Article

THE NATURE OF INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL WORK IN THE INTEGRATION OF IMMIGRANTS: A SCOPING REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Even though social work has long been viewed as an international profession in many respects due to the pioneers' intense interest in and involvement in international interaction, the field is still lagging in terms of migration. This review aims to demonstrate the economic, social, and cultural integration of immigrants and how this issue is influencing social work practice globally and also investigates immigrants' integration in Aotearoa New Zealand, and how social work is dealing with this issue. The literature review found that most social workers are employed by social service organizations and state agencies that are caught in a paradox: on the one hand, they strive to improve individual emancipation, but on the other, they adhere to a larger social system that upholds oppression. This review calls on social workers and academics across the world to mitigate tensions in social workers' roles between post-enlightenment and collectivist social work as state agents as well as the growing conflict between Western and Asian views of this profession.

Keywords: international social work, immigrant integration, host society, post-enlightenment, biculturalism

INTRODUCTION

Social work is a practice-oriented occupation that supports community empowerment, social change, development, and cohesion. Social workers are concerned about societal injustices that occur every day, all over the world, both visible and behind closed doors (Hosken, 2018). The phrase 'international social work' was originally introduced at the First International Conference of Social Welfare in 1928, and the topic's academic popularity and attention have increased significantly since a book written by Lyons in 1999 and the publication of two important reference works (Healy & Link; Hueglar & Hall) by reputable publishers in 2012 (Healy & Wairire, 2014) There were approximately 281 million people living outside of their country of birth in 2020, which was equal to 3.6% of the world's population (International Organization of Migration [IOM], 2022) and international migration is one of the most important areas where we can connect global and local issues. Immigrants are people who voluntarily depart their home countries in search of new employment opportunities or to be with family members who have already migrated there (Potocky & Naseh, 2019). Thus, migration has become an important topic in social work because when people move, they frequently experience challenges to integrate into host societies but the growing literature on international social work explicitly connects social work practice to the question of immigrants' integration.

Immigration is a contentious and desirable aspect of Aotearoa New Zealand's economy and society. Since the late 1990s, when Aotearoa New Zealand abolished its racially discriminatory immigration policy and switched to a system that chooses immigrants based on personal merits, the country has seen the highest number of immigrants in its history (Liu et al., 2022). Prior to August 2022, the annual net migration hit a record high of 49,000, despite the severe border controls imposed by Coronavirus Disease (Covid-19) (Statistics New Zealand, 2022). Charania et al. (2020) report that immigrants currently comprise approximately 25% of Aotearoa New Zealand's population. The current immigration approach attempts to attract people who would offer their skills, resources, and energy to fill labour market gaps and boost economic growth (New Zealand Productivity Commission, 2021a). As a result, social work practices in Aotearoa New Zealand cannot ignore their role in integrating immigrants into mainstream societies as the number of immigrants is predicted to rise (Kim, 2021). Therefore, this review aims to demonstrate how social work is playing its role in integrating immigrants and how this issue is influencing social work practice globally.

This review is divided into four sections. The topic and the goal are introduced first, followed by the methodology. Secondly, it examines the literature on the integration of immigrants in the host society and social workers' contributions to immigrants' integration. The literature review also focuses on immigrants' integration as well as social work practice in Aotearoa New Zealand. Throughout, the review addresses tensions in social workers' roles between post-enlightenment and collectivist social work as state agents and provides some additional tactics that can help social workers cope with the upsurge in global migration. Thirdly, it discusses the limitations of the present literature. Finally, the conclusion summarises key ideas and places special emphasis on strategies that social workers may use to deal with immigrants' integration.

METHODOLOGY

Google Scholar, ProQuest, Journal Storage (JSTOR), and the Google search engines were used to access pertinent books and journal articles. Additionally, the facilities of Massey University's library were used to access journals, books, and other publications. The search strategy included the terms social integration of immigrants, social work and immigrants, migration history in New Zealand, immigrants in New Zealand, and social work with immigrants in New Zealand. The selected study papers and materials were read and examined to gain a better understanding of how social work is currently responding to immigrants' integration and disputes in social workers' responsibilities between post-enlightenment and collectivist social work as state agents. To identify common themes and factors that might lead to the effective integration of immigrants and how social work is responding to social workers' responsibilities, thematic analysis was used. As a result, the following key themes were identified during this analysis process: (a) Integration in the Host Society (b) Social Workers' Contributions to Immigrants' Integration (c) Immigrants' integration and social work practice in Aotearoa New Zealand.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Integration of Immigrants in the Host Society

Integration of immigrants is a process that takes time, and it is the ultimate endpoint of migration (Franzke & Ruano de la Fuente, 2021). Some academics contend that it is a desired end state (Favell, 2005; Klarenbeek, 2021), while others contend that there is no such thing as a desired end state (Spencer & Charsley, 2021), suggesting that nothing resembling an "integrated society" actually exists. As integration continues to be extremely context- and nation-specific, there is no agreement on a singular definition. Here, the term "integration" refers to the incorporation of immigrants' social, economic, and cultural aspects into a host society, which should then take steps to promote their adjustment by adopting its norms and customs (Gisselquist, 2021; Grzymala-Kazlowska & Phillimore, 2018; Klarenbeek, 2021; Penninx, 2019; Saharso, 2019). It also can be described as a way of reciprocal adjustment between the host community and the migrants (Naveed & Wang, 2021). To achieve successful integration both the host country and the immigrants need to make an equal contribution (Hamberger, 2009; Naveed & Wang, 2021). However, not all migrants receive a warm welcome from the host communities or are given the opportunity to share the same social, economic, and cultural privileges as local residents and some of them strongly identify as members of their ethnic group and either reject or do not integrate into the host society (Cormoș, 2022).

Immigration into a new country is heavily influenced by economic factors (Castles, 2017). Since they are comparatively recent arrivals to the host community, immigrants are likely to have fewer social connections than local residents, which limits their ability to use their network to find employment (Peters & Vink, 2016). However, discrimination is present in host societies, where pay and employment levels are determined more by ethnicity and visa status than by qualifications, creating barriers to economic integration (Quijano, 2020). Japaridze and Kaplan (2023) claim that the significant wage gap between local and immigrant workers in host countries is primarily the result of immigrants being employed at jobs below their level of skill and education. According to a recent study by the University of Chicago, 22% of migrants worked in private households, mostly women, where they frequently endured sexual assault, 12-hour shifts without breaks, and overtime pay (Quijano, 2020).

The age and place of study of immigrants both affect their ability to integrate economically (Peters & Vink, 2016). When Fortin et al. (2016) investigated how a student's county of origin affected the resident-immigrant wage gap, they discovered that graduates from Asian countries fared the worst and that the gap widened as the immigrant's age rose. Moreover, immigrants encounter difficulties integrating economically because they lack access to resources, education, life experience, language skills, and networks (Japaridze & Kaplan, 2023). Additionally, Peters and Vink (2016) suggest that immigrants are not able to access certain sectors of the labour market, such as positions in the public sector, due to restrictive regulations. Greenspan et al. (2018) revealed that when immigrants are not properly integrated into their host societies, anti-immigrant sentiment develops in the public sphere, and worries about increased competition for jobs and housing lead to defensive behaviour or social unrest among locals.

The multidimensional factors affecting immigrant social integration are the subject of expanding scholarship (Leal & Harder, 2023; Zhao et al., 2018). Migration has brought issues of social integration to the forefront of ongoing discussions about the right to citizenship, equal rights, and a sense of belonging (Viola et al., 2018). In the context of the Global North, social integration has been seen as a constructive process that enables those who have been marginalised or excluded to receive

equal opportunities as well as access to rights (Wieviorka, 2014). Örgütü (2017) stresses that although there are no specific international legal instruments for immigrants' integration along with social cohesiveness, everyone has the right to the protection of their human rights under international law and traditional norms, regardless of their status. Social policies pursue the idea of equality of people and are designed to facilitate social inclusion and well-being (Kotkas & Veitch, 2017). Integration policies prove more successful when they adopt a whole-of-community strategy and when everyone involved, including local, regional, and national authorities as well as immigrants and the society that accepts them, has an in-depth comprehension of their responsibilities (Örgütü, 2017). In contrast, Gsir (2017) recalls that immigrants' familiarity with the host tongue, attitudes towards the host culture, and sense of cultural belonging are all crucial for their social integration into the host society. The importance of learning the host tongue is additionally emphasised by Zou and Deng (2022) as a means of achieving economic success, which then leads to social integration. Nevertheless, it is found that despite efforts made by immigrants to integrate, state policies frequently encourage precarious conditions in a number of different ways. Ataç and Rosenberger (2019) declare that social policies serve as a tool for controlling immigration and impose restrictions on immigrants' access to social services. Although social harmony is the goal of integration, many immigrants, according to McIntyre (2008), adversely experience challenges in integrating into host societies because of political reasons. For instance, Arab and Muslim families experience some of the most severe types of discrimination, which has a detrimental effect on social integration, because of the hostility between the West and Muslims that has developed since 9/11 (Sirin et al., 2021).

The term cultural integration refers to the process of acquiring knowledge of and competence in cultural elements, for example, language or societal norms, that help people function in a given society (Gentin et al., 2019; Korteweg, 2017). Integration of immigrants is seen as an imminent danger to the integrity of the culture of a supposedly homogenous society, which can sometimes result in the adoption of nationalistic endeavours of exclusion, racism, xenophobia, and the denial of every aspect of otherness (Grzymała-Kazłowska, 2015). By highlighting the lack of a critical cultural approach to integration, Schinkel (2018) concludes that homogeneity should be abandoned because it perpetuates cross-cultural inequality. According to Hadj Abdou (2019), who agrees with Schinkel (2018), a critical approach to integration is required rather than relying on the notion of a homogeneous society in which immigrants are seen as a source of disruption. This approach needs to be re-examined considering super-diversity in order to understand the complexity of the demographic and ethno-cultural traits that define contemporary (Grzymala-Kazlowska & Phillimore, 2018). In contrast, some research (Amelina, 2021; Errichiello, 2023) has revealed ethnic diversity as a strength where people of different backgrounds coexist peacefully and racism is not an actual social issue, diversity is valued and helps to promote the host nation as inclusive and multiracial. Similarly, (Ryan, 2018; Strange & Oliveira Martins, 2019; Wessendorf, 2018) research conducted on the super-diversity in various European cities and emphasise that integration does not occur in monolithic communities. Immigrants leave ethnic enclaves as soon as their socioeconomic situation improves and settle in neighbourhoods populated by the local majority (Grzymała-Kazłowska, 2015). This typically entails moving to areas with more amenities and safer streets, where they can learn to function in everyday life (Lin et al., 2020). This is a strategy for successfully integrating immigrants into the community (Berry, 2018).

It is fair to say that the integration of immigrants is a challenging process. Social workers participate frequently in this process and are essential in promoting successful immigrant integration (Viola et al., 2018). The argument about social workers' contributions to immigrants' integration is presented in the section below.

Social Workers' Contributions to Immigrants' Integration

Social workers are in a key position and are actively involved in integrating immigrants due to their professional expertise (Cheetham, 2022; Viola et al., 2018). The International Association of Schools of Social Work [IASSW] and the International Federation of Social Workers [IFSW] (2014) also revealed that by adhering to principles and values like human rights, solidarity, social justice, and diversity, social work aims to achieve positive social growth, being empowered, and the freedom of people. This claim unambiguously supports the rights and freedom of immigrants (Viola et al., 2018). Sakamoto (2007) concurs that the goal of social work with immigrants is now economic, social, or psychological integration into the host society in line with the widely accepted ideologies of multiculturalism.

However, the experiences shared by social workers have brought to light how challenging the integration process is. According to Viola et al. (2018), social workers see immigrants' integration as a process of addressing their basic needs, which is necessary but inadequate to accomplish integration. Nevertheless, the reality is that most social workers are employed by social-service organizations and state agencies that are caught in a paradox: on the one hand, they strive to improve individual emancipation, but on the other, they adhere to a larger social system that upholds oppression (Matthewson, 2021). Particularly, non-profit organisations (NGO) contracted and funded to deliver social services have discovered that they are unable to criticize the effects of governmental policies (Mullaly & Dupré, 2018). To avoid this paradox, social workers must first carefully and meticulously engage in policy practice and social advocacy to advance social change and development rather than as a governing mechanism (Finn, 2020; Hoefer, 2019), in accordance with the profession's values, principles, and goals. Without advocacy and policy practice, these social work values and principles will only exist as documents that students must read and recite to pass exams to become social workers (Beckett et al., 2017).

Since the social work profession is dedicated to disadvantaged and marginalised people (Parker & Crabtree, 2017), social workers should get involved in political and social activism that aims to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to have all the services and resources they need that fulfil their basic human needs. When governmental policies are unfair, oppressive, or discriminatory—whether intentionally or unintentionally—social workers can take action to initiate new legislation or amend existing laws by lobbying with bureaucratic and societal systems (Jönsson, 2014). However, participation in policy practice and advocacy with bureaucrats is difficult and complex, and it calls for a variety of knowledge and abilities that social workers might not have (Viola et al., 2018). To address this issue, professional associations and the social work profession must play a significant role (Webb, 2023). Additionally, Julkunen et al. (2023) assert that to promote tolerance and embrace differences, social workers have an ethical obligation to fight oppression by upholding the principles and values of human rights, solidarity, social justice, and diversity.

Henrickson (2022) expresses concern about the conflict between collectivist social work, which is in line with the state's goal of fostering social harmony, and post-enlightenment (liberal humanistic) social work, which encourages personal liberation. Academics were also urged to investigate whether social workers can carry out post-enlightenment social work that is valid and compatible with liberation and empowerment, or if they are just acting as government agents of social control (Henrickson, 2022). Drechsler (2015) also draws attention to the tension between Asian and Western views of social work, where the former places a higher priority on security and social harmony and the latter encourages individual values and freedom. Finally, Henrickson (2022) concludes that while these questions will not be answered right away, if we do not pose them, we will never begin to look for solutions. These problems highlight the need for a critical analysis of the theoretical and ideological underpinnings of social work with immigrants.

Immigrants' Integration and Social Work Practice in Aotearoa New Zealand

Originally based on the indigenous structure of its indigenous Māori people, Aotearoa New Zealand has always been a popular destination for immigrants (Ward & Masgoret, 2008). Less than 200 people settled in New Zealand following James Cook's arrival in 1769, while there was a presence of 100,000 Māori (Phillips, 2023). Early British colonisation was made possible by the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi, and because of severe labour shortages in the nation in the latter part of the nineteenth century, European immigration to Aotearoa New Zealand increased gradually (Mutu, 2019). However, Kukutai and Rata (2017) insist that with the significant inflow of British immigrants after the signing the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, interactions between the indigenous people and the immigrants were fundamentally altered. A lower percentage of Asian immigrants, Chinese and Indian, also made Aotearoa New Zealand their home at that time, although they were subject to racialised practices and policies (Bandyopadhyay, 2009; Kim et al., 2016). This review does not intend to discuss historical legislation and policies that affected Aotearoa New Zealand's immigrant population and have already been covered by numerous authors; (Ferguson, 2003; Elers, 2018 and Wheeler, 2021). These studies demonstrated how racialised ideology significantly influenced Aotearoa New Zealand's immigration policy between the 1880s and 1920s, when a number of rules and restrictions were put in place to limit immigration from and naturalisation of people from non- European nations (Ferguson, 2003; Elers, 2018 and Wheeler, 2021).

It must also be acknowledged that the extreme shortage of employees and Aotearoa New Zealand's distinct geographic location during the post-World War II period led to a rush of massive Pacific immigration (Bedford et al., 2017). A recession in the 1970s, nevertheless, contributed to the idea that Pacific Islanders were to blame for societal issues and a lack of jobs, and this belief led to the deportation of people who had overstayed their visas (De Bres, 2022). This included an operation called the "Dawn Raids," in which police randomly checked the passports of brown people (De Bres, 2022). The traumatising raids mostly targeted the dwellings of Pacific Islanders families in Auckland, a majority of whom were either residents legitimately or citizens (De Bres, 2022). A more enlightened government officially issued an official apology in 2021 to the communities and people affected by the Dawn Raids (Etherington, 2022). According to the press release, the Dawn Raids period placed a dark cloud over Aotearoa New Zealand's shared history, whole communities were singled out and terrorised, and the raids were unfair (Etherington, 2022).

The Government began to accept non-traditional sources of immigration in 1986, and in 1991 it started to actively seek out skilled and business-oriented immigrants (Wheeler, 2021). This led to a noticeable rise in the number of immigrants from Asian nations, particularly China, India, and the Philippines (Kim et al., 2016). The current emphasis is on luring high-calibre immigrants who will contribute their knowledge, resources, and vitality to boost domestic demand and open job opportunities (De Bres, 2022). Over 10,000 immigrants per year settled in Aotearoa New Zealand between 2015 and 2019 (New Zealand Productivity Commission, 2021b); this data demonstrates that Aotearoa New Zealand draws immigrants from all over the world due to a variety of pull factors. Aotearoa New Zealand is a popular immigration destination due to both economic and non-economic pull factors, including better wages, better opportunities, stability and safety, freedom, a higher standard of living, and family reunions (New Zealand Productivity Commission, 2021b). According to the 2018 census, the population of Aotearoa New Zealand is made up of 70.2% European ethnicity, 16.5% Māori, 15.1% Asian, and 8.1% Pacific, with 1.2% from Middle Eastern, Latin American, and African nations (Statistics New Zealand, 2019). However, if these trends are considered from an international perspective, Aotearoa New Zealand has only had a very limited amount of time to acknowledge and successfully address its growing sociocultural integration (Simon-Kumar, 2020).

Although there was obvious antagonism towards racial and cultural diversity for an important part of Aotearoa New Zealand's history, the current foundation of the country's diversity is the acceptance of the freedom to practise many languages, cultures, and faiths, and access to employment, not only by the local residents but also through numerous initiatives from the Government (Chiou, 2017; Fleras, 2009). Simon-Kumar et al. (2020) drew attention to the fact that the New Zealand Government also actively considers promoting integration a top priority, and a few government programmes were launched with the justification that Aotearoa New Zealand's many cultures will enrich the country. Among these, the well-known Settlement Strategy provided incoming immigrants with support in navigating the nation's work, housing, school, and health systems by providing translator services, English-language lessons, and other forms of assistance (Fleras, 2009; Rupar et al., 2015; Simon-Kumar, 2020). Ethnic minorities can also engage in civic and political activity, including voting and belonging to political parties (Simon-Kumar, 2020), which is unique to Aotearoa New Zealand. This evidence show that immigrants are accepted in Aotearoa New Zealand and that the nation has created a safe environment for them to do so, which has facilitated their easier integration (Wheeler, 2021). Additionally, because of their desire to learn Aotearoa New Zealand's language, ethics, practices, skills, and economic activities, these immigrants have become more adaptable to the Aotearoa New Zealand environment and have helped to promote integration (Simon-Kumar, 2020). It is noteworthy that more than 160 distinct ethnic groups now call Aotearoa New Zealand home (Statistics New Zealand, 2020), this strongly demonstrates immigrants' integration into the nation.

Since social work is a Western endeavour, it was first practised as a colonial activity in Aotearoa New Zealand, and was greatly influenced by the founding document, the Treaty of Waitangi (Beddoe, 2018). It also reveals that the profession's history reflects the up and down relationship with the government as well as the profession's battle to gain recognition as a profession while also pursuing its goals of promoting societal rights and equality for all (Beddoe, 2018). The Government does maintain a bicultural policy based on the Treaty of Waitangi, which was signed in 1840 by indigenous Māori and the British Crown (Kim, 2021). However, there is no official policy promoting multiculturalism (Nayar, 2013). As a result, in Aotearoa-New Zealand, biculturalism and multiculturalism in social work practice are frequently viewed as competitive frameworks that are oppositional and conflicting with one another (Dam, 2017). Biculturalism is ingrained in many aspects of government policy because of the Treaty of Waitangi's partnership principle, particularly in the areas of the environment, health, education, welfare, and justice, but it's important to remember that this also paves the way for the coexistence of various multi-cultural groups (Nayar, 2013; Pepworth & Nash, 2009). Social work is, in principle, an occupation that fosters social responsibility and cohesion (IASSW & IFSW), 2014). According to this idea, social work in Aotearoa New Zealand emphasises how to enable individuals and groups; and to act to effect change in the social structures that support injustice (Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social workers [ANZASW], 2019). This viewpoint offers a helpful framework for social workers to think about how the various actors involved in the settlement process interact to address the challenges that immigrants face as they adjust to community life and advance their integration (Kim, 2021). When compared to bicultural social work practice, multicultural practice provides legitimacy for immigrants' position and contribution to Aotearoa New Zealand society, whereas bicultural practice is a fundamental recognition of indigenous people (tangata whenua) and British settlers (Pakeha) (ANZASW, 2019). Dam (2017) highlights that despite the agreement between tangata whenua and Pakeha, the Treaty of Waitangi established manaakitanga-based Aotearoa New Zealand in a special position in comparison to other nations, where every resident, regardless of their national origins, stands for respect and care for one another while also sharing power and protecting the environment. As a result, social work cannot be separated from the diverse ethnic groups that make up Aotearoa New Zealand, and it is crucial for social workers to be familiar with and skilled at working with immigrants in this context (ANZASW, 2019).

LIMITATIONS OF THE LITERATURE

The nature of international social work in the integration of immigrants is subject to limited relevant research (Anis & Turtiainen, 2021; De Paola & Brunello, 2016; Viola et al., 2018). Numerous studies on international migration have identified the driving forces for immigration to new countries, but they have not adequately addressed the nature of international social work integrating immigrants or the ways in which this topic is impacting global social work practice (Cheetham, 2022; Kim, 2021; Potocky & Naseh, 2020). It is necessary to undertake further research to better understand how social workers deal with the challenges posed by post-enlightenment and collectivist social work as state agents.

Although Aotearoa New Zealand is historically an immigrant-based country, there is no solid research on how immigrants are integrating in this country and how social worker is dealing with this process. Therefore, this review calls for Aotearoa New Zealand researchers to research in this area.

CONCLUSION

The review reveals that tensions between immigrants and their hosts are more likely when there are barriers in the way of migrants participating in the social, cultural, and economic affairs of their communities (Cheetham, 2022; Grzymala-Kazlowska & Phillimore, 2018). The review also finds that the social workers' ability to aid immigrants in integrating into society is questioned due to their adherence to a larger social system, despite the principles and values of social work that aim to achieve positive social growth and freedom of people (Viola et al., 2018). Additionally, it explains that there was

obvious antagonism towards race and culture in Aotearoa New Zealand's history, but 160 distinct ethnic groups now call Aotearoa New Zealand home which strongly demonstrates immigrants' integration (Statistics New Zealand, 2020). The review emphasises the need for social workers to become politically and socially active rather than acting as a governing mechanism or state agent by pointing out the necessity of policy practice, social advocacy, and political activism (Matthewson, 2021). Most significantly, a long-lasting solution is needed to address the contentious role of social work between post-enlightenment and collectivist social work, as well as the growing conflict between Western and Asian views (Henrickson, 2022). Achieving effective integration of immigrants is a two-way process that calls for equal privileges and obligations for all parties, as well as mutual adaptation on the parts of the host society and the immigrants (Hamberger, 2009; Naveed & Wang, 2021). It needs also to be acknowledged that if there is an absence of integration into a new culture, society will be chaotic, and immigrants are more likely to experience depression, joblessness, and anti-social behaviours like drug use, violence, and crime (Greenspan, 2018).

Finally, given that social work as a profession is in such varied and developing phases across nations, it may not be possible to have a globally recognized response at this time, but as social workers, it is imperative that we navigate the avenues in search of a mutually agreeable solution.

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