced assessment of what they describe as “the fundamentally valid principle of self-determination,” Ewalt and Mokuau suggest that it has assumed a culturally biased interpretation (1995, p. 173). They propose that independence, so prized in Anglo cultures, is esteemed more highly than interdependence and individual identity over group achievement. By asserting a professional obligation to assess cultural bias, Ewalt and Mokuau propose that, for collectivist communities, the “values of interdependence should be given equal weight with independence” (1995, p. 173). Those perceptions are entirely congruent with indigenous leadership thinking in North America, Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand.

In common with the values of respect for persons, self-determination and autonomy, **confidentiality** viewed through an indigenous lens may be interpreted quite differently to the Anglophone sphere’s understanding of the term. This variance is now considered.

**Confidentiality**

Congress (2010) notes that Collingridge, Miller, & Bowles (2001, p. 10) suggest that confidentiality derives from the “more fundamental notion of privacy,” and that privacy is best understood as a manifestation of respect for persons and self-determination. They also suggest (2001, p. 11) that “self-determination requires a measure of privacy.” In brief, then,
these authors argue that a conceptual connection exists between privacy, confidentiality, respect for persons and self-determination—and confidentiality cannot be seen as the foundational ethical value as is so often asserted by the social work profession.

Confidentiality is therefore a contested value, although from a different perspective to that of self-determination and autonomy. Once again, the principle became familiar to a generation of practitioners from Biestek’s (1957) seminal text—now in its 12th edition, most recently re-published in 1989 (Mwansa, 2008)—in which confidentiality is described as an essential right of the client, ethically binding on the social worker. The content of disclosed information in worker–client interactions is protected, and the value is seen as foundational to the helping relationship—that is, it is a place of safety. Biestek qualified confidentiality by virtue of the inevitability of shared information within the agency and outside to other agencies, although he argued that written consent for the latter is required.

Confidentiality’s different perspective to self-determination noted above is located in a consideration of collectivist vis-à-vis individualist cultures. Ho (2007) advances the proposition that people in collectivist cultures privilege tightly knit relationships and committed care within extended families, in return for which “absolute loyalty” is a *sine qua non* (2007, p. 50).

The implications of collectivist values on social work organisational leadership may therefore compromise the profession’s commitment to confidentiality in exchange for group-based empowerment—or to apply a Māori concept, tūrangawaewae*, a metaphorical place to stand by rights of kinship. The kinship in this context may refer to both the Tangata Whenua and professional social work communities. Implicit in such a discourse is the notion of trust. If a practitioner, at whatever hierarchical level in a social work organisation, is able to trust appointed or organic leaders, sharing sensitive personal and professional information represents the place of safety noted by Biestek’s formulation. Of course, it must be noted that such sharing is a voluntary decision.

Viewed from the perspective of an appointed or peer-recognised leader, maintaining confidentiality with information divulged by virtue of a trusting relationship may pose ethical challenges. If safety issues pertaining to the practitioner, a client or the organisation are identified, limits of confidentiality are likely to be encountered. Indeed, the whole notion of confidentiality as an essential ethical premise has been questioned.
Diverse implications of these considerations on social work leadership are evident. Consistent with the profession’s systems, or ecological thinking, ethics cannot be neatly packaged up in discrete silo-like modules. Confidentiality arises from respect for colleagues and commitment to their self-determination—but within limits. That commitment includes a responsibility, or loyalty as per the collectivist worldview, to the person whose safety is at risk by virtue of information shared. In addition, information sharing with the employing agency’s right to the information in terms of organisational risk management is a critical issue which may limit confidentiality. The ethical commitment to confidentiality may therefore be contradicted by an equally strong commitment to safety. In a practice context, confidentiality is limited, for example, by risk of harm or danger to the person divulging information or to other parties. The New Zealand code of ethics contains a number of confidentiality limitations described in paragraph 3.13 (ANZASW, 2008, p. 10) which arguably reduces the whole ethic.

It is also evident that the risk principle applied to limits of confidentiality draws on the previously discussed limitations to autonomy. Once again, an ethical base to practice and from that point to organisational social work leadership actions requires an integrated systems-wide perspective. Such a whole systems framework enables a “balcony view” environmental scan (Heifetz & Laurie, 1997 as cited in Attwood et al., 2003, p. 61). In brief, an ethical foundation for social work leadership must be drawn from a holistic appreciation of the code. Cherry-picking data deemed favourable to a desired research finding is unethical: so too, is selective appeal to favoured ethical clauses.

5.3 Indigenous leadership approaches

Two intertwined perspectives are employed in exploring conceptualisations of indigenous leadership. Cultural constructs determining indigenous leadership actions are considered; and historical/political contexts in which indigenous leadership functions are described. These elements are integrated in the following narrative. The review of the literature will also explore conceptual connections between indigenous, Western and social work leadership thinking.

Indigenous leadership actions arise out of unique cultural identities. Analysis derives from social anthropology study of culture (e.g., Peoples & Bailey, 2003). The literature identifies certain generic understandings of indigenous perspectives: leadership is collective; it is organic; and it privileges holistic, spiritual thinking.
Indigenous leadership in Aotearoa New Zealand

The indigenous leadership literature from the US, Canada, Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand share common themes which provide conceptual integrity for historical and political contexts. These themes include the effects of colonisation and consequent disempowerment and marginalisation of pre-European indigenous community identity and leadership (Chartrand, 2008; Durie, 1998; Smith, 1999; Walker, 2004); an understanding of how collective indigenous leadership is exercised (Sveiby, 2011); political, or aspirations of self-determination (Belanger, 2008); tribally based leadership (Winiata, 1967); and indigenous cultural and economic renaissance (Tangihaere & Twiname, 2011).

In the Aotearoa New Zealand context, Māori “cultural renaissance”* (Walker, 1990, p. 10) and the coincident economic advancement of iwi—partly through the Treaty of Waitangi settlement process (Belgrave, Kawharu, & Williams, 2005)—has influenced recent and current political discourse in which contemporary Māori political, tribal and urban leadership has developed. A political expression of this leadership development was demonstrated by the establishment of the Māori Party* in 2004 and the Mana Party* in 2011. Māori were also elected to Parliament in unprecedented numbers on behalf of other parties, independent of the dedicated Māori electorates.

Following Schein (2010), I adopt the notion that, to understand the values, beliefs and observable artefacts of a community of any size or nature, the observer must equally understand the worldview that informs the values and artefacts of that community. With that approach in mind, I suggest that recognition of cultural assumptions from the Māori renaissance (Walker, 1990)—coinciding with political and professional social work recognition of institutional racism in the 1986 Puao-Te-Ata-Tu* report—created an indigenous perspective to social work organisational policy and practice with profound cultural implications for leadership actions. Not least of these implications was leadership exercised from a collective perspective, quite distinct from individualistic Western thinking (Sveiby, 2011). Furthermore, indigenous thinking introduced notions of shared, distributed leadership (Barker & Floersch, 2010), spirituality and servant leadership (Freeman, 2011), and leadership authenticity (Leonard, 2009; Luthans & Avolio, 2003). In the Aotearoa New Zealand context, Tipu Ake brings a Māori perspective by depicting organisational leadership as exercised biologically through the metaphor of a living tree (Te Whaiti Nui-a-Toi, 2001) (Figure 5.1).
recent years, Western complexity leadership and metaphorical organisational thinking has embraced biological models (Morgan, 2006; Uhl-Bien et al., 2007).

Arguably, the most striking leadership aspect of Tipu Ake is its location and its composition. Māori see leadership as collective—many individuals can contribute to it—yet possessing the courage that germinates the seed of a new entrepreneurial idea and moves it up out of the undercurrents from where it is defined, recognised and nurtured by those who support it (Goldsbury, 2004; Te Whaiti-Nui-A-Toi, 2001). The function of leadership includes filtering toxic ideas (“whiro”: see Figure 5.1). Teamwork—the roots—is where a new style of leadership based on a shared vision of wellness is gathered to sustain growth above the ground. Processes metaphorically located in the trunk of the tree represent the group, or work-based team, collectively structuring the idea to enable its practical application.

Figure 5.1
Tipu Ake

Seven interwoven levels
- Wellbeing: fruits
- Wisdom (collective): flowers
- Sensing (collective): branches
- Processes: trunk
- Teamwork: roots
- Leadership (shared): seed
- Undercurrents (ideas): soil


Conventional Western ideas locate leaders at the apex of the organisational chart with an ethos captured by the subtitle of Bennis and Nanus’ (1985) leadership text: ‘The strategies for taking charge.’ In contrast, Tipu Ake places leadership at the base of the living organism, not the top. From leadership and teamwork, processes follow which use “sensing.” In Western social work leadership literature, sense-making depicts storytelling (Gardner, 2006), helping
people interpret events and changes. Tipu Ake suggests that arising from the earlier processes, up to and including collective sense-making, wisdom and well-being result. Wisdom is seen by Tipu Ake as the intellectual capital of a group embodying cultural values and is most often told as stories (Te Whaiti-Nui-A-Toi, 2001). The tangible sense of “ora,” well-being, completes the cycle.

A biological metaphor is the dominant imagery of Tipu Ake. To understand the processes that begin with shared leadership and teamwork, the observer must appreciate the organic mindset. I will argue that the appropriation, perhaps unwittingly, by Western management and leadership theorists of such thinking offers a fertile connection with indigenous leadership approaches (see, for example, Lichtenstein & Plowman, 2009; Plowman et al., 2007).

**Indigenous leadership: political and social work dimensions**

In Canada, negotiations between Inuit resident in the north-west of the country resulted in the establishment in 1993 of a self-governing Canadian territory, Nunavut (Henderson, 2008, p. 222). The philosophical political framework underpinning this contemporary development is the Harvard Project’s “nation-building” model (Innes & Pelletier, 2008, p. 240) which sets forth economic and governing criteria. Self-government recognises a level of indigenous leadership to which the New Zealand Government has yet to accede in respect of Māori despite reiterative claims of self-determination that protagonists argue is enshrined by Treaty of Waitangi related “tino rangatiratanga,” or sovereignty (see, for example, Munford & Walsh-Tapiata, 2006; Tangihaere & Twiname, 2011)—although in 2010 exertion of Māori political leadership secured New Zealand Government adherence to the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Sharples, 2010).

Māori political leadership thus briefly described was arguably advanced by the post-1987 environment which witnessed commitment by public sector policy to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, subsequently seen in social work leadership and management. Prime drivers of this paradigm change were the examination of racism in the Department of Social Welfare published as *Puao-Te-Ata-Tu* (Ministerial Advisory Committee on a Maori Perspective for the Department of Social Welfare & Rangihau, 1986), and the recognition by the Royal Commission on Social Policy of the Treaty as the founding document of Aotearoa New Zealand (Royal Commission on Social Policy, 1988). In 1993 the influence of *Puao-Te-Ata-Tu* and the Royal Commission was seen in the adoption of a bicultural code of social work ethics
mandating “an indigenous [Māori] identity for social work” as a counterpoise for Western, and particularly Anglo, approaches (Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers, 2008, p. 16). Thus the political and policy contexts of indigenous leadership in Aotearoa New Zealand became a force in the leadership of the social work profession.

The qualities associated with a collectivist culture—equal rights, circumspect exertion of power, systemic location of problems, redistribution of power as a change-management strategy, and a group consensus for decision-making—find common ground with social work’s commitment to human rights and social justice (see, for example, Androff (2010); Bisman (2004); Chu et al. (2009); Leonard (2009); and Marsh (2005). As findings emerge from research participants, issues which may require exploration include the place of social work organisational leadership actions emanating from a collectivist cultural perspective in the context of a Western individualist majority culture such as Aotearoa New Zealand (Kennedy, 2008). Questions to emerge may include how, or if, participants integrate collectivist commitment to social justice in their understandings of leadership actions in organisations? On a personal level, whether participants from an individualist culture identity perceive a measure of dissonance between the norms of such an identity and the exercise of leadership by the social work profession? The other side of the equation is equally applicable: how do participants from a collectivist societal view, such as indigenous Māori practitioners, deal with these issues in the context of a dominant Western societal identity? These themes have been increasingly addressed in social work and management literature; see, for example, Briskman (2008); Goldsbury (2004); Gray et al. (2008); and Tangihaere and Twiname (2011).

**Indigenous leadership in North America**

The literature addressing indigenous leadership actions offers diverse perspectives illustrating the scholarship of cultural analysis. In the North American context, Calliou (2005, p. 52) observes that, historically, indigenous leaders placed importance on cultural identity. Among other characteristics, these “chiefs, warriors and medicine men” exercised their leadership by paying equal attention to action and speech. In a parallel to the early 20th century Western “great man,” or trait thinking about leadership, Calliou repeatedly uses the adjective “great” of these individuals, stating, for example, that “these great Indian leaders were visionaries” (Calliou, 2005, p. 52). Balanced against this trait approach, Calliou offers evidence of collective understandings about leadership: shared decision-making, open dialogue and consensus in regard to followers. Calliou further argues that indigenous cultural survival
mandates integration of these traditional values with “modern [i.e., Western] leadership and management competencies ... a foot in both worlds” (Calliou, 2005, pp. 52-53). No cultural identity is static.

**Indigenous leadership in Australia**

Ivory (2008) offers a comprehensive analysis of Aboriginal leadership characteristics in Australia’s Northern Territory (NT). Ivory poses some critical questions:

> Why is Indigenous leadership seemingly invisible to non-Indigenous eyes? Is Indigenous leadership so politically under-developed that it is ineffective in today’s post-colonial Australian society? Are the leaders themselves content to sit in the background and let the intercultural vortex marginalise them? (Ivory, 2008, p. 234)

Ivory contextualises these questions in a vignette describing the official visit of then Prime Minister (PM), John Howard, in 2005 to Port Keats, NT. Waiting respectfully to welcome their guest, the PM, were a group of Aboriginal senior leaders, who possessed notable skills of ensuring survival of indigenous identity, understood the culture of Aboriginal ceremony, and were well able to negotiate decision-making through consensus (Ivory, 2008, p. 234). The indigenous community paid respect to this group. Apart from a “brief acknowledgment,” the PM and his official party did not. The cultural dimension to analysing leadership actions is, arguably, nowhere better illustrated.

Ivory’s analysis of the recent literature suggests that a culture of collective identity underpins Aboriginal leadership characteristics (Ivory, 2008, pp. 236-237). He proposes that hierarchical family and social networks prescribe leadership behaviours, and that knowledge of culturally determined ceremony may increase the influence exercised by leaders. The importance attached to social networks and skills demonstrated by developing “reciprocal obligations” within them may create recognition of “big men.” Essentially, Ivory argues (2008, p. 253) that Aboriginal leadership is to be perceived as emerging from nodes of organic governance crossing over from diverse communities: it is “distributed.”

European perceptions of this distributed leadership arguably caused, or contributed to, Prime Minister Howard’s inability to recognise the group of senior Port Keats Aboriginal leaders. Ivory suggests that interactions with the state have produced European perceptions of leadership “invisibility” (Ivory, 2008, p. 255), potentially complicated by equal value placed by
Aboriginal communities on constructs of egalitarianism and hierarchy. Cultural identity as dynamic is applicable to Aboriginal leadership as it is to North American.

5.4 A formative statement: Integrating indigenous leadership, social work ethics and political dimensions

Social work ethics arguably lean towards the collective end of the oft-quoted individualist–collectivist cultural continuum. The profession’s characteristic identity is formed from a commitment to social justice, empowerment of marginalised and disempowered groups, and respect for ethnic, cultural and other forms of diversity in both practice and organisational arenas. These qualities lend themselves to a collegial interpretation of professional practice, be it frontline service delivery or organisationally based leadership. That said, there are significant balancing considerations. The profession is equally committed to a democratic society in which, by definition, numbers rule. The tension between that ethical stance and the recognition of self-determination by marginalised groups such as indigenous peoples does not admit facile declarations or problem-based-solutions thinking. Political advocacy simply casts individual members of the professional workforce into the same boat as any other citizen unless a common voice is agreed upon. Whether in the constitutionally based secrecy of the ballot box, every social worker will vote in the same way is not only unlikely, but unknowable.

A pathway forward may be found by the same organic approach espoused by indigenous peoples and, increasingly, by Western leadership theorists. Organisational leadership actions by which practitioners demonstrate respect and cultural competence may fruitfully engage in authentic, servant leadership and thus change the profession from the inside out. If it took Wilberforce 45 years to convince the British political élite to remove slavery, it is surely conceivable that social workers can unify the organisational persona of the profession around a commitment to the indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand to restore their mana and enable them to stand in their own unique tūrangawaewae*: a metaphorical “place where one has rights of residence and belonging through kinship and whakapapa”* (“genealogy”) (online Māori dictionary).

The characteristic ecological framework epitomised by indigenous approaches to leadership is an appropriate place to offer a summative statement of the literature review of the last five chapters and make a connection with the research methodology. The review has in effect integrated a range of literature: leadership and management from wider scholarship; the
contexts in which leadership is exercised, represented by current and historical welfare policy, international for-profit and public sector leadership and management, including NPM; social work ethics, standards and identity; and indigenous thinking relating to organisation—better understood as organism—and leadership. The four literature strands presented in Figure 1.1 (chapter 1) act as a conceptual base for an emergent research-based model of New Zealand social work leadership. The perspectives and perceptions of informants will be woven into this model as the unique outcome of the research.

I interpret the methodology as the means by which the research project comes to life. It is the nexus in which social work values connect with qualitative thinking, thus producing a holistic model through which findings emerge. If the findings and the model of leadership are seen as the “what” of the entire project, the methodology is the “how.”
Chapter 6  
Methodology  

6.1 Introduction: Conceptual considerations  

To determine social workers’ conception of organisational leadership is to engage in the exploration of a human phenomenon which—I will argue—is of necessity a social constructionist exercise. The methodology of the project proceeding from that perspective logically adopts a constructionist paradigm whose rationale will shortly be further addressed. Responses to four questions posed by Crotty (1998) will inform the proposed methodology, and are intended to provide a coherent conceptual underpinning for the project. These responses are also informed by the aim of the research, namely to develop an Aotearoa New Zealand model of social work organisational leadership.

Crotty’s (1998) four questions inform the project’s methodological framework:

I. What paradigm, or worldview, informs the project? What theory of knowledge embedded in the theoretical perspective and thereby in the methodology informs this theoretical perspective? (Crotty, 1998, pp. 2-3)

II. What theoretical lens—a “philosophical stance informing the methodology thus providing a context for process and grounding its logic and criteria”—will underpin the methodology to be used? (Crotty, 1998, pp. 2-3)

III. What design—“plan of action”—stands behind the method to gather and analyse data? (Crotty, 1998, p. 3)

IV. What methods—“techniques to gather and analyse data relating to the research question”—to identify the population sample will be used? (Crotty, 1998, pp. 2-3)

These questions are presented as schematic elements in Figure 6.1 in order to inform the structure of the chapter (Crotty, 1998, p.4.) These successive elements are not neatly packaged in sequential order. During the course of the project, an iterative process back and forth will be the reality, signalled by two-way arrows. Hussey and Hussey (1997, p. 48) suggest that the design of a qualitative study emerges as the process develops, and patterns and theories become apparent. Crotty argues (1998, p. 14) that the qualitative paradigm does not, in fact, emerge until the methodology to be used is identified.
6.2 Epistemology: A constructionist paradigm

I have selected constructionism as the epistemology most appropriate for a study in which the participants will construct their unique perception of leadership. Crotty (1998, pp. 8, 9) suggests that constructionism assumes that “meaning” emerges from human interaction with “the realities in our world.” The word *constructionism* is intrinsically onomatopoeic. “Meaning,” says Crotty (1998, p. 9), “is not discovered, but constructed.” Unique perceptions of identical phenomena from individual human beings demonstrate that meaning is a construction dependent on the diverse perspectives of an observer’s cultural or generational location (Crotty, 1998).

Guba and Lincoln (2005, pp. 195, 197) suggest that a *constructivist paradigm* (which they use as an alternative term for *constructionist*) is a “meaning-making activity” in which acquired knowledge derives from the consensus of individual or collective reconstructions. Crotty (1998) uses the same “constructed meanings” terminology to convey the essence of the paradigm selected for the project. Crotty also proposes that constructivism as a meaning-making process applies to the individual; “constructionism” applies to a collective process (Crotty, 1998, p. 58). This research is located in the latter; Holosko’s (2009) suggestion that social work leadership is collaborative, or constructionist, may inform respondent perspectives of social work leadership.

The constructionist vision is rooted in social sciences—anthropology as the initiating discipline from where it spread to sociology, psychology, organisational studies (e.g., Morgan & Smircich, 1980) and eventually to social work (Padgett, 2008). The project in which I am engaged integrates organisational leadership and social work; the influence of organic, living
images of organisation (Morgan, 2006) bear with them biological rather than machine metaphors. Social work leadership fits into this organic complexity lens characteristic of the person-in-society practice context in which social workers function (Jarvis, 2009). Research in a constructionist paradigm requires the same commitment to the informants as a social worker’s professional relationship with her client; a constructionist researcher, Crotty argues, never treats the informant simply as a source of information but enters into the interaction with an intent focus: “meditation with content” (Crotty, 1998, p. 52).

The significance of these insights cannot be overstated for a social work leadership researcher. They are reminiscent of underpinning social work approaches to learning, theory and practice. Payne (1997, pp. 3, 13) articulates a “what works” methodology in his treatment of “the social construction of social work theory.” He proposes that:

In selecting a “theory” to use, workers contribute to how social work is constructed, because what they do . . . is or becomes social work . . . “Theories” . . . must be products of the context in which they arise. (Payne, 1997, pp.3, 13, emphases in original)

Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p. 3) offer a generic definition of qualitative research which provides a series of constituent elements. As each element is unpacked, a coherent design pattern—in effect, a road map—emerges which guides the project. This definition reads:

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self ... qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic [i.e., in natural settings] approach to the world ... qualitative researchers interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

I suggest that these elements are congruent with social work leadership thinking enabling a coherent design. Qualitative research as a situated activity fits conceptually into Payne’s (1997) “what works” as a building block for social work theory; in this instance, the aim of the project, to develop a New Zealand model of social work leadership.
6.3 Theoretical perspective: Symbolic interactionism

Crotty (1998, pp. 66-76) addresses Denzin and Lincoln’s “interpretive practices” by tracing the history of interpretivism from Weber’s notion of *Verstehen* (“understanding”) to its appropriation and development as symbolic interactionism by such American pragmatic sociologists as Mead, Blumer, Peirce, James and Dewey in the Chicago School. Crotty (1998, p. 72) cites Blumer’s statement describing the assumptions of interactionist thinking: people act towards things in terms of what those things mean—I suggest, *make sense of*—to them; what makes sense is dependent on people’s social interactions with others; and what makes sense is filtered through an interpretive process. The essence of symbolic interactionism, Crotty proceeds to argue, is to “put oneself in the place of the other” (1998, p. 75). A social worker would instantly recognise such a phrase as the practice value of empathy; or to use Weld and Appleton’s (2008) evocative phrase, to “walk in people’s worlds.”

Denzin and Lincoln propose (2005, pp. 6-8) multiple potential interpretive practices in qualitative research methodology. They argue that no specific method or practice can be privileged over another (2005, p. 6). The selection of an interpretive practice for the project is to identify its methodology and design. The qualitative researcher also acknowledges that his/her interpretation of the observed phenomena becomes an intrinsic part of findings. The constructionist paradigm extends to the researcher’s writing (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 26): the “field text” of notes and documents becomes the basis for the “writer-as-interpreter” to add notes and interpretations—the “research text”; from the research text, a “working interpretive document” is developed as the researcher’s initial sense-making statement. The final phase is the text or thesis presented to a relevant audience. This process is located, Denzin and Lincoln suggest, in an interpretive community with its own evaluative criteria. This project is located in the social work community whose criteria for evaluating and analysing data is expressed in the ethical codes and practice standards of the profession (e.g., ANZASW, 2008; IFSW/IASSW, 2005).

6.4 Methodology: Descriptive/exploratory design

To answer Crotty’s question (what design—plan of action—stands behind the method to gather and analyse data?) (Crotty, 1998, p. 3) I propose a descriptive/exploratory design for the project. In applying that design, note will be taken of Mason’s (1996) caveat that qualitative research merely seeks to describe or explore the social world, as cited in Silverman
Silverman (2010, p. 86) points out that unfocused research pursuing a pristine inductive design carries the danger of neglecting the necessity of assembling a body of knowledge—the literature review—to be used to inform the project. He observes that:

The beauty of qualitative research is that its rich data can offer the opportunity to change focus as the ongoing analysis suggests ... such changes of direction, like the original research proposal, do not come out of the blue but reflect the subtle interplay between theory, concepts and data. (Silverman, 2010, p. 86)

In order to [1] achieve the research aim (to develop a New Zealand model of social work organisational leadership); [2] answer the research question (“What are the fundamental elements of organisational leadership within social work in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand?”); and [3] develop an empirical generalisation from data analysed, the sample selected must be derived from rigorous responses to certain questions or issues. The study identifies those “certain issues” as relating to theoretical and empirical considerations (Mason, 2002)—the theoretical being symbolic interactionism (Figure 6.1), the empirical relating to the experiences of the participants in supplying data for qualitative analysis.

In respect of empirical research, and how a qualitative project uses its sources, observations by the sociologists Mason (2002) and Plummer (2001) align with social work in general and this project in particular. Mason (2002, p. 57) identifies the “core theme” of the capacity of humans to describe their actual experience as “highly significant” in the research task. Plummer’s description lays emphasis on the “concrete” experiences of humans—how they talk, feel and act. Abstract understandings “untempered by close involvement,” Plummer argues, are “ruled out” (2001, p. 14). He proposes that a researcher needs self-awareness of his/her professional commitment to structures in which “there is less exploitation, oppression, injustice and more creativity, diversity and equality” (Plummer, 2001, p. 14). These understandings are consistent with social justice as an underpinning social work value. In the context of this project, Plummer and Mason’s approaches to research are highly relevant in thinking through how the profession applies its emancipatory values to address NPM’s colonisation of management and leadership practice.
6.5 Methods: Purposive sampling and semi-structured interviews

To achieve the objectives of this research project, a purposive sampling strategy will be used (Padgett, 2008, pp. 53-57; Patton, 2002, pp. 230-246). Silverman (2010, p. 141) argues for a critical selection of the population parameters being examined; but he also proposes that, in selecting a sample, it is of greater importance to follow the researcher’s theoretical position than to define populations. These two dimensions are treated sequentially.

Population parameters

Purposive sampling requires critical thinking in respect of the parameters of the population under examination. Registered social workers (RSWs) are the target audience for the project. The rationale for this selection derives from the 2003 Social Workers Registration Act Section 105 which stipulates that RSWs are required to maintain their professional development, including this provision under clause 2b:

b. Professional Development

When in supervisory or management roles, counsel, mentor, support and encourage staff in a manner that encourages constructive personal and professional development, utilises high standards of management behaviour and contributes to greater client satisfaction and well-being.

And further, pursuant to clause 2c:

c. Balance of responsibilities between Employers and Social Workers.

Maintain and, if necessary and appropriate, critically review and contribute to the strengthening of their employer’s structures, practice standards, policies, quality management practices and service improvements that impact upon the provision of social work services to clients. (SWRB, 2008, pp. 5-7, emphases added)

An expectation of quality management practice carries an inherent leadership dimension (Boettcher, 1998). Such an expectation provides an underpinning professional rationale for this project. I believe that the project will make a significant contribution to the ability of the Board to discharge this professional obligation. Further, the provisions of the Code cited above arguably carry an ethical requirement that RSWs seriously consider participating in the research.
Sample selection process

The SWRB website stated that, as at 4 October 2013 there were 4,253 registered social workers and thus potential participants. Selecting a sample from over 4,000 possible respondents for a qualitative study demands an analytical framework, or what Patton (2002) describes as “criterion sampling.” Criteria for developing this framework are drawn from the researcher’s wish to present generalisable findings, or at least those which possess a wider resonance (Mason, 2002); are connected with the research question, aims and objectives and the project’s constructionist theoretical stance; but most importantly—as Mason argues (2002, p. 124)—that the sample will enable the development of the argument which the thesis seeks to present. The issues associated with generalisability are addressed in the next section of this chapter. Criteria to select participants are dealt with now.

Prospective participants were selected on the basis approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (UAHPEC), as follows:

1. Potential participants must be registered social workers (RSWs) in Aotearoa New Zealand who have held or hold leadership or management responsibilities in a social work organisation.

2. Up to 30 participants are to be interviewed. It is therefore possible that not all potential participants who have indicated interest will be interviewed. The implicit connection of this limitation with issues of saturation will be addressed in the discussion on credibility below.

The process required to select up to 30 participants from a total of over 4,000 RSWs is now described as a series of steps for the purpose of clarity.

Step 1
The recruitment process was initiated on 8 March 2014. Only those registered social workers on the SWRB database who held a current annual practising certificate were selected. This excluded non-practising social workers.

Step 2
In order to facilitate accessibility for interviews, only those social workers employed in Auckland, Wellington, or Christchurch were considered. Excluding non-practising social
workers and those working outside the three nominated cities reduced the number of potential eligible participants to approximately 1,200.

**Step 3**
To further reduce the potential sample, every second name was arbitrarily selected, thus creating a workable list of 600.

**Step 4**
The Deputy Registrar of the SWRB, Dr Jan Duke, sent a letter to these 600 RSWs on SWRB letterhead which covered a communication I prepared on University of Auckland (UOA) letterhead. Jan Duke’s letter stated that the SWRB supported the research and that the names and addresses of the recipients were not disclosed to the researcher. The UOA letter did not reproduce the Participant Information Sheet in *toto*, but gave adequate information to enable RSWs to make an informed decision on whether to participate in the project.

**Step 5**
As expressions of interest were received, potential participants were supplied with a Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form. As Consent Forms were completed and returned, a table enabling accurate tracking of interviews was set up. The purpose of this table was not only administrative. It also represented the beginning point to address issues of credibility, transferability, auditability and confirmability. These issues will be explored after the demographic profile of the sample is presented.

**Semi-structured interview schedule**
At this point, the interview schedule is reproduced as Table 6.1. The rationale is twofold. First, the reader is introduced to the largely open-ended questions illustrating the research design. The constructionist paradigm intended to create a meaning-making interaction between the participants and researcher is facilitated by the design of the questions. In addition, the questions are consistent with Crotty’s (1998) symbolic interactionist theoretical perspective which—as already noted—carries the classic social work value of putting oneself in the place of the other. Finally, the capacity for story-telling inherent in a descriptive/exploratory methodology proved in fact to bear fruit. Stories which emerged from the interviews were evocative and rich.
The second aspect of this rationale logically develops from the first by aiding the flow of the discourse and thus the understanding of the reader.

Table 6.1
*Semi-structured Interview Schedule*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research question</th>
<th>What are the fundamental elements of organisational leadership within social work in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research objectives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ To explore how social work practitioners who hold or have held leadership or management responsibility in Aotearoa New Zealand conceptualise leadership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ To describe participants' experiences of social work leadership in Aotearoa New Zealand</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These are designed to contribute thematically with regard to relevance for the research theme; and to contribute dynamically to the interpersonal relationship in the interview (Kvale, 1996).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introducing questions in respect of conceptualising leadership:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. What comes to mind when you think about leadership?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What words do you associate with leadership?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Probing questions</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. What are your thoughts about leadership and its relationship to management?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What do you think are the influences on how leadership is exercised?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Does leadership have to be ethical?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What elements or values do you think are non-negotiable in exercising leadership?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Do you think there is such a thing as ideal leadership? What would it look like?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introducing questions in respect of social work organisational leadership:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Without divulging which agency, tell me about your experiences of leadership in social work organisations or agencies.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What comes to mind when you think about how leadership is exercised in social work agencies?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What words do you associate with leadership in social work organisations?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Probing questions</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. What do you think influences leadership in statutory social work agencies? And what influences leadership in social work NGOs?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do you think that the way you have seen leadership actually exercised in social work organisations looks the same as your ideas of non-negotiable elements or values?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Does leadership in social work carry distinctive elements as compared with leadership elsewhere?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Without divulging which agency, can you tell me about your first hand experience of leadership during your career?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the interview progresses, follow-up questions to themes introduced by the interviewee may be asked or what the researcher thinks are significant words repeated to lead to elaboration.
6.6 Participants: Demographic profile

The 23 participants interviewed, a number determined by achieving data saturation as discussed under “credibility” below, consented to provide demographic data, anonymised to ensure confidentiality. The essential data are seen as [1] hierarchical level, e.g. midlevel manager; [2] sector i.e., state or NGO; [3] fields of practice e.g., child and family, policy; [4] gender; [5] ethnicity; [6] years of social work experience; [7] years of management experience; [8] organisational designations e.g., frontline manager, chief executive officer; and [9] age ranges. The purpose of gathering and aggregating this data was to contribute to the project’s credibility by virtue of the range of data categories. The complete presentation of statistical tables and corresponding Excel graphics are located in Appendix 3. To provide an overview at this point, Figure 6.2 reproduces organisational designations. Table 6.2 provides pseudonyms, context, ethnicities and designations of participants as a guide when reading findings.

Figure 6.2
Participant Demographic Profile: Organisational Designations (N=23)
Table 6.2
Participant Pseudonyms Used in Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Designation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Matthew</td>
<td>NZE</td>
<td>CEO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Judith</td>
<td>NZE</td>
<td>CEO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bronwyn</td>
<td>NZE</td>
<td>Co-ordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Wendy</td>
<td>NZE</td>
<td>Frontline manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ann</td>
<td>NZE</td>
<td>Frontline manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Cheryl</td>
<td>NZE</td>
<td>Frontline manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Deborah</td>
<td>NZE</td>
<td>Frontline manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Patricia</td>
<td>NZE</td>
<td>Frontline manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Natasha</td>
<td>PAS</td>
<td>Frontline manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Alan</td>
<td>NZE</td>
<td>Frontline social worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>NZE</td>
<td>Frontline social worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Lynda</td>
<td>NZE</td>
<td>Frontline social worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Kate</td>
<td>NZE</td>
<td>Frontline social worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Dorothy</td>
<td>PAS</td>
<td>Frontline social worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Barbara</td>
<td>NZE</td>
<td>Midlevel manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Jack</td>
<td>NZE</td>
<td>Midlevel manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>David</td>
<td>NZE</td>
<td>Midlevel manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td>NZE</td>
<td>Midlevel manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Jenny</td>
<td>NZE</td>
<td>Midlevel manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Louisa</td>
<td>NZE</td>
<td>Midlevel manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Margaret</td>
<td>NZE</td>
<td>Professional supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>NZM</td>
<td>Quality assessor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Paula</td>
<td>NZE</td>
<td>Senior policy advisor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. CEO: Chief executive officer; NGO: Non-governmental organisation; NZE: Aotearoa New Zealand European; NZM: Aotearoa New Zealand Māori; PAS: Pasifika.

I now turn to issues associated with credibility, transferability, auditability and confirmability, needed to demonstrate the project’s trustworthiness.

6.7 Issues of generalisability: Credibility, transferability, auditability, confirmability

To adequately address the issues associated with generalisability requires that the study considers the issue of trustworthiness. The social work academics Lietz and Zayas (2010) propose that a study is trustworthy if the research process ensures that the perspectives of the participants are authentically gathered and accurately represented in the findings. To achieve such trustworthiness, authenticity and accuracy, four concepts must be addressed: credibility, transferability, auditability, and confirmability (Lietz & Zayas, 2010). Unpacking these concepts will enable a response to Mason’s (2002) sample-related questions. I will consider credibility in more detail, because its rigorous application will, in large measure,
underpin or even guarantee the study’s capacity to demonstrate transferability, auditability and confirmability. Padgett (2008, p. 181) summarises transferability as the capacity to generalise research findings; auditability as tracking in a documentary form the logical procedures used in the project; and confirmability as demonstrating that findings have grown out of the data.

**Credibility**

Credibility, or validity, (Silverman, 2013, p. 285) is the extent to which a researcher is able to accurately describe and interpret the views of the participants (Padgett, 2008, p. 181): that is, to ensure authenticity. The danger in this context is “anecdotalism” (Silverman, 2013, pp. 286-288), which is to “cherry-pick” preferred literature and even more, findings from data analysis. Lietz and Zayas (2010) warn of the danger of misrepresenting the data—an ethical as well as a methodological issue. Constant reflective practice (Schön, 1983) is called for in social work research no less than in social work practice. Lietz and Zayas (2010) describe this practice as “reflexivity,” which is to thoughtfully consider one’s perspective as a researcher as the process unfolds. Strategies to address anecdotalism will be considered shortly.

Lietz and Zayas (2010) also draw attention to the use of triangulation, member checking and “thick description” as strategies to increase credibility. However, Silverman (2013, p. 288) suggests that a constructionist approach “is simply not compatible” with triangulation, that is, “true fixes on reality” as a means to obtain credibility. He underpins that argument by observing (2013, p. 137) that triangulating data—as, for example, in a mixed methods approach using interview data and discourse analysis of documents or texts—seeks to overcome the limitations of social construction, but at the cost of analysing their sense in context. Silverman takes the position that a researcher needs to think carefully before adopting mixed methods, choosing instead “simplicity and rigour rather than the often illusory search for the full picture” (2013, p. 139). Applying Silverman’s observations to this project drew on the nature of constructionist research whereby data analysis constructed the participants’ perception of the fundamental elements of organisational social work leadership.

Referring to Lietz and Zayas’ “member checking” as “respondent validation,” Silverman sees such feedback from research participants as highly problematic (2013, p. 288) on the basis that such participants are not necessarily to be regarded as “privileged commentators” on
their own perspectives. I return to Silverman’s suggestions for critical thinking designed to aim at credibility shortly.

To achieve credibility, thick description (Lietz & Zayas, 2010) presents as appropriate for the current project. The term calls for a thorough contextual account of a phenomenon (Denzin, 1989, as cited in Lietz & Zayas, 2010, p. 194). Thick description does not refer to volume, but to enhancing the capacity of data for insightful interpretation—that is, conceptualisation and meaning-making (Padgett, 2008). Lietz and Zayas (2010, p. 194) suggest that it is particularly appropriate for constructivist (referred to in this project as constructionist) research. For the purposes of this study, thick description will be achieved through data saturation (Lietz & Zayas, 2010).

According to Padgett (2008), the notion of saturation means that data collection has reached the point where no new coded categories or themes can be found, and what themes have been identified have been fully explored, or “fleshed out” (2008, p. 171). Analysis and interpretation of data findings are the yardstick for determining the point at which saturation—that is, completion or fullness—has been reached (Schutt, 2006, p. 156). In the current project, saturation was achieved by interviewing each of 23 participants twice.

Silverman (2013) proposes several strategies to address the danger of anecdotalism. In order to avoid the temptation of jumping to easy conclusions, Silverman (2013, p. 289) cites Popper (1959) in arguing that evidence derived from data analysis demands “critical rationalism” by committing to a process of rejecting assumed relationships between observed phenomena. To achieve that objective, Silverman suggests that an emerging hypothesis or perspective must be continually checked by analysing one dataset against another. He describes this strategy as a “constant comparative” exercise (2013, p.290.)

Datasets in this project were constructed in successive phases: they started with each participant’s interview transcript; moved to individual expressions which carried similar ideas; and from that point were categorised into child and parent nodes (Table 6.3). Utilising NVivo software (Bazeley, 2007) facilitated this process and the subsequent testing of emerging hypotheses to a high degree. This approach expresses the iterative process noted in earlier discussion on Crotty’s (1998) research process text. Silverman (2013, pp. 291-292) cautions the researcher that “all parts of your data must at some point be inspected and analysed. This is part of what is meant by comprehensive data treatment,” a second strategy to address the
risk of anecdotalism. Silverman (2013, p. 238) sees “thematic analysis,” the method of data analysis used for this study, as a qualitative version of “content analysis.” This chapter treats these two terms synonymously.

Silverman’s (2013, pp. 291-292) “comprehensive treatment” refers to the production of an aggregated generalisation which applies to “every single gobbet of relevant data” that the research has collected. In practical terms, this requires the researcher to address “discrepant cases,” that is, findings that are anomalous to the researcher’s current or emerging understanding from data analysis. Silverman (2013, p. 292) argues for the potential in qualitative research to produce a generalisation as valid as a quantitative statistically analysed correlation: no mean claim. He cites Mehan’s (1979) statement that “the result [of comprehensive data treatment] is an integrated, precise model that comprehensively describes a specific phenomenon” (Silverman, 2013, p. 292).

Silverman (2013, pp. 297-298) sees advantages in a qualitative study from using quantitative techniques such as numeracy tables. Their purpose is to enable surveys of the entirety of data collected which would otherwise be lost in the intensity of thematic analysis. Such techniques must come out of the project’s underpinning theory and the developing categories of data.

So, in addition to applying a thick descriptive approach, I planned to achieve credibility in this study by using constant comparative methods as scaffolding for comprehensive treatment. As exception cases emerged—and they certainly did, for example, in the Treaty value to be explored in chapter 7—this process carries the capacity to deal with them.

**Transferability, auditability, confirmability**

To ensure the thick description (Lietz & Zayas, 2010) required for credibility data, saturation must be achieved. The design of the semi-structured interview questions initiated the process enabling saturation, including provision for each participant to review the transcript of an interview. The process chart also made a solid contribution to ensuring that saturation had occurred. I had not envisaged a second interview for data collection when the methodology for the project had been designed prior to participants actually being interviewed. This assumption was to change.

At the commencement of each interview I reiterated ethical consent issues, including the provision for transcript review. When re-interviewed, the first participant agreed that her
transcript was an accurate record and that no content required removal or change. No further exploration occurred. This default process soon changed. As the project unfolded, a dynamic process developed which illustrated Payne’s (1997) idea that what works in practice guides the construction of theory.

When the contribution of the second participant was considered during the interview itself I applied Schön’s (1983) “reflection in action.” I realised that themes emerging in the participant’s discourse warranted further exploration in a second interview which enabled exploration of emerging content from the first interview, disallowed because of time constraints. As I will discuss, that exploration also informed the adaptation of Kvale’s (1996) interview analysis methodology. For the remaining participants I made the request for a second interview in order that themes identified in the first interview could be examined. In every instance, participants gave that consent. Subsequently, the first participant interviewed consented to a second interview.

Application of Schön’s reflection after that first participant interview and transcript review was routinely applied in the data collection process. The first step in that process, as in any qualitative research, was to write field notes immediately after each interview. These notes recorded immediate impressions of the interview; the participant’s speech patterns, body language; my own initial observations of the significant elements in the participant’s discourse as measured, for example, by her or his body language or demeanour. In addition, notes recording website addresses, documents and the like identified by the participant were noted to ensure later access. Field notes also addressed my own “actions, questions and reflections” (Gibbs, 2007, p. 28) in the interview. These notes expressed Denzin and Lincoln’s (2005) acknowledgment (identified earlier in this chapter) that the qualitative researcher’s observations are integrated into the findings.

The second step in this procedure, prior to the second interview, was to conduct an initial analysis of the transcript. This process did not engage in systematic thematic coding because of a decision to integrate the second transcript with the first for that purpose. Instead, to inform the questions for the second interview, salient points made by the participant were noted and organised into topics for further exploration. Part of this second procedural step was to listen to the digital recording with the transcript simultaneously displayed. This process not only ensured that the transcript was accurate, but in itself contributed to field
notes. Listening to the audio recording with a view to an accurate transcript was repeated after the second interview. The benefits in terms of achieving thick description needed for data saturation became apparent as the project’s data collection unfolded. Silverman’s (2010) characteristic rich data in qualitative research—to which reference was earlier made—was unfolding before my eyes. As the initial analysis informed second interviews, “aha” moments as unforeseen perspectives emerged from participants. As Silverman notes (2010, p. 86), a changing focus as analysis suggests offered insights which otherwise would have been lost.

The third step comprised several elements preparatory to engagement in computer-assisted qualitative data analysis (CAQDAS). These elements were not sequential, but iterative. Thematic coding was of prime importance. Following Gibbs (2007, p. 41), a codebook categories memo was used as categories were identified and defined. The volume of transcripts was immense. Twenty-three participants had been interviewed twice, resulting in approximately 300,000 words requiring analysis. Consistency demanded rigour, provided by this system. The design of the codebook is reproduced below (Figure 6.3).

Figure 6.3
Codebook Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of code</th>
<th>Definition:</th>
<th>Other notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Analytic idea to which code refers</td>
<td>• Relationship to other codes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Reliability of coding i.e., systematic and consistent</td>
<td>• Split between two codes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>These categories will be the basis of every transcript analysis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Padgett suggests that a successful qualitative project is premised on “high-quality interviews” (2008, p. 99). For the current project, semi-structured, in-depth interviews have been used. In the first of two interviews the same set of open-ended questions were put sequentially to every informant (Padgett, 2008, p. 103).

Data analysis in the project adapted Kvale’s (1996) approach to qualitative interview analysis. Kvale describes “six possible steps” (1996, p. 188) of analysis. The adaptation used for this project is represented in Figure 6.4. The research employed QSR NVivo software to code the responses of each participant in a “thematic development” approach (Bazeley, 2007; Padgett, 2008, pp. 156-160).
6.8 Analysis proper: Generating meaning

Consistent with the project’s descriptive/exploratory approach, Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña’s (2014) “analytic tactics” is utilised. Miles and his colleagues note that working through each tactic—#1 to #13—is a rough arrangement proceeding from the descriptive to the explanatory, moving from the “concrete to the conceptual and abstract” (2014, p. 277). The detail required to describe all 13 “analytic tactics” precludes exhaustive treatment at this point. It will suffice to summarise some key points I used in the actual exercise.

Figure 6.4
Interview Data Analysis: Four Steps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ Participants respond to open-ended questions in the first interview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ No interpretation from the researcher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 2</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ After the first interview, researcher writes field notes and performs initial transcript analysis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Probing questions developed to elucidate and/or explore themes uniquely identified by each participant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 3</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ Participants respond to probing questions in the second interview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Using social work paraphrasing/summarising/reflective interview skills researcher enables participants to potentially discover new relationships and new meanings from their discourse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Limited interpretation of the participants’ discourse by the researcher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Dialogue between researcher and participant continues until common understanding/interpretation reached in a “self-correcting” interview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 4</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transcribed interview interpreted by researcher:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Structuring material for analysis using CAQDAS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. Clarifying the material by distinguishing essential and non-essential for the study’s purpose and theoretical underpinning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii. Analysis proper:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Generating meaning through analytic tactics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Adapted from Miles et al., 2014, pp. 277-293)

Source: Adapted from Kvale (1996, pp. 189-204).
The initial phase of data analysis utilised the process of listening to audio recordings to ensure accurate transcripts as described under the earlier subheading “Transferability, auditability, confirmability.” Absorption in the data enabled several iterations. Characteristic of qualitative research, this exercise moved back and forth between noting patterns, themes, impressions and condensing the data (clustering) all featured in an intellectual exercise of extraordinary fascination. Transcript notations provided the raw initial analysis of no less than 22 codebook categories (Gibbs, 2007) representing the first attempt to set the data into order. This exercise took place both prior to NVivo analysis and in the early use of the program.

The notion of abstraction, or constructing generalisations, led the research process into a tactic known as “making metaphors” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 280). The phrase opens up the research process to a new world of richness and complexity (2014, p. 281). In this project the biological metaphor of the organisation as a living tree was employed as an analogy which connected with sources of nutrition: does the organisation, or organism, allow healthy or toxic ideas entry? Citing Lakoff and Johnson (2003), Miles et al. propose that metaphors integrate reason and imagination.

Analysis in the project also included counting the numbers of references extracted from NVivo nodes. As already noted, this project analysed some 300,000 words, from any perspective, a large batch of data. Rationalising the frequency of concepts which informed codebook categories (Gibbs, 2007) enabled me to collapse codebook categories into an overarching category when considered appropriate, thus simplifying the presentation of findings.

In addition, the presentation of findings appropriately used narrative approaches (NA.) Viewed from a social work perspective, Padgett (2008, p. 34) observes that NA “have tremendous intuitive appeal given their emphasis on the power of the spoken word focusing on how something is said as well as what is said” (emphasis added). Padgett also makes the point that NA are “forms of meaning-making” (2008, p. 34), which characterises the stories told by participants in this project. Padgett (2008) describes two basic types of NA:

*Narrative analysis* of interviews designed to elicit storytelling; and *conversation* and *discourse analyses* of naturally occurring speech. Narrative analyses involve repeatedly listening to the [recorded] interview scrutinising the transcript to identify “stories” from which structural components are then delineated. In addition, the narrative
analyst may examine how respondents “voice” themselves and others, thereby indicating social relationships and the meanings attached to them.

Discourse analysis (DA) identifies the social meanings reflected in talk and text. Meaning can be ascertained from a variety of indices, including choice of words and idioms, speaking rhythm and cadence [“the rise and fall of the voice during speech,” Encarta Dictionary], inflection, intonation, gestures and nonverbal utterances (groans, sighs, laughter) (2008, pp. 34-35 emphasis in original).

This lengthy quote could be applied practically word-for-word in the process followed in this project. For this researcher, the two key phrases in Padgett’s description are “storytelling” and “social meanings.” The iteration which characterises qualitative research was needed to elicit those stories and meanings: listening again and again to digitally recorded interviews with transcripts simultaneously displayed; identifying structural components, interpreted as nodes or categories; assigning significance to laughter, for example; and evaluating texts provided by participants to illustrate or contextualise their spoken words. All these elements took their place in the process followed, and further demonstrated Padgett’s insights insofar as they thrust “considerable demands” on the author as researcher (Padgett, 2008, p. 35). I paraphrase her comment that “the researcher become[s] intensively involved in linguistic structures and meaning [and thus raising] concerns about losing the larger social context” (2008, p. 35) by the familiar proverb that we can “lose the wood for the trees.” The trees were planted in discrete plantations according to their species (see Table 6.3 and Table 6.4 and Figure 6.5).

6.9 Approaches to analysis

The practical codebook tool offered by Gibbs (2007) became an indispensable analytical framework by which findings were structured. That framework enabled an identification of 4 overarching codebook categories—hereafter “parent nodes” as described by NVivo 10 software (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013)—and 15 “child nodes.” The parent nodes are: [1] the values, or “roots” that inform leadership actions; [2] the visible actions, or “fruit” of social work leaders; [3] the context, or “earth” in which leadership is placed; and [4] a social work model of leadership, or “kauri.” These are set out in Table 6.3.
Table 6.3
*Parent and Child Node Tree Outline*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent node I: Values—“roots”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This parent node identifies the assumptions (or worldview), core values and beliefs that underpin and inform the exercise of organisational social work leadership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child nodes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Identity, integrity, life journeys and mentors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Commitment to ethical empowering and competent leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Human rights, social justice and social change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ecological systems thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Spirituality, authenticity, servant leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The Treaty of Waitangi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent node II: Actions—“fruit”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This parent node identifies the artefacts—the visible actions—of organisational social work leaders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child nodes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Leadership, management and change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Advocacy, empowerment and vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Communication: networking, relationships, dialogue, stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. The use of power and authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Mobilisation, motivation and outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Communication and thought leadership: Politics and government</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent node III: Context—“earth”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social work organisational leadership is influenced by and influences diverse organisational environments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child nodes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Public sector influences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. NGO sector influences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Multidisciplinary sector influences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent node IV: Social work model of leadership—“kauri”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The statements made by participants drawn from other nodes that endorsed or did not endorse the notion of a social work model of leadership and the elements that supported either view.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although this is a qualitative project, the number of references from transcripts in each parent node, which includes the child nodes, gives a quantitative picture of the themes which captured the attention of participants. These are numerically depicted in Table 6.4 and graphically in Figure 6.5.
Table 6.4  
Numerical Data References in Parent Nodes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter and node</th>
<th>References (number)</th>
<th>Percentage (rounded) of all references</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 7 Parent node I: Values—“roots”</td>
<td>2038</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 8 Parent node II: Actions—“fruit”</td>
<td>1349</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 9 Parent node III: Context—“earth”</td>
<td>954</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 10 Parent node IV: Social work model of leadership—“kauri”</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>4508</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6.5  
Percentage Breakdowns of Parent Node References Made by Participants

The insertion of “roots, fruit, earth, and kauri” as descriptors against each parent node is deliberate. In Aotearoa New Zealand the ethics of the profession privilege the bicultural relationship foundation embodied in Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The image conveyed by the roots of social work leadership expresses an organic indigenous understanding of leadership; the fruit express the manifestation of nutrients conveyed to the recipients of that leadership; the earth is the location where leadership is exercised; and the kauri represents the living reality of all those elements as a whole entity. These metaphors represent the schema in which the findings are presented (See Figure 5.1, Chapter 5).
6.10 Ethical considerations

In constructing an application for ethics approval to the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (UAHPEC) I identified two areas of potential ethical concern, neither of which were unusual. These are listed below, together with approaches designed to address ethical risk.

Potential conflicts of interest

The potential for dual relationships between the researcher and participants was considered. At the time of the application to UAHPEC this was considered minimal for these reasons:

1. The information sought relates to professional assessment of a theoretical construct and does not require disclosure of sensitive personal or organisational information.
2. If during the time of the data collection participants enrol in University of Auckland courses for which the researcher is lecturer, course work grading will be delegated to a competent colleague.

In fact, disclosure of sensitive personal information in an organisational context occurred during data collection, relating to workplace bullying experienced by a participant and management inaction. To address the risk of disclosure, two actions were taken. The first was to offer complete erasure of the transcript section dealing with the events described. When this was not taken up by the participant, the second action was offered and accepted: complete removal of any reference to [1] the geographical location and [2] the organisation.

As no participant enrolled in a course in which I was lecturing, delegation of course grading was not needed.

Issues of confidentiality, anonymity, informed consent, and participants’ rights to withdraw

As noted above, these ethical risks were not unusual. They were addressed as follows:

1. Confidentiality in this project meant that no information provided by a participant was traceable to that person unless written permission was granted to the researcher. Interview recordings and transcripts were limited to the respondent, transcriber, researcher and doctoral supervisors.
2. Participants provided information on the understanding that it was completely confidential to the researcher and his doctoral supervisors and that it was not possible to identify them in any of the reports of the study. All identifying features were removed. The researcher discussed these issues with participants and explained them in the Participants Information Sheet (PIS).

3. Informed consent: on ethics approval, the SWRB informed registered social workers of the project. Potential informants were directed to the researcher to express interest and receive the PIS and consent forms.

4. Participants were entitled to withdraw from the interview at any time, and to withdraw from the research up to the data analysis stage, as stated in the PIS.

Because of personal circumstances, one potential participant who had indicated acceptance withdrew. All 23 participants accepted the ethical conditions set out above.

On 20th December 2012 the University of Auckland’s Human Participants Ethics Committee (UAHPEC) gave approval for the research for the usual 3 year period. The letter of approval, referenced as 7679, is attached as appendix 6.
Chapter 7
Findings: Leadership values

7.1 Introduction

Chapter 7 presents the findings of the project on the values (“roots”) which underpin social work leadership as set out in Table 6.3 (Chapter 6). Table 7.1 expands the outlines given in Table 6.3. Using the roots metaphor enables a nuanced treatment of the significance of the child nodes. The relationship between roots and other parts of the plant is described here in words that carry an extraordinary symbolic application to the current project:

The growth of a plant is an integrated phenomenon that depends on a proper balance and functioning of all parts. If a large portion of the root system is destroyed, a corresponding portion of the leaves and branches will die. Many tree deaths are accidental and involve misconceptions about the structure and function of tree roots. (Perry, 1982, p. 197)

Social work leadership is indeed an “integrated phenomenon that depends on a proper balance and functioning of all parts.” The failure of the roots in a physical tree may lead to the death of the entire plant. If the values—the metaphorical roots—which inform leadership actions cease to be a living, vital source of nutrients we are left with the equivalent of a dead tree. It may still stand but is incapable of sustaining the flowers and fruit: wellbeing and wisdom. Its purpose and function have ceased.

Quantitatively comparing the relative interest demonstrated by participants in each node is instructive. Table 7.1 and the graphics (Figure 7.1) that follow are not to be interpreted as illustrating the importance of each node, but as indicating predominant themes on the minds of participants at the times of their semi-structured interviews. As the findings are presented, critical comment may be made on the quantitative data.

Table 7.1 was constructed from two sources. The first of these sources is constituted from the definitions of each node derived from [1] an integration of data analysis from all 23 participants; and [2] relevant literature. The order in which they are listed (1 to 6) was determined by the frequency with which the participants made reference to the node in the semi-structured interviews as reported in Table 7.2.
Table 7.1
“Roots”: Parent and Child Nodes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent node I: Values—“roots”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using a modified version of Schein's (2010) “levels of culture” analysis, this parent node identifies the assumptions (or worldview), core values, beliefs and life journey experiences that underpin and inform the exercise of organisational social work leadership.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Identity and integrity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identity and integrity in organisational social work leadership is to be honest about one’s ability (including performance anxiety), demonstrating qualities of reliability, transparency (or authenticity) impartiality, and approachability. These qualities acknowledge the influence of personal identity and integrate personal and professional ethical values by asking “Who am I?” They are shaped by a practitioner’s self-efficacy, genetic make-up, personal, professional and educational journeys and by role model or mentoring relationships.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Commitment to ethical empowering and competent leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethical, empowering leadership creates a safe workplace by demonstrating trust in the professionalism of workers and a commitment to social work’s global and national codes of ethics, including ethical debate, reflection, boundaries, conflict resolution, professional supervision (IFSW, 2012). Unethical or inadequate leadership detracts from effective social work leadership and contributes to organisational dysfunctionality including toxicity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. Human rights, social justice and social change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social work leadership strives to ensure access to needed information, services, and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation in decision making for all people in organisations and the wider community; to act as an agent of human rights and social change for marginalised and vulnerable client groups in society (NASW, 1996, as cited in Stewart, 2013, p. 165).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. Ecological systems thinking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole systems ecological leadership (Attwood et al., 2003), derived from complex adaptive systems thinking, applies biology to organisational leadership by privileging interactions between individuals. Following social work understandings of/commitment to interdependency of, and reciprocity between, different agents and systems (Green &amp; McDermott, 2010) leadership in this approach may be exercised from any hierarchical level and does not require formal titles.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5. Spirituality/authenticity/ servant leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The connections between authenticity, spirituality, wisdom and servant leadership: the values of transparency and accountability to followers, employers and clients which give meaning, purpose and inspiration to other parties and from which a leader learns.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6. The Treaty of Waitangi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social work leadership which recognises the values set forth by a Te Tiriti ō Waitangi-based society.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7.2
Quantitative Breakdown of Participants and References in Values Parent Node

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Node</th>
<th>Number of participants who identified the node (N=23)</th>
<th>Numbers of references (N=2038)</th>
<th>Percentage of total references</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent node 1 Values—“roots”</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>43(^1)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child node 1 Identity and integrity</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>861</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child node 2 Commitment to ethical</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>empowering and competent leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child node 3 Human rights, social</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>justice and social change</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child node 4 Ecological systems thinking</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child node 5 Spirituality/authenticity/</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>servant leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child node 6 Treaty of Waitangi</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. \(^1\) References which identified values but did not fall into a child node category.
Of 23 participants, only two specifically used the term “worldview.” An overall analysis of the parent and child nodes suggests that the relatively abstract notion of “worldview” is expressed by participants through such elements as self-identity, life journey and interpersonal relationships. This infers that participants best understand the assumptions, core values and beliefs underpinning social work leadership by reference to the child node categories, and in particular identity and integrity.

7.2 Child node 1: Identity and integrity

“Integrity” is defined, *inter alia*, as “the state of being complete or undivided” (*Encarta Dictionary*). The identity and integrity of a leader is predicated on a sense of wholeness in which personal and professional ethical values are congruent. Self-identity relates to self-awareness, or the capacity to “understand yourself” as noted by one participant. The exploration of understandings of self by participants is to be seen in that context.

One of the two participants who used the term “worldview” saw it as reflective practice: a practitioner’s capacity to analyse her own perceptions as influenced by life’s journey comprising psychosocial, socio-economic, cultural and family norms. These factors in effect constituted her worldview:
Worldview is about not getting caught in a narrow perception of how things are and being open to learning from others and others’ experiences. So worldview is about listening and being intrinsically interested in others, what makes them tick, how they develop [their] opinions and really unpack what is underlying. (Deborah)

In that response, worldview is couched as the product of Deborah’s interaction with, and openness to, diverse understandings of the fundamental questions of life which she articulated as existential issues in her discourse: “why the world is here” and “the reason for life.”

The worldview concept clearly emerged in comments made by other informants, suggesting that the values that constitute a participant’s worldview are the product of diverse sources. The pre-eminent source appears to be the respondents’ life journeys, comprised of five distinctive elements. Participants frequently alluded to core values shaped by [1] personal; [2] professional; and [3] educational journeys; [4] feelings of self-efficacy; and [5] their own genetic make-up.

These diverse sources make fascinating reading. Philosophies encountered or embraced along life’s journey were formative influences for some participants. One spoke of her earlier identification as a “social justice Christian Marxist.” Although no longer identifying either as a Christian or a Marxist, her “ideal world” retained the social justice dimension:

In my ideal world there wouldn’t be huge gaps in income distribution. The most vulnerable members of our society would be able to live as fully participating in society where they had basic needs met. (Margaret)

Margaret commented that her ideals of social justice predated social work training. They were rooted in a “theology of justice and the work of Paulo Freire” when she was a teenager. Social work education confirmed her in that commitment to equal access to resources by all members of society. Decades later, that perspective appeared to have become part of her persona.

Lynda contrasted the assumptions of the “majority culture”—the European New Zealand identity in which she placed herself—and the world as perceived by Māori. Lynda observed that the way she saw the world “didn’t touch” the reality for Māori clients and in particular for Māori children. Reflecting on that tension, Lynda considers that “nothing is set in concrete
for any of us.” Having grown up in a “fundamentalist Christian home” she recounts her earlier commitment to “the rights of the unborn as totally and utterly paramount. There was no place for abortion.” Exposed through professional practice to such issues as suicide she “wrestled with abortion” and changed her position.

These accounts illustrate how the personal and professional life journeys of social workers influence the development of their leadership worldviews. The dynamics of worldview formation are captured in this quote:

Social work forces you to confront fundamental issues, the core of who we are, the uniqueness of the individual, the experience that we all bring, that we don’t all share the same backgrounds and ways of viewing things and coming to decisions. It is how you stay true to yourself but also challenge yourself to think there are other ways of doing this. (Lynda).

Addressing the question, “who am I?” provoked a range of views from participants on identity, integrity and worldview. Leadership decisions were seen by this participant as being made in the context of life’s meaning and purpose:

Accompanying those practical issues is something to do around meaning and purpose, something to do with who am I, what am I about in this world. (Emphasis added by the author here and henceforth) (Matthew).

Such a response draws from humanity’s most profound need for significance. Matthew identifies the critical function of leadership as restoring a sense of meaning to help people, employing elsewhere the phrase “spiritual component” to capture the purpose of leadership. Helping people, he said, includes a mission to regain hope—the beginning of a “values-driven social justice” approach to organisational leadership including staff selection. In a holistic statement encapsulating many of this chapter’s findings, Matthew set out his views on workplace leadership:

People’s work is about their sense of meaning and purpose. And so you want that to be as good an experience as it can be even when it’s in difficult circumstances. I look at the values that they bring. Are they consistent with the organisation’s? Does the way that they talk and act match the value base that they espouse? Do they have an established sense of self that fits with that notion of integrity? And I look [for] the
evidence that indicates that they can command respect and have people pay attention and respond rather than the opposite, [that is] authoritarian and directive.

That statement is evidence of a commitment to integrity as wholeness in which work is seen as meaningful—or spiritual—and purposeful. The corollary is that the people working in that social work agency are engaged on the basis of their own demonstrated integrity and wholeness.

The idea of “knowing yourself” (“who am I?”) as being tied up with a leader’s personality vis-à-vis leadership is articulated here:

Your own personality influences how you lead, manage people, [and] how you, as a leader, need to adapt your personality to the particular person or people you’re working with. You have to be self-aware to know how your personality is impacting on the role. (Wendy).

A high degree of self-reflection is demonstrated by this participant:

I think it’s helpful to know [what drives you]. I’m absolutely sure that not all leaders understand that, or that I understand it in every moment that I am working. There are moments when I think “Hey, pull back here, this is just you reacting. What [do] you need to do from a purely professional point of view? Is your personality and your professional role out of step here if you get angry with something?” I’m interested in the interplay between psychology and sociology. We are social animals and we have a psychological makeup as well. We are looking at a context where no person is an island. (David)

David’s reflection on his own leadership reactions is evidence of remarkable personal strength of character. The allusion to the famous John Donne quote “No man is an island” connects to another core value, ecological systems thinking.

David’s leadership insights drew from his educational journey as a social anthropologist and appreciation of cultural diversity:

If you’re not born into a culture, how can you possibly understand it in the same way that the people who are part of it? We have Somalian refugees. I might understand [Italians or Greeks] a little better because we share some European traits, but there’s
a vast difference between an Italian and an Englishman, and differences again where you are a New Zealander. It’s fascinating. My undergraduate degree is in social anthropology so that gives you some idea where a lot of the stuff comes from. I am intensely interested in why and how people interact. These things permeate us.

Such understanding is evidence of a profound appreciation that we are the products of our individual journeys through life. It is also noteworthy that, for David, cultural understandings are more than academic—they are “fascinating, intensely interest[ing].” His educational and personal journeys are integrated into an exceptional leadership perspective which “permeates [me].”

Alternative perspectives into the connection between personality and leadership actions also emerged:

I think [personal makeup] may attract people to [leadership positions] but often change occurs when they get in the role. I have experienced that myself. When I worked at the coalface I was really aligned to [social justice] issues, and then I got put into a leadership role and my thinking becoming aligned to the management perspective. And it really shocked me that my perspective was changing. (Bronwyn)

Ideas associated with self-knowledge and autonomy emerged. Judith described her journey to NGO leadership as the result of “self-belief.” Through her life journey the realisation dawned that “maybe I did have those [leadership] qualities.” As the “charismatic visionary” social entrepreneur who created the organisation withdrew from active leadership, Judith found herself filling the gap. She described her role in that gap in these lines:

Ma mua ka kite a muri
Ma muri ka ora a mua

Those who lead give sight to those who follow,
those who follow give life to those who lead

This whakatauki (Māori proverb) conveys the quality of interdependence between leaders and followers. The fact they need each other introduced a mediating influence in Judith’s interpretation of leadership—that “people are looking for someone to follow”—led her to the understanding that “well actually Judith [laughs] you are it right now. That’s what this place needs.”
Paula employed striking language in discussing personal integrity as standing at the heart of “thought leadership.” In analysing leadership actions she drew attention to social workers “making massive life changing [and] at times traumatic decisions on behalf of people. Personal integrity [is] an absolutely critical component in decisions made.” For that participant, the social worker’s integrity and the decisions she makes are, in practice, synonymous. That statement of what integrity means is as strong as any in the data.

Appreciation of the origins of ethical leadership and its impact on others is demonstrated in this statement:

> When you are in a position of leadership it’s making decisions that are in the best interests of others and being ethical and values driven.  **[Pause, thinking]** Because everybody is so different and everybody has different natures and different emotions and different experiences you have to be very sensitive and ethical in how you influence others. (Deborah)

These insights did not stop there:

> Well **[pause, thinking]** I define [leadership] as tuning into [another person’s] experience according to their history and putting yourself in their shoes. Rather than a top down thing like you should be doing this, you should be doing that. (Deborah)

This demonstrates systems thinking, and also expresses servant leadership. However, it is more than that. This participant not only knows herself; she is also able to place herself in the shoes of the staff member through the conscious capacity to conceptualise “the other’s” journey and that person’s formative development of skills in that process.

### 7.3 Child node 2: Commitment to ethical empowering and competent leadership

We now explore the second of six child nodes identified in the “roots” or values underpinning and informing social work leadership. I note that 22 of 23 participants made reference to their commitment to ethical leadership but that the frequency of references (358) is less than half of the identity and integrity child node (851, or 42%). How that might be interpreted will be addressed in Chapter 10’s discussion; at this point, two observations are germane.
The first observation is that integrity is, in itself, a critical element in considering ethical leadership. A simplistic division of child nodes into conceptually discrete constructs is not appropriate if only because data analysis assigned participants’ statements into multiple nodes: a characteristic systems social work schema. Some participants hardly differentiated integrity from ethics; indeed, the connection between the two will be demonstrated in the opening paragraph which reports this node’s findings.

The second observation relates to the definition of the child node (refer to Table 7.1). Three points emerge from this definition, itself a summative statement of participant data. First, the commitment arguably straddles leadership values and actions. The idea of empowering, competent leadership is simultaneously a value and an action. We are dealing with findings which become problematic unless reference to organisational outcomes is made—for example, the creation of a safe workplace characterised by trust. Safety and trust are two sides of one coin. Leaders’ trust in the professionalism of their staff contributes to a place of safety in the workplace.

Second, the definition includes ethical and unethical leadership. How leaders understand and deal with unethical conduct is as informative of their vision of leadership as how they conceive of an ethically based vision.

Third, in reporting data associated with ethical, safe, trusting leadership, this child node draws from the profession’s ethical codes. Those codes are not prescriptive organisational codes of conduct setting out what specific actions are deemed acceptable or unacceptable. They represent the conceptual standards which integrate social work at the transnational as well as local levels. Codes of ethics constitute a profession’s core attribute. So, putting aside numerical references, this child node serves the critical function of demonstrating how participants conceived and applied social work ethics to leadership. Having started with identity and integrity and personal, professional and educational journeys we now turn to a more explicit and sharper focus in this project.

The open-ended question put to participants at the start of the semi-structured interviews reads: “What comes to mind when you think about leadership?” Identifying ethics in general and the ANZASW Code of Ethics in particular were among the earliest responses. Participants used terms such as “honesty,” “transparency” and “integrity” as synonyms for “ethics.” As we will see, transparency as a leadership value also occurs together with authenticity in the
minds of a number of participants, and also carried connections with three-way accountability: leader to staff member; vice versa; and worker-to-worker.

Transparency was identified by participants from both the state and not-for-profit sectors as a value informing ethical leadership:

I have really transparent conversations. You [are] trying to get team rapport [in order that] people feel a part of something that is going somewhere. So there is a team approach towards somebody [who] drops the ball. It is not just me having to point that out. The other team members will hold each other accountable. I am very transparent to my team. I hold myself accountable for their work and giving them feedback whether positive or negative or a mixture of both. I have a no surprises policy so [employ] transparency [in] annual performance appraisals. (Emphases added). (Deborah)

The implicit quality in transparent leadership which contributes to team cohesion, mutual accountability and a sense of purpose draws on Deborah’s own sense of self-efficacy. Transparent leadership clearly contributes to team-member-level accountability—a practical application of what leadership is all about: influencing values which are embraced by followers and result in tangible actions.

This contribution explored the tensions involved in ethical leadership:

I think much like social work itself [leadership] is a balancing, juggling act between practising [pause, thinking] in a way that a social worker should [by applying] best practice standards maintaining integrity and professionalism within your role and for the organisation. You’re obviously ethically obligated to perform in a certain way and then on the managerial leadership side, you have to be able to make decisions based on business models as opposed to social work models. So I’ve found that certainly, a balancing act with trying to maintain your ethical practice whilst working in a business environment. (Wendy)

Wendy’s discourse is striking from diverse perspectives. The commitment to reflective practice and her knowledge of SWRB practice standards is arguably the most noteworthy quality. Wendy’s commitment to the value of empowering, ethical leadership makes sense when linked to leadership actions—in this case, performance and decision-making on behalf
of the organisation but equally in relation to consumers. The management of tensions, the “balancing/juggling act” which arises from social work ethics vis-à-vis business-related decision-making illustrates an aspect of conflict resolution which is a constant element in this project and indeed in professional social work practice.

Wendy drew attention to the function of the Code of Ethics as differentiating social work leadership from other spheres:

I think that social work’s code of ethics gives the leadership role very clear boundaries whereas, in my experience, leaders without those clear, ethical boundaries [pause, thinking] well they’re not guided by the same ethics and principles that a social worker is. I think for the organisation the positive benefits are many. When I’m wearing my social work hat in meetings, where decisions need to be made, I’m trying to practice in an ethical way whereas others are not guided by those [ethics] and therefore perhaps making, not rash decisions but just less informed based on client rights, client welfare, clients just being involved in the process but also for the organisation. I think it helps to minimise risk when you’re working for a risk averse organisation, which most are.

Addressing boundaries, risk, and social work ethics demonstrates a keen awareness of our unique professional identity in a multidisciplinary health context. Wendy perceives social work’s commitment to empowering, ethical leadership as equally applicable to organisations and consumers. That perception suggests a holistic view of ethics but also recognises the risk-averse nature of social work organisational—and political—considerations which are now so commonplace. Wendy’s appreciation of risk aversion, raised in the context of ethical leadership values, suggests a realistic grasp of organisational and political realities faced by social workers in applying those values in exercising leadership.

Critical thinking skills emerge in this content-rich, reflective, practice discourse:

When I got promoted I recall thinking that there shouldn’t really be a difference between how I work with clients, with staff, or just generally with any people [in] external agencies, colleagues, managers, etc. I’ve been able to be more transparent perhaps because the roles aren’t segregated. Ethics and standards influence my management style. (Wendy)
Wendy presents transparency as informing every professional relationship at diverse organisational levels and locations. What strikes the reader from Wendy’s discourse is her integrated perspective. Leadership actions for this practitioner are based on self-reflection—an indispensable facet of her commitment to professional supervision—and the ethics and standards of the social work profession.

This statement sees transparency as a prerequisite for effective management and team functioning:

> For [a social work team] to be functioning well [I think] there needs to be transparency. People need to see that the manager is taking things seriously and doing something about them whether through a formal process or just talking to that team member and saying “That wasn’t good what you did was not appropriate.” (Ann)

Ann endorses the notion that transparent managerial behaviour enables difficult issues to be addressed—for example, inappropriate staff behaviour. Transparency is not a naïve acceptance of others but incorporates accountability for unethical behaviour. The *Oxford English Reference Dictionary* defines “transparent” as “(of a motive) easily discerned; evident; obvious; (of a person) easily understood, frank, open” (Pearsall & Trumble, 1996, p. 1532). This definition carries implications for social work leadership exercised in the reality context of organisational politics. As noted already, transparency may be interpreted as exhibiting the idea, “What you see is what you get.”

How participants would address unethical or inadequate leadership further emerged in this discourse, which also illustrated the inevitability of values intersecting with actions if they are to make sense:

> [Q. Does leadership have to be ethical?] Well should it be, it should be, [repeated] but doesn’t have to be. [Q. Oh really?] It should be. [Q. So you are saying leadership can be exercised [un]ethically?] Yeah absolutely. One of the reasons I responded to this [research invitation was], because of an experience I had in a community agency where the leader was the most unethical dangerous person I had ever met. (Bronwyn)

This “unethical dangerous” behaviour identified by Bronwyn related to allegedly illegal behaviour and the misuse of professional power by her immediate manager. How she addressed this situation, and the outcome, is revealing:
I started to raise concerns with her and things got ugly pretty quickly. She started to question my work [by] bringing [it] into meetings. When she went on leave I had to step up [as] manager. One night one of the [residential] clients said [to me], “I have just had a text from [the manager] saying the house will probably fall apart with [Bronwyn] looking after things.” [On the return of the manager] I said to her “That is really undermining because not only are you in contact with the clients when you are on leave [but] you are setting me [up] to fail.” She question[ed] my competency and we ended up having a meeting with an upper manager and I went on leave. They encouraged me to resign and I went back with my lawyer and I ended up disclosing everything to the [upper] manager. I am glad I actually got to do that and then they paid me off to leave.

There are typically two sides to every story. This account, however, suggests that senior management failed to adequately address organisational conflict thus contributing to perceptions of unethical, even toxic, behaviour. In subsequent employment in a state sector multidisciplinary agency, this participant also experienced workplace intimidation perpetrated by a professional from a discipline other than social work:

Generally it is a very healthy working environment but there are issues of social justice that aren’t dealt with that have been around for years and years and years and keep happening and just never get dealt with. One staff member is quite a bully to new social workers. When I started I became aware of this person ignoring me. I thought it was strange that out of all the staff there was one person who ignored me. I didn’t worry too much about it [be]cause it [was] a psychologist so I didn’t deal with them too much. After about 6 months I started to feel really uncomfortable. There was direct nastiness coming out like comments about obesity or about my parenting—really mean. If I walked into the room the conversation would stop. [There was] targeting bullying kind of stuff and I started to think this is more than just me being ignored so I went to the manager and clinical head and said “Look I am not sure what is going on but this is what I have noticed.” [They responded] “So you are the latest victim. This person has worked here for [x] years and they have always got a victim, always a social worker.” I found out from other social workers the list of people, “Well first it was her, then her.” It was this massive systemic problem that people were really aware of. After that [the perpetrator] twice made a complaint about me. I had
to go and see the manager and the clinical head and they both said the complaints were ridiculous stuff about racism. I did say to them, “Why is this allowed to go on? This is not a performance or disciplinary issue.” They kept saying, ‘Unless you can give us really specific examples we can’t do anything about it.’ She is very clever about it so I think is an issue that has never been dealt with and continues to go on to this day. Everyone is aware of it but [senior management] just don’t deal with it. My supervisor said to me, “You know it is awful but when you came along it stopped being me.”

Bronwyn perceives workplace bullying as an issue of social justice, once again illustrating the ecological/systems thinking so characteristic of social work. The denial of social justice in the workplace is evidence of dysfunctionality, arguably even toxicity, and the perception of this participant that senior management required her, as the victim, to prove intimidation stands as the opposite to the profession’s commitment to human rights and social justice. In effect, Bronwyn was marginalised by her employer. The systemic nature of the toxic environment emerges from the participant’s supervisor identifying the same experience.

Subsequent comments provided further insight into this participant’s experience:

*It [bullying] is horrible. It eats me up inside.* The worst thing is now she is on my team and *it has just been horrible for me.* I have thought of leaving *it feels that bad to me.* I [successfully] applied for another job but I changed my mind because *[my employer is] funding my study.* I *just feel really demoralised and unsupported* and I just feel like I can’t actually deal with it. *I am too scared to say anything.*

Statements such as “it is horrible” (twice); “eats me up inside”; thoughts of flight from the workplace; “demoralised and unsupported”; and even fear (“I am too scared to say anything”) represent the 180° opposite of social work’s empowerment value based upon social justice. A subsequent statement adds to our understanding of potential consequences of these two toxic environments:

*It is start[ing] to sound like I am the problem, it has happened twice.* (Bronwyn)

A professional’s self-perception doubting her personal efficacy is perhaps the most profound negative emotion provoked by workplace intimidation and management’s failure to address the problem. This devastating self-labelling reflection emerged despite the revelation by Bronwyn’s supervisor that she had herself undergone similar encounters. These findings sadly
demonstrate that organisational leadership can collude with a toxic environment. Disempowerment is not confined to the marginalised communities to which social work is committed.

The final segment of the findings from this child node reports participants’ understanding of empowerment. The views of participants are well represented by this definition of empowering leadership:

I think empowerment is encouraging a person to feel like they are of *equal standing*. Where there’s *not a power imbalance*. In staff meeting[s] for example somebody [is] encouraged [to] bring forward *their own ideas* and *their own perspective* and *feeling valued*, being *supported and encouraged*. (Wendy)

“Equal standing” cannot be understood in terms of organisational hierarchy. As a values statement, the term suggests leadership as providing a place of trust and safety for workers to express their opinions *because they feel valued*. Expressing ideas also relates to advocacy and organisational culture. Wendy saw her organisational leadership as an equivalent expression of client advocacy:

I consciously made a decision when I started in my [team leadership] role to *work alongside the staff* as I would clients, in an empowering strength-based way. We’ve got a very positive staff culture, *people feel valued*, they feel [pause, thinking] *empowered to do* [their] *job*. My feeling is that other managers have taken note of the different stance in leadership and started to emulate some of those ways in which I’ve been working with staff, based on social work models and theories. So it seems to have had a trickle up effect, if there’s such a thing. [Wendy laughs]

In this quote, empowering leadership is collegial (“working alongside”) suggestive of Wendy’s “conscious decision” to exercise collaborative—or distributed—leadership, applying social work’s strength-based approach to client practice. Organisational leadership which borrows from strengths-based practice focuses leadership values on affirming a worker’s abilities as distinct from performance deficits. Such leadership is directed towards the staff member’s work with consumers as the evidence of its effectiveness. A case may be proposed that such a focus reduces the potentially negative influence of organisational politics and creates a seamless connection with external practice.
Empowerment produces an ability to “do the job.” If staff feel valued they experience self-efficacy from which effective practice is developed. Task effectiveness is an equivalent term for competency. Competent leadership may therefore be defined as producing or contributing to the “skill or ability [of practitioners] to do [the job] well” (Encarta Dictionary). Participants evidently believed that commitment by leaders to ethical and empowering leadership values results in competent practice. Put simply, ethical leadership is the best policy for organisations and professions despite the cynicism, for example, in the party political world. One is reminded of the aphorism cited by Winston Churchill that “a moral of homely simplicity may be drawn from this: Honesty is the best policy.” Nor does it appear that the flow-on benefits are confined to the work of one team as we note that the culture shift in leadership values and practice influenced other team managers. Again, if social work leadership as practised by Wendy presents as proceeding from the “different stance” she notes, its uniqueness will likely be included in the model.

7.4 Introduction to child nodes 3–6

The analysis now turns to the findings derived from the remaining four child nodes which make up the values identified by participants as underpinning organisational social work leadership. Some preliminary observations introduce this section.

I suggest that, for most social workers, the perception of the profession’s defining characteristic globally or in Aotearoa New Zealand is its commitment to social justice. It is therefore remarkable that in the findings which have emerged from “human rights, social justice and social change” (hereafter social justice) constituted only an eighth (12.5%) of the totality of references identified through NVivo analysis. I reiterate the observation that numbers in themselves do not indicate significance or importance. References may be fewer than other child nodes, but every participant in the sample of 23 identified at least some aspects of social justice as a root value in exercising leadership. Nonetheless, the implications of the degree to which social justice occupied the minds of participants will be explored in the summative discussion in Chapter 10.

Arguably of greater note than the frequency of references to social justice is that of the Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti ō Waitangi). The preface to the ethics of the profession in Aotearoa New Zealand states, inter alia:
This Code of Ethics is founded on the guidelines enumerated by the International Federation of Social Workers. The Code also recognises the unique constitutional foundation of the articles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. (ANZASW, 2008, p. 7)

The Code expects that members will take “responsibility for Te Tiriti o Waitangi-based society” (ANZASW, 2008, p. 7). Earlier findings relating to social work’s commitment to ethical leadership become relevant here. The definition of ethical leadership includes a “commitment to social work’s global and national codes of ethics.” The ANZASW Code’s recognition of the “unique constitutional foundation” of the Treaty suggests that ethically based social work leadership actions must take significant account of that foundation.

Findings reveal that commitment to that foundation by participants in this project certainly exists but not to a foundational extent. While bearing in mind the caveat in respect of statistical significance, of 23 participants, 17 (73%) identified commitment to Te Tiriti as a contributor to social work leadership. Those 17 participants made 108 out of a total of 2,038 (5%) references to Te Tiriti. That said, findings will show that some participants not only embraced Te Tiriti but displayed a remarkable integration and understanding of the value in their leadership perspective.

There is, however, a second aspect to this child node. A commitment to Te Tiriti recognises two parties: iwi (Māori tribes) and the Crown. The signing of the Treaty in 1840 enabled the legitimate settlement of colonists (Māori “Tauiwi*: “foreigner, European, non-Māori, colonist”) in Aotearoa. For well over 100 years following the Treaty tauiwi were overwhelmingly Europeans, primarily settlers from the British Isles. This picture has changed.

The changing demographics of Aotearoa New Zealand in recent decades reflect that extraordinary change. Auckland (Tāmaki Makaurau) is reportedly the most ethnically diverse city in the world. The 2013 census reports that 213 ethnic groups are represented in the country (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). With that change, the profession needs to recognise ethnic diversity as a contributing value to social work leadership. This recognition encompasses a wider picture than a commitment to the indigenous people of the land, the Tangata Whenua—although that commitment is foundational to the profession in Aotearoa.

It is a striking feature of project findings that participants made only marginal reference to this ethnic diversity. A commitment to the value of Te Tiriti was simply not matched by a commitment to the sheer diversity of the tauiwi half of the equation.
Viewed from this perspective, the minimal degree to which registered social workers as participants in this project identify ethnic diversity and a commitment to a “Te Tiriti ō Waitangi-based society” in that context may carry an implicit monocultural message. The participants comprised 20 Europeans, 1 Māori and 2 Pasifika. In common with the human rights and social justice child node, the implications of the findings in regard to ethnic diversity and Te Tiriti will be explored in Chapter 10.

I now present the social justice findings of the project. As measured by the number of references made by participants, this child node is the third of six comprising the values of social work leadership. It will be followed by ecological systems thinking; spirituality, authenticity and servant leadership; and as already introduced, Te Tiriti ō Waitangi, each in descending order of frequency of mention.

7.5 Child node 3: Human rights, social justice and social change

For the purposes of reporting findings in this project, human rights are conceptualised as underpinning and informing social justice. In turn, these values produce the profession’s commitment to social change.

Three broad contexts are immediately apparent in the definition of social justice, to be demonstrated by selected participant statements. The first applies social justice to “the community,” representing social work’s deeply held historical concern for marginalised populations. In a fresh perspective, the second applies social justice to the organisation. The third relates to social change. Informing those three arenas, values familiar to any social worker are identified. The notion that knowledge is power is seen as the domain of social work leadership: accessing information is the route to accessing services, resources and all that follows. Viewed objectively, this pathway has enormous societal and organisational implications for social work leadership. Issues of how social work leadership defines (the values side of the equation) and implements (the actions side) human rights and social justice are critical. These issues will become clearer as data are presented and integrated into the proposed social work leadership model in Chapter 10.

The contested nature of social justice practically, and in relation to values is seen in the following statement:
In some ways I get a bit cynical because I think in the end social work comes down to people walking alongside others in a way that is enabling and relationally based. While there are high minded ideals around social justice, a lot of social work is practiced in the context of social control. So high minded ambitions that are espoused are often quite difficult to be grounded in reality on the day to day basis and so in my view the way through that is about having purposeful and ethical relationships and making those work well with the client in every case. (Matthew)

Although Matthew clearly locates social justice in global and national ethical codes, he introduces, albeit humorously, a note of cynicism. The phrase “high minded ideals around social justice” suggests that for this hugely experienced social work leader social justice is found in the day-to-day integrity of worker–client relationships “grounded in reality.” He draws attention to social work’s function as a control agent, drawing into the discourse the vexed issue of social work as a coercive agent of the state.

The overriding position of participants in respect of social justice related to the commonly accepted understanding that social work is concerned to secure the social inclusion of marginalised groups in our communities. Many participants also articulated a personal commitment, amounting to a strong emotional, intellectual and professional identification with social justice. First-hand observation of deprivation impacted this participant emotionally but also led to systemic political action:

[On taking up a new appointment] my office faced onto the food bank reception area. I was very immediately enmeshed in the issues of poverty and the smell of poverty and that was quite an eye opener. That organisation had a very strong justice focus on poverty and the systemic barriers to people having adequate income and did a lot of work on those issues politically. (Matthew)

That “strong justice focus on poverty” and its consequential political actions represent the classic social work identity associated with Jane Addams and the Settlement House Movement in the United States: working with the poor combined with political action. However, Matthew saw another form of poverty which, in his eyes, demanded the application of a “social justice mirror”: 
When I came [to a new location] there was no food bank and I couldn’t figure out what the organisation did for a while [chuckles] and then I realised after talking with staff that the focus here was on the poverty of relationships. The social justice mirror of that is social inclusion or social exclusion. The things I have learnt from those experiences are that the notions of social justice have different forms. So we have got a really strong practice focus on connecting people to others around them as a way towards social inclusion.

Viewed through the lens of the “poverty of relationships,” social justice is therefore not exclusively concerned with material poverty, although they may co-exist. A psychosocial element is evident in that perspective. Additionally, this participant understands socially just leadership as connecting with spirituality and Christian belief. He poses and answers a question which brings us back to ecological systems thinking:

*How do you as a professional social service provider capture the spiritual?* One of the points of leadership for me was to work out [with staff] as professionals [the answer to the question] “What is the spiritual?” Our journey for that essentially took us down the track [of] thinking about social justice in Christian terms. *Social inclusion is a key aspect of social justice and that the way to social inclusion is through relationships.*  
(Matthew)

That extract immediately connects social justice with spirituality/authenticity/servant leadership. Borrowing a term from NVivo analysis, a “gold thread” between social justice, ecological perspectives and spirituality as values informing social work leadership emerges.

Viewed from the vantage point of senior management, Matthew’s poverty of relationships interpretation of social justice placed it in a wider, organisation-wide approach:

We have tried to develop an organisational model that we can live up to because it has got to work for staff as much as for clients. For our organisation that element of social justice is about [the] notion of people being connected to those around them and the notion of compassion and relationships that enable the redevelopment of a sense of meaning and purpose.

This iteration of social justice as set out by Matthew broadens its scope remarkably. Not only is social justice construed as poverty of relationships with clear affinity to other forms of
poverty such as financial deprivation, but the notion of compassion is introduced. We may infer that social justice without compassion (“to suffer together”) lacks the authenticity expressed in spirituality/authenticity/servant leadership. For Matthew, the quality of compassion activates social justice, suggesting that compassion is an integral motivator for his leadership culture. Such thinking precludes an exclusive reliance on intellectually based leadership actions. If compassion means anything it implicitly requires the social work leader to be confronted face-to-face with the suffering of our marginalised population groups. Only then can a “sense of meaning and purpose” be redeveloped. These rich allusions will offer much in the summative discussion in Chapter 10.

The power dimension vis-à-vis organisational social justice in terms of decision-making is acknowledged here:

There is always some power involved in being a social worker or being a team leader either with the client or with the worker. If I am going to tell you what to do or this is how you have to change that is not helpful; but I [can say to the worker] “Well this is the issue. How can we together come up with a solution?” That is how I see collaborative practice. It opens up more possibilities [and] is not so threatening to the staff and I believe they have a sense of autonomy. (Louisa)

Louisa interprets organisational social justice as a power-sharing exercise: in her words, as “collaborative practice.” She perceives this approach as contributing to the staff member’s “sense of autonomy.” Despite that interpretation of Louisa’s discourse, the actuality of power remains. The leader is obligated to match staff resources to contracted outputs and Louisa acknowledges that fact by the statement, “there is always some power involved.” Nonetheless a further insight worth noting suggests that power is not simply a leadership or management issue—it applies equally to the social worker vis-à-vis the client. Louisa demonstrates a holistic awareness of the implications of power in both leadership and professional practice. Her insights also connect with how leaders use power and authority, to be explored in Chapter 9.

The definition of social justice as “meaningful participation in decision making for all people in organisations” is clearly expressed in this statement integrating organisational social justice with advocacy:
I see [social justice] as an opportunity for social workers to have a say in management, in decision making, in advocating for social workers and as a result the client group gets a more holistic systemic service provision. (Elizabeth)

Elizabeth’s response suggests a remarkable commitment to power sharing. In addition, even in a brief discourse her understanding of a systemic approach incorporating the client group as beneficiaries of social workers’ participation in decision making reinforces the ecological thinking which has emerged in this project. From elsewhere in the interview Elizabeth demonstrated her own leadership role modelling to “ensure equality of opportunity:”

*Any one of those social workers on my team could just be a manager, any one of them [repeated].*

Elizabeth’s motivation to engage in socially just leadership was transparent:

*Just makes me feel like I’ve done a good job. I’ve helped them be independent. They are reaching goals and hopefully they are becoming knowledgeable and wise. I always love learning and I love others learning as well.*

Elizabeth’s motivation to “see her staff becoming independent, knowledgeable and wise” arguably expresses the heart of socially just leadership. It is striking that she sees that independence as not only achieving objectives, but doing that through the acquisition of knowledge and wisdom. A legacy of that quality is a notable leadership achievement.

Social change as an element of social justice was identified by several participants. This comment represents that group:

*I think [facilitating change] in the social work context is at the heart of [leadership] And I think this is why it’s important for practitioners to extend their thinking and be challenged themselves about why they do what they are doing and what actually works for them. (Sarah)*

Sarah appears to believe that social justice produces social change which in turn stands at the “heart of social work.” Change, as she conceives it, is provoked by critical thinking: why do social workers act as they do? The unspoken origin of social workers “challenging themselves” is arguably in their own persona, or at any rate, Sarah’s.
The familiar “change agent” term is used here in describing social work leadership:

I think social work is also about pointing out when there [are] things that are wrong [chuckle] so it is making change, it is about being an agent of change and social work leadership needs to be talking on behalf of vulnerable people to ensure that there is systemic change to create better opportunities for them. (Deborah)

The repeated quotation of “change” included systemic change in vulnerable communities. This extends the term conceptually far beyond facilitating change in the lives of individual social workers or clients, or even challenging them to reflect on their current life trajectory and make personal changes for their own benefit. Systemic change finds its place in the latter part of the social justice child node definition: “to act as an agent of human rights and social change for marginalised and vulnerable client groups in society.” Such thinking, and arguably of greater importance, action, defines social work in the most commonly understood interpretation of social justice. Deborah has taken us to the heart of the profession.

The following reflective comments appropriately close this section on social justice. In offering her perspective on the topic, this participant reflected on the society in which the profession currently functions. These thoughts set out an alternative frame of reference that social workers will need to consider in achieving a “just society”:

I think you can’t get away from the fact that what is happening in society influences how people behave and social workers capture that. We are working through a period where social workers are yet to find a more just society. What is that? I come through a journey where people very readily took positions, you know, there needs to be equity and fairness and I like that. [But] it’s a different world. There’s a whole range of technology that influences people’s way of thinking. There’s social media that influences people’s thinking and the social worker of today has got all these sorts of influences to consider how they impact, fairly or not, on the client. So I say social justice because it’s more about my era of social work but I say it with some reservation. It’s that kind of thinking of how ideas and ideologies influence us as well and influence how we behave and that’s what I think social workers need to connect with as well. (Sarah)
The interpretation of social justice expressed here is an acknowledgement of social work’s location in a changing world. Sarah reminds us that, in the public square of policy, competing world views, political discourse, information communication technology including social media, social justice as described must remain as a commitment to a “more just society.” Social work leadership, Sarah is essentially saying, needs to embrace certain unchanging values notwithstanding the impact of new “ideas and ideologies.” In remaining true to social justice, the profession and its leaders may need to develop new ways of communicating that central value in language that makes sense to the millennial generation.

7.6 Child node 4: Ecological systems thinking

The previous section reporting on social justice contained frequent reference to ecological or systems thinking. Participants saw leadership as being profoundly influenced by the sheer diversity in the systems where it is exercised. Such thinking becomes a value because of its inherently collective nature. Interactions between human beings are not mechanistically determined because people are infinitely diverse and no-one is able to accurately predict how those interactions will proceed. Such interactions are best understood as interdependent relationships. Data analysis demonstrated that participants agreed with the systems leadership thinking found in Attwood et al. (2003) and with Green and McDermott’s (2010) notion of reciprocity.

A common theme which emerged in this child node relates to the perception that leadership is not necessarily dependent on a formal title. This perspective is clearly set out in this statement:

>[In] the team that I am managing one of my most junior people is a leader. She organises team events; she is very good at making sure that other people in the team are okay, she is very helpful to people, but she is also able to complete work very effectively. She’s led projects [having] been given opportunities to show [her] skills and has done really well. But in terms of seniority she is the most junior person. I think the same would go in any team. There would be some social workers who are seen as leaders. People who I suppose others might look up to and see as being mentors.

(Ann)
Ann suggests that a staff member’s ability is recognised by colleagues: they are “seen as leaders” and respected as “mentors.” Subordinate status in Ann’s response is not a barrier to leadership recognition. This theme emerged from a number of participants, albeit with some nuanced variations. Another informant used the term “natural leaders”:

Some people are more natural leaders than others and that will come through no matter what they do. *I think leadership should be at all levels in an organisation, at the bottom of the organisational scale.* (Jack)

That is a contrary discourse to the conventional understanding of hierarchically based power. Jack also commented that those who “lead by example” are recognised because “people will listen to them, follow their examples [and] seek advice from them.” In addition, Jack believes that developing and maintaining relational networks are “really important”:

In fact, you’re only as good as a leader as the quality or the strength of your relationships or your networks.

The notion that *leadership* is practically synonymous with *relationship* is found in the literature and will be a consideration in Chapter 10. Relationship quality as a dimension of leadership as identified by Jack conceptually links with power-sharing which is, in turn, an alternative rendition of ecological systems thinking. This theme was repeated in diverse ways by a number of participants.

Leadership values in non-hierarchically based relationships are well demonstrated in this statement:

I facilitated the team brainstorming and work-shopping how *we could increase our targets.* *They came up with ideas of how* [we could increase our targets]. *I suggested* to the team that we become more focused. *We all did heaps of work.* I put to the team how much *we’d done* and how amazing it was and how about this year *we* try and focus in more on the areas that *we’re passionate about and enjoy doing.* And I think that’s part of my leadership style too, to acknowledge what *we’re* doing well. *[Pause]* I suppose that’s partly why people say I bring the strengths out in them. (Louisa)

Values which privilege interactions and interdependency as underpinning leadership actions are illustrated in that discourse by the repeated use of “we”; by Louisa as the designated
team leader seeing herself as a facilitator rather than the director; and the reported acknowledgment that she is the agent by which people’s strengths are released. It is also evident that, while this systems approach to leadership is the value, it is all but impossible to articulate without observing leadership actions, the subject matter in Chapter 8. The same informant also noted that social work practice and values are applicable to leadership:

In collaborative practice we’re coming together to look at the issue so it changes the power difference in the relationship. I think that works very effectively with staff (Louisa).

The evocative picture portrayed in the following extract—equally applicable to the summative model of leadership—appropriately wraps up this section of the chapter. The idea of a “social matrix” plants these comments in the ecological frame of reference:

I think the unique part [that social work contributes to leadership] is concerned with that social matrix that is our unique focus. *No person is an island.* They operate within a social fabric: work, family, money, recreation, leisure, interests. These are things that everybody can touch at some point in their life. *If we are not interested in that it’s difficult to be a social worker.* (David)

John Donne’s 17th century lines to which David alludes are so well known that they have become a familiar proverb:

No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. Any man’s death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bells tolls; it tolls for thee (Donne, 2014, p.98.)

David’s selection of Donne captures the essence of ecological systems thinking leadership. The message of interdependency is graphically portrayed, perhaps most powerfully in the clauses “any man’s death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bells tolls; it tolls for thee.” Applied to the social work leadership context, the loss of any constituent value diminishes its coherence. The tolling of a bell conveys a memorial for a sense of loss. David’s final sentence—“if we are not interested in [the social matrix] it’s difficult to be a social worker”—suggests that a failure to recognise humanity’s need for biological interdependent relationships removes critical knowledge from
a practitioner’s bag of leadership values. We are thus the poorer. Social work and its leadership will always be located in the wider context of its stakeholders, the communities where it functions, the nation-states where the profession is recognised and ultimately the world in which we live. Perhaps a more connecting image than nation-states is the estimated 16,400 people groups who live in our world (Joshua Project, 2017). The ecological systems value of social work leadership is the entry point for understanding that amazing complexity.

7.7 Child node 5: Spirituality/authenticity/servant leadership

The penultimate child node contributing to the values which inform social work leadership is now considered: spirituality, authenticity, servant leadership. I make these introductory observations.

Greenleaf’s inclusion of autonomy in servant leadership also applies to its usage in this child node. The meaning of autonomy in the discourse which follows is not one of independence, but of self-leadership: the capacity set out in the ancient Greek notion that we must know how to lead ourselves if we are to lead others.

Although 22 of 23 participants identified spirituality (used hereafter as referring to the whole node), it became apparent that two or three had developed an overarching interpretation of its meaning. This participant responded to the question, “are there connections between spirituality, social justice and leadership?” by an unambiguous response, part of which was cited earlier:

Absolutely. I was raised within a very strong fundamentalist Christian faith and grew up with such exhortations as do good unto all men, biblical ideas around social justice. Going into social work that is what my gifts are, this is what I was born to do. I think that spirituality from whatever faith base does have an impact on how people lead. For Māori their sense of spirituality for those that have that connectedness to the wairua, that wholeness it is about people being whole isn’t it? It is about people being present and understanding their emotional, their physical, their spiritual[ity], the whole person’s wellbeing and if you bring that sense of integration and their own wellness into the profession then it has got to be good. (Lynda)

Lynda sees spirituality as the overarching value, and the “faith base” where it exists (“whatever”) as subsumed in spirituality. The strands expressed in Lynda’s discourse
encompass Christian faith; personal and ethnic identity, giftedness and career pathway; understanding our need for emotional, physical, spiritual wholeness and wellbeing all leading to a “sense of integration.” Lynda is able to reflect on these elements which for her constitute spirituality. In turn, that reflection “impact[s] on how people lead.” This contribution could almost as well be assigned to any or all of the other values. From that perspective, spirituality may be seen as a river flowing between the roots of leadership and thereby connecting them all.

For this participant, spirituality carried existential questions:

I have had to deliberately make space for thinking, for reflecting and for wondering about who we are and where we are going and why we do what we do. (Judith)

Viewed from Schein’s (2010) “unexamined assumptions” or worldview analytical perspective, that sentence is extraordinarily profound. A highly active CEO, Judith grasps the implications of Schön’s reflective practitioner to a rare degree. She appears to possess insight into the idea that spirituality “gives meaning [and] purpose to other parties.” The reciprocal nature of that attribute was also expressed in Judith’s comment on her accession to the chief executive role:

I get life from those that I lead. What’s the point of having a vision if that vision doesn’t come to life somehow and that can’t come to life if it is just me on my own little waka doing my own little thing?

Acknowledging this reciprocity is also evidence of servant leadership which proposes that those who are served—including the leader—“grow as persons.” Judith asks a rhetorical question: “What’s the point of having a vision if it doesn’t come to life?” The notion of “vision,” frequently cited and arguably overused, is seen by Judith as coming to life because she operates at the interdependent end of the isolation–interdependent continuum occupied by leaders: “That [vision] can’t come to life if it is just me on my own little waka [Māori canoe] doing my own little thing.”

In a similar vein to Lynda, Judith responded to the notion that work has meaning and organisations have a spiritual aspect by stating “Absolutely, absolutely.” She continued:

I think because of the type of organisation that [name] is, it draws people whether it is an actual faith based spiritual belief or maybe [an] unspecified decision that I want my
life to have some kind of benefit beyond just the 9-5. I always come back to [the thought that] we are all standing on the same foundation which is the 25 years’ history of this organisation. For a lot of people I think it is that whakapapa [Māori genealogy] of the organisation and the sharing of stories that helps keep it alive. We take lots of time to bring that reflectiveness into every level of the organisation.

The notion that work has a spiritual dimension—that it has meaningful and purpose beyond the immediate task—offers potential for a connecting thread for the project as a whole. Judith suggests that people want their lives and work to accrue benefits beyond their required employment contract hours. She does not specifically identify those benefits although the intrinsic value of “sharing stories” from the whakapapa of the agency to “keep it alive” carries leadership significance for Māori. The significance of recounting narratives drawn from the agency’s whakapapa as reflective practice may legitimately be interpreted as a response to the existential questions Judith posed earlier.

In a further extract from her interview transcript, Judith made connections between a range of constituencies: leadership; sight, direction, ability to communicate; mission, vision, values; strategic goals; bringing the “nuts and bolts” of grassroots practice to life:

Leadership is about sight and direction and an ability to say “This is where we’re headed folks.” And to be able to [communicate] a mission and a vision and values and strategic goals [with] the Board ... how do you help that to come to life for our staff who might be picking up a young person and mentoring them, or at the hospital [at] 5am waiting for them to get an operation. How do you help them to see their part in there? Someone has to do that, it is that sight I suppose, bringing that down to the grassroots level but then there is so much reciprocity in it.

Reciprocal relationships as a consequence of workplace spirituality naturally bring servant leadership into the discourse. This participant described servant leadership “autonomy” in Greenleaf’s sense:

I really like working autonomously but I also like team work, so that’s a really good balance. So it will actually be a team project but I am getting it going. (Kate)

Kate’s autonomous working style motivates her productivity, but it is carried out with the purpose of serving a team. Servant leadership and spirituality are not to be construed as low
self-esteem or minimising personal abilities but as using those abilities for the benefit of others. This value is expressed as reciprocity for the common good.

Although expressing a sense of autonomy, servant leadership also incorporates accountability to multiple parties as underlying collaborative power-sharing:

[As a leader] you are accountable to the people you are leading and you are also accountable to the people who employ you and to the people who use the service. We make each other transparent about our practice and what we’re doing. (Bronwyn)

Ideas of accountability and transparency are implicit in leadership as spiritual. The notion of authentic, transparent leadership emerged in Bronwyn’s discourse. A number of participants alluded to authenticity. This statement captured the connections between authentic, spiritual and servant leadership in a summative sense of wisdom:

*Authenticity is being present in the situation in a very real way.* For me social work [means] you’re always *giving of yourself.* Even when you are behaving ethically there is a *giving of self* to people and entering into time and space with them. That to me is the essence of really good social work practice and *I think that is the exact same truth of any leader in whatever area.* (Judith)

The notion of “being present” in Judith’s contribution it is connected with authenticity—what you see is what you get—and transparency. If wisdom represents the ability to apply knowledge in a given context, Judith recognises that quality insofar as she understands the need for ethical behaviour while at the same time demonstrating personal transparency, or authenticity.

I conclude the spirituality reporting node with this insightful grasp. Seen from a senior NGO management perspective, how values influence leadership, the contribution of workers to organisational outcomes including wellbeing and quality of life, and the systems which support client satisfaction are reported in these terms:

*From a leadership point of view what are we trying to achieve?* We focused on the notion that there were four main outcomes that we try and achieve with *everyone that we work with.* One is the *enhanced quality of life* which could be safety wellbeing or security. One is *better social connection.* One is *improved social function which is*
about skills and the other we call responsive systems, that is, satisfaction with the worker. No matter what service we provide we ask clients to comment on those outcomes. The other thing that we thought about is what are the values that the organisation needs to live and we settled on connectedness, cohesion, capability and coping, sustainability and creativity and hope as value dimensions. (Matthew)

This summative statement casts those organisational outcomes, familiar to any social work leader, into the context of “spiritual meaning and purpose”: in brief, the raison d’être of the organisation’s existence:

We are here to help people improve their relatedness with others; spiritually we are interested in the notion of meaning and purpose and giving people some sense of hope and optimism. How do you measure that, how do you know that you are actually making some sort of progress or contribution? That is where the outcomes thinking came into focus. How do we want this organisation to be: the value dimensions [of] connectedness, cohesion? There is a sense of coherence to all of that notion of people being connected to those around them and the notion of compassion and relationships that enable the redevelopment of a sense of meaning and purpose. (Matthew)

These last two discourses capture the essence of spirituality, authenticity and servant leadership. Matthew demonstrates a depth of thinking into the whole purpose of social work organisational leadership which warrants cautious optimism for the future of leadership in the profession. It is worth repeating an earlier observation that the “notion that work has a spiritual dimension—that it has meaning and purpose beyond the immediate task—offers potential for a connecting thread for the project as a whole.” The ability to offer an integrated picture of spirituality as depicting meaning and purpose to our work beyond statistical key performance indicators is evidence of a wise leader. We may legitimately revisit the definition of wisdom in the Oxford English Reference Dictionary as “experience and knowledge together with the power of applying them critically or practically” (Pearsall & Trumble, 1996, p. 1659). That is the outcome of Matthew’s assessment and a critical contributor to a summation of the thinking embodied in this node.
7.8 Child node 6: The Treaty of Waitangi

We now turn to the last value which emerged from data analysis. The chapter introduction noted a relative paucity of references to the sixth child node—that is, relative to other nodes. The implications of this statistic are explored in the summative model in Chapter 10. The purpose of this section, as in other nodes, is simply to report findings and make observations on their content as it stands.

Comment has been made in the introduction to the unprecedented growth of ethnicities in Aotearoa New Zealand society in recent years, and the implications for social work. Implications of the marginal references to this reality by participants will also be addressed in Chapter 10.

In presenting findings I begin with the place of Te Reo Māori (the Māori language) in participants’ transcripts. Language is hugely significant in understanding culture. In the context of the Treaty, that significance as a seminal underpinning influence on social work leadership must be constantly held in mind. Appendix 4 sets out a detailed treatment of Te Reo in participants’ transcripts.

Māori language reveals a collectivist perspective quite disparate from compartmentalised “silo” thinking. The idea for example that family values inherent in kaumatua (a person of status within the extended family) have their place in an organisational setting is evidence of that collectivist lens. The ability of one social work leader to articulate a Te Reo proverb (“Mā mua ka kite a muri/Mā muri ka ora a mua”) is evidence that she does in fact live in a consciously bicultural expression of social work. The richness of mana whenua*—carrying profound connections with the land—and of manaakitanga* as embodying hospitality and kindness when applied to the leader’s world indicates that, for the participants who made those statements, bicultural practice as a leadership value is a living reality.

I considered the merits of an exhaustive analysis of data for presentation. That option was rejected as running the risk of losing sight of the wood for the sake of examining the trees. An alternative offered greater value for the project: a global perspective in which the views of a few participants, presented as two ends of a continuum, would enable a contrasting balcony view of the topic under consideration. An apparent inability to understand how to apply Te Tiriti values in social work leadership stands at one end of the continuum. At the other end,
the opposite would be presented: how other participants grasped and integrated Te Tiriti values to their leadership thinking. This approach offers the opportunity for formative comment contributing to Chapter 10: the social work leadership model.

Findings related to the first perspective open the discourse. They draw from the identity of the participant (child node 1), italicised to make an unequivocal point: *Unless a social work leader has integrated a commitment to bicultural practice into their own persona, policies designed to implement “values set forth by a Te Tiriti o Waitangi-based society” are unlikely to gain traction.*

That reality is expressed in an interaction discussing social work competency standards in respect of practice with Māori. The participant responded to a question asking her to comment about her leadership style in respect of indigenous issues. In the only one of its type in the transcripts, the informant stated:

> I don’t know quite what you mean. I’ve had to instate some cultural training for the team. And raise the competencies of the team [pause]. I see cross cultural work and working with Māori as an important part of [competent] social work practice. I don’t know if that’s answering your question. [Q. [Does] the Treaty dimension impact on your leadership?] [Pause] I think it ought to [chuckles]. I haven’t really thought about it much, sorry. I haven’t meaningfully tried to think how the Treaty [pause] integrate[s] with leadership. (Louisa)

Critical reflection is required to embrace and implement a bicultural approach to organisationally-based social work practice. In an earlier interaction, Louisa indicated that as team leader she was responsible to develop staff competencies to work with Māori in professional development plans for the current year. In terms of self-leadership, the absence of a coherent understanding of how to integrate a Te Tiriti based approach to her leadership carries certain implications. The “cultural training” mentioned may be an isolated event rather than forming part of an integrated model of practice. This suggests a management exercise rather than engaging in professional development.

Part of the explanation for the scenario depicted above may be found in this discourse:

> [Q. Do you think that there are some unique characteristics about social work in New Zealand which would contribute to a model of leadership?] Yes. I’m obviously
thinking of the Treaty of Waitangi and how that would inform the model. From a managerial perspective, to be culturally inclusive, culturally sensitive takes time [and] training. I think there is a tension between the leadership managerial side and maintaining the principles of the Treaty because it’s time consuming and anything that’s time consuming is an issue for a manager. We have a specific group to try and increase the organisation’s cultural responsiveness to service users. So we’ve got an organisational waiata and karakia that we’re just trying to implement across all the services, but from a leadership managerial perspective there’s certainly a tension given that the time consumingness of operating in that way. (Wendy)

The scarce managerial resource of time clearly produces tension for this leader despite—or perhaps because of—her commitment to a biculturally sensitive organisation. The challenges associated with implementing biculturalism were not limited to time constraints:

Yes, time and also depending on the culture of the organisation, the amount of value that the organisation places on the Treaty and its values and principles. I’m sure lots of organisations do place a huge amount of value and try and incorporate that in everything they do and then there would be others that are probably quite far behind. (Wendy)

For Wendy, cultural considerations as the natural domain in which leaders function are arguably a more constraining force than available time. Reflection on her statement suggests that securing the critical mass of staff commitment in order to implement “Treaty values and principles” is an ongoing leadership challenge. The issues raised by her discourse may be applicable to Louisa’s situation.

Creating and changing professional or organisational culture is a leadership function. A third participant insightfully noted that “working with Māori [can] alienate and you were either willing to go on the journey or you were not” (Lynda). Culture change may be the most challenging task in which leaders engage.

Lynda’s perspective on what she describes as “the values drive to be [biculturally] inclusive” develops Wendy’s discourse by taking into account wider issues such as the image of the profession:
I guess seeing what unfolded in those years with the changes with the Children and Young Persons and Their Families Act [1989], the values drive, the drive to be inclusive, to be bicultural, the things that make [the] social work profession was probably more clearly enunciated in terms of social justice, about understanding the place of Māori in New Zealand society and what colonization had brought to [that] understanding.

The process Lynda describes is in effect a cultural change; but it is built on a personal journey recounted in a seminal moment in her early social work career on meeting John Rangihau. Now sadly deceased, Rangihau co-authored a landmark 1986 report (*Puao-te-ata-tu*) on institutional racism in the Department of Social Welfare. He exercised a profound influence on policy and, as we will see in Lynda’s statement, on people. The impact Rangihau made on Lynda as a young practitioner and continued to the present is seen in the following interactions:

> [John Rangihau was of course the author of *Puao-te-Ata-tu*]. Absolutely and [he] challenged us: what were we doing sitting at [our residential institution] with an over representation of Māori girls that we had taken out of homes from the far north, from Porirua to Invercargill here we were looking after them in Christchurch. What right did we have to their children and what were we doing about retaining their family links and did we know their tribal connection and how important and significant that was for them and what were we doing about fostering that? If we were in an institution away from our parents and families, what would we expect as Pākehā in terms of being kept in touch with our families? (Lynda)

The evident passion inherent in that challenge needs no comment except perhaps the observation that there is a legitimate place for outrage in social work when racist practices are exposed and the contrast with Pākehā expectations identified. For Lynda, bicultural policy and practice issues are located in the leadership domain:

> Where is the leadership, where are the people inspiring and leading the way? I suggest they are absent and that people we had who were sharp and onto this somehow are no longer in those key positions where they can make that significant difference or they have lost the drive, the energy, I don’t know what’s happened but I feel huge
alarm and concern about the lack of leadership particularly around more vulnerable kids, children in care.

Comments by the final participant appropriately cap the preceding, perceptive statements. Two themes emerge from her discourse. The first illustrates Lynda’s earlier statement in regard to “working with Māori.” The critical issue: “you were either willing to go on the journey or you were not.” An affirmative response was forthcoming from this remarkable change leader:

Years ago I went to Mangere East [South Auckland] to do a social work placement and was told by the two women [supervisors] “Oh you want to work here, you’re a white middle class woman whose husband’s a bank manager, you’ve got your own house and your own car. We’ll tell you when you can come and work here.” And it changed my life. I walked the streets, I sat in the shopping malls and absorbed everything, just listened and people started talking to me and made me feel really welcome. Eventually I went to work there and the privileges I had while I was there really influenced who I have become. (Elizabeth)

Therein lay the beginning of the journey for Elizabeth. Without that seminal moment—amounting to an epiphany—the subsequent career of this social work leader in respect of social work’s commitment to bicultural practice may have been policy rather than passion. That experience laid the foundation for the emergence of the second theme:

I have always walked alongside the Māori people. I even went to the extreme [when] I employed a social worker because she was Māori and had [no recognised] social work qualifications. When I was asked what her qualifications were I said she was Māori and they [the organisational decision-makers] didn’t know what to say to me so they employed her. I was able to access some training for her and she was an amazing person. With Māori people I work alongside and I acknowledge their mana [and] their skills. (Elizabeth)

Elizabeth’s leadership actions emanated from a personal commitment to Māori acquired during her own professional journey. Walking alongside Māori, the indigenous Tangata Whenua of Aotearoa must never be reduced to policy statements and actions, although of
course these are needed. Leadership actions must be underpinned by that personal commitment.
Chapter 8
Findings: Leadership actions

8.1 Introduction

Chapter 8 reports leadership actions identified by participants. Using NVivo analysis, a descriptive overview of the parent and child nodes is found in Table 8.1. Before making specific comment on these nodes, the content of this chapter is integrated with findings related to the roots, or values, of leadership reported in Chapter 7. The purpose of this exercise is to make a conceptual thread connecting the findings.

Applying the metaphor of fruit to depict social work leadership actions is once again drawn from the image of a living tree (Te Whaiti Nui-a-Toi, 2001). To further explore those terms we turn to Tipu Ake, the Māori image of an organisation, or organism (Figure 5.1, Chapter 5) (Te Whaiti-Nui-a-Toi, 2001). In English, the word “tipu” (noun) signifies “seedling, growth, development, shoot, bud, plant.” “Ake” used as a particle refers to “original, indigenous, own, real.” The idea that Tipu Ake depicts an original, indigenous, real, developing plant expresses a richness to which we will return in Chapter 10.

The visible elements of the Tipu Ake tree include trunk, branches, flowers and fruit. For leadership actions, the applicable terms are flowers and fruit. Flowers represent “collective wisdom”; fruit represent “wellbeing” (Figure 5.1, Chapter 5). Applied to this project, these terms are evocative. The notion that collective wisdom produces leadership actions suggests that to be legitimate, leadership actions need to embody at least a measure of collective decision-making. The result of wise actions is seen in the fruit of wellbeing. Healthy workplaces characterised by the wellbeing of those who work in them will become a critical element in the development of a model of social work leadership.

Table 8.1 sets out the definitions of the parent and child nodes which collectively present social work leadership actions. Quantitative data are located in Table 8.2 and Figure 8.1. The nodes may be seen as falling into two groups. Leadership, management and change are naturally expressed in advocacy, empowerment and vision; in the use of power and authority; and in mobilisation, motivation and outcomes. Communication skills applied internally (child node 9) and externally (12) constitute a second group. Table 8.1 lists these child nodes in
descending order of frequency of references in NVivo. Numbers allocated (7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12) continue the child node list in Chapter 7.

Table 8.1
“Fruit”: Parent and Child Nodes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent node II: Actions—“fruit”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using Schein’s (2010) “levels of culture” analysis, this parent node identifies the artefacts—the visible actions—of organisational social work leaders.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7. Leadership, management and effecting change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drawing on extra-social work sources, this node describes leadership actions as people-related, creating or changing the culture of the organisation in which social work leadership is exercised (Bass &amp; Bass, 2008; Schein, 2010;) and management actions as relating to “things” such as job descriptions, organisational structures and change management. (MacKenzie, 1969 as cited in Bass &amp; Bass, 2008, p. 655)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8. Advocacy, empowerment and vision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organisational social work leadership is to speak on behalf of [1] marginalised and vulnerable client groups in society; [2] the profession; [3] those who have no official position of authority or peer recognised position of influence; [4] those who belong to groups such as contract workers, casual workers and workers with disabilities by enabling their voice to be heard and integrated into policies and organisational practices. The capacity to articulate and project a shared vision and create followership</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9. Communication: Networking, relationships, dialogues, stories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active engagement in developing networks, relationships and dialogue, drawing on historical narratives, advocacy, communication knowledge and skills, personal attributes of the leader and the ecological/systems perspectives of the profession.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10. The use of power and authority</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How social work uses power and authority (French &amp; Raven, 1959) to maintain community and organisational social system accountabilities and management of risk. (Report of the 21st Century Social Work Review)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>11. Mobilisation, motivation and outcomes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership identifies workers’ abilities and motivates them to achieve desired organisational and professional outcomes by placing them in appropriate positions and celebrating success.</td>
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</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>12. Communication and thought leadership: Politics and government</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active engagement with local and national politicians, pressure groups and Government at a policy advice and advocacy level.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While reiterating the caveat about necessarily assigning significance to quantitative measures, it is still worth noting that of a total 4,508 transcript references, 2,038 (45%) are located in the values informing leadership, compared with 1,349 (30%) in leadership actions. Of those 1,349, 36% (486) references are located in child node 1, leadership, management and change, equal to the next two child nodes combined: [1] advocacy, empowerment and vision; [2]
communication: networking, relationships, dialogues, stories. Comment will be made on the inferences we may draw from the predominance of leadership and management. Distribution of contributing participants and the number of references in this node warrants comment. We may note that all 23 participants expressed a view of each child node with two exceptions: the use of power and authority (21) and communication and thought leadership relating to politics and government (16). The slightly reduced number of participants (91% of total sample) who referred to the use of power and authority may be explained by two considerations. First, nine of the 23 were frontline practitioners or non-management specialists with consequently reduced need to exercise power in respect of other workers. To meet research participation criteria these people had prior management or leadership experience and thus would have a base upon which to express an opinion. Second, the slightly lower numbers may indicate that social work’s historical distrust of management as power remains a factor in terms of willingness to comment.

More noticeably, only 16 of 23 participants (69%, slightly over two-thirds) expressed a view on the sixth child node, communication and thought leadership relating to actively engaging in the political process. It is quite likely that, because the sample contained only two chief executives and six mid-level managers, there was a significantly reduced opportunity to make informed comment on the topic. As already noted fewer or more references do not necessarily indicate significance in terms of the summative model of this project. Fewer references tell their own story which may be of equal importance to higher numbers. As noted in respect of social justice and a commitment to Te Tiriti in Chapter 7, numerical values of the child node categories will be evaluated where appropriate in the summative leadership model.

The process that determined these categories has been set out in the findings overview introduction to Chapter 7. A brief recapitulation reminds the reader that, as the nodes were identified and described, it became apparent that to a certain extent they illustrated Schein’s “levels of culture” analysis located in Chapter 2. Schein’s (2010) “basic underlying assumptions” and “espoused beliefs and values” are represented as the values (“roots”) of social work leadership. Sitting at the summit of his model, Schein’s “artefacts” are “visible and feelable structures and processes [and] observed behaviour” (2010, p. 24). These artefacts are represented as parent node II, the actions or fruit of leadership.
Table 8.2
Quantitative Breakdown of Participants and References in Actions Parent Node

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Node</th>
<th>Number of participants who identified the node (N=23)</th>
<th>Numbers of references (N=1349)</th>
<th>Percentage of total references (rounded)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent node II “fruit”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>N/A¹</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child node 1 Leadership, management and effecting change</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child node 2 Advocacy, empowerment and vision</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child node 3 Communication: Networking, relationships, dialogues, stories</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child node 4 The use of power and authority</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child node 5 Mobilisation, motivation and outcomes</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child node 6 Communication and thought leadership: Politics and government</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹Note. All references were capable of being allocated to one of the child nodes.

A distinctly positive interpretation arguably emerges from the comparison between the numbers which make up the values and actions parent nodes respectively. Recalling Weaver’s (1984) dictum that “ideas have consequences,” “cautious optimism” (to use a quote from Chapter 7) may be expressed in the light of the focus of participants’ contributions on the roots of social work leadership. Social work leaders appear to be primarily concerned by the values which inform their actions—that the reasons why they do what they do are of more importance than the actions themselves. That is evidence of a remarkable commitment to identity, integrity and values.
Chapter 8 focuses on the artefacts of leadership: that is, “visible and feelable structures and processes [and] observed behaviour” (Schein, 2010, p. 24). This definition informs the description of parent node II: Actions, or “fruit”:

Using a modified version of Schein’s (2010) “levels of culture” analysis, this parent node identifies the artefacts (visible actions) of organisational social work leadership.

### 8.2 Child node 7: Leadership, management and change

Findings under three headings emerge from this child node: [1] whether the participants differentiate leadership from management; [2] the views of the participants of the influence on leadership by forces external to the profession; and [3] whether the participants identify a distinctive social work interpretation of leadership in the profession. The leadership, management and change child node is the point at which the greatest interaction between the general leadership field and the views of social work leaders contributing to this project is found. It is in fact the “moment of truth” (Grönroos, 1990) on which the entire project hinges. If no discernible differences exist between the generic leadership literature and the perception of informants, the ability of the research to legitimately identify a model of social work leadership will, at best, be compromised.
Differentiating leadership and management

Initial comments drawn from the first of two chief executives represented in the sample offer a global perspective on the topic at hand:

> I think leadership is about *inspiring and enabling people to focus on the mission and the results that we are after*. Management is about *day to day organisation and oversight of how things are done*. (Matthew)

This concise definition clearly places leadership as the overarching activity by virtue of the reference to people, mission and results. Matthew sees leadership actions as starting from a relationship with his agency’s workers. He implicitly suggests that working with people to inspire them is achieved by a focus on the mission of the organisation and the results in the community mandated by that mission. Task comes out of relationship, a familiar theme in the literature. Mission in a social work context is distinctive, a point to which we will return in the third critical element (is there a distinctive social work interpretation of leadership?) Mission draws from the values in Chapter 7, but the task dimension ("results we are after") indicates that leadership demands much more than building relational deposits in a conceptual bank with workers. Leadership requires productive activity within a well-articulated framework of purposeful mission.

Matthew’s description of management suggests daily routines through which managers consciously use their positions to coordinate activities. His job description removes him from day-to-day management:

> As CEO I take a whole of organisation view and I don’t get into day to day interaction with a whole lot of staff. A lot of my role is about *keeping the vision and values of the organisation in front of people* and so when I trot around staff meetings I will generally be talking about the *strategic level and referencing them back to our mission and vision and how we want it to be and how we are doing*. When I talk to staff about managing the organisation it will be with reference to [how] we can live those values [and] with things like flexible work place practice.

That discourse depicts an approach to the leadership task which uses the values expressed in mission, vision and action as driving management. Management in fact serves leadership. Matthew expands on how he addresses his task:
In my mind it’s about me *nurturing* the platform for staff and modelling *respectful and reciprocal accountable relationships* [in] how I work with managers and with staff. People’s work is about their sense of *meaning and purpose*. You want that to be as good an experience as it can be even when it’s in difficult circumstances.

Nurture, respect, and reciprocity characterise the understanding that this chief executive brings to his working relationships with staff. Even more remarkable is the reference to his accountability to managers and staff with the apparent goal of creating meaning and purpose in their worlds. Matthew realises that this approach is needed “because the other regional managers and service managers are busy managing operational stuff.” Those qualities are plainly values that derive from the roots of leadership in Chapter 7. The thinking which informs such action in itself is evidence of integrity.

Management and leadership for the second chief executive is equally underpinned by a clear philosophy which translates into actions. This value base is expressed in an extract from this Māori proverb (whakataukī) cited in Chapter 7:

> *Those who lead give sight to those who follow,*  
> *those who follow give life to those who lead*

The image expressed in the whakataukī applies poetry to management and leadership alike.

The “systems and processes”—devised by developing relevant competencies—are management tools which “give life to those who lead”:

> I think that management is the systems and process side, utilising resources and how you make everything fit together to get the job done. (Judith)

Systems, processes, resources and fitting everything together is Judith’s own statement of management and easily recognisable as such. Her take on social work leadership is set out in the following statement:

> If we are thinking about social work where people go into it for heart reasons, there is a real motivation above and beyond just a job. I think that *people are looking for something [to which] they are contributing*. I am not saying that is not true outside [social work] but my experience of leadership has primarily been in context[s] where
people are saying “I want to do a really good job but I just want to know that I am making a difference.” Maybe [in] big computer companies people achieve targets and are creative and innovative.

In effect, Judith equates leadership actions as located with “those who lead giv[ing] sight to those who follow”: that is, the sight or vision by which workers are able to make their own contribution. Leadership in this picture assures those workers that they are making the proverbial difference. Although the terminology is not revolutionary, Judith does bring into the debate a fresh insight: both management and leadership are expressed as living entities in which leadership gives metaphorical sight to followers and followers give metaphorical life to leaders.

An intriguing addition is also made. Judith’s acknowledgment that her leadership picture may well be evident outside social work as a helping profession—and even nominates ICT companies as candidates—is capable of more than one interpretation. Perhaps, first, there is no difference between the leadership of for-profit entities and social work agencies, that both “achieve targets and are creative and innovative.” By virtue of her own career trajectory Judith cannot offer a definitive statement in that regard. But, second, we might equally argue that Judith’s take on leadership applies to commercial companies: that they would benefit from a leadership commitment to giving sight and a followership commitment to giving life, a characteristic social work philosophy. That might be an interpretive bridge too far; but it is worth reflection.

This statement draws attention to the values base of leadership. Leadership and management are contrasted by suggesting that managers possess a “mandate” for action:

I think [that in] leadership you are coming from values, collaboration and a neutral perspective in that you are open to [being] shap[ed], considering [other] views. But [in] management you are more likely to have [to] make something happen regardless of your views as a leader whether it’s a good thing or not. Some people can do both really well, but I think some people become more aligned to the management side, when they get put in that position. (Bronwyn)

Describing leadership as drawing on values, collaboration and openness places Bronwyn’s interpretation in the cultural formation domain. Management, she suggests, lacks
leadership’s openness to other views. Executing management decisions may even challenge ethical commitments embraced as a leader. Bronwyn’s own experience of workplace bullying reported in Chapter 7 may have influenced her perspective; but similar comments were made in this discourse:

I definitely think you can be a manager and not a leader because people can manage clients, services, situations, staff without having a clear vision or a clear stance, a clear philosophical position. There’s the organisational mission statement which I think the organisation would hope is what is leading managerial decisions, but my experience there [are] managers or management tasks, functions, procedures that don’t have a clear leadership stance. (Wendy)

Wendy assigns ethical values to an agency’s mission statement, in what she describes as “a clear philosophical position.” Wendy also suggests that leadership operates more in that missional ethics domain as contrasted with management which does not work from leadership’s ethical base. This perspective unequivocally connects leadership and workplace culture, also drawing a stark picture from firsthand experience of how a “destructive culture” can wreak havoc in an agency:

Where there is poor leadership or the wrong people in the wrong job at the wrong time the culture that can develop is so destructive and because the work is stressful it can bring out the worst in people. (Lynda)

Lynda describes the outcome of dealing with conflict engendered by a “destructive culture” both positively and negatively:

[Lengthy pause, thinking] I would imagine that effective leaders took people aside individually and sought to understand the grievance or misunderstanding [which was] making them behave in the way that they were. They sought to understand and resolve it on a one to one basis. I saw poor managers try to deal with [a destructive culture] in a group situation. It was terrible. The manager or the supposed leader was sort of savaged by the crowd. If people don’t have strategy and skills and a framework in which they operate then I think that [conflict resolution] is difficult. I don’t believe all people who are social workers make good managers or leaders. Some people should stay at the front line where their strengths, skills and abilities are.
For Lynda, good leadership actions draw on understanding people, possessing appropriate strategy and skills to address workplace dysfunctionality by resolving conflict face-to-face. Lynda also differentiated leadership from management. The image of “the manager or supposed leader savaged by the crowd” brings to mind the narrative in Golding’s *Lord of the Flies* where the boys literally did to Piggy, the intellectual leader among them, what Lynda metaphorically described.

The leadership skill set to which Lynda referred appears in the following statements, which also unequivocally set out an understanding of leadership and management:

> [Management and leadership] are different because you can be in management without being a leader. You bring a leadership skill to the management role. [Q. So you see them as different skill sets?] Absolutely. (Elizabeth)

Elizabeth’s experience and clarity of thinking around leadership skills are displayed in this response:

> [Q. What are leadership skills in your view?] When I set up a new service I was able to use my skills to design the service, to write the programme, to access resources and the best people possible to help me put together something that was very skilful, very well managed, very well structured and very successful and that was across all the disciplines. So that was one role. But then when I moved to the next, that service was merged with another service and I became part of the management team where I wasn’t actually in control but as a social work leader on that team I contributed to the decisions that were made by management.

The skills enumerated in that discourse cross over several disciplinary boundaries. Professional skills are evident: designing a service and writing a programme; leadership skills: staff selection (“the best people”) and service success; and what might be seen as management skills: accessing resources; excellent management (“very well managed”) and structure (“very well structured”). Leadership skills appear to act as a binding agent for the entire project. Elizabeth’s ability to “put together” the new service is a leadership skill *par excellence*. Negotiating recruitment of the best interdisciplinary professionals available; visualising the construction and roll-out of the service; and ensuring a successful ongoing operation requires exemplary leadership. The statement relating to the image of a tree cited...
in Chapter 7 that “no component can stand by itself” is simultaneously a description of leadership and a summative expression of Elizabeth’s leadership abilities.

Elizabeth’s discourse is appropriately rounded off by a remarkable insight in this statement: “I became part of the management team where I wasn’t actually in control but as a social work leader on that team I contributed to the decisions that were made by management.” I interpret that statement thus: Leadership is an indispensable component of management decision-making. The interstices between the systems represented in a project or new service are the places where leadership skills and insight are exercised to ensure a coherent structure and roll-out.

This participant was more ambivalent about the leadership/management dichotomy, expressing a social-work-specific perspective:

> Management I see as ensuring the right resources are there; that pay reviews and performance appraisals are happening; and that the [needed] car is [available] ensuring accountability. Leadership is about keeping people inspired, involved and interested because social work can get quite draining when you are dealing with difficulties day in day out. (Deborah)

The function of management is readily understood in that description. Leadership as Deborah understands the term appears to include a version of professional supervision in addressing potential staff burnout. She develops the theme by referring to leadership in relation to supervision and management:

> [Q. Where does leadership fit between supervision and management?] I think it is having the social awareness and intelligence to know when to say something and when not to; knowing the right environment or the right conversation or the right timing to bring up points. So good leadership shows that you know what is going on; that you are keeping your finger on the pulse; you are aware of timekeeping and whether [staff members] are late for work; and you know whether things outside work are affecting [workers’] productivity or their feeling at work. And knowing the right time to bring it up without people feeling managed.
This discourse blurs boundaries between three discrete functions: leadership, management and what appears to be professional supervision. Concerns about timekeeping may become a leadership issue if workplace culture becomes dysfunctional in the way described by Lynda. But that level of oversight suggests micro-management. Workers’ feelings—gauging their wellbeing as a mental health issue—legitimately fall into the leadership domain. Likewise, emotional intelligence is clearly a leadership skill, evidenced by the capacity to raise sensitive issues without individuals “feeling managed.” Deborah’s discourse suggests that roles may be transferable between distinct functions.

Participants generally saw leadership and management as distinctive. While not always clearly defined, the flavour of the comments tended towards according an overarching function to leadership. This was not universal. A contrary discourse emerged in some instances. Although she described leadership and management as discernibly separate, this participant subsumed leadership under the management function:

I think leadership work[s] with the team towards a common goal and management is a top down approach to ensure that the goal is met. [Leadership is] working with and alongside towards that common goal and guiding the team to get there whereas management ensure[s] that everybody is doing what they’re meant to be doing. I think management overarches leadership. To be a good manager you have to have a really good understanding of leadership and you have to model what you expect from your leaders so then they model that with their teams. [Q. Why do you think that management overarches leadership?] I’ve used the analogy the captain of the ship. Somebody has to be driving it. They’re holding the overall picture so to speak and I think the management of all the different functions and how they can interrelate [needs] to be understood and kept at that management level. (Cheryl)

Cheryl sees leadership as exercised at the team level and management as responsible for overall coordination. Insight into Cheryl’s understanding of the two roles comes from the “captain of the ship” analogy. The implications of the “manager as captain” are fascinating, even extraordinary. A ship’s captain exercises statutory authority—“final authority,” “control,” “command” and “discipline”—representing a completely contrary discourse to the profession’s culture and ethics. These comments do not suggest that Cheryl espouses such views, but they do propose that metaphors or similes must be used with caution. The captain
of a ship with coordinating management responsibilities is likely to have been the picture she wished to convey. That said, she did use the suggestive words, “Somebody has to be driving [the agency].” The driver of a car and the captain of a ship may in their different spheres carry analogous responsibilities.

This contribution appropriately concludes the first section differentiating leadership and management. It illustrates the ambivalence noted earlier:

I don’t think that there is necessarily such a strong [difference between leadership and management]. When you are a leader you still have to manage, there is still management and there [are] still transactional components. Leadership is a little bit like the icing on the top. I see leadership as having a lot more of a strategic and a visionary thing that helps people to see the end game and how to get there and builds that kind of enthusiasm and commitment and sense of purpose. (Barbara)

Barbara’s picture of leadership as the “icing on the top” borrows from the lyrics in Disney’s Mary Poppins that “a spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down.” Barbara’s imagery portrays leadership as masking the pain associated with management. Perhaps social work’s old aversion to management as control is present. That interpretation is strengthened by this discourse relating to transactional management:

I wasn’t talking from a leadership sense I was talking from a sense of how our social work role can just be a purely transactional role within Child Youth and Family. So you [a client] come in, I have to do this, this, and this and that spits out [a decision]. People in a Work and Income office are very transactional. They have rules and regulations and they measure things against that so you need to do A, B, C and D and you get it or you don’t get it. So it is very easy there [are] rules around it. That is not social work in my view. (Barbara)

So for Barbara, transactional management is incompatible with social work, a position that may explain her analogy of pain. Her rationale expressed in the extract below returns us to a profoundly social work value statement:
Where are the people in this, what is important, what might be happening for them, where does that fit into the system? And that is where I think the development of a social work leadership model is really important.

Barbara believes that people, I add whether service users or staff, should not be required to "fit into the system." The implications of that stance include a social justice lens by which the profession’s management and leadership are guided. Such thinking will re-emerge in Chapter 10.

Influences on social work leadership actions exerted by forces external to the profession

Perspectives offered by the two chief executives are presented first. This statement sets out leadership as “capturing hearts and minds”:

[Leadership] is really harnessing people around an ethical practice framework. The driving force of leadership was always about making sure that the basic job was done properly so you had to have concern about ethical practice and competent practice and legal practice but you also aspired to making things better. (Matthew)

Within the wider purpose of leadership to “capture hearts and minds” in order to “make things better,” Matthew sees four external influences: effective and efficient work practices (“basic job done properly”); ethical practice; competent practice; and legal practice. Leadership ensures effectiveness (achieving the organisation’s mission) and efficiency (use of resources) illustrating the influence of NPM. Ethical practice encompasses codes of ethics and integrity as a wider ethical commitment. Competent practice is expressed by knowing and applying standards set out by the registration body, the SWRB. Legal practice requires that leadership operates within the social-work-specific statutory framework.

Contractual accountabilities entered into by NGOs with public sector agencies exercise major influence on leadership, as observed by this CEO:

To date it had been like trust us [contracting government agency]. You guys [the NGO] will deliver the service. We will check your books once a year. [With] fiscal responsibility and outcomes based programmes there is increasing scrutiny around evaluating the effectiveness of our programme; how we deliver our programme; are we getting the outcomes that we say we are with young people. I have had a focus on
developing an evaluation framework to *effectively capture* what we are doing and make adjustments accordingly. *Accountability* is really important in developing the best that we can for the client group, always looking at how we can improve and be open to seeing where we go wrong. (Judith)

The language Judith employs—fiscal responsibility, outcomes based programmes, effectiveness, evaluation, effective capture, accountability—is classic NPM. “Specialist language” (*Encarta Dictionary*), colloquially jargon, is evidence of culture change which once embedded creates a new and normative discourse. With those new ideas comes a philosophy likely to affect social work leadership in much the same way as the Greek story of the Trojan horse. The influence of external models on social work leadership may come with logically coherent arguments but, once inside the camp, will change the culture of social work profession and its organisational leadership.

Innovative, entrepreneurial social work leadership in setting up a new agency is illustrated by this personal statement:

*Got to find the money somewhere* [to establish] *hospice care*. It’s a global problem [for which] there are no facilities. We need a hospice for that age group, for the under 65s. So I’ve got my ears and eyes open. (Kate)

Over the last 30 years, entrepreneurial social work leaders have been actively launching not-for-profit enterprises. The skills needed for such endeavours have also enabled such individuals to take up leadership positions in other social services or in even wider fields. Innovation and entrepreneurship are conceptualised as a “business model” approach to social work leadership:

*On the managerial leadership side, you have to be much more business-minded and make decisions based on business models as opposed to social work models.* [It is] a *balancing act* trying to maintain your ethical practice whilst working in a business environment. (Wendy)

Influences exerted on social work leadership by business model decision-making in Wendy’s discourse introduces potential ethical dilemmas, expressed by her comment that business thinking is “opposed” to social work models of practice:
[Social work] ethics [to which] a social worker is bound positively inform the leadership, managerial side but with its challenges because it takes time and effort to practise in an ethical way whereas you can work, in a way, more efficiently without having to be concerned about ethical practice. (Wendy)

Those comments suggest that external business thinking represents a clash of cultures which for Wendy is an ethical dilemma. She advanced the notion that “if business leaders reflected more on the way in which they pursue business goals, for example, they would possibly not have so much disparity between rich and poor or pollution” representing an appeal rooted in economic social justice and environmental protection.

The last contribution to this section adds a nuanced slant on how “management capture” and the “organisation’s determinants” carry potential to distort leadership:

_I’ve been acutely aware of how much you could get captured by the organisation’s determinants and requirements and that might be at the expense of leadership. Leadership can be distorted by management capture._ [Where] I hold a budget I am held to account for it. “No, you can’t have more people. [Both laughing] This has happened and you need to sort it out.” That’s part of my job. But leadership is about encouraging people to do their best. Now and again I have to say to somebody, “Look you’ve really got this wrong. If you do it like this again someone’s going to come down on you like a ton of bricks. It might even be me. But I’d rather say this is what you do really well.” At the end of the day that’s what matters. Did the patient, the relatives feel they got what they needed from social work or from the health service while they were here? (David)

David is a highly perceptive reflective thinker. He draws a picture of budgetary determinants and organisational requirements as exercising “management capture” of his “leadership as encouragement” model. While accepting accountability, David is essentially arguing that the focus on financial control and staff ceilings may result in a social work leader losing relational capital with his or her teams. Instead of asking the key questions about outcomes for patients, a focus on organisational management requirements may detract from exercising leadership. David’s narrative carries similarities to Judith’s account of NPM language and programme accountabilities exercising influence on leadership.
We now turn to the final aspect of this section.

**Whether a distinctive social work interpretation of leadership in the profession may be identified**

The contribution made by this section does not constitute the model to be presented in Chapter 10. It is nonetheless a signpost on the pathway to that model.

Selection of managers offers a useful starting point. This participant (one of our CEOs) sets out his organisation’s recruitment policy which consciously builds a social work philosophy into succession planning:

>[When] selecting managers we look more at their leadership skills. Management skills can be learnt, leadership can be learnt but people need to have some sort of passion for it and an aptitude for leading. Why employ well trained and relatively well paid people if you are going to tell them what to do all the time? [Leadership] is about enabling people to use their skills. That is where that notion of passion in hearts and minds stuff comes in because hopefully we have got an environment where people can apply themselves to their job in their way but at the organisational level there is [also] a focus to our reason for existence. (Matthew)

The ecological/systems integration in that discourse is easily discernible. The identity of management candidates and their personal and professional journeys is the starting point for selection: what Matthew describes as “passion and aptitude for leading.” The environmental ecology of the agency nurtures that leadership aptitude (“people can apply themselves to their job in their way”) but within the focus of the organisation’s purpose: “our reason for existence.”

Matthew adds a further dimension to his leadership model by removing the prestige and mystique of “leader”:

*I don’t think it makes any great difference what title you have. Obviously we get entrance into different spheres according to title but generic problem solving, advocacy and influence are pretty central to what I do. If you are driven by social justice and by a set of ethics and values irrespective of your role, you are just really applying those or exercising those things in a different dimension.*
The values evident in that discourse suggest that the profession is well able to interpret leadership with a distinctive social work identity. Matthew emphasises context of practice and what leaders do, not leadership status, in his understanding of the topic.

A number of participants expressed a common perspective, essentially proposing a social work leadership model composed of certain non-negotiable constituent elements. A fine example of that thinking is located in the notion that cultural identity informs social work leadership:

[Leadership culture] comes from advocates. It comes when decisions are being made about what we are going to offer in this service. There could be a [staffing] crisis, “We haven’t got enough people to run this group,” but [staff] will say “We have to run this group, this is important, this is people.” And it’s people who will challenge others. People like challenge. “Have you thought of doing this or offering that? Have you done everything you need to do?” (Bronwyn)

For Bronwyn, a social work leadership model will both contribute to, and draw from, a culture of challenge and advocacy, thus pointing to the next child node: advocacy, empowerment and vision. Challenging decisions or policies brings to mind the ethical mandate in the ANZASW Code to “challenge unjust structures” but which may be the subject of oral discussion more than action. Organisational resource allocation decisions are hardly ethical challenges to marginalising institutional forces; but the attitude is similar.

On that note, we turn now to the second child node, advocacy, empowerment and vision.

8.3 Child node 8: Advocacy, empowerment and vision

Data analysis reveals three overarching categories: [1] Advocacy as a non-negotiable element in social work leadership; [2] Advocacy which is internal to organisational social work; and [3] Advocacy which is external to organisational social work. Each constituent is dealt with in turn.

Advocacy as a non-negotiable element in social work leadership

Advocacy and social work are seen as synonymous in this unequivocal statement:
Social work is advocacy. If you are not advocating I don’t see how you are doing a good job because most of the situations are ones where there are all sorts of issues that require advocacy. (Matthew)

Matthew understands advocacy as being woven into the fabric of leadership actions: it is a pre-requisite if we aspire to “do a good job.” The issue is not positions or people for whom social work leaders advocate: it is simply that advocacy is a day-to-day activity without which leadership is disempowered and partially unrecognisable. Matthew believes that social work leaders have “an obligation to pursue the best possible deal for the client.” Obligation is a compelling expression.

This informant saw advocacy as a social-work-specific term originating from the profession’s tertiary training:

The evidence is in social work training. We’re taught to advocate, to help people be self-empowered. It is a social work trait and really useful one for leadership. I think it is a specific social work skill. It’s what makes social work different than other professions. (Elizabeth)

Internal advocacy

A number of participants saw advocacy’s contribution to leadership as ethically mandated, requiring self-confidence and the need to challenge workers. This informant consciously uses advocacy to set out expectations of good social work practice by her team members:

Absolutely I put the challenges out there. Absolutely. I’m a challenger. I challenge bad practice. I have very little time for incompetence. So leadership is about challenging. (Patricia)

Advocacy, as Patricia describes it, presents as rigorous, demanding, to be viewed as a non-negotiable commitment to professional knowledge, skills and leadership. Patricia is arguably suggesting that, without the challenging function, leadership is illegitimate. An example of challenging unethical behaviour is well illustrated by this exchange:

I heard [a worker] yelling at the client and I jumped up and [said] “Hey you can’t yell at clients.” That person became offended that I’d raised my voice. So we had a conflict
resolution meeting a week later [when the worker] felt that as a manager I’d embarrassed her. I said “Fair enough, I apologise for that.” (Deborah)

Deborah interprets advocacy in this instance as a leadership action: “pointing out things that are wrong.” For her, leadership in the “immediate organisational context” is “about being an agent of change.” For Deborah, engaging in advocacy is to expect change, a characteristic of leadership.

A second aspect of internal advocacy is to empower workers by giving them a voice. By consciously empowering them, leaders motivated practitioners:

If frontline experience isn’t being heard [workers] can become frustrated and not be effective in their practice. Because if people don’t feel heard they are less likely to get on board with your vision or get on board with anything. (Deborah)

This participant understood the same dynamic of team empowerment resulting in a remarkable organisational achievement:

The whole team [participates in strategic planning]. I facilitated the team around brainstorming and work shopping how we could increase our targets. That was a couple of years ago. They came up with ideas of how. We all did heaps of work. By the end of the [current] year we’re actually an FTE short because we’d peaked at 200% of our contract expectations. (Louisa)

Louisa appreciated the underpinning contributors to that outcome:

If people don’t have a voice in [the] direction of their work or choices they end up feeling disgruntled and bitching behind the leader. They find somebody else to [understand] their position to get support. And then you get a fractious team.

Enabling frontline workers to express their perspective is to apply social work’s commitment to giving a voice to the voiceless.

External advocacy: Advocacy on behalf of marginalised populations in the community (expressing social justice)

Speaking on behalf of marginalised populations as an expression of social justice is arguably the common understanding of advocacy by the profession and public alike. This perception
was well represented among participants. There were some nuanced expressions of underlying motivators.

This participant’s motivation for advocacy and social justice is likely the most widely held view in the profession:

> I’ve got a strong sense of social justice. *I will do everything within my power to make sure that people get what they are entitled to.* [Pause] I feel strongly about discrimination, that *I will do what I can to rectify it.* [Pause] Social work is about representing the underdog, *giving those marginalised people a voice.* Maybe my *personality* [as] a rescuer has a bit to do with it, seeing all those people standing outside the Salvation Army in Queen Street queueing up for food parcels. There was a woman with this baby who looked about six months had been there since 3 [am] queueing for this food parcel to get through this holiday period. *I just wanted to go and fix it all.* (Kate)

Although the authenticity is tangible, Kate’s self-description as a rescuer is arguably the key to her perception of social work and its leadership. Practical action to “fix it all” may include systemic advocacy aimed at societal structures which cause or contribute to the queues outside the Salvation Army, but one suspects not. For that systemic understanding we turn to this statement:

> Social work is about being an agent of change. Social work leadership needs to be talking on behalf of vulnerable people to ensure that there is *systemic change to create better opportunities for them.* Leader[s] need to [scan] the horizon and [fill] those gaps to *generate the change* that needs to happen. (Deborah)

Deborah addresses the essence of systemic advocacy in this insightful statement:

> *If we’re not changing things at other levels we just keep coming up against the same barriers.*

Using another metaphor, one might argue that if social work leaders do not direct their attention to the spider, the web will keep appearing. A sense of futility ensues; or in Deborah’s words, “it becomes very frustrating for staff to keep coming up against the same barriers.” Advocacy must be strategic, purposeful and planned.
The final section addresses a perspective of increasing relevance: the function of social work leadership in multidisciplinary settings, commonly health providers.

**Advocacy for the profession, especially in multidisciplinary contexts**

Of all the statements by participants, this “ambassador” metaphor best captured advocacy for the profession:

> So here I am in front of all these staff as a social worker delivering [the training]. *I am being an ambassador.* It’s putting us on the map in a different way than day to day clinical practice. *In health settings there are limited opportunities for social workers to develop formal leadership roles and maintain the social work identity.* (Margaret)

The *Encarta Dictionary* defines “ambassador” as an “official of the highest rank sent by one country as its long-term representative to another.” Alternatively, an ambassador is “somebody regarded as an unofficial representative or a symbol of something.” Margaret is not officially designated as social work’s ambassador; but in her own mind and by virtue of her status as an accredited trainer for a range of health professionals including psychiatrists she has seized the opportunity to project social work’s professional status:

> Because of my social work background *I always include domestic violence and care and protection scenarios.* I am explicit. I say to the group “I am a social worker [and] this scenario include[s] care and protection. I want to see how you would respond to that.”

*[So you put it out there].* Yeah. *Everybody knows* [both laughing].

Self-efficacy is a key attribute to Margaret’s capacity to act as an ambassador which also draws from her own identity:

> My female partner and I are often the only lesbian couple at social events. “Here we go, ambassadors for the sisterhood. Let’s be ordinary and approachable and warm and friendly because that is what we are anyway.”

Personal identity and professional role make up a strong combination. Indeed, Margaret’s self-portrayal as social work’s ambassador to the more prestigious medical profession is reminiscent of the first child node represented in the roots of leadership: identity and integrity. She has asked the question: “Who am I?” The answer: A symbol of the social work profession. It is entirely conceivable that imminent mandatory registration towards which we
have been working for some twenty years will enable social workers like Margaret to become more than symbols, but social work’s ambassadors in reality: fully recognised official representatives.

Advocacy requires specialised communication skills. It is therefore appropriate that the next section reports findings on two child nodes dealing with communication. The common denominator of communication falls into two spheres. For economy of space, both nodes are collapsed into a single section.

8.4 Child nodes

Node 9: Communication: Networking, relationships, dialogues, stories

Node 12: Communication and thought leadership: Politics and government

Encarta’s definition of communication (“the exchange of information between people, e.g. by means of speaking, writing, or using a common system of signs or behaviour”) is shared by the two nodes we are now exploring. The difference is located not in the mechanics of speech or other mode but in the context and purpose of the communication process (“exchange of information.”) Communication skills are critical to leadership.

Mutual understanding stands at the heart of the communication loop. No effective exchange can occur if even one party in a group is unable to grasp the words of another. This participant put herself in the place of the communicator:

Gauge your audience and see who you are talking to. Don’t use academic words because it is just going over [their] heads. You have to speak their language so that they understand where [the speaker is] coming from. (Natasha)

Storytelling is a frequent theme in the participants’ discourse. One of our chief executives set out her understanding of the power of such narratives in a wider context:

[The] whakapapa [Māori genealogy] of the organisation and the stories help keep it alive. Sharing of stories is very much how we roll around here. We take lots of time to do that stuff, connecting, bring that reflectiveness into every level of the organisation. (Judith)

These further interactions with Judith emphasised the value of storytelling:
Q. So you're a storyteller?] Absolutely. And our organisation is story based. We keep that alive by continuing to provide those opportunities.

The content of those stories is rich and are the result of conscious planning as a leadership skill:

I love developing reflective training sessions. Last year and again this year I made up these posters with lots of stories, hung them around the walls [and] got people to see them. We bring people from the past to tell stories [from the] time when they were at [name of agency]. Recently we had a reflection morning on Martin Luther King Junior and his “I Have a Dream” speech and we started talking about that. It was just so powerful. (Judith)

These events serve to connect the workers with each other and with the significance of their day-to-day tasks. Judith recalled the impact of the “I Have a Dream” speech as “the richness of what [was] coming out” reflected in the staff writing and asking questions. She continues:

They talk about their experiences. “What is something great that you have done this week?” “Oh I did this or I did this.” The amazing work that they are doing, the amazing self-discovery as well makes you realise that it is all worth it.

The power of stories as contributing to a common purpose hardly needs comment. A similar account emerged in this discussion of the importance of communication in the context of staff care and client risk of self-harm:

The other side of [staff care and client risk] is ensuring that each member of the team feels happy at work and [is] getting a sense of fulfilment from their work. Also that the whole team is working in a way that’s cohesive and the communication’s flowing well and there’s no conflict, in-fighting or whatever. So I want the clients to be supported, I want the team to be supported. (Louisa)

Although Louisa did not use the terms “story” or “storytelling,” a sense of the collective culture-building to which communications contributed is evident in her discourse on that theme. Louisa has a “background of believing in a sense of community.” She continues:
There is a team culture that I’m mindful of. People spend most of their waking life in the workplace so they need to feel it’s part of their community. [Pause] Not everybody feels like that. [Q. What makes a community team culture?] Openness, honesty and transparency. The ability to talk to each other, communicate, listen, debrief with each other. The level of interaction [is] quite high. When I started [this team] didn’t talk to each other and now they do.

Louisa’s account is not dissimilar to Judith’s: conscious leadership planning to engender communication for mutual benefit. It became apparent during the two interviews with Louisa that her leadership style facilitated effective communication. Her leadership ability to which communication skills contribute was also in evidence in the earlier transcript quote recounting how her team doubled contracted outputs through collaborative brainstorming.

This participant’s leadership practice includes “narrative therapy [as] informs my practice with clients [and] staff” (Wendy). Helping staff members to tell their story gives them opportunity to discover their own values; if necessary re-cast their own identity and apply their identity and values in the workplace. Wendy sees this model as “working [and] leading alongside staff”: a strengths-based or appreciative enquiry approach.

As chief executive of a large NGO with 300 staff, this participant offers a holistic, structured discourse on his communication style and strategy. This strategy harnesses a management framework to ensure consistency. Although for that reason spontaneity does not appear to be a feature, there is space for individual staff members at whatever level to access him:

We have a protocol that anyone can come to me about anything. [It might be] a problem or an issue. I will simply encourage them to take it back to their manager. Sometimes people are just telling me about something interesting with a client or something that they are doing that they think should be more widely publicised. Other times there is a particular pressure [about which] they want some understanding.

(Matthew)

The communication strategy engages Matthew with his key internal stakeholders: “senior [and] regional managers by way of an executive management team meeting once a month.” In addition, he “would normally be in contact with each member of that management team on a face to face basis. The regularity varies depending on the people and situations but I
have a lot of interaction with those people, either in face, by phone or by email.” In effect, this group is Matthew’s team.

Matthew regularly attends site meetings to interact with a “group of staff and have conversations about strategic issues [and] also hear about what is going on the ground.” In addition, “because I’ve been here a while now I have built relationships with some particular staff who will quite frequently [he chuckles] contact me or I will see them. So I have that less formal network that I will tap into or they will tap into me” [laughs]. The final face-to-face interaction is to “meet regularly with the health and safety reps.” The range and identity of these stakeholders is what one would expect.

Written communication uses “an in-house newsletter [issued] 4 times a year.” Matthew “always use[s] that to get particular messages across” and for the senior management team to respond, for example, to generic patterns in comments from the annual staff survey. Responses numbered 130 or 140 (mid 40s %). The focus of the staff survey is whether “the staff think the organisation is living its values.” Efforts are being made to increase the response rate.

As chief executive, Matthew’s performance is reviewed by the agency’s Board every year using a formal 360° review. He sets out the process:

All the managers that report to me get offered a questionnaire about my performance. A group of 6 or 8 staff and two or three external people who work with me on a regular basis [are] offered opportunity to provide input into that process, plus the board members themselves. Something like 30 questionnaires [are] sent out by [a] consultant each year on behalf of the board.

The Board focuses on “what they see as critical areas” as well as “leadership and the effectiveness of my management.” As a registered social worker, Matthew employs a “critically reflective approach” by which he means “self-monitoring and being alert to situations” when he is “not performing as well as I think I should be [chuckles].”

Underpinning these processes is a clear set of values. Matthew sees these as “the how” of having:
Effective and respectful relationships and then getting agreement [or a] transparent understanding about what we are working together on. A lot of the how is about making the relationship work in an okay way. It’s no different to working with a client.

At an organisational level we say those four outcomes are what we want to achieve.

The social work values are readily apparent. The “four outcomes” are: enhanced quality of life; better social connection; improved social functioning; responsive systems at an organisational and political level. Commitment to these values represents the holistic approach noted at the introductory comments to Matthew’s discourse. The systems thinking used is consistent with the profession’s principles; and outcomes identify the process as applying social work values to an organisation.

Storytelling is a transcultural phenomenon. In addition to Louisa, Wendy and Judith’s explicit references to stories as a communication tool to create a collaborative culture, Matthew’s protocol which allows any staff member to see him in effect enables workers to tell the chief executive their own story. In this way we note that the social work value of giving a voice to the voiceless has been harnessed for organisational wellbeing—a theme which will reappear in Chapter 10.

We now turn to external communications in the sixth child node (Communication and thought leadership: Politics and government). Engaging in the political process by social work leaders is not a common pursuit. Findings revealed that the organisational location of participants is arguably the prime determinant of their ability to voice an opinion. The relatively few references—in relation to other nodes—in this theme also carry another message. If social work wishes to challenge the structures that marginalise populations and communities, it will not be achieved through frontline practice with those communities. Political activity which addresses policy, legislation and resource allocation is needed. The paucity of attention given to this endeavour may be part of the current somewhat directionless state of the profession in Aotearoa New Zealand. Empowering individuals and communities may amount to nothing more than Kate’s efforts to “rescue” them; but the spider keeps spinning a metaphorical, marginalising web. With these thoughts in mind, we turn to the findings.
As this social work leader engaged with government on issues that affect her agency's workforce in, staff morale lifts. Concern for young people in care and the age (17) at which support is withdrawn motivated this participant to develop a collaborative, agency-based group to engage in lobbying at the parliamentary and governmental levels:

We have been lobbying parliament and government and Child Youth and Family. As a team it has been quite inspirational. They are feeling part of a bigger picture [which] can help that day-to-day grind. Dealing with the bigger mechanisms that could make a shift gives them more hope or inspiration. (Deborah)

Deborah’s strategy was multifaceted. Seminar and conference, including international level, presentations on “the issues and gaps that young people face” have also targeted “lawyers and judges on what counsel for child can do to advocate for the needs of the young person and the type of gaps [that exist].” Deborah also met with the then Minister of Social Development “and discussed the gaps and requested housing provision for this group of care leavers.” A petition was created. “Postcards [have been sent] to the new Minister saying [that current provision] is not good enough.” A media company’s offer of production support was accepted.

The lobbying was not confined to children in care. Raising the age of criminal liability as set out in the UN Convention of Rights for the Child (UNCROC) from the current 17 in New Zealand, to 18, was also the subject of lobbying the Minister. Deborah recounted that “we have had meetings with the Children’s Commissioner and an Auckland University Law School [academic].” Submissions to a parliamentary select committee included taking an “incredible young person to talk to this.” Out of these initiatives “we have been quoted in parliamentary debate.”

The energy which characterised the interviews with Deborah in relation to the lobbying campaign was not always reflected in other interactions. This participant’s discourse on the ANZASW’s 50th anniversary conference in 2014 represented an alternative view:

One of the big themes that kept coming through was about social justice, community development, social action alongside the work with individuals and families. But actually latterly we’ve dropped the ball as a profession. (Margaret)
Margaret based her judgment on comments from a “younger social worker, the leader [of] the Social Worker Action Network [who] was talking about the difficulty of getting people who trained at a similar time as her to think about social justice, political action.” Margaret also commented on a lack of social work participation at a protest march against the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement: “I felt somehow we are really letting our social work professional identity down.” She did acknowledge a subjective element: “I might be seen as going wrong, you know, ageing wannabe socialist.”

As noted, organisational location is a key factor in participants’ ability to actively engage in political communication. This senior policy advisor referred to “thought leadership” or “thought leaders” (Paula) on 14 occasions in her transcript. The recipients of Paula’s policy advice have included the relevant Minister, chief executives and senior managers. Her public service status removes her from the political advocacy to which Deborah and Margaret referred; but her identity as a registered social worker means that the voice of the profession is heard by default in the political arena. What comprises the content of that voice?

Paula defines thought leadership as both content and process-based. Content may come from expertise: “You know something in such depth that you are an expert so can provide really sound advice [and] analysis about how to make something different.” Thought leadership is useful to “pitch new ideas, analyse what has happened before, analyse what is happening currently, [and] have a view about what is happening internationally.” But relationship building and internal politics are also thought leadership:

You can be a thought leader in regards to process. I had a colleague who was an absolute gem at understanding interoffice relationships worked and [was] able to massage a project through the right people at the right time and not get stuck at barriers. Thought leadership is about getting to the end goal.

This contribution put a metaphorical finger on a central reality issue:

In my experience there is a lot more weight on what the social worker is doing with the person that on how they then translate that into political action. I think social workers will often think about the political [but] won’t do much about it because they are simply too busy dealing with the here and now. (Matthew)
That reality will simply result in constantly encountering barriers reported earlier and the consequent frustration experienced by workers: “Staff just keep coming up against the same barriers, things that are holding these young people back.” Addressing that frustration is an “important leadership issue” (Deborah).

These realities do not prevent a commitment to addressing social injustice as the primary purpose of political engagement. From his CEO perspective, Matthew set out a clear value statement:

You [as CEO of an NGO] challenge injustice, you challenge unfairness and you always look for ways to create better opportunities for marginalised people. (Matthew)

That commitment is tempered in Matthew’s pragmatic view that social work leaders should not “just bag [e.g.] Work and Income because of how they are doing things.” His strategic and indeed wise thinking appropriately sums up this node:

You need to [maintain] constructive relationships with officials and politicians of all persuasions in a way that enables you to say the things that need to be said when they need to be said. That is when I think about integrity: if you have an issue around how the system is working you look for the right opportunities to voice that concern where possible with a solution not just a criticism. You keep providing them with ideas about the way it could be improved. That in my mind is the critical thing. As an NGO you have got more freedom about the tracks you can take. (Matthew)

8.5 Child node 10: The use of power and authority

Few themes in this project test the commitment to empowering, ethical and socially just leadership more than the use of power and authority. Coming to terms with the generally accepted understanding that leaders and managers in any professional field are obligated to exercise positional power is an ongoing issue for social work leaders. Managing the polarity between empowerment and control at opposite ends of a continuum is to develop a situational ethical response to social work’s coercive agent of the state conundrum. How participants have addressed this perennially thorny issue—including the management of risk—is the subject to be explored in this node.
Two spheres are under consideration: practice in the field and organisational leadership. We deal with field practice first.

Statutory child protection is arguably the pre-eminent practice domain in which risk management and the use of legislatively based power and authority come together in the minds of both the public and the profession. A representative perspective on the “cold hard face of social work” (Natasha) captures that reality, commenting on social workers in Child Youth and Family as “the ones who go into the house, ask the hard questions, get the information to determine whether that child or those children are safe with those parents or in that family.” Those questions are the basis of consultation, checks and court affidavits alleging risk. “We work under an Act that enables us to do that.”

Natasha’s rationale for that “cold hard” reality derives from the NPM-mandated “measurements and accountability.” The accountability measurements are KPIs by which “[our] perform[ance] as a site” is measured. In a telling phrase she adds that the “hierarchy within a very structured environment is good; it is needed.” That statement may be interpreted as [1] relief: policy exists subject to checks by senior management; I am part of that hierarchy which in itself is morally good and necessary; but alternatively, [2] it is not my responsibility to weigh the ethical dilemmas associated, for example, with current concerns that children in care are subject to further abuse. Herein is the heart of the conundrum. Accentuating the dilemma is Natasha’s comment that “frontline social workers have so many things to complete within timeframes.” Deadlines may be externally generated, such as court sitting dates, or created by internal management reporting requirements.

Encounters with hard facts are the reality check in Natasha’s exercise of leadership: “there are always children coming through our doors. We work with the family [but] can’t identify any safe person so have no choice but to bring these kids into care.” In dealing with those nuts and bolts issues, Natasha transparently acknowledged the temptation to retreat from looking at data: “Sometimes you don’t want to sit in front of a computer all day long checking your team’s work. Because that is what a supervisor does.” The use of power and authority may be reduced to mechanically scanning computer files.

Natasha would prefer to “congratulate the people who constantly do good work and are getting good feedback,” a recognition that power can be used to affirm excellence in practice.
Affirmation, empowerment, and recognition are presented in that comment as social work’s default value, giving rise to trust. Natasha’s preferred work environment is expressed in these terms:

The site manager knows me. My supervisor knows me. They know how I work [and] *they trust me*. I love it. I don’t feel someone is watching me. I can just focus on what I need to get done. *I think people thrive under that rather than being policed all the time.*

This reflection appropriately sums up this aspect of power and authority:

> *Being able to* [lead] *without needing to enforce authority is really important.* You come from an organisation [with] statutory power. You walk into [a] home and you *can hold that power very lightly.* You don’t feel you have to wield it. When I most feel I need to assert my authority are probably those moments when I most need to *step back and reflect and think.* What is playing out here? Am I just feeling my leadership and my decision making is being challenged? I [ask] myself: “What is driving this behaviour that I am seeing?” (Judith)

Judith’s nuanced treatment of power and authority is an example of insight and professional wisdom. It applies ethical empowering and authentic leadership. Reflective practice as a hallmark of professionalism is true of any field; but it applies particularly to social work.

The last few paragraphs lead almost imperceptibly into a consideration of organisational leadership. This is to be expected. The purpose of leading social workers is to add value to their work with service recipients, the “moment of truth” to which reference was made in introducing this chapter. The evidence of leadership quality is located in such interactions.

Typically thoughtful comments by this participant on the use of organisational power and authority serve to introduce a second representative view of this node. Leading staff and service delivery go hand in hand, endorsed in this interaction:

> [Q. Are you saying that leadership has got a lot to do with the practice context?] I think *it has got everything to do with it.* (Alan)
Leadership actions in the practice context need to address such risk management issues as child protection to which Natasha referred. Alan’s discourse explores the leader as an encourager and also as a risk taker by way of a “really good leadership model.” That model is that of a leader who “can recognise and show real confidence in their staff” while acknowledging what he describes as “knife edge stuff” in relation to risk. Alan acknowledges that “we are all worried about whether [a social worker’s practice] goes well or not.” When in his practitioner days Alan’s manager expressed recognition and confidence in him “I [was] much happier and able to do much better work.”

As a leader, Alan’s risk assessment strategy in the context of recognising and showing confidence in his team takes a global approach which is bounded by reality factors. He contrasts managers “who would play it by the book, get all the [KPIs] ticked off [to] look good on paper” against a set of transactional management questions:

Have they really helped their clients? Have they looked at the possibilities that might make some worthwhile change for them? Have they in fact done anything other than put rubber stamps on everything and so rather than [being] leaders they just tick things? A leader is a person prepared to take calculated risks based on good judgment because the good leader has sound judgment, sound networking and other skills [and is] aware of the issues. They don’t go in blind.

Alan illustrated his leadership strategy through two scenarios. When “called to account” by the agency’s executive senior social worker who challenged his judgment over a staff member’s case management, Alan responded by setting out his leadership model:

I believe in what [my staff member] is doing. I’m backing him. We’ve got good evidence to support this particular action [with the client] and with all due respect your knowledge of this is some months old. You are not up with the play with what has been happening.

The immediate aftermath included being “threatened” by “having [unspecified] things removed from me.” Alan reiterated his endorsement of the social worker, but in a balanced statement which acknowledged the risk factors:
I stand by my social worker. *He has got to know that I will stand always [with] him.* He keeps me informed. *Yes we have been taking some risk[s] but I believe that we will get more changed behaviour [from the client] than has been achieved in some months.*

Alan’s leadership philosophy in terms of exercising authority is not dissimilar to Judith’s notion of “holding power lightly” but with two-way accountability: to his staff member and to his own manager. Alan also illustrated his leadership model through another instance relating to “a social worker [who] was basically dead in [the] water [who] nobody could manage.” Alan employed empathy: “This guy is not unlike me. He is not necessarily burnt out but he is bored, he has been manipulated, he has been kicked here and there and basically had lost the ability to give a damn and extend himself.”

That insight led Alan to a conclusion: “I knew he had it in him.” That belief started a process by which Alan “backed him and backed his decision.” Therein lay the calculated risk:

> I was thinking, “You had better get it right, or my backside is on the line here.” But the beauty about it was that when he actually saw that people did start to believe in him, did give him the chance to be creative, he blossomed. Every one of the three original social workers I had in my team all became supervisors in their own right.

These discourses suggest that social work leadership can exercise its organisational authority in a process which is compatible with the profession’s commitment to empowerment. The key issue appears to be the leader’s belief that workers are competent to confidently engage in the social work task. From that underpinning value base, leaders are able to constructively use power and authority in respect of risk management. To quote Alan again, “[We] don’t go in blind.” Realism is not incompatible with aspirational expectations.

On that note we appropriately turn to the last action: how leaders mobilise and motivate their staff to achieve desired outcomes.

### 8.6 Child node 11: Mobilisation, motivation and outcomes

This universal leadership task is defined in table 8 in the following terms:
Leadership identifies workers’ abilities and motivates them to achieve desired organisational and professional outcomes by placing them in appropriate positions and celebrating success.

Findings reveal 115 references which through NVivo analysis were summarised under 10 headings. The framework by which they are presented starts with overarching leadership functions and works its way down to the contributions individuals make for common objectives—from “global to local” (Table 8.3). Representative transcript extracts provide key perspectives from participants.

The notion of quality of life (QOL) as noted under “strategic planning and leadership” is expressed as wellbeing, arguably carrying a person-in-society inference (Jarvis, 2009.) Jarvis is admittedly not a social worker; but social work has long borrowed from other disciplines in constructing its own identity. I suggest that QOL and wellbeing are essentially social work ideas. Schalock, Bonham and Verdugo (2008) propose a QOL conceptual model as comprising three factors: independence, social participation and wellbeing. Indicators of independence include the ability of clients to make autonomous choices and decisions. Indicators of social participation include social interactions and relationships; community participation; and human rights of dignity, respect and equality. Wellbeing is located in three domains: emotional, physical and material wellbeing (Schalock et al, 2008, p.182.) These indicators and domains express to a greater or lesser extent social work values.

So, leadership actions designed to mobilise and motivate practitioners to achieve outcomes of wellbeing offer a social work characteristic in the lives of clients with whom practitioners engage. The purpose of leadership is a prime indicator of its professional location.
### Table 8.3
Global to Local: Mobilisation, Motivation and Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Strategic planning and leadership: integrating systems for outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Matthew) Four main outcomes for everyone that we work with:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Enhanced quality of life: safety wellbeing or security.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Better social connection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Improved social function: skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Responsive systems: satisfaction with the worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values of organisation: connectedness, cohesion, capability and coping, sustainability and creativity and hope</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Developing a vision for mobilisation: “bigger picture”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Deborah) If people don’t feel heard they are less likely to get on board with your vision or get on board with anything.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Judith) The people that come to [our] organisation want a[n] aspirational vision: “We are achieving something and it has meaning and purpose. Even when the work is hard, even when it costs me something you know there is a purpose in it.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. Function of leadership: creating followers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Judith) Do I really believe that I am the leader of this agency? And if I truly believe that I’m leading this agency and responsible for the achievement of an aspirational vision and I need to have a team that follows and we are all going to achieve that vision.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. Growing people and building relationships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Ann) If someone asked me the thing that I enjoyed the most about my job I would say it is the watching people grow and being able to feel like I might have contributed to that in some way.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5. Organisational opportunities for professional upskilling and advancement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Kate) I’m blown away with what [my workplace] offers: education, opportunities to up-skill, to lead if you want to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Bronwyn) I have had three years of postgraduate study fully funded. I have been so well supported.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6. Team building for mutual connection and building confidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Alan) If I had any social worker on my team that I didn’t [believe] in I don’t know how we could have functioned as a unit. They all had different personalities, different abilities, some I am never going to change but there is usually some familiar chord that you can strike to motivate change. It was about building a team with these eclectic personalities that was important to me.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7. Playing to strengths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Kate) I really enjoy the project work. It’s really floating my boat. I like being extended.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Natasha) Management and leadership give [staff] opportunities to work in areas that they have strengths in [and] being open with them about opportunities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. **Excellence and challenge**

(Jenny) We will be excellent at a few things and good at everything else. But you can change your points of excellence along the way.

(Alan) “I know what you [staff member] are capable of,” which shocked him that I had bothered to do that homework. I said “Well, why can’t we go there?” So we worked it through. Nobody ever thanked me but when he was promoted I saw something that we did together along the journey.

9. **The importance of feedback**

(Cheryl) Feedback can reinforce the positives that you want from your team. It can help them to feel valued because you are noticing good things about them. Providing feedback on areas of development allows that person the opportunity for growth. Sometimes people just don’t have an awareness of themselves and so if nobody ever says anything then how will they ever know?

10. **Celebrating milestones: people are valuable**

(Cheryl) [We] celebrate staff members just graduated from university.

(Elizabeth) Who I am, where I come from [and] what I believe in. But also understanding and seeing other people [and what they have to contribute] as really valuable.
Chapter 9
Findings: Contexts of leadership

9.1 Introduction

Leadership actions influence the environment in which those actions are exercised. Equally, if not to a greater extent, leadership actions are themselves influenced by those environments. In the metaphor of a living plant used in this research, the earth in which leadership actions take place is not to be equated with worldview or values which underpin leadership. For the purposes of this chapter, those environments are the organisational management structures and the location in which organisations are placed: the state sector; NGOs; or multidisciplinary entities—which may fall either in the state or NGO contexts—and are likely to contain two or more professions.

To define “leadership actions” recourse is made to Chapter 2 where leadership was seen as:

- Requiring communication skills to influence people to achieve desired objectives;
- Purposeful action; motivating; conflict resolution; managing change; selecting, training and developing people and so on (Mackenzie, 1969, pp. 81-86). Leadership as the exercise of influence and power creates or changes the culture of the organisation. Organisational culture is pre-eminently created by people rather than things. Leadership actions therefore fit naturally into that domain.

Using a metaphor once again, findings suggest that the environments in which leadership functions act as the banks of a river. The water represents leadership values explored in Chapter 7. In large measure, the underpinning values are not in themselves affected by the banks of the river; but the banks certainly influence the way in which leadership actions are executed. The river still finds its way to the sea, but may meander in its journey. How participants saw influences that produced that meandering is the subject of Chapter 10.

Table 9.1 sets out parent node III and its three child nodes as informed by data analysis. Table 9.2 provides quantitative data which is graphically presented in Figure 9.1. Initial intentions, following the format in previous chapters, were to report findings using the parent node and three child nodes. This approach proved unrealistic. Although participants had identified all four categories it became clear that their discourse was so intertwined that separation into
four sections for the purpose of writing would have created artificial silos in the narrative. That narrative will contain references to all four nodes; but following social work’s characteristic interconnected systemic thinking, the diversity in this overarching category will be presented as a composite picture.

Viewed as a component of the global picture emerging from the project, the contexts in which social work leadership is located constituted 21% of all references. Once again, the notion that theories arise from contexts applies here. Social work leadership has to take account of the environment in which it is exercised. Indeed, while still bearing in mind that quantitative data are not driving the project, the contexts identified are numerically not much fewer than leadership actions. Social work leaders are acutely aware of their surroundings.

Table 9.1
"Earth": Parent and Child Nodes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent node III: Context—“earth”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social work organisational leadership is influenced by and influences diverse organisational environments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Public sector influences**
  
  Social work leadership is influenced by traditional public administration—characterised by values of hierarchy, independence, and integrity, insulated from politicians and citizens—and new public management (NPM) based on public choice theory, principal-agent theory; transaction-cost economics; and new public management (including results based accountability) as informed by Taylor’s “scientific management.”

- **NGO sector**
  
  Social work leadership exercised in NGOs is influenced by the challenge of managing accountability to ‘multiple stakeholders’ (Tennant, 2007, p. 213) and principal-agent public sector contractual influences.

- **Multidisciplinary sector**
  
  Social work leadership exercised in multidisciplinary contexts—typically health-related—located in both the public and NGO sectors.
Table 9.2
Quantitative Breakdown of Participants and References in Earth Parent Node

III: Context—“earth”
Social work organisational leadership is influenced by and influences diverse organisational environments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Node</th>
<th>Number of participants who identified the node (N=23)</th>
<th>Numbers of references (N=954)</th>
<th>Percentage of total references (rounded)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent node III</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>52.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context—“earth”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child node 1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public sector influences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child node 2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multidisciplinary influences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child node 3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO influences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 9.1
Frequency of References for Context (“Earth”) Parent and Child Nodes (N=954)

Data analysis identified two overarching categories which offer a framework within which each node can be accommodated. The findings will therefore be reported using those two categories but will traverse comments from each node. The categories are:
1. Contextual influences on leadership actions; and
2. The influence of leadership actions on their contexts.

The rationale for the adoption of these two categories draws on two fields. The first is located in the methodology for the research. I draw the attention of the reader to this statement, quoted from Chapter 6:

The research question and objectives were designed by the author thus setting the parameters of the endeavour. Even within the interviews, probing or follow up questions were selected by the author. To a large extent they were based on comments made by participants, but that was not always the case as topics were introduced by the researcher.

The process described in that extract is what, in fact, shaped the design by which the findings in Chapter 9 are presented. The unfolding picture was also influenced by the steps described in Figure 6.4 which sets out the adaptation of Kvale’s (1996) approach to analysing interview data. In particular, these elements from steps 3 and 4 are relevant:

**Step 3**
Dialogue between researcher and participant continues until common understanding/interpretation reached in a “self-correcting” interview.

**Step 4**
Transcribed interview interpreted by researcher.

This process brings into view the second field by which findings relating to context (“earth”) have been structured: the statements by participants themselves. As noted above, the “intertwined discourse” which emerged from transcribed interview analysis precluded the presentation of findings in the format of parent and child nodes created by NVivo. The confluence of the two fields produced the outcome: the shaping of two categories which were in truth a sense-making exercise by the author.

The final element which shaped the presentation of findings was the creation of the author. Two questions in respect of each of the two categories applied a structure to each category by way of a closed, followed by an open, question. These questions in effect became sub-categories:
1. Does context influence leadership actions?

2. How does context influence leadership actions?

3. Do leadership actions influence the context?

4. How do leadership actions influence the context?

Consistent with the image of social work leadership as a plant, the biological term, symbiosis, applies to the two overarching categories and responses given by participants. The online Oxford dictionary defines the term as an “interaction between two different organisms living in close physical association, typically to the advantage of both.” Organisations (or organisms) are people who create the culture in which they work. We are about to discover how people interact with their environment in terms of their leadership actions.

### 9.2 Contextual influences on leadership actions

Initial exploration of findings address thinking by participants on the closed question: “Does context influence leadership actions?” With varying degrees of certainty, participants said “Yes.” One informant’s response to the question, “[Do] you place significance on social work leadership within the specific context of the work that you’re doing?” states:

Yes I guess so, well personally that’s the way I perceive it. (Kate)

Kate subsequently became more assertive. Her views on social work leadership as advocacy provoked a much stronger perspective which also drew on changes in her job title from community worker to social worker. Drawing on previous interactions, I asked Kate whether social work was somewhat marginalised in her organisational context. Her unequivocal response was: “Yes, yes, absolutely, absolutely.” She continued:

If we were trying to strongly advocate for our clients, we weren’t considered to have the authority to do that because we were community workers not social workers, in some instances, not always, but in some instances. Possibly the reason was that social workers are paid more than community workers.
Organisational policy as context certainly influenced job titles and professional recognition, even though Kate was a registered social worker. Her reaction and the change in job designation could arguably have been categorised as responses to question 3 or 4.

This informant offered a far more definitive response to a similar question: “Is leadership tied into the specific context in which you work?”

Yeah very much so. (Bronwyn)

The basis of that unequivocal statement may have been that the social workers in her workplace were constituted as a single team thus allowing a distinctive identity.

Contractual obligations as influencing social work leadership actions were a common theme. One of our two CEOs gave a representative perspective of this situation. Following a lengthy pause, she responded to the question, “How important is achievement in leadership?” in the context of government contracts:

I think it is really important but it has to be balanced. As an organisation we [have] take[n] up government contracts and we need to achieve, actually meet the requirements of those contracts [by] achieving targets and outcomes. (Judith)

As reported elsewhere, Judith has a strong, clear social work leadership philosophy; but that response tells a story of obligation which accompanies her day-to-day endeavours: “need to achieve, actually meet requirements, targets and outcomes” are evocative statements. The way in which targets were achieved reflected her social work beliefs, but the requirement to produce results is a familiar reality for social work leaders in the state sector as well as the NGO context.

This participant captured the dichotomy between the ethical obligations mandated by social work practice standards and “managerial leadership.” The evocative phrase, a “juggling act,” tells its own story as she responds to the wide ranging question, “What [do] you think about leadership?”

Like social work itself, it’s a bit of a balancing, juggling act. You’re obviously ethically obligated to perform in a certain way and on the managerial leadership side you have
to be much more business-minded, able to make decisions based on business models as opposed to social work models. (Wendy)

Wendy’s commitment to “ethical” behaviour appears to underpin her leadership actions, implying that the “business models” are accommodated within professional obligations. Problem-solving is not in view: managing polarities is required.

A number of participants defined the contextual influence on leadership actions as contingent on the personality and approaches to practice by the staff and managers in their workplaces. This perspective accorded priority to people rather than policy, and applied to state and NGO agencies in equal measure. Natasha attributes the extent of staff turnover—an indicator of workplace climate—to management. Contrasting her work site as enjoying “very low turnover” with others as “very high,” Natasha responded unequivocally to the question “Why do you think this site compared with other sites has got a lower turnover?” by stating: “Because we have got a good site manager [and a] “good PL [practice leader]; overall the supervisors have been here for a long time and none of them [are considering] moving. It’s a very stable office and therefore stable staff.”

Lynda addressed this issue by offering a perspective from both the state sector and NGOs drawn from her work history. She contrasted the two in a striking way by drawing attention to personal characteristics in NGO workforce membership:

I had the most wonderful work experience of my life although I didn’t earn near as much as I could [in the state sector] in terms of workplace satisfaction, the leadership, support of caring colleagues and in the workplace that really cared about people. That was my experience in the NGO sector. (Lynda)

Staff attitudes in Lynda’s NGO work history influenced organisational policy and practice. She recounted how the “passion [for] the work” meant that “the organisation was about innovation.” Workers were supported to follow their own professional career pathways and “be the best at the world” in their fields of practice “although they were constrained financially.”

Lynda’s quite different state sector experience was influenced by the people who occupied management and leadership positions:
In the state sector I worked with all manner of people who had to manage or lead because that was the job that they got promoted into because there was no one else at the time or they just happened to luck in within a bigger organisation. Some of those people should never have risen into those roles.

Although not stated explicitly, Lynda appears to be referring to promotion by virtue of length of service. In her mind, some of the managers or leaders were promoted to the level of their incompetence: “[They] should never have risen into those roles.” The outcome for Lynda was a perception that in “big bureaucracy there [were] a favoured few. There wasn’t enough resource to go around and there wasn’t always a sense [that resource allocation was] done fairly or equitably.”

The incongruity of bureaucracy as “favouring the few” led to a further interaction in which Lynda’s intriguing rationale for her observations became clear. In Lynda’s view, leaders and managers “need to pick out the people who may potentially give them the most grief for rewards or opportunities.” For Lynda, recognition of that group might be “way of keeping things stable,” perhaps a reference to giving staff perceived as dissenters or nonconformists leadership or management responsibilities. The purpose of that strategy was revealing:

They [unrecognised dissenters] wouldn’t have been mining for the gold. The gold was to be found by making sure that people who [are] potentially difficult were better rewarded.

The argument advanced was that nonconformists are, in fact, the practitioners who are “mining for gold,” perhaps representing the innovative practice that Lynda saw in the NGO sector. By rewarding them not only would the workplace become more stable—as noted by Natasha—but innovation would become part of the agency’s culture by virtue of recognising and promoting the innovators and pace-setters. It might also be argued that implementing such a strategy is to call the dissenters’ bluff: a potentially radical move which might introduce further organisational risks. The factors traversed in Lynda’s analysis illustrate the point being made in the preceding paragraphs: the influence on leadership actions is contingent on the personality and approaches to practice by the staff and managers in their workplaces thus according priority to people rather than policy. If personality and belief
systems ultimately exert more influence on leadership actions than policy, the leadership model in Chapter 10 needs to attend to that insight.

The second question asks: “How does context influence leadership actions?” Responses placed in the immediately preceding section demonstrate the challenges to data analysis in this chapter. Some of the comments could easily have been located in this second category.

Natasha identified another common theme: managing risk. She perceives risk management as affecting virtually every dimension of her work relationships:

   We deal with [risk management] every day. When we work with our clients, our families, our children; with other professionals; with our colleagues, our supervisors, our practice leader, our [site] manager.

Margaret’s job description requires her to deliver “mandatory” risk management training: specifically, “assessment and management of risk of suicide and interpersonal violence” to audiences which included medical professionals. The organisational mandate was clearly influential. Equally, in a response which could have appropriately been placed under responses to question 4, Margaret saw her training role as “advocating for social work and seeing social workers as able to deliver training.” This two-way dimension characterises the interconnectedness of findings in Chapter 9.

Wendy’s perspective on risk management was no less strong, but was couched from a different angle: public relations as organisational risk. She describes risk management for a social work leader as a “huge component” of the job; but it is instructive to note the basis of that judgment. In responding to a discussion-type question as to whether risk management is managerial or ethical, Wendy needed to consider her answer:

   I think firstly [pause, thinking] obviously [the] client’s welfare but I guess from a PR perspective nobody likes bad press.

It was within that context that Wendy mentioned the challenge of having to practise “juggling”:

   From a managerial, social work role it is a minefield of trying to keep everyone happy, keep within your practice. Yes, definitely, juggling.
Wendy’s use of “managerial” and “social work role” followed a brief discourse in which social work’s action role as “advocating for client rights” was balanced against her function “as a leader, as a manager.” That organisational leadership role provoked Wendy into thinking that “you don’t want [our agency] to be on the front page of the local papers and then everyone in the community thinks, this is a terrible organisation.” From a professional perspective, client welfare ostensibly takes priority, the prime concern on Wendy’s mind appears to be organisational risk.

Managing risk as a social work leader is contingent on the participant’s position and organisation. This informant, a senior policy advisor in a state sector head office, applied risk thinking to organisationally imposed deadlines and their potential impact on integrity in decision-making:

> Timeframes are important but integrity to make a good decision potentially is compromised. A frontline example is easy to explain but I think that concept goes up to that higher tier of senior leadership. (Paula)

Paula emphasised her point through two penetrating questions:

> Are we really considering the risk in driving to other people’s pressures? Are we going to undermine our integrity to the service that we are trying to provide?

Those questions arguably exemplify a social work leader’s commitment to ethical standards as a means of counteracting managerial practices—the banks on our metaphorical river. The reference to “driving to other people’s pressures,” perhaps more accurately rendered “being driven by other people’s expectations,” is a powerful evocation of how NPM has encroached on social work practice integrity.

Managing risk attracted diverse opinions. Patricia, a state sector frontline manager, described herself as “really hardnosed” in regard to risk management for young people of 14 years committing offences. Her assessment of risk takes place within the context of “business risk and safety plans.” Patricia expands her thinking by referring to a young person’s responsibility and “telling my [social work] staff to stop holding their hands.”

> If a kid can go across the city to commit a crime I’m not going to [pick] them up at 4 pm because they’ve got themselves in a situation. Kids [at] 14 [are] criminally liable,
they’re responsible and they have the ability to get themselves home so I’m really
hardnosed. And sometimes I tell my staff to stop holding their hand. When I look at
risk, business risk and safety plans, I tend to take risks when it comes to young people.
If they were vulnerable under 5s I’d be thinking quite differently. Some of [my team
say] “Come on,” and I said “No, you will not go and pick them up in the car. What are
we teaching them? Nothing.”

Such attitudes and staff directives present as the opposite of risk-averse thinking. Patricia
explained her rationale from a public finance perspective by integrating “value for dollar”
state sector policies into her leadership function as a registered social worker:

For me the spending of public finance is important. I’m scrupulous because we’re
always going over budget. I want to role model my staff around thinking twice before
spending the dollar. I always say, “Put a kid in care, you’re looking at three million
dollars. Think of three million dollars and then think of what other creative ways or
other family members could take responsibility and how we can support family which
costs a lot less and we stay within the principles of our own Act.”

The influence of budgetary constraint on Patricia’s leadership philosophy and actions was part
of a well-conceived rationale. In dealing with youth at offending risk, Patricia says that “I
honestly believe [that] the focus [should be to] spend less [public money] and make it a
community issue. Community need to deal with their own. I would prefer to see more public
finance in terms of health, education [as] the foremost.” Prioritisation of this type is not
driven by a balancing of the financial books mentality but on strategic thinking, part of which
is to engage in what Patricia describes as being “more creative.” Another aspect of her
thinking is to “focus on core business”:

80% of children and young people that stuff up generally don’t stuff up again. We
shouldn’t be spending money on them.

Patricia was the sole public sector participant whose leadership actions were influenced by
budget considerations. This was a pre-eminent example of context—in this instance, the state
sector—influencing leadership actions. Patricia’s case is fascinating because the influence of
context is actually in accord with her social work leadership thinking: to use a cliché, a “win-win” outcome.

Revisiting Natasha’s comments, another instance of contextual influence on leadership actions was evident in her observation that “environment matches talents and passion. You match natural talent and an area of interest” and a situation-specific context emerges in which potential leaders “have done [their] research, they ask thought provoking questions, [they] know what they are talking about” and in Natasha’s words, “Hello, all of a sudden who is leading who?” She concludes that people can emerge as leaders without formal designations.

The extent to which the organisational context allows autonomous leadership actions is another key finding. Kate defined “autonomy” in her multidisciplinary NGO setting as “having the liberty to find the site [for a new service delivery office], procure the office furniture, [and] get that delivered. I did it from scratch.” Kate added, “I was really passionate about that service working.” Delegation of nuts and bolts decisions on necessary actions, combined with a professional commitment to see a new service established plainly motivated her. The liberty to make project management decisions and delegation as a conscious policy is a powerful contextual influence on leadership actions.

Enabling opportunities for staff development into leadership positions described above was evident in another context that Kate recounted: “We can put our hands up within [the] strategic plan [for] new roles.” Kate described a specific scenario:

One of my colleagues is working on a project reviewing [a particular] programme, how that can be developed. She’s doing a business management diploma [and] integrating that learning with the project. [At the same time] there’s going to be a new position created for a 0.2 allied health clinical leadership role. We’ve all been invited to think about applying.

The opportunity to review programmes as a project to advance tertiary study—and simultaneously invite applications for a leadership role—illustrates an organisational context which certainly influences leadership actions. Using the river metaphor, this is to widen the banks to increase the agency’s capacity to grow by internal promotion. The carrot of advancement in terms of knowledge, skills and openings for leadership creatively influences
the actions of workers. This stands in contrast to the pressure imposed by timeframe deadlines on staff recounted by Paula, our policy advisor.

A final aspect of this section addresses the broad considerations attached to hierarchical levels as influencing leadership actions. Although arguably a variation on the findings relating to delegation, there are distinctions which warrant separate treatment.

Bronwyn’s discourse started from the familiar systems approach: “What are the systems in your context through which leadership is exercised?” Her response expressed an orthodox perspective:

We have a senior social worker, a senior clinical social worker and we as a group meet once a week and talk about any issues or whatever is happening. And then beyond this service the organisation then does the same. [Q. “A hierarchy?”] Oh absolutely yeah.

For this state sector multidisciplinary practitioner of over 20 years’ standing, organisational hierarchy was the primary influence on the social work team and in the wider organisation. In Bronwyn’s thinking, “We [the social workers] need leadership to validate our perspective because in this organisation there is a hierarchy.” Recognition of professional practice needs validation afforded by hierarchical leadership. In this view, professional bureaucracy is alive and well.

A different perspective occasionally emerged from some of the NGO-based social work leaders in responding to the question, “How is social work leadership influenced by the organisational level at which it is located?” Kate’s understanding was a reflection of conventional “career path framework” thinking:

I guess it’s initiated by conversations formally or informally where Allied Health as a collective body or the individual disciplines [express] a desire [for] a career path framework or make changes within their own discipline or collectively as an allied health body which is what we have been working on this year.

“Conversations” can be formal or informal; address for example social work as a single discipline in allied health, or open up an interdisciplinary career pathway. This latter understanding is becoming increasing relevant as the employment of social workers in the
health sector grows, and social workers find themselves managing, for example, occupational therapists or indeed the reverse.

Although conventional thinking in regard to hierarchically based leadership actions might still be the norm, Deborah’s advocacy initiatives as reported in Chapter 8 present a new perspective. As a mid-level NGO manager, Deborah attended an extra-organisational leadership course which in her words attracted “high flying leaders from all over New Zealand from different companies.” Conversations with a media company leader led to the production of a video as part of the campaign to raise the age of adult accountability in Aotearoa New Zealand from 17 to 18. The organisational outcomes Deborah reported were remarkable:

I was leading these initiatives myself. However the management team members are amazing here and have gotten behind [the campaign]. We have built it into our 5 year plan so it’s become an organisational focus now, [a] priority.

As a member of the senior management team in a mid-sized NGO, Deborah was arguably in a favourable position to influence the organisation through her leadership initiatives. It is nonetheless noteworthy that her colleagues, including the chief executive, endorsed Deborah’s approach and incorporated her initiative into formal planning documentation.

Deborah’s story appropriately concludes this section of the chapter. As a final observation, her account aptly illustrates symbiotic relationships noted earlier. People in the context in which Deborah exercised leadership—her senior management team—enabled her actions by allowing latitude; but without her actions the policy adopted by the organisation may not have eventuated. There are no neat silos in this chapter; although one might make the same observation of chapters 7 and 8.

9.3 The influence of leadership actions on their contexts

We now turn to the second major category: leadership actions and their influence on the context in which they occur. The first of two subcategories is defined by the following closed question: “Do leadership actions influence the context?” Participants responded affirmatively.

To set the scene for the findings, we note the obvious: leadership actions start with the leader. The nature of those actions will therefore be determined by the persona of the
individual leader who initiates them: feelings of self-efficacy and other qualities will frame the actions taken and their content. Judith sets the scene by her comment on self-identity:

I’ve had to shape my identity from coming in as a senior social worker and then moving into this position as the director. That has been a real journey. I’ve had to conceptualise who I am as a leader at a professional level but also at a personal level.

The definition of leadership actions with which this chapter opened refers to the “culture of the organisation” as the domain in which leadership actions naturally fit. Margaret’s contribution from a public sector multidisciplinary context extends the notion of culture from the organisation to the profession and its standards:

I have held leadership positions which are administrative i.e. holding a budget for, managing and being responsible for delivery of a social work service in a health setting. I currently hold professional leadership [with] no budgetary responsibility, a professional role for social workers around performance review training standards [which] does have some professional power in a performance review process.

Margaret’s leadership actions from both administrative and professional positions plainly exert influence on her organisational context from two distinct platforms. The budgetary responsibility is organisationally derived, although service delivery requires both management delegations and professional knowledge. The performance review function needs professional knowledge of standards established by the SWRB; but it is equally dependent on organisational authority through job descriptions, key performance indicators and the like. Interaction between the professional and organisational worlds is once again a symbiotic relationship: both sides benefit.

Margaret describes her leadership actions in terms of “hold[ing] people accountable for standards of practice that we deliver.” She sees this accountability in terms of “a more traditional managerial role” but captures the tension between social work’s empowerment value and the “power-over” dimension of performance reviews in this discourse:

Leadership is around empowering social workers and social justice. The other side is accountability. Performance reviews hopefully have a supportive function but the bottom line is accountability. I do hold a form of power in those situations. Hopefully I
use that in an open, fair and transparent way but I use it nonetheless. Where needed I have and will hold people to account. If disciplinary procedure around someone’s performance or practice [is needed] I wouldn’t baulk from [it]. I would like to think that I try my very best to do that in a way that wasn’t oppressive because there is a tension there.

Equal weight appears to have been given to professional and managerial functions and, in fact, both need each other. On one hand, the absence of professional practice standards would remove accountability by registered social workers to the SWRB in the event that unprofessional or unethical conduct or service occurs. On the other hand, the absence of organisational accountability affects the requirement that social workers comply with management functions of work and task allocation. Margaret’s leadership responsibilities sit at the nexus of these two fields, at which point her own persona also becomes an important consideration.

Organisational restructuring as part of the context in which Margaret functions offers further case-specific opportunities for her social work leadership actions. At the time of the interviews for this project, she was engaged in writing practice documentation for the restructured entity, including performance review templates. As this activity is considered, we move into the second subcategory in this section represented by this question: How do leadership actions influence the context? Margaret’s writing activity presented the proverbial golden opportunity for social work leadership actions to influence that context, expressed in her statement:

Documents I am writing as part of the restructuring process [include] performance reviews, advocating for social workers to have social work specific training, using the new CPD [continuing professional development] requirements for the [Social Workers] Registration Board as a way of furthering that. And also I talk about the accountability. This represents an opportunity to integrate policy and practice requirements set out by social work’s certifying body into the performance management system of a multi-disciplinary state sector health organisation. Margaret’s discourse includes an accountability dimension: that is, accountability to SWRB standards. Her strong commitment to those standards, and equally to the consumers, is recounted here:
If I was really worried about somebody’s safety to practise, I would do whatever I needed within the organisation to address that [and] I would not hesitate to write to the Registration Board and lay a complaint [because I believe in] the right of consumers to be protected.

This statement integrates organisational and professional expectations and exemplifies the symbiotic relationship between the two entities as described earlier. Margaret also recounted a case scenario where accountability was invoked:

I do talk about bottom lines. There are two or three examples where we are actually talking about the stage before formal performance review with a disciplinary flavour so trying to get people to improve their practice within a specified timeframe. If we can’t see evidence of that happening then the manager and I working together look at what do we do next in terms of formal disciplinary review around clinical practice.

Common interest between Margaret as a professional social work leader and an organisationally appointed line manager as reported in that quote is one of those “gold thread” moments in research. One is also struck by the statement, “I do talk about bottom lines.” A comment which may apply to a financial statement finding its way into the social work profession is arguably evidence of non-negotiable minimum standards. The rigour which attends such a pronouncement is remarkable.

The extensive treatment of the current theme afforded to a public sector organisation calls for balanced consideration of the NGO context. Before moving to that section, a final observation on the public sector-related findings is noted. Margaret’s discourse represents the clearest example in the public sector of the interactions of the two domains (context and leadership) in the project’s findings. While her comments are representative, there are nuanced dimensions in the public sector of relevance to this aspect of the project. Although space constraints prevent reporting them, one—Barbara, a mid-level state sector manager—spoke of her organisation as a “cold beast.” She sees the warmth of a social work agency being lost when the social workers are one of two or more groups in a larger organisation. How social work leadership actions influence such divisionalised structures remains for future exploration.
As a final contribution to this section, we turn to Judith, our second NGO chief executive. She paints a picture in which multiple organisational and professional factors influence her leadership actions. These factors include a mission statement; strategic goals; results-based accountability (RBA®) and required outcomes: all the paraphernalia associated with NPM. Judith, however, prioritises her commitment as a leader to internal dialogue:

In part I have been pushed a little bit that way [managerial thinking] through all the change around results based accountability and the outcomes you are trying to achieve. We are on a journey at the moment and leading those conversations is part[ly] defining my emergence into being a leader.

The “conversations” seem to be a channel for that personal and organisational leadership journey to which Judith refers. The conversations are evidently frequent and multifaceted:

[Who do you have those conversations with?] Pretty much all the time with staff [as a group]; individual staff; as a team with the board; and we [are] going through a strategic process which has to include us. I think it is a journey actually as an organisation.

Coming to terms with the management factors appears to be mediated through these conversations. A flavour of the fierce debate in those conversations is captured in Judith’s quote which clearly prioritises a commitment to the kaupapa—the purpose—of her agency:

We are pretty tough on each other in the sense that we expect a lot of each other. That is the kaupapa of our organisation that says, “We need to develop [your performance] but I develop it because I care about you and I want you to do the best. It is about you and it’s about those young people. This is what we are trying to achieve so this is why I am now saying we are meeting each week and we are going over your work and making sure that you are going to do it.” Trying to frame it in a way that fits with our kaupapa as an organisation because that is why our staff are here. They want to be part of that kaupapa.

Judith’s position as the chief executive of a much smaller agency than Margaret’s state sector organisation creates a different dynamic in terms of the leadership—context dyad. There are nonetheless some striking similarities between the two scenarios of which the pre-eminent
appears to be a common commitment to professional practice. Margaret’s comment about “bottom lines” is tantamount to Judith’s communication to her team that “we are going over your work and making sure that you are going to do it.” The potential interpretation that such a statement represents a power-over authoritarian stance is mediated by the opening comment relating to mutual expectations. Judith occupies the equivalent conceptual space as Margaret: the nexus connecting the groups that constitute her agency. In her strategic position she is able to connect with the Board; with the team; and with the abstract component: the mission, the kaupapa of the entity. It is readily observable that the symbiosis between context and leadership actions is a functioning reality.

We have now reached the final stage of this research journey: the construction of a model of social work leadership for Aotearoa New Zealand. The content of Chapter 9 acts as a container for the values and actions of social work leadership set forth in chapters 7 and 8. How these elements uniquely contribute to the model is the subject matter for Chapter 10.
Chapter 10
“Kauri”: A social work model of leadership in Aotearoa New Zealand

10.1 Introduction

The model set out in this chapter is a summative statement created by the responses of participants to the research question in Chapter 1. Those responses have also enabled the research to address the aim and objectives which initiated the whole project. From that starting point, the model also draws on responses made by participants to a number of questions to which the whole thesis has contributed. Responses to these questions, aims and objectives constitute the subheadings whose content will inform the model.

To provide that structure and to tie the content of this discussion back to Chapter 1, I set out the questions, aims and objectives of the project:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research question:</th>
<th>What are the fundamental elements of organisational leadership within social work in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research aim:</td>
<td>To develop a New Zealand model of social work organisational leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research objectives:</td>
<td>▪ To explore how social work practitioners who hold or have held leadership or management responsibility in Aotearoa New Zealand conceptualise leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ To describe participants’ experiences of social work leadership in Aotearoa New Zealand</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Writing the model was facilitated by tightening these overarching themes through a second set of questions. I designed these questions by drawing from the interview schedule and the participants’ transcripts. They enabled an added focus to the format for the chapter:

1. What is the purpose of social work leadership as exercised in:
   ▪ A. The community?
   ▪ B. The organisation or agency?

2. A. What actions are needed to express social work leadership in those two contexts?
   ▪ B. What non-negotiable values inform social work leadership actions?

3. A. What are the strengths of social work leadership in Aotearoa New Zealand?
   ▪ B. What is currently lacking in our context, and how can the gap be filled?
A critical review of my own learning and development over the course of the research is offered. The themes identified immediately above will then be considered as part of a summative statement setting out a model of leadership derived from the entire project. The contribution of the model to Aotearoa New Zealand and transnationally—particularly in respect of Australia and the UK—will be assessed thus bringing the thesis full circle by addressing the gaps in social work leadership research noted by McDonald and Chenoweth (2009) in Australia, and in the UK by Hafford-Letchfield and Lawler (2010.)

To inform the model of leadership, the imagery found in Tāne Mahuta, a giant kauri is used to illustrate the organic thinking which has informed the thesis.

**Tāne Mahuta**

“Tāne Mahuta is a giant kauri tree (*Agathis australis*) in the Waipoua Forest of Northland Region, New Zealand. Its age is unknown but is estimated to be between 1,250 and 2,500 years. It is the largest kauri known to stand today” (Wikipedia, n.d., paragraph 1.) That description appropriately sets the stage for this final chapter. I have purposefully chosen to use the image of Tāne Mahuta for a social work leadership model (Figure 10.1). In the following paragraphs, I set out a fivefold rationale for that choice.

First, it is consistent with the living tree metaphor for the entire project, thus integrating the indigenous Māori image relating to organisational leadership taken from Tipu Ake, traversed in Chapter 5. It is a conscious bicultural statement of the social work profession in Aotearoa New Zealand, seeking to weave a tapestry in which the unique constitutional arrangements of Te Tiriti signed in 1840 are an integral element.

Second, the giant kauri tree simultaneously stands out from its environment but is also part of that ecological system. For this project, leadership stands as the summation of its constituent elements: values, actions, and contexts. But leadership is not isolated and cannot be understood without reference to the knowledge, insights, skills and wisdom supplied by the 23 participants and the literature explored in chapters 1 through 5. When we contemplate the giant kauri and its environment, the interdependent ecological systems thinking which, uniquely among the professions, characterises social work, is continually brought back to our minds.
Third, although Tāne Mahuta is ancient, it is alive. The knowledge base of leadership practically applied becomes wisdom. This model has consciously drawn on ancient biblical wisdom literature which for this researcher is a living reality. Three thousand years ago the writer of Proverbs articulated an expression which profoundly applies to social work today: “Speak out on behalf of the voiceless/and for the rights of all who are vulnerable” (Proverbs 31: 8, Common English Bible.)

Fourth, the fact that Tāne Mahuta is alive reminds us that even an ancient giant kauri can die. Leadership is not confined to a set of accountabilities or lines of authority: ultimately leadership derives from the interaction of human beings. If the “roots”—the values—that inform the individuals and communities who make up the metaphorical tree of leadership die, this statement from Chapter 7 applies: we are left with the equivalent of a dead tree. It may still stand but is incapable of sustaining the flowers and fruit: wellbeing and wisdom. Its purpose and function have ceased. Leadership can never be reduced to activities alone.

Fifth, I make a subjective statement. Chapter 1 referred to the “glaring absence” of social work leadership research in Australia (McDonald & Chenoweth, 2009, p. 105). In the UK,
Hafford-Letchfield and Lawler (2010, p. 5) note that “research and debate in the area of social work management and leadership is still in its infancy.” The same comments can be made of Aotearoa New Zealand. Tāne Mahuta as a giant kauri conveys a message: leadership research for our profession must not be marginalised.

10.2 A critical review: Learning and development

I propose that a critical reflection on the findings of this research demonstrates that social work’s characteristic systems/ecological thinking and practice provides a useful framework by which my own learning and development may be presented. As a registered social worker whose field of practice is that of an educator, this reflection will demonstrate that the two disciplines under consideration, social work and education, are complementary. Conceptualised from this perspective, the model of organisational leadership for the social work profession to be articulated in this chapter draws therefore on diverse elements. How those elements have contributed or even shaped my development as a researcher is now considered.

An earlier finding proposed that social work leadership functions in the interstices between the systems represented in a project or service. These are the places where leadership skills and insight are exercised to ensure a coherent structure or roll-out. What, then, are the systems—or elements—constituting this research? I summarise them as the researcher; the supervisors; the literature informing the project; the participants; the methodology; the findings; the discussion which arose out of the findings. Some comments on these elements follow.

The project originated with the author. The research question, aims and objectives were the product of my own thinking and initial understanding of the investigation. The expression of interest which gained me acceptance into the social work PhD programme was the earliest expression of that thinking; but (as a part time student) two years elapsed before the initial formulation was refined into a solid proposal and ethics application and approval. This process marked the beginning of a journey that began in January 2011 to the present, July 2017, the oral examination and final thesis amendments. The learning and development that occurred during and contributed to that trajectory has been for this researcher extraordinary and multifaceted. On reflection, that developmental learning is summarised as the intellectual challenge to write succinctly; to respond to the hard questions posed by my
supervisors; to learn that “less writing is more,” a position espoused and practised by my supervisor; to acquire the skill of storytelling (narratives) as portrayed by my co-supervisor; and understand that how the research was to be carried out—the methodology—was as important as the outcome—the what. Nor did the learning end when a modest capability emerged through a formal proposal and ethics application: my oral and written presentations were to be made to my academic peers. Although our School exemplifies the collegiality known to be a social work characteristic, feelings of vulnerability infused with a flavour of the imposter syndrome (Craddock, Birnbaum, Rodriguez, Cobb & Zeeh, 2011) were part of the developmental journey. The point at which the proposal was accepted and ethics approved marked the transition from provisional candidacy to confirmed PhD registration. It also marked the point at which completing the project became a prospect. Acceptance by peers whose knowledge and insights were remarkable created anticipation, but an anticipation which was to be periodically tested.

Although the italicised elements are listed as separate entities, the nature of iterative qualitative research obligated a reality check. The interactions between every element illustrated not only the research design (figure 6.1) but also social work’s ecological theory and practice. The methodological and ethical danger of cherry picking from the literature and even more from data analysis illustrates this reality check. Interactions between these entities meant that outcomes were not predetermined; that the uniqueness of each participant, the researcher and my supervisors might result in the construction of a leadership model which did not match expectations. This reality check was a productive experience, for the elements of the final model were not as expected: the paucity of references by participants to the values of a society informed by the Treaty of Waitangi in comparison to other nodes was an epiphany.

The anticipation of completion was to be tested by another element: data analysis. Although I have not carried out a precise word count, 46 interview transcripts produced a total of about 400,000 words. Attempting analysis with any method other than NVivo software would have been practically impossible; but “getting my head around” NVivo’s capabilities provoked a temporary onset of the imposter syndrome. Until the programme was mastered to a functional degree, the feeling that I had a lack of Hercule Poirot’s “little grey cells” (courtesy of Agatha Christie) made its appearance. Fortunately, it was relatively short lived; but the sheer volume of words created another syndrome: becoming lost in the trees and losing sight
of the wood. Reference to this aspect is located in chapter 6.8. The learning that came out of the symbolic trees revisited the “less is more” dictum of my supervisor. My penchant to cover every angle, perspective and insight which I knew to be a perennial weakness emerged in the findings chapters. The draft thesis complete, I departed on our annual camping vacation leaving the work in my supervisors’ email inboxes. The comments that awaited me on return drew attention to the inordinate length of at least two chapters: 17,000+ words in one instance. In fact, another two months of further editing elapsed before the thesis was adjudged worthy of submission. That pronouncement by my supervisor seemed to be an examination in itself.

Weld and Appleton’s (2008) Walking in people’s worlds has been a recurring theme in this thesis. I see it as the practice value of empathy. The reflection of my own developmental learning journey is legitimately expressed as that value. Walking in the shoes of a social work researcher in this project has been to travel down the metaphorical river of leadership whose banks have not only meandered but may also have branched off into distributary channels flowing away from the main stream (Olariu & Bhattacharya, 2006.) Those channels carry the risk of focusing on a subsidiary element, rather than the Waikato, or to expand the metaphor, the Mississippi, the Yangtze, or the Nile. The art of identifying the critical elements which comprise the leadership model bears similarities to the Pareto Principle: the skill of isolating the 20 percent of presenting factors that influence 80 percent of the whole phenomenon (Dale, der Wiele, & Iwaarden, 2007.) Collapsing an original 22 nodes into four parent nodes and fifteen child nodes represents that process.

Empathy is a valid descriptor for the social work researcher and equally for the social work practitioner. The complexities of walking in their respective worlds is to understand their pathways; but I add to that understanding the appreciation of what we as educators expect of our students and in the diverse fields of social work practice what we expect of our clients. One prime purpose of leadership is to add value to the practitioner-service recipient relationship. Social workers must never be so immersed in their academic or practice skills that they lose sight of the marginalised and disempowered people and communities that our profession serves.

So, a summation of learning and development is now offered as a statement:
The construction of a thesis addressing social work leadership integrates academic rigour and social work systems theory and practice. It is characterised by the author’s ability to effectively engage with the diverse elements represented by the literature, the participants, the supervisors, the findings and discussion. But above all it is to engage in critical self-reflection which is the domain of the social work researcher and practitioner and from that position walk in empathic appreciation of the individuals and communities that our profession serves in the academy and society.

I now turn to the construction of the model itself. As indicated earlier, articulating the model begins with a considered response to these questions:

What is the purpose of social work leadership? What actions express that leadership? What non-negotiable values inform that leadership? What are the strengths and what is lacking in that leadership? How can that gap be filled?

Drawing from the discussion of findings, the process begins with the purpose of social work leadership.

10.3 The purpose of social work leadership

The baseline purpose of social work leadership both in the community and organisation must be to act as an agent to implement the provisions of the profession as set out in the IFSW definition:

The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work. (IFSW, 2014)

The definition notes that human rights and social justice are “fundamental” to social work. Encarta defines “fundamental” in two ways: as “basic, relating to or affecting the underlying principles or structure of something”; or as “central, serving as an essential part of something.” In terms of this project, the nature of social work is therefore predicated on the effectiveness of the profession’s leadership in applying “principles of human rights and social
justice” in order that social change, problem solving, empowerment and liberation of people for the purpose of wellbeing can be implemented.

Chapter 7 offered this definition of human rights, social justice and social change:

Social work leadership strives to ensure access to needed information, services, and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation in decision making for all people in organisations and the wider community; to act as an agent of human rights and social change for marginalised and vulnerable client groups in society.

(NASW, 1996, as cited in Stewart, 2013, p. 165)

As we will see, this definition applies to organisations as much as to the communities where social workers function. As an advocate of human rights and social justice, social work leadership functions at several levels or locations: the transnational context; the nation-state and its government; our communities, especially those marginalised by policies and structures; and the organisations where social workers are employed. Organisations are diverse: they include agencies largely staffed and led by social workers; multidisciplinary settings such as hospitals where social work exerts a measure of influence through the allied health division; and agencies such as the Police where social workers are a small group. These bodies may be state or non-governmental. As noted in the UDHR discussion (chapter 4.3,) Charles Malik usefully addresses these multiple contexts by differentiating between society and the state, insisting on the importance of the institutions of civil society that “stand between the individual and the state. The [UDHR] declaration explicitly protects these mediating structures” (Glendon, 2000, p. 3). As a critical construct for the model to be articulated in this summative chapter, I propose that, because of its diverse locations, social work leadership actions are multifaceted. Building on that construct, and consistent with the ecological value and practice which has been a connecting thread throughout this thesis, I further propose that a model of social work leadership must strategically engage with other disciplines and professions if its voice is to be heard in those wider environments. Italicising the text is a measure of the importance I place on that statement.

The purpose of social work leadership exercised in communities or agencies

Individuals, families, and communities are most often the focus of our work, and the function of social work leadership is to create a place of safety for the individual client in the
acknowledged light of “social control” that participants and the literature (Smith, 2008, p. 107) mention. Practitioners and leaders function in the interstices between Malik’s mediating structures in society that stand between our individual clients and governments. Those practitioners and leaders ensure that the profession stands on behalf of individuals who feel overpowered by bureaucratic structures and the inevitable forms—the artefacts of the power of the state. Social work leadership may equally address the state as an alienating structure in the lives of our communities, as it does in regard to other marginalising forces. For social work’s client communities the state may conceivably present itself as a version of Kafka’s “organisation” in his classic story, The Trial (Kafka, 2009.) The state-endowed power of social work and its leadership must always be borne in mind.

Social work leadership in the organisational setting is, however, different. Here we may apply the NASW (1996) description of social work. In particular, the references to accessing information, services, resources and participation in decision-making are pertinent. How does social work leadership respond to those expectations within the agency setting, state sector and NGO alike? Participants expressed their views on organisational social justice in a number of ways. We might summarise those perspectives under six headings:

1. **Enabling the social work voice to be heard in the multidisciplinary context**

To advance social workers’ voice in the multidisciplinary environment, social work leaders must embed the standards required by the imminent mandatory registration of the profession. Initiating or maintaining strategic alliances between leaders in the following fields are critical: tertiary education; the statutory registration body; the professional association; and to ensure that leadership actions incorporate practice realities, leaders in agencies: a united commitment to ensure that the knowledge and skills of practitioners in multidisciplinary settings are enhanced is called for. As these attributes are increasingly developed, leaders will be making a significant contribution to feelings of self-efficacy among practising social workers.

With self-efficacy comes the confidence to articulate the social work function among other professionals, even if they carry more prestige. One participant in particular (Margaret) understood this dynamic, captured in her “ambassador” discourse in Chapter 8. Her expressions such as “putting us [social workers] on the map” and self-identification (“I am a social worker”) expresses the self-efficacy which is also embodied in the self-image of an
 ambassador: the highest official representing one government to another. That image equally expresses the strategic engagement with other disciplines and professions to which reference has already been made and which include medicine, allied health practitioners, the law, leadership and management scholars and practitioners. I suggest that as these professional occupations understand social work’s theory, practice and leadership the capacity for emerging synergies between them and social work will become real rather than aspirational. How those synergies might be developed is discussed in 10.6, *Filling the gaps.*

2. **Participation in decision-making processes**

Two leaders in particular captured the mind-set epitomising such participation: Elizabeth and Judith. Attitudes that they articulated and practised recognised the function of leadership as recognising staff skills and career aspirations. Elizabeth stated: “Any one of those social workers on my team could be a manager, any one of them” [repeated]. She saw leadership as creating opportunities for social workers to participate in managerial decision-making and advocacy with a view to providing more holistic systemic service.

Elizabeth’s actions were motivated by her wish to engage in empowering leadership which is also socially just. She valued people succeeding because it brought social work values and practice—such as developing their self-management capacity, achieving life goals and becoming knowledgeable and wise—into the leadership function. Similarly, Judith felt validated as a leader by watching people grow with the outcome that they were “going to impact this world in an amazing way. I love that.”

The motivation of social work leaders to “see people succeed, help them to be independent” and from that point “impact this world” expresses the authenticity of servant leadership addressed in Chapter 7. Leaders who are committed to developing Greenleaf’s autonomous servant leadership in others are likely to enable participative decision-making by their staff. This process illustrates Malcolm Payne’s (2005) notion that theory (in this instance, the value of servant leadership) is expressed in practice (opportunity to engage in decision-making). Leadership of this nature is our profession’s response to leadership’s inherent power dimension.
3. Integrating compassion into leadership thinking and practice

Matthew’s notion (chapter 7.5) that social justice is expressed through human connections, compassion and relationships is part of his leadership values and practice:

We have tried to develop an organisational model that we can live up to because it has got to work for staff as much as for clients. So if you take that notion that for our organisation that element of social justice [in which] we think we have a stake and capability is about [the] notion of people being connected to those around them and the notion of compassion and relationships that enable the development of a sense of meaning and purpose.

The phraseology employed calls to mind the spirituality dimension of authentic, servant leadership. An ecological understanding of social work leadership emerges again by way of commitment to the core value of social justice as expressed through workplace relationship connections. Compassion in these relationships creates a place of trust and safety and from there to meaningful, purposeful work. As noted in Chapter 8, a further quality may be inferred:

Social work leaders appear to be primarily concerned by the values which inform their actions—that the reasons why they do what they do are of more importance than the actions themselves. That is evidence of a remarkable commitment to identity, integrity and values.

Compassion in the social work profession might be better rendered “empathy”: the capacity to walk in another’s shoes, to which reference has already been made (Weld & Appleton, 2008) I suggest a further application. A prime or even the prime purpose of social work leadership is to leave a legacy in the lives of those with whom we interact whether organisationally or in the community. That legacy is expressed by the recipients of our leadership function achieving their ultimate potential—professionally and personally—and in turn creating the same framework for the next generation. Values and action coalesce into a culture of social justice marked by the qualities discussed in this section.
4. **Constructively confronting ethical considerations in supervision**

Social justice as an underpinning theme of the profession’s leadership is also considered in terms of Schön’s (1983) reflective practice. The implications of social justice and indeed other values and actions require exploration and evaluation in the context of individual reflection or in supervision. Professional supervision as a mandatory requirement of registration is ideally placed to engage in such reflection. As we saw in Chapter 7, Jenny as a supervisor actively used ethically based questions to ensure that social workers actively engaged in issues of social justice. She responded unequivocally to the question, “Is social justice part of social work leadership?” in this way: “Absolutely I do. In social work you should be facing an ethical dilemma a day not just in a week and if you are not why aren’t you questioning your practice?”

The implicit assumption behind that interaction is that leaders carry the responsibility to engage with the values which inform the work of practitioners, and convey that expectation to frontline workers. Neglecting that responsibility is arguably a failure of leadership, and further illustrates the perspective in the quote that “the reasons why [we] do what [we] do are of more importance than the actions themselves.” Middleman and Rhodes’ (1980, p. 52) frequently quoted statement that “the supervisor/worker relationship is the key encounter where organizational authority and professional identity collide, collude or connect” underpins that stance. Leaders must recognise that they wear both organisational and professional hats. From either position the risk of colluding with unethical practice presents as an abdication of leadership which is tantamount to a failure of integrity. Identity and integrity, it will be recalled, constituted the largest single value informing leadership actions in terms of frequency of references (Chapter 7).

Sarah engaged in a similar strategy. Social justice commits us to social change. When asked whether facilitating change is a critical leadership element, she stated:

> I think it absolutely is because that’s at the heart of it isn’t it? It’s at the heart of it. This is why it’s important for practitioners to extend their thinking and be challenged themselves about why they do what they are doing and what actually works for them.

That is a content-rich discourse. Leadership functions as a sense-making exercise for frontline practitioners in regard to managing change, which may originate from multiple sources. These
include the ongoing structural changes created by the NPM revolution; but perhaps more pertinently for this discussion, it should also emanate from challenging those marginalising forces in our societies with which social work is vitally concerned. To extend the thinking of practitioners is a reflective exercise: leaders, therefore, function in the realm of communication and thought leadership (Chapter 8). Sarah encapsulates that domain by asking: “Why do social workers do what they do?” Such intellectual pursuits need to be equally evident in agencies as they are in tertiary training. For a social work leader to imagine that the completion of a degree course concludes intellectual examination of core issues facing our communities, policy and the profession is effectively to deny the critical need for continuing professional education. Sarah recognises the leader’s obligation to continue critical reflection in the context of active practice.

Critical reflection about the nature and quality of change applies to diverse settings. Leaders in our profession need to consider face-to-face social work services; engaging with the registration body and professional body the ANZASW (if members); the political process at local and national levels by way, for example, of submissions to parliamentary select committees and government green policy papers. Active lobbying as advocacy is another dimension, to be addressed later. Because city council land zone regulations impact on housing and environmental health, or living spaces, local government is equally a part of social justice and social change.

Another dimension of change is expressed in Margaret’s (state sector professional supervisor) expectation as a leader that people with whom she interacts will “make changes” and be empowered to grow in the organisational context. Such leadership is transformational (Bass & Avolio, 1993) requiring careful application. Transformational leadership works to create or modify culture by working with people. While carrying appeal, the risk of conscious or unconscious manipulation of followers that transformational leaders may employ in seeking change must be held constantly in mind. Power does not originate solely from knowledge, legislation or codes of conduct. In its extensive discussion of these themes, Chapter 8 notes: “few themes test the commitment to socially just leadership more than the use of power and authority.”

Margaret is well aware of the inherent “bottom line controlling function” of leadership. Powerful personalities invested with organisational authority may be separated from
intimidatory or even bullying behaviour by a line in the sand. These risks are mediated by Margaret’s understanding that working with clients and staff is carried out “in a way that helps them make changes and empower and grow.” Critical reflection may be interpreted as holding up a metaphorical mirror for the practitioner to evaluate their own behaviour. Few environments engender capacity for people to grow and make needed personal change more than enabling the development of their own insight: the self-revelation of what others see in us is both effective and therapeutic. Social work transformational leadership is located in that sphere.

5. Information-sharing as a conscious practice

Chapter 7 introduced the commonly quoted saying, “knowledge is power.” Considered as an element of leadership, the extent to which organisational leaders share information with their subordinates is arguably a key indicator of how power is viewed as a mechanism of control. The information to be shared must, of course, take into account the profession’s principle of confidentiality: but that is not in view in this section. The discussion in Chapter 5 notes that information held by social work agencies limits the commitment to confidentiality by virtue of the management of organisational risk.

Information sharing as a theme in transcripts was, in fact, limited. David was one of the few participants to address the topic, but not in the sense conveyed in the preceding paragraph. When asked, “How do you gauge the effectiveness of what you do as a social work leader?” he interpreted the enquiry as proactively creating opportunities for professional practice “social work forums” in his multidisciplinary setting. Here is a leader—described in Chapter 7 as possessing a “high degree of self-reflection”—who did not confine himself to business-agenda-type staff meetings. David’s commitment to learning is expressed in forum-type gatherings which gauge the interest of his staff in advancing professional knowledge and skills. The flavour of his comments suggests that the power dimension of leadership is absent. We may also note that David conceptualises these open professional fora as a self-imposed indicator of his effectiveness as a social work leader. His thinking provides a bridge to the earlier treatment of supervision and ethical considerations by virtue of the ongoing commitment he has made to interactive professional discussions. In brief, David engages with continuing professional development as a leadership value. Instead of the power dimension, the acquisition of new professional knowledge and skills is his yardstick of leadership efficacy.
This represents a refreshing perspective which in a phrase previously employed, “warrants cautious optimism for the future of leadership in the profession.”

6. Creating opportunities for line management responsibilities

Willingness by social work leaders to share power assumes another dimension in the following discourse, which represents a logical development of an earlier section addressing participation in decision-making processes. The next step in joint decision-making is to assume management or leadership responsibilities. Where social work leaders holding designated management positions actively seek promotion opportunities for team members we are witnessing the application of Elizabeth’s earlier statement that “Any one of those social workers on my team could be a manager, any one of them.”

In this vein, Ann, a state sector manager, actively creates opportunities for staff promotion. She believes that “opportunities can lead to promotion. I absolutely believe that it is my role to provide people with those opportunities.” Two interconnected implicit elements are expressed in that statement: first, a commitment to coaching and mentoring team members as of intrinsic value; and second, conscious succession planning. This thinking is demonstrated in the telling statement: “I absolutely believe that it is my role to provide people with those opportunities.” Here is a social work leader actively developing her staff’s acquisition of skills with a view to replacing herself.

How leaders pass the baton, or fail to plan to do so, is an eloquent statement of their commitment—or otherwise—to social justice values. No social work leader who believes in human rights and social justice wishes to retain positional, professional or other power at the expense of advancing team members into their own positions of responsibility. Passing the baton develops our earlier discussion of leaving a legacy. It also suggests that leaders will be remembered, not by virtue of their knowledge or power, but by those with whom they entered a professional relationship and facilitated their career pathway.

10.4 Actions expressing social work leadership

To analyse leadership actions and values, Schein’s (2010) organisational culture diagnostic tool discussed in chapter 3.6 is useful. The actions appear as the artefacts; the values and beliefs which inform those actions appear underneath the artefacts. The tool can also be
adapted to illustrate diverse settings in which leadership actions take place. These settings might be almost infinite.

**External leadership actions**

The classic social work leadership action is to engage in advocacy and empowerment in order to create vision and engage in strategies for societal change. The external context is located in [1] marginalised and vulnerable client groups in society; and [2] the profession. The artefacts—Schein’s visible actions—are best illustrated in the campaign by a frontline/middle level NGO manager, Deborah, to have the age of adult accountability raised from 17 to 18. Consistent with social work’s systems thinking, her actions were not confined to advocacy. Communication and thought leadership in relation to the political process were in equal evidence.

Deborah believes that “social work is about being an agent of change. Social work leadership needs to ensure that there is systemic change to create better opportunities for [vulnerable people.]” She addressed the essence of systemic advocacy in her insightful statement that “if we’re not changing things at other levels we just keep coming up against the same barriers.”

We may note therein a perceptive understanding of systems. Deborah appreciates that advocacy seeking specific change must take account of unintended consequences: that advocacy to “fix” one problem will almost inevitably create unforeseen systemic reactions elsewhere in the ecology surrounding that problem. This is colloquially known as working from a balcony perspective, or to quote Deborah, “scanning the horizon.”

It is of interest that Deborah’s external and internal leadership actions occurred together. In fact, symbiosis took place. She attended an extra-organisational leadership course which in her words attracted “high flying leaders from all over New Zealand from different companies.” Conversations with a media company leader led to the production of a video as part of the campaign to raise the age of adult accountability in Aotearoa New Zealand from 17 to 18. In noting that she led the early initiatives herself, Deborah reported remarkable organisational outcomes: “The management team members are amazing here and have gotten behind [the campaign]. We have built it into our 5 year plan so it’s become an organisational focus now, [a] priority.”
As a member of the senior management team in a mid-sized NGO, Deborah was arguably in a favourable position to influence the organisation through her leadership initiatives. It is nonetheless noteworthy that her colleagues, including the chief executive, endorsed Deborah’s approach and incorporated her initiative into formal planning documentation.

These examples allow us to discern the beginning of a pattern. Deborah employed specific actions based on specific values to influence government towards a desired end. Exercising such influence is the essence of the leadership process. It is of relevance to also note that as of this writing (March 2017), the Minister of Social Development has committed the New Zealand government to raise the age of adult accountability to 18. Leadership activities have resulted in the desired outcome. The part that Deborah and her agency played in that outcome cannot be quantified, but we might note the strategic alliance with the media company as a further example of ecological systems thinking. The pattern may be described as purposeful selection of a particular action appropriate to the situation or environment, underpinned by values consistent with the social work profession. The “menu” may be discernible; in reality, no two situations are the same. Social work leadership in common with any aspect of professional practice requires Schön’s (1983) reflective thinking.

What values, beliefs and assumptions informed Deborah’s advocacy and thought leadership? Clearly, human rights and social justice take primacy. But ecological thinking was also in evidence as Deborah engaged with other agents such as the public relations video production company. That partnership leads to a discussion flagged in an earlier comment in regard to social work leadership’s need for strategic engagement if the voice of the profession is to be heard in public discourse.

Actions which initiate strategic connections—which may as earlier noted develop into alliances—are entirely consistent with social work ecological thinking. The need to initiate such connections is provoked by Margaret’s suggestion that the voice of the profession in the national discourse has been muted. Her observations form a useful bridge from social work leadership values actions reported in this section to the later proposals for “filling the gap.” In her description of the 2014 protests against the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement [TPPA] Margaret saw a major theme as “about social justice, community development, social action. But latterly we’ve dropped the ball as a profession.”
In recounting her participation in a street march against the TPPA, Margaret observed that “the New Zealand Nurses Organisation were there with their banners, Public Service Association were there with their banners, [a] forensic psychiatrist was a key note speaker talking about the impact of the TPPA and pharmaceutical corporations and how that would mean access to medicines would become more difficult for our consumers.” But “w[ere] there any social workers? No. Was there [an] ANZASW banner? No. Were there people publicly identifying as social workers? I could count a handful. Many more of my nursing colleagues were there than my social work colleagues. I felt like somehow we are really letting our social work professional identity down.”

That lengthy discourse tells several stories. Perhaps the pre-eminent impression is one of social work’s minimal involvement with social justice issues in comparison with medical professionals and unionists. The radical social work generation represented by Margaret has largely gone, replaced presumably by practitioners committed to their clients but not to visibly challenging perceived social injustice. The causative factors of this apparent inaction were not addressed in this research, so no analysis can be offered. The issues identified by Margaret’s account are not, in fact, identical to the need for strategic alliances as discussed; but if the leadership of the profession has indeed “dropped the social justice, social action ball” it is an arguable proposition that those alliances are needed to provoke social workers themselves into appropriate action.

A second strand which emerges from Margaret’s transcript is inferred rather than stated. Medical professionals who marched against the TPPA are arguably more likely to be reported in the media than social workers. As I have already argued, in constructing a social work leadership model our profession may benefit from conversations with some key disciplines and professions because of the effects of synergy, “the combined effort being greater than the parts” (Encarta Dictionary). This theme will be further explored in 10.6, “filling the gaps.”

The wider implication of such proposed conversations is located in the notion, as discussed earlier, of social work leadership’s natural home: in the interstices of mediating structures in society that stand between our individual clients and governments. The unique capacity of social work among the professions to function in an ecological mode of thinking lends itself to that vision.
Internal leadership actions

We now turn to intra-organisational leadership actions. Findings from this theme applied to the model of leadership now being constructed were unusually rich. They included reciprocal, accountable relationships; how leaders recognised the human need for significance; how leaders projected the values of the organisation to the staff. We start with insights into leadership, management and change afforded by one of our two CEOs, Matthew.

Matthew conceived leadership—engaging with people to create or change the culture—as being complemented by management actions. He sees leadership actions as initiating a process and management actions as following those initiatives: “A lot of my role is about keeping the vision and values of the organisation in front of people and so when I trot around staff meetings I will generally be talking about the strategic level and referencing them back to our mission and vision and how we want it to be and how we are doing. When I talk to staff about managing [or improving] the organisation it will be with reference to [how] we can live those values [and] with things like flexible work place practice.”

Matthew’s approach employs a classic ecological frame of reference: organisational vision, “management by walking around,” lived values, flexible work practices—these diverse themes constitute authenticity. Matthew’s tangible commitment to authentic leadership is demonstrated by his willingness to engage in 360° surveys of his performance, as well as the revealing phrase inviting staff to comment on “how we are doing.” Such action conveys a message of being open to vulnerability, or servant leadership thinking, depicting a holistic approach to the leadership task which integrates values with action. Matthew’s overriding commitment to reciprocal, accountable relationships with those he leads is a refreshing expression of Follett’s “power-with” thinking, so strikingly different to the “power-over” ethos and practice.

The second extract was as much a values statement as it was an action. In Chapter 7, Matthew clearly articulated the values that inform his leadership: “accompanying those practical issues is something to do around meaning and purpose, something to do with who am I, what am I about in this world.” I suggest that this statement draws from a worldview that includes humanity’s most profound need for significance. Matthew develops his remarkable thinking in setting out these views on leadership in the workplace as distinct from the community being served: “people’s work is about their sense of meaning and purpose. I
look at the values that they bring. Does the way that they talk and act match the sort of value base that they espouse? Do they have an established sense of self that fits with that notion of integrity? And I look [for] the evidence in what they are doing now or in the past that indicates that they can command respect and have people pay attention and respond rather than the opposite, [that is] authoritarian and directive.”

That statement is evidence of a commitment to integrity as wholeness in which work is seen as meaningful—or spiritual—and purposeful. Matthew also commented that helping people includes a mission to regain hope. Such narratives suggest values of spirituality, authenticity and servant leadership and a commitment to “values-driven social justice” in the organisation of which he is CEO. Matthew’s position in the agency ensures that his communications will be heard; nonetheless, his values have made a solid contribution to the communication channels, informal and formal, that he has set up. Exemplary leadership is in evidence.

Having set out the perspectives of the participants and the inferences to be drawn from those perspectives, I now initiate the process intended to articulate the proposed model of social work leadership: the purpose of the entire thesis. This discourse begins with an examination of the strengths and gaps which have emerged from the findings.

10.5 Social work leadership in New Zealand: Strengths

I suggest that the strengths of social work leadership in our country have emerged quite naturally in this research. For this researcher, the most remarkable and simultaneously most encouraging is the commitment of the participants to the values which inform their actions. The evidence indicates that these leaders believed that why they did what they did was of greater significance than the actions in themselves. Italicising that clause—which has already appeared earlier in this chapter—expresses for me the significance of the statement. Why significant? To respond to that question, I return, first, to perspectives found in the literature of relevance to the discussion; and second, to certain elements constituting leadership which have emerged from data analysis. From time to time these two dimensions will coincide.

Leadership as conceived by participants and mediated through data analysis illustrates the ecological value of the social work profession. That ecological understanding has been conceptualised as a living tree—a giant kauri—which conveys the clear message that leadership is the product of every aspect of that kauri: its roots, its visible artefacts, and its
environment. As I have already noted, if the values which inform leadership actions are missing, the wellbeing and wisdom of leadership will no longer be evident. For that reason alone, the values constitute a seminal element.

Associated with that perspective, which I argue is non-negotiable, is the position proposed by Weaver (1984) that ideas have consequences. In this context, values that inform leadership actions identified by participants included integrity: personal, professional and educational. Integrity means wholeness: thus personal values as congruent with and expressive of social work’s professional values become a holistic entity. This thinking is illustrated by the giant kauri imagery: the integrity of a tree’s growth depends on the interdependence of all of its component parts. That integrity is to actualise Weaver’s position.

A further strengthening element is located in the ethical value required by answering the questions: “Who am I?” “What am I about?” The leadership value implicit in simply posing those questions connects values and actions as an indivisible whole. The professional commitment to reflective practice (Schön, 1983) is thereby embedded in the mind of the leader and coincidentally requires consideration of Argyris and Schön’s (1996) call to ensure that our espoused theories are also our theories in use. Those theories for this discussion are located in social work’s ethics, principles and standards—all of which are an intrinsic part of the pre-eminent node, identity and integrity.

The commitment to reflective practice as the means by which ethical leadership becomes the norm also addresses the danger of pseudo-transformative leadership (Bass & Steidlmeier, 2004). Any leadership action emanating from ethically-derived reflective practice brings to mind the ancient Greek notion of self-leadership discussed in chapter 7.7. An examination of why we are doing what we are doing brings us back full circle to the beginning of the immediate discourse. To set to one side serious consideration of the values which inform our actions would likely result in cognitive or emotional dissonance in any leader: not easy to live with.

The second strength is the other side of the coin to the first: the extent to which participants understood and were committed to empowering leadership and social justice applied organisationally. The reflective statements were evidence that these leaders practise Schön’s (1983) reflection-in-action as earlier discussed. These are people who understand themselves:
they have integrated their own identities and an extraordinarily encouraging commitment to integrity into their leadership function. Because they understood self-leadership, these participants knew how to lead others through ethical empowering leadership. Participants wanted those people on whose behalf they exercised leadership to succeed in their own right. To use a cliché, participants were not psychologically threatened by advancing subordinates: indeed, some saw that progress as validating their own leadership.

Third, there is a consistent understanding of, and commitment to, the profession’s ecological, systems thinking. These leaders appreciated the interdependency of the living elements in the tree of leadership. In effect, they applied the theory and practice of the social work task into their organisational leadership responsibilities. For those participants who had reflected on the bicultural dimension of the profession (the contributions of Lynda and Elizabeth as the primary examples are discussed in 10.6, “Filling the gaps”) there was a remarkable grasp of the place of Māori as social work clients which translated in no small measure to the organisational context. In fact, the interdependency between elements in our metaphorical kauri has already been noted in chapter 7.5 as the “gold thread” between social justice, ecological perspectives and spirituality as values informing social work leadership.

10.6 Filling the gaps

On the other side of the ledger, in what ways does this project reveal gaps in social work leadership values and actions? Two key gaps are identified. The first relates to the value informing social work leadership in respect of indigeneity, bicultural relationships—as enshrined for social work in Te Tiriti—and Tāuiwi* identity in multi-ethnic, multicultural Aotearoa New Zealand. The second relates to the leadership action of communication and thought leadership as a political dimension: active engagement by social work leaders with Government policy.

For a profession that functions under a bicultural code of ethics, and whose certifying body, the SWRB, requires competency in working with Māori (SWRB, 2015/2016,) there was a paucity of reference by participants to the bicultural basis of social work practice (as noted in chapter 7.8.) Why this should be the case is not known, but will provoke future research. A beginning point may be to consider social workers’ understanding of the IFSW’s endorsement of The Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (ITPC) (ILO, 1989).
Paragraph 3 of the IFSW’s Statement of Ethical Principles (IFSW, 2012) explicitly connects the global social work community with the ITPC (ILO, 1989.) The IFSW describes this Convention as one of several—including the UDHR—which are “accepted by the global community [as] particularly relevant to social work practice and action” (IFSW, 2012, pp.1, 2.) The ITPC, ratified by New Zealand in 2010, applies to:

Tribal peoples in independent countries whose social, cultural and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the national community, and whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws or regulations (Article 1.1.a) (ILO, 1989, np.)

By virtue of this article and in the light of the IFSW’s Statement of Ethical Principles (2012,) the ITPC applies explicitly to Māori as the indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand. It is worth noting that the ITPC contains clauses of remarkable similarity to the Principles of the Treaty enunciated by New Zealand Courts, the Waitangi Tribunal and the Government (Hayward, 2007.) An extract from the ITPC’s Article 7.1 sets out the rights of indigenous peoples to

Decide their own priorities for the process of development as it affects their lives, beliefs, institutions and spiritual well-being and the lands they occupy or otherwise use, and to exercise control, to the extent possible, over their own economic, social and cultural development (ILO, 1989, np, emphasis added.)

Hayward (2007) notes for example two Treaty principles which reflect that ITPC article:

**4. The Crown’s duty of active protection**

Justice Cooke stated that ‘the duty of the Crown is not merely passive but extends to active protection of Maori people in the use of their lands and waters to the fullest extent practicable’.

**6. Maori to retain rangatiratanga* [ownership] over their resources and taonga* [treasures] and to have all the rights and privileges of citizenship** (Hayward, 2007, pp.478, 479, emphasis in original.)

These provisions carry coherence and force by virtue of their origin in an international body, the ILO and ratified by the government of New Zealand; endorsed by the IFSW as the global
body of governance for the social work profession; bearing similarities to interpretations of
the Treaty by the New Zealand judiciary; and finally, being applied by social work’s
certification body in New Zealand, the SWRB (SWRB, 2015/2016) and also the professional
social work association in this country, the ANZASW (ANZASW, 2008.) Indeed, the clarity of
this process practically amounts to an audit trail. The implication of these issues is discussed
under Te Tiriti ō Waitangi below.

The gap in leadership actions was also apparent, but arguably understandable by virtue of the
composition of the sample. Participants appeared to have given little thought as to how they
might engage in communication with the political process and, allied with that, to engage in
thought leadership. The notable exceptions, Matthew and Deborah, evidenced an excellent
understanding and application of those actions. Deborah’s advocacy and thought leadership
in the campaign to raise the age of accountability to 18 has already been discussed. Matthew
has been active in research-based submissions to parliamentary select committees and in
other contributions to policy formation. He sees his active role in influencing senior public
servants and politicians as providing sector leadership. In an amusing aside, Matthew
comments “I couldn’t do this job if I just stayed here. I would get bored [laughter by both
parties].”

Awareness of the political dimension in exercising thought leadership may be limited to
leaders functioning at senior management levels in both the state and non-governmental
sectors. That perspective begs the inevitable question: since challenging unjust structures
that contribute to marginalisation is a Code of Ethics requirement (ANZASW, 2008), every
registered social worker should have a view on how to initiate that challenge. How to fill that
gap is appropriately considered under the subheading Communication and thought
leadership.

To propose a set of action to fill the gaps revealed or at least suggested in analysing the data
is a subjective process. To a considerable extent, identifying the gaps relied on statistical
NVivo evidence in that tables 6.4, 7.2 and 8.4 list the number of references to the nodes
identified through analysis. But in thinking for example about human rights, social justice and
social change it is worth noting that although that node comprised 12.5% of all references—
compared with identity and integrity’s 42%—every participant made reference to that
category.
For the reason that arbitrary selection based on percentages is therefore potentially misleading, the gaps to be considered in this section are confined to those categories which were manifestly underrepresented in the minds of participants. The gap in the “roots” (values) informing leadership actions is seen as “Social work leadership which recognises the values set forth by a Te Tiriti ō Waitangi-based society,” on the basis that of 23 participants only 17 (73%) commented on the theme, and their references constituted 5% of the total.

Likewise, the gap in the “fruit” (actions) is communication and thought leadership: Politics and government, defined as “Active engagement with local and national politicians, pressure groups and Government at a policy advice and advocacy level.” Of 23 participants, 16 (69%) commented on the topic, and their references amounted to 6% of the total.

To determine causative or at least contributing factors to the relative paucity of references to these two nodes is to set up a fresh research enquiry. That endeavour is beyond the purpose of this chapter; but a scoping exercise is not. I address the two gaps in sequence.

**Te Tiriti ō Waitangi**

To participate in this research, every informant was required to be a registered social worker (RSW.) To achieve registration, a social worker must demonstrate a number of competencies. The first requires social workers to demonstrate their competence to practise social work with Maōri, to be evidenced by a range of specific skills including knowledge of the Treaty of Waitangi, te reo Maōri* and tikanga* Maōri (SWRB, 2015/2016.)

However, as noted in the discussion of the Treaty in chapter 7.4, there is a second aspect to a social worker’s commitment to Te Tiriti. Two parties were recognised by the Treaty: iwi* (Māori tribes) and the Crown. The Treaty legitimised colonisation of Aotearoa by tauiwi* (“foreigner, European, non-Māori, colonist.”) The early colonists were European, primarily from the British Isles: but this picture has changed. The 2013 census reports that 213 ethnic groups are represented in the country (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). Bearing that change in mind, chapter 7.4 noted that the profession needs to recognise ethnic diversity as a contributing value to social work leadership.

For that reason, the second competency listed by the SWRB (2015/2016) becomes relevant: Competence to practise social work with different ethnic and cultural groups in Aotearoa New Zealand. Evidence required for this competency includes the ability to “acknowledge and
value a range of world views including divergent views within and between ethnic and cultural groups; demonstrates awareness and self-critique of their own cultural beliefs, values and historical positioning and how this impacts on their social work practice with their clients from other cultural backgrounds” (SWRB, 2015/2016.)

The less than adequate awareness—and in one case knowledge—of cultural competence suggests that for a number of participants, social work leadership practice is monocultural. If that is the case, the enculturation of future practitioners in tertiary degree training into these, the first two competencies required for registration, may be deficient. I suggest that a conceivable reason is the capture of social work values and principles by the academy and, via the legislatively-based SWRB, the state: that the advent of four year degrees, supplanting two year diplomas as recently as 2002, has substituted achievement, for example, of research outputs by academics in place of a grass roots commitment to the marginalised communities that social workers are called to serve. The imperative need for quantitative research outputs and the actions of the SWRB as a Crown entity are arguably neoliberal constructions. I argue that the focus on the risk discourse in organisations providing social work services has effectively minimised the profession’s commitment to social justice.

In addition, Roger Smith’s (2008) warning, as noted in chapter 4.5, that welfare professions are elitist by virtue of their “their specialised education and distinctive disciplinary pathways to employment” (p.107) comes to mind. The status associated with authority derived from university postgraduate education, Smith proposes, may have led to a self-interested “maintenance of the system which supports them” (2008, p. 107). The unfaithful angels charge (Specht & Courtney, 1994) may be apposite. Leadership of the profession is obligated to face these potential ethical challenges if the gap is to be addressed.

A second factor is worth mentioning. Again, it is speculative. The role of the social work profession as risk managers, or to use a potentially pejorative term, coercive agents of the state, has received repeated comment in this thesis (see Braye & Preston-Shoot, 2006; Smith, 2008.) Has the leadership of the profession failed to articulate that social workers must always be mindful of Malik’s insistence of the importance of the institutions of civil society that “stand between the individual and the state?” As noted in chapter 10.3, we may need to be reminded that the seminal UDHR “explicitly protects these mediating structures” (Glendon, 2000, p. 3). Social workers may be paid by the state, but human rights and social
justice transcend the institutions of the state. We scarcely need reminding that our indigenous population constitute a disproportionate share of marginalised communities (Walker, 2004.) That marginalisation adds to the need to ensure priority is accorded to Te Tiriti as social work practitioners come to terms with multicultural challenges in a 21st century Aotearoa.

**Communication and thought leadership: Politics and government**

The second gap—one of leadership action ("fruit")—is defined as "active engagement with local and national politicians, pressure groups and Government at a policy advice and advocacy level." Initial considerations suggested that this may be a function of participant demographics. As noted in Chapter 8, political communication is likely to be the domain of chief executive or senior managers. Participants who identified the value (Matthew and Judith) fall into that category; and Deborah, as a member of the senior management team in a mid-sized NGO, is practically in the same demographic. The size of the state sector typically allocates political communication to designated specialists. However, I do not think that filling this gap can be confined to simple hierarchical level analysis.

By revisiting Congress (2010) (chapter 4.3), we are again reminded that commitment to social justice and human rights in both the ANZASW Code of Ethics (ANZASW, 2008) and the IFSW/IASSW (2005) Global Standards sets out a dual focus encompassing individual solutions and working to change society’s structures. Chapter 4.3 notes that social justice and human rights mandate action to challenge barriers, inequalities and injustices in society; taking action to include marginalised groups, promoting human rights; policy advocacy on behalf of vulnerable people; and encouraging respect for diversity (Chu et al., 2009, pp. 287, 288). Individual action is a starting point: but collective action is needed. Responsibility for filling the gap in thought leadership in the political arena is not to be abandoned to chief executives; indeed, frontline staff and their immediate managers are in much closer contact with those marginalised communities and may well be able to articulate moral outrage, as noted in chapter 7.8 when confronted with the consequences of structural forces contributing to individual and community disempowerment and impoverishment.

How does social work leadership address this second gap? I suggest once again that our degree courses must engage with students in human rights and social justice strategies, and
that such courses are not to be confined to academic appreciation of the problem but teach how to engage with the political process and indeed in raising the conscience of society. It is worth mentioning that pursuant to section 162(4)(a)(v) of the Education Act, 1989, academics possess the right, and I argue, the responsibility to act as the “critic and conscience of society.” This does not mean endorsement of any one political party; in the context of this thesis it relates to the professional social work mandate for just societies.

In this context, social work must engage—as suggested earlier in this chapter—with other professions in the University and in society to create alliances for common concerns. As noted, social work’s voice in the public square and in public sector policy contexts appears to be minimal. Leadership of the profession collectively expressed through the ANZASW as well as through peer-recognised or designated leaders needs to consider strategic alliances with recognised players in the public, and governmental, mind. The obvious alliances would be with those professions represented in multidisciplinary organisations: hospitals and community agencies employ doctors and allied health professionals who work alongside social workers and have some understanding of the social work task. In addition, lawyers practising in such fields as child and adolescent abuse and offending are natural allies as are academics teaching and researching, for example, in youth law.

In the view of this researcher, a third field of practice is worth investigating. Innovative work including research is being carried out by leadership and management academics who often work in collaboration with business leaders. Social justice in the form of corporate social responsibility (London, 2010) has become part of management and leadership in the for-profit sector. As already noted, social work leadership and management scholarship is in its infancy; but informal networks suggest that numbers of social workers are employed in senior management in the NGO and public sectors. Fruitful collaborations have already been developed by the author. There is no reason why more could not be initiated. Social work leadership understandings of ecological systems thinking is ideally placed to connect with all these groups.

10.7 New Zealand and transnational applications

We may now consider how this thesis legitimately applies to national and overseas social work leadership. I propose that three crucial considerations form a platform for that argument.
The first plank of our metaphorical platform is predicated on the history of our nation state. From the social laboratory of the world 120 years ago, which embraced human rights and social justice in the form of female suffrage and industrial conciliation and arbitration, measures ahead of the UK as the colonising power of the day, New Zealand has a history of pioneering social policy which has continued to the present day. The innovative Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act of 1989, addressing child protection and youth justice, is a recent example. I suggest that social work and its leadership is more than a profession in Aotearoa New Zealand. It is a tangible expression of Kennedy’s (2008) observation (chapter 2.2) of a culturally derived leadership model characterised by a participative team-based commitment to sharing success drawing on the country’s egalitarian beliefs. Kennedy’s analysis illustrates the influence of societal culture on organisational form and practices and thence to leader attributes and behaviour.

The second plank is an expression of the first viewed from a different perspective. The epoch of transformative change in the 1980s witnessed the adoption of a managerialist philosophy which radically changed both the state sector and through contractual funding agreements the NGO sector. Overseas public management scholars such as Allen Schick (2001) and Christopher Hood (1991) have evaluated the New Zealand NPM model as ideologically pure and remarkably lucid. From the social work perspective described in this thesis, the values espoused by NPM changed the ethos of the profession and its leadership as a results-oriented management style replaced the focus on the quality of social work processes. We remain essentially in the policy grip of NPM 30 years after its introduction. These issues have been canvassed extensively in chapters 1 and 3. This second plank may be applied transnationally as the most coherent example of neo-liberal management philosophy in the Anglophone world. Its impact on the social work profession and its leadership offers an exceptional base from which to evaluate its transformation of a hitherto model social welfare state. The lessons to be learned from that revolution (Hughes & Smart, 2012) in a small society are applicable internationally.

The emergence of two diverse and, I would argue particularly in respect of social work and its leadership, opposing societal philosophies raises issues which demand acknowledgment and discussion. The question to be answered might be expressed in these words:
Why and how did New Zealand as a nation state with an egalitarian (Kennedy, 2008), low power distance (Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005) societal ethos and reputation as a social security laboratory for the world (Tennant, 2004; 2007) embrace NPM as a modern version of scientific management (Boston et al, 1996; Hood, 1991; Scott, 2001; Taylor, 1967)?

The earlier comment may be repeated: determining “causative or at least contributing factors to [this issue] is to set up a fresh research enquiry.” Why New Zealand became the seat of a revolution (Hughes & Smart, 2012) is a sociological rather than social work enquiry. The transformatory takeover of the Labour Party by neo-liberals in the early 1980s is arguably evidence that the NPM revolution was the outcome of a few determined strategic players. The takeover is evidenced by the fact that the same group responsible for implementing the fourth Labour Government’s “Rogernomics” in 1984-1990—discussed in chapter 1.2—subsequently formed the right wing Act Party. In terms of this thesis and its potential to generate further research there may be a place to ask the question posed above.

The final plank is located in New Zealand’s historic and ongoing commitment to internationally recognised human rights instruments which have formed in name at least a solid base for a socially just society. Sadly, those aspirations have not been consistently realised; but the formative contribution to, or ratification by, this country to the United Nations Charter, the UDHR, the UNCROC, the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Sharples, 2010) carry an unmistakable message: we are at least philosophically committed to human rights and social justice. The leadership of the social work profession can legitimately draw on these endorsements through which the values located in this thesis can be presented. We do have a story to tell.

10.8 Forward planning: Theory, practice and research

That “story to tell” offers a connecting statement to the potential application of the findings of this thesis to social work as a global profession. In the light of the significance attached to values as underpinning leadership in the model which has emerged from this research, Abbott’s (1999) seminal paper (cited 21 times from 2003 to 2015) “Measuring social work values: A cross-cultural challenge for global practice” offers a useful starting point.
Abbott reports on research using an instrument known as the Professional Opinion Scale (POS) to identify “four factors (values) of 10 items each which were labelled: respect for basic rights, sense of social responsibility, commitment to individual freedom (social justice) and support of self-determination” (Abbott, 1999, p.457) The value statements were based on 41 Public Social Policy Statements developed by the US National Association of Social Workers (NASW, 1983) The four grouped POS factors emerged from data collected from:

128 social workers, representing 26 different countries, recruited at two international social work meetings: the 1995 Asia-Pacific Regional Social Services Conference (Christchurch, New Zealand) and the 1996 Joint World Congress of the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) (Hong Kong) (Abbott, 1999, p.455.)

The four groupings related to societal values that participants believed social work should or should not endorse. They were not connected to organisational contexts examined in this thesis. For that reason, I am not suggesting that Abbott’s findings may simply be applied as a platform for future research using the leadership model in the current project: but there are conceptual connections. The values identified by social workers arguably endorse the position that social work organisational leaders must take them into account in exercising leadership. Abbott’s POS encompassed values and actions arising from those values: an example reads: “there should be a guaranteed minimum income for everyone” (1999, p.457.)

So, bearing in mind Abbott’s cross-cultural values and actions findings, I propose a social work leadership research pathway to explore potential application of the model in this thesis in diverse contexts. Questions informing this pathway might include:

In what ways are the leadership values and actions articulated in this thesis of relevance to the global social work profession?

Closely allied to that global perspective, and revisiting Chu et al.’s (2009, p. 288) proposal that “social justice must be contextualized and take into account the related goals of social harmony, stability, human rights and individual well-being,” how might the leadership values and actions described in this thesis integrate collectivist values
(social harmony, stability) and individualist ideas of “human rights and individual well-being?” As a global profession with increasing influence from the “two-thirds world” (Mohanty, 2003, p. 505), how does the leadership model in this thesis connect with that two-thirds world?

What commonalities might exist between leadership exercised in the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural context of Aotearoa and other nation states with diverse ethnic and cultural composition?

How might the leadership model inform social work services provided in nation states with differing political philosophies such as the People’s Republic of China?

How do the values espoused in the model relate to a neo-liberal management world of which Aotearoa New Zealand is a prime exemplar (Hood, 1991; Schick, 2001)? How might this leadership model contribute to workplace wellbeing and wholeness in the organisational reality of outcomes and outputs-driven NPM management philosophy?

How might the leadership model inform and influence results-based accountability (RBA®) (Friedman, 2009) management thinking applied to organisations providing social work services?

How does social work leadership express and extend the values and actions such as social justice identified in the model in organisations whose task it is to provide social work services?

How does the model function in the increasingly multidisciplinary contexts in which social work services are provided? What is the relationship of social work leadership to the leadership of other professions such as medicine?

In what ways does the model connect social work to the wider leadership field of research and practice?
How might social work leaders operating out of the model articulated in this thesis form effective alliances with those fields already identified: doctors and allied health professionals; lawyers practising in such fields as child and adolescent abuse and offending; academics teaching and researching, for example, in youth law; leadership and management academics; business leaders committed to exercising corporate social responsibility (London, 2010)?

In summary, I suggest that the research pathway proposed by those questions would make a contribution to the implicit challenges put forth by the British social work academics Hafford-Letchfield and Lawler (2010) and the Australian social work academics McDonald and Chenoweth (2009) noted at the outset of this thesis. The wording employed remains valid: “research and debate in the area of social work management and leadership is still in its infancy” and that “more recognised professional pathways to foster better [social work organisational] leadership” are needed (Hafford-Letchfield & Lawler, 2010, pp. 5-6). Likewise, McDonald and Chenoweth (2009) identify a “glaring absence” (p.105) of leadership research in the profession. The gaps noted have been one reason for this study: but I propose that the journey has yet to traverse more uncharted territory (Martin, 2002.) That prospect is stimulating.

10.9 Summative statement: A Leadership model for Aotearoa New Zealand

The summative statement setting out a leadership model is the product of four sources. The data and analysis are the first. Second is the literature informing the study. Third is the interpretive lens of the researcher. Fourth, consistent with social work’s construction of theory through practice and practice through theory (Payne, 1997; 2005), I propose that the synergies created by the interaction of these elements will produce a recognisably new entity.

Two authors in particular have influenced this thesis and will also influence the formation of this summative statement. Keith Grint’s (2005) proposal that leadership does not determine solutions to “wicked” or complex problems but asks questions was discussed in chapter 2.1. Edgar Schein’s insights into the formation of organisational cultures through “underlying assumptions (ultimate source of values and actions); espoused beliefs and values; visible
Values: The “roots” of leadership

What then is the ultimate source of organisational social work leadership in Aotearoa New Zealand? In words already articulated I propose that

Social work leaders appear to be primarily concerned by the values which inform their actions—that *the reasons why they do what they do are of more importance than the actions themselves*. That is evidence of a remarkable commitment to identity, integrity and values.

The implications of that statement are of seminal significance. Leadership actions with no defined “ultimate source of values” (Schein, 2010) are profoundly dangerous. A professor of social work in England Michael Preston-Shoot (2011) warns of these dangers in his paper “On administrative evil-doing within social work policy and services: Law, ethics and practice.” The ultimate source of values is to enter the domain of the philosopher; but Burke’s dictum expresses the issue well:

*If I cannot have reform without injustice, I will not have reform* (Bone, 2005, p.405.)

So how we achieve a society—or more specifically, an organisation—which express the social work values that have emerged in this thesis is as crucial as the outcomes we seek. Not only have values come into view: leadership actions and the questions that Grint says we must ask to address “wicked problems” are part of the construction of the leadership model. I propose that the first question, which we can arguably already answer, is: How does social work leadership integrate an ultimate source of values in expressing actions characterised by justice?

I believe that the findings provide a response. Leadership for social workers brings together the identity of the practitioner exercising leadership (at whatever level and regardless of formal designation) with integrity. That integrity connects the person, his or her ethics and leadership authenticity into a seamless whole. Leadership exercised with that wholeness is likely to facilitate or even guarantee the expression of the other root values detailed in Table 7.1. If integrity is the prime underpinning “ultimate value” (Schein, 2010) it becomes the
yardstick by which actions are evaluated and taken. Every time leadership actions are initiated by a social worker he or she is mindful of two questions, the answers to which reveal why (the values) they are taking those actions: Who am I? And what am I about? Can I live with the potential outcomes of my actions, and are they in accord with the values, standards and principles of the profession?

I suggest that with those questions continually in the mind of the social worker exercising leadership, the remaining five values naturally fit into the process. Any social work leadership action will express ethical, empowering and competent leadership because the initiator is likely motivated to create a safe, trusting workplace in which reflective practice takes place. Staff will be enabled to advance personally and professionally. Conflict is more likely to be constructively addressed because integrity and empowerment will preclude intimidation and the dysfunctionality of a toxic environment. Human rights and social justice for every practitioner will, in Matthew’s words noted in chapter 7.5 and quoted earlier in this chapter create social justice in these terms:

> For our organisation that element of social justice is about [the] notion of people being connected to those around them and the notion of compassion and relationships that enable the redevelopment of a sense of meaning and purpose.

Ecological ideas of interdependency and reciprocity fit hand in glove to that understanding of social justice because they are predicated on the notion that we need one another to secure meaning and purpose. This is another illustration that none of us are “islands” (Donne, 2014) as set out in chapter 7.6. Such interdependency is akin to the fifth value: spirituality, authenticity and servant leadership expressed as accountability to colleagues at diverse levels in the organisational hierarchy. Such accountability provides an environment which gives meaning and purpose. Why is that the case? If I am being asked to voice my perspective on a practice issue by a colleague I receive the message: my views are worth hearing and therefore valuable. I do have purpose.

These values once established as the norm will flow into the last one: commitment to the values embodied by Te Tiriti. Integrity, empowerment, social justice, interdependency and servant leadership all combine to demand an unequivocal commitment to the people of the land, the Tangata Whenua. What is more, the risk of paternalism is addressed because
leadership values and therefore actions acknowledge that we need each other regardless of ethnicity or culture. I suggest that integrity will demand nothing less.

**Actions: the “fruit” of leadership**

The values discussed come alive only when expressed in leadership actions. A critical assessment is required to determine the significance of leadership actions as influenced by core assumptions and values which have emerged from the analysis of data. I suggest that this assessment is nothing less than a determination of whether a model of social work leadership—the aim of the entire project—may be validly constructed. That valid construction is dependent on an affirmative response to a straightforward question: Do leadership actions taken by participants express a distinctively social work character and intent? If they do, what are those distinctions and how are they evidenced?

Interrogating the findings has in fact already given insights into this issue. I propose that every leadership action (table 8.1) carries a social work identity. This list starts with leadership, management and change as the node with the highest number of NVivo-derived references, and ends with communication and thought leadership as the node with the least. The questions guiding the discussion that follows are designed to make a clear connection between the values, the “roots” informing leadership, and the actions, the “fruit” that express those values. That process aims to demonstrate that the integration of these values and actions constitute a model of leadership, the purpose of the project.

The questions guiding this discussion are:

- What if any connections between leadership *values* and leadership *actions* are evident in the findings?
- What are the intended outcomes of the actions and in what way if any do those outcomes contribute to the purpose of social work as a unique profession?

Data analysis revealed a distinction between leadership and management in the following definition (table 8.1):
Leadership, management and effecting change

Drawing on extra-social work sources, this node describes leadership actions as people-related, creating or changing the culture of the organisation in which social work leadership is exercised (Bass & Bass, 2008; Schein, 2010;) and management actions as relating to “things” such as job descriptions, organisational structures and change management. (MacKenzie, 1969 as cited in Bass & Bass, 2008, p. 655)

What values were expressed in this definition? I suggest that the reference to leadership actions as “people-related” arguably connects with every value set out in table 7.1. The Māori proverb quoted at the outset of this thesis (“What is the most important thing in the world? It is people! It is people! It is people!”) acts as a summative statement for the findings. Social work leadership as relating to people—in this instance, the staff in an organisation—only makes sense if it is exercised with integrity; is ethical, empowering and competent; acts as an agent of human rights and social justice; understands the complexity of systems thinking; believes that work has meaning and purpose beyond the day-to-day tasks; and, consistent with social work’s bicultural code in Aotearoa New Zealand, recognises the value of a Te Tiriti-based society.

The perspective that underpins that statement draws on the normative leadership literature review (chapter 4.4) as well as the wisdom found in certain participant transcripts. Burns (2004,) Ciulla (2004,) and Bass and Steidlmieier (2004) make the central observation that transformational leadership must be authentic and good to warrant its inclusion in the domain of leadership. Social work leadership aims to be transformative: of society as socially just; of people as achieving their potential; and as interdependent. This latter perspective is illustrated by Judith’s quote in chapter 7.2 of this whakataukī (Māori proverb) conveying the quality of interdependence between leaders and followers:

*Those who lead give sight to those who follow,*  
*those who follow give life to those who lead*

The interdependence of leadership described above also marks its relationship with other values and actions, acting for example as a mediating influence on the use of power and authority. Authenticity and goodness in leadership naturally connects with advocacy and
empowerment in that the authentic leader is also a servant leader. Servant leadership is concerned with marginalised, vulnerable person or group in society or in the organisation, and equally with actions that will advance personal growth and the ability of those marginalised to function with more autonomy as Greenleaf (1970) notes (as cited in Graham, 1991, p.112.) The interdependent dimension of social work leadership is to function in a systems approach.

The overarching commitment of leadership to creating organisational culture (table 8.1) may be appropriately summed up by the observation that every social work value listed in table 7.1 makes a contribution to that culture. Thus the model articulated as the summative result of this project may be expressed in this final discourse:

>Social work leadership values and actions are an interdependent entity. Without the values, leadership lacks authentic transformational capacity; but without the actions, values become no more than armchair aspirations and ultimately sterile slogans. The leadership model thus presented is an holistic construction by which the commitment to advocacy, empowerment and shared vision of social justice in the organisation as much as in society will be advanced by communication skills such as storytelling, the constructive use of power and authority, thought leadership in alliance with other professions and the motivation of social work practitioners to achieve organisational and societal wellbeing. Social work leadership will be characterised by a commitment to meaning and purpose beyond the day-to-day tasks of the job at hand. It will challenge and stretch social workers to achieve their personal and professional potential as demonstrating the integrated values and actions of the model thus presented. It is a journey that knows no end.
Appendix 1: The core purposes of the social work profession

Social work in various parts of the world is targeted at interventions for social support and developmental, protective, preventive and/or therapeutic purposes. Drawing on available literature, the feedback from colleagues during consultations and the commentary on the international definition of social work, the following core purposes of social work have been identified:

- Facilitate the inclusion of marginalised, socially excluded, dispossessed, vulnerable and at-risk groups of people.
- Address and challenge barriers, inequalities and injustices that exist in society.
- Form short- and longer-term relationships with and mobilise individuals, families, groups, organisations and communities to enhance their well-being and their problem-solving capacities.
- Assist and educate people to obtain services and resources in their communities.
- Formulate and implement policies and programmes that enhance people’s well-being, promote development and human rights, and promote collective social harmony and social stability, insofar as such stability does not violate human rights.
- Encourage people to engage in advocacy with regard to pertinent local, national, regional and/or international concerns.
- Advocate for, and/or with people, the formulation and targeted implementation of policies that are consistent with the ethical principles of the profession.
- Advocate for, and/or with people, changes in those policies and structural conditions that maintain people in marginalised, dispossessed and vulnerable positions, and those that infringe the collective social harmony and stability of various ethnic groups, insofar as such stability does not violate human rights.
- Work towards the protection of people who are not in a position to do so themselves, for example children and youth in need of care and persons experiencing mental illness or mental retardation, within the parameters of accepted and ethically sound legislation.
- Engage in social and political action to impact social policy and economic development, and to effect change by critiquing and eliminating inequalities.
• Enhance stable, harmonious and mutually respectful societies that do not violate people’s human rights.
• Promote respect for traditions, cultures, ideologies, beliefs and religions amongst different ethnic groups and societies, insofar as these do not conflict with the fundamental human rights of people.
• Plan, organise, administer and manage programmes and organisations dedicated to any of the purposes delineated above.

(Sewpaul & Jones, 2005, p. 219)
## Appendix 2: Glossary of Aotearoa New Zealand terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bicultural</td>
<td>The notion that New Zealanders could exist in one nation but as two peoples. Māori could speak their own language, pursue their own traditions, have their own educational institutions such as kōhanga reo (preschool language nests), kura kaupapa Māori (schools using Māori language) and wānanga (universities), provide their own social services, and control their own businesses. (<a href="https://www.nzencyclopedia.govt.nz/en%E9%85%88ulture/bicultural">The Encyclopedia of New Zealand</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamics of Whanaungatanga</td>
<td>A cultural framework that provides understandings on concepts and principles of whanaungatanga to enhance personal skills and actions on how to maintain Whanaungatanga. (<a href="https://www.nzencyclopedia.govt.nz/en%E9%85%88ulture/dynamics-whanaungatanga">Tate, 2010</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whanaungatanga: relationship, kinship, sense of family connection—a relationship through shared experiences and working together which provides people with a sense of belonging. It develops as a result of kinship rights and obligations, which also serve to strengthen each member of the kin group. It also extends to others to whom one develops a close familial, friendship or reciprocal relationship. (<a href="https://teakaonline.org.nz/whanaungatanga">Te Aka online Māori dictionary</a>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manaakitanga</td>
<td>Hospitality, kindness, generosity, support—the process of showing respect, generosity and care for others. (<a href="https://teakaonline.org.nzmanaakitanga">Te Aka online Māori dictionary</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mana whenua</td>
<td>Territorial rights, power from the land, authority over land or territory, jurisdiction over land or territory—power associated with possession and occupation of tribal land. The tribe’s history and legends are based in the lands they have occupied over generations and the land provides the sustenance for the people and to provide hospitality for guests. (<a href="https://teakaonline.org.nzmanawhenua">Te Aka online Māori dictionary</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Māori “cultural renaissance”</td>
<td>Refers to the renewal of Māori culture, development, and identity since the 1960s but accentuated after 1984. It had two principal characteristics: it was driven predominantly by “flax-roots” Māori; and it was rooted in the desire to nurture Te Reo Māori (the Māori language) for a new generation of speakers. (<a href="https://www.nzencyclopedia.govt.nz/en%E9%85%88ulture/morirenaissance">Moon, 2009</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mana Party, later Mana Movement</td>
<td>The party was formed following Hone Harawira's resignation from the Māori Party after that party's disciplinary committee recommended his expulsion. He had been vocal in his opposition to the Māori Party's position on a policy issue relating to ownership of the foreshore and seabed. The party formally launched on 30 April 2011. (<a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M%C4%81ori_Party">Wikipedia</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Māori Party</td>
<td>The party (Māori: <em>Te Paati Māori</em>) is an indigenous rights-based political party, formed on 7 July 2004. Tariana Turia founded the party after resigning from the Labour Party, where she had been a minister in the Fifth Labour Government. She and Pita Sharples, a high-profile academic, became co-leaders. Sharples resigned in 2013 and was replaced by Te Ururoa Flavell. (<a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M%C4%81ori_Party">Wikipedia</a>)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Term | Meaning
--- | ---
**Puao-Te-Ata-Tu** | This document was an enquiry into racism within New Zealand society, and in particular within the Department of Social Welfare. It contains a detailed account of New Zealand's history focusing on the interactions between the indigenous Māori people and the British settlers. It points out in detail the harm done to the Māori people and culture and the effects this has had on the wellbeing and socio-economic status of Māori people. 13 recommendations were given in regard to becoming an anti-racist society and achieving social equality for the Māori people. *(Wikipedia)*

**Rangatiratanga** | Chieftainship, right to exercise authority, chiefly autonomy, chiefly authority, ownership, leadership of a social group, domain of the *rangatira* (chief), noble birth, attributes of a chief. *(Māori dictionary [http://maoridictionary.co.nz/search?idiom=&phrase=&proverb=&loan=&histLoanWords=&keywords=rangatiratanga](http://maoridictionary.co.nz/search?idiom=&phrase=&proverb=&loan=&histLoanWords=&keywords=rangatiratanga))*

**Tangata Whenua** | Tangata whenua is a Māori term for the indigenous peoples of New Zealand and literally means “people of the land”, from tangata, “people” and whenua “land”. *(Wikipedia)*

**Taonga** | Treasure, anything prized - applied to anything considered to be of value including socially or culturally valuable objects, resources, phenomenon, ideas and techniques. *(Māori dictionary [http://maoridictionary.co.nz/search?idiom=&phrase=&proverb=&loan=&histLoanWords=&keywords=taonga](http://maoridictionary.co.nz/search?idiom=&phrase=&proverb=&loan=&histLoanWords=&keywords=taonga))*

**Tauwi** | People who are not Maori, especially non-indigenous New Zealanders. *(Oxford Living Dictionaries [https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/tauwi](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/tauwi))*

**Tipu Ake** | In full: Tipu Ake ki te Ora means “growing from within, ever upwards towards wellbeing.” Tipu Ake is a cyclical leadership model for innovative organisations that focuses on organisational behaviours. It provides new tools for organisations that wish to grow into dynamic living entities, rather than just behaving like machines. *(www.tipuake.org.nz)*

**Treaty of Waitangi principles** | In 1987 the New Zealand Court of Appeal decided upon the following Treaty principles:
- **Participation**
- **Protection**
- **Partnership**
  - The freedom of the Crown to govern.
  - The Crown’s duty of active protection.
  - The duty of the Crown to remedy past breaches.
  - Māori to retain sovereignty over their resources and treasured possessions and to have all the privileges of citizenship.
  - Duty to consult. *(Adapted from Wikipedia)*

**Tūrangawaewae** | Domicile, standing, place where one has the right to stand—place where one has rights of residence and belonging through kinship and *whakapapa*. *(Te Aka online Māori dictionary)*

**Whakapapa** | Genealogy, genealogical table, lineage, descent—reciting *whakapapa* was, and is, an important skill and reflected the importance of genealogies in Māori society in terms of leadership, land and fishing rights, kinship and status. It is central to all Māori institutions. *(Te Aka online Māori dictionary)*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whakatauki</td>
<td>Māori proverb, significant saying, formulaic saying, cryptic saying, aphorism. (Te Aka online Māori dictionary)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3: Participant demographic profile

Participant Demographic Profile: Hierarchical Organisational Levels (N=23)

Participant Demographic Profile: Organisational Context (N=23)
**Participant Demographic Profile: Fields of practice (N=23)**

- Children, young persons: 28%
- Multidisciplinary incl Health: 16%
- Policy: 4%
- Community development: 4%
- Addiction: 4%

**Participant Demographic Profile: Gender (N=23)**

- Female: 83%
- Male: 17%
Participant Demographic Profile: Ethnicity (N=23)

- European: 87%
- Māori: 4%
- Pasifika: 9%

Participant demographics profile: Years of social work experience (N=23)

- > 10: 13%
- Between 10 and 19: 22%
- Between 20 and 29: 26%
- Between 30 and 39: 9%
- Over 40: 30%
**Participant Demographics Profile: Years of Management Experience (N=23)**

- **> 10:** 70%
- **Between 10 and 19:** 13%
- **Between 20 and 29:** 13%
- **Between 30 and 39:** 4%

**Participant Demographic Profile: Age Ranges (N=23)**

- **25-35:** 35%
- **36-45:** 39%
- **46-55:** 9%
- **56-65:** 13%
- **66+:** 4%
### Appendix 4: Te Reo Māori usage by participants (Te Reo Māori in blue)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Phrase</th>
<th>Meaning in English</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Management</strong></td>
<td>Our <em>kaupapa</em> as an organisation</td>
<td>Plan, purpose, scheme, proposal, agenda, subject, programme, theme, issue, initiative</td>
<td>Integration of Te Reo into social work management language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership, culture, social work profession</strong></td>
<td>Triangle where you have clients, staff, organisation, we have <em>Aotearoa</em> in the middle of the triangle</td>
<td>Land of the long white cloud</td>
<td>Te Reo appellation of New Zealand commonly used by non-Māori: for this participant it is an element in her model of social work leadership</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| | *Ma mua ka kite a muri*  
*Ma muri ka ora a mua.* | Those who lead give sight to those who follow; those who follow give life to those who lead | Māori proverbs used by non-Māori is evidence of cultural integration and understanding in social work leadership discourse |
| **Whakapapa of the organisation** | Genealogy, genealogical table, lineage, descent | The location for Māori oratory and debate have become part of social work leadership discourse |
| | We didn’t have a *marae* in those days | Courtyard—the open area where formal greetings and discussions take place |  |
| | They [tukutuku panels] had been made by one of the *Pukenga Atawhai* (health workers). | Ornamental lattice-work used particularly around the walls of meeting houses. Skilled, versed in (*pukenga*). Be kindly, kind, generous, benevolent, hospitable (*atawhai*). | Māori cultural artefacts and social values have been integrated into social work multidisciplinary practice contexts |
| | One is the *Kaumatua* | Adult, elder, elderly man, elderly woman, old man - a person of status within the *whānau* (extended family). | Māori terms for social order are commonly used in social work organisational leadership settings |

Māori appoint leaders who are seen as at that wisdom stage, especially the *whaea* the older women.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Phrase</th>
<th>Meaning in English</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership, culture, social work profession</td>
<td>I was invited to be in a kohanga reo</td>
<td>Māori language preschool</td>
<td>Evidence of social work leadership ecological connections with the Māori community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>He talks to children about their identities; if any of them are having struggles or they want to learn kapa haka</td>
<td>Concert party, Māori cultural group, Māori performing group</td>
<td>Māori music as the universal language has been integrated into social work leadership thinking and practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers and the Tangata Whenua Caucus</td>
<td>Local people, hosts, indigenous people born of the whenua, i.e., of the land where the people's ancestors have lived and where their placenta are buried</td>
<td>Prime evidence of Māori cultural identity integrated in the social work professional body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You need actually to be in partnership with mana whenua to open doors</td>
<td>Territorial rights, power from the land, authority over land or territory, jurisdiction over land or territory—power associated with possession and occupation of tribal land</td>
<td>Māori social structures which legitimise a sense of community order are practically applied to ecological social work leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I've just been to a tangi for a well-respected Kuia who called me a friend.</td>
<td>Rites for the dead, funeral Elderly woman, grandmother, female elder</td>
<td>Social work leaders walking in the Māori world as a personal statement of connectedness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I think that concepts like Manaakitanga really support influence in leadership</td>
<td>Hospitality, kindness, generosity, support—the process of showing respect, generosity and care for others</td>
<td>Deeply held Māori values are seen as influencing and informing the exercise of organisational social work leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tikanga</td>
<td>Correct procedure, custom, habit, lore, method, manner, rule, way, code, meaning, plan, practice, convention, protocol—the customary system of values and practices that have developed over time and are deeply embedded in the social context</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Phrase</td>
<td>Meaning in English</td>
<td>Significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity, relationship</td>
<td>How distressing it was being confronted about being Pākehā</td>
<td>New Zealander of European descent</td>
<td>Acknowledging confrontation: the power differentials between the indigenous Tangata Whenua and the colonisers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I would [ask] social workers:</td>
<td>Extended kinship group, tribe, nation, people, nationality, race - often refers to a large group of people descended from a common ancestor</td>
<td>A social work leader’s outrage at ignorance of Māori identity and language by colleagues indicating their failure to practise biculturally as required by the profession’s ethical code and practice standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“What is the iwi of this child? This is a Māori child.” They would say “Something like Nay Poro.” I would say “Do you mean Ngati Porou?” It was utterly shocking to me</td>
<td>Tribal group of East Coast area north of Gisborne to Tihirau</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>She was North Island Māori, Taranaki. I recognised she was different straight away and of course it’s Ngai Tahu down here</td>
<td>Tribal group to the west of Mount Taranaki Tribal group of much of the South Island</td>
<td>Recognition of tribal Māori identity is evidence of bicultural knowledge and practice by these social work leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Ngati Whatua</strong></td>
<td>Tribal group of the area from Kaipara to Tāmaki-makau-rau (Auckland)</td>
<td>The “sense of belonging” derived from this value is evidence that Māori understanding of kinship is appropriately applied to organisational social work leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The importance of sitting and having a cup of tea and sharing <strong>whanaungatanga</strong></td>
<td>Relationship, kinship, sense of family connection—a relationship through shared experiences and working together which provides people with a sense of belonging</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirituality</td>
<td>Māori sense of spirituality connectedness to the wairua is about people being whole isn’t it?</td>
<td>Spirit, soul of a person which exists beyond death</td>
<td>Recognition of Māori spirituality is evidence that social work leadership sees transcendent meaning beyond the workplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organisational <strong>waiata</strong> and karakia</td>
<td>Song, chant, psalm Incantation, ritual chant, charm, spell</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I acknowledge their mana</td>
<td>Prestige, authority, control, power, influence, status, spiritual power, charisma A supernatural force in a person, place or object</td>
<td>Recognition by social work leadership of Māori understanding that authority in the professional context derives from an appreciation of spirituality as much as organisational position or job title</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Appendix 5: Semi-structured interview schedule of questions

Research Project: Social Work Leadership in Aotearoa New Zealand
Semi-structured interview schedule

Research question
What are the fundamental elements of organisational leadership within social work in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand?

Research objectives
 To explore how social work practitioners who hold or have held leadership or management responsibility in Aotearoa New Zealand conceptualise leadership
 To describe participants’ experiences of social work leadership in Aotearoa New Zealand

Interview questions
These are designed to contribute thematically with regard to relevance for the research theme; and to contribute dynamically to the interpersonal relationship in the interview (Kvale, 1996).

Introducing questions in respect of conceptualising leadership:
1. What comes to mind when you think about leadership?
2. What words do you associate with leadership?

Probing questions
1. What are your thoughts about leadership and its relationship to management?
2. What do you think are the influences on how leadership is exercised?
3. Does leadership have to be ethical?
4. What elements or values do you think are non-negotiable in exercising leadership?
5. Do you think there is such a thing as ideal leadership? What would it look like?

Introducing questions in respect of social work organisational leadership:
1. Without divulging which agency, tell me about your experiences of leadership in social work organisations or agencies.
2. What comes to mind when you think about how leadership is exercised in social work agencies?
3. What words do you associate with leadership in social work organisations?

Probing questions
1. What do you think influences leadership in statutory social work agencies? And what influences leadership in social work NGOs?
2. Do you think that the way you have seen leadership actually exercised in social work organisations looks the same as your ideas of non-negotiable elements or values?
3. Does leadership in social work carry distinctive elements as compared with leadership elsewhere?
4. Without divulging which agency, can you tell me about your first-hand experience of leadership during your career?

As the interview progresses, follow-up questions to themes introduced by the interviewee may be asked or what the researcher thinks are significant words repeated to lead to elaboration.
MEMORANDUM TO:

Dr Carole Adamson
Counselling, HumServ & SocWrk

Re: Application for Ethics Approval (Our Ref. 7679)

The Committee considered your application for ethics approval for your project entitled Social work leadership in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Ethics approval was given for a period of three years.

The expiry date for this approval is 20-Dec-2015.

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: 7679.

(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
Mr Michael Webster
Assoc Prof Christa Fouche
Assoc Prof Michael O'Brien

Additional information:
1. Do not forget to fill in the 'approval wording' on the Participant Information Sheets and Consent Forms, number, before you send them out to your participants.

2. Should you need to make any changes to the project, write to the UAHPEC Administrators by email (here the proposed changes including revised documentation.

3. At the end of three years, or if the project is completed before the expiry, please advise UAHPEC of its

4. Should you require an extension, write to UAHPEC by email before the expiry date, giving full details can be granted for up to three years, after which a new application must be submitted.

5. If you have obtained funding other than from UniServices, send a copy of this approval letter to the Man
For UniServices contracts, send a copy of the approval letter to the Contract Manager, UniServices.

6. Please note that UAHPEC may from time to time conduct audits of approved projects to ensure that the approval that was given.


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