Including Decolonization in Social Work Education and Practice

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Abstract

Social service providers must support the recovery of Indigenous peoples from the effects of colonization. Therefore, social work educators must help decolonize our profession. Indigenous North Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians have experienced colonization and its multigenerational impact. Without an understanding of the effects of colonization, social workers, many of whom will work with Indigenous clients, will be less prepared to encourage positive change. A description of decolonizing Social Work practice and education through the application of post-colonial theory and approaches is provided. This approach can also inform Social Work with African-American and Indigenous Hispanic peoples since these groups have also been negatively affected by the oppression of colonization. The focus of this discussion is the application of post-colonial approaches to Social Work. The decolonization of Social Work practice, through the incorporation of Indigenous worldviews into Social Work curriculum including knowledge, skills, and values, which are needed for effective provision of social services, is demonstrated through reforms to Indigenous child welfare services.

The education of Social Work practitioners and practices continue to marginalize Indigenous knowledges[1] and cultures. To provide effective services, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Social Work students need to be better prepared to work with Indigenous peoples[2], families, and communities. Social Work students need to be provided the knowledge, skills and values that will support and enhance their ability to work in partnership with Indigenous peoples. Viewing curriculum from a post-colonial lens can aid in this endeavor.

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1 *Knowledges* refers to the knowledge bases of various diverse indigenous cultures.
2 *Indigenous peoples* are the original people of the Americas, including people who have been labeled by various governments as American Indian, Native Hawaiian, First Nations, Inuit, Aboriginal, and Métis.

WHAT IS COLONIZATION AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO SOCIAL WORKERS?

By the 1930s European colonies and former colonies encompassed 84% of the land in the world (Fieldhouse, 1989). In North America, colonialism refers to the "cultural exploitation that developed with the expansion of Europe over the last 400 years" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2000, p. 45). Similarly, Said (1993) a post-colonial scholar, stated that colonialism or imperialism is "the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distinct territory; 'colonialism'…is the implanting of settlements on distinct territory" (p. 8). Additionally, the main interest in the colonized countries is material wealth for the colonizer not the wisdom, knowledge, religions, and philosophies the colonized people created over thousands of years (Ashcroft et al., 2000).

Colonization includes the control of the land and the production by Indigenous peoples through war or the threat of war. Although there had been a history of conflict between Indigenous nations, European colonization was unique because the colonizing forces were from a different continent, drastically altering the societies they colonized by restructuring the economies for their own benefit, and ignoring the needs of the colonized peoples (Loomba, 1998). Colonization, represented to the world as *civilization*, created European economic and governmental expansion throughout much of the world and as a result, Europeans attempted to control, exploit, and subjugate Indigenous peoples. According to Smith (1999), colonization caused the death of as many as 90% of Indigenous peoples. Through war and disease, European conquerors took Indigenous slaves and natural resources to a distant continent and created economic dependence in the colonies and multi-layered relationships between the conqueror and the conquered, decimating Indigenous ways of living, by creating the reservation/reserve systems in North America. This system created a state of dependence for these Indigenous peoples (Dickason & McNab, 2009). Colonized nations have provided the natural resources, raw materials, labor, and markets, while the *metropolis*[3] has manufactured the goods, and the *colonizers* have reaped the profits (Loomba, 1998). Colonization left Indigenous Nations of the U.S., Canada, and Hawaiʻi dependent on Great Britian, France, and subsequently the newly formed United States and Canada. The role of religious institutions was pivotal in this process.

It is essential that social workers understand the source of what can appear as dysfunctional behavior of Indigenous peoples and families. The loss of family, communities, and cultures has left a legacy of death, pain, and devastation that affects the Indigenous peoples today in the form of multi-generational trauma. According the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2006), American Indian people have increased rates of suicide, drug and alcohol addiction, health concerns, infant mortality rates, poverty, and violence.

3 The *metropolis* includes places like London, Paris, and Rome.

By the 1970s, many of the European colonies were considered relatively independent and were regarded as post-colonial (Ashcroft et al., 2000). However, in North America, the European colonial systems transformed the Eurocentric-based colonies into *Nations*, the U.S. and Canada. The original *First Nations* of the Americas remain colonized in a condition identified as the *Fourth World* by Secwepemc elder, George Manuel (1974). Along with co-author Polsuns, Manual described poverty, lack of health-care, and unsafe living conditions for Indigenous peoples. Blackstock (2005) identified this same concern when she cited a 1998 United Nations report on the Human Development Index that identified Canada as the best country to live in, except for the Indigenous people of Canada, whose communities were ranked 79th along with Peru and Brazil.

Social workers need to understand the history and current issues created by colonization to work effectively with people who have been colonized. Currently little information is required in Social Work education in the U.S., while some information is required in Canada and Australia (AASW, 2010; CASWE, 2012; CSWE, 2008). The Canadian Association of Social Work Education and the Australian Association of Social Workers have specific accreditation standards requiring Indigenous content (AASW, 2010; CASWE, 2012). Although the U.S. Government acknowledges the sovereign status of federally recognized American Indian Tribes with their own social services and child welfare systems, and Indian Health Service, the Council on Social Work education does not require Social Work programs to educate students about the unique circumstances of American Indian people (CSWE, 2008).

The need for Indigenous content can be seen through the diversity and range of Indigenous peoples[4] across North America. In Canada there are currently 614 First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities, including over 1,319,890 people speaking several indigenous languages (Information First Nations People of Canada, 2003). According to The U.S. The Bureau of Indian Affairs (2011), there are 565 Federally Recognized American Indian Tribes. Also, there are 27 State Recognized Tribes (State recognized tribes in the United States, 2011). The U.S. Census (2011) enumerated 5.2 million American Indians and Alaska Natives and 1.2 million Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders.

DECOLONIZING APPROACHES TO SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

An approach based on post-colonial theory can guide the decolonization of Social Work practice by helping to create an awareness of the effects of colonization and create less oppressive ways of delivering social services. An approach that includes the perspectives of Indigenous, non-Western people and their worldviews will help

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4   The term *peoples* is used in this context to acknowledge the diverse cultures that are categorized as indigenous, American Indian, and Aboriginal.

transform the field of Social Work co-creating more effective services with Indigenous peoples. Post-colonial theory gives insights into the struggles of colonized peoples to recover from the effects of colonization including slavery, economic exploitation, war, disease, and suppression of indigenous culture and spirituality (Ashcroft, 2001). Post-colonial theory foregrounds the histories and current issues caused by colonization, the need for self-determination, and self-governance utilizing Indigenous worldviews. This approach encourages social workers to consider the effects of colonization when working with Indigenous peoples.

When a post-colonial theoretical lens is used in Social Work curriculum, it can provide an alternative to the *Western Eurocentric* perspectives on culture, history, and education utilized by the profession of Social Work (Baskin, 2009; Blackstock, 2009; Weaver, 2005). Gail Baikie, an Indigenous Social Work educator (2009) suggests that postcolonial thinking "raises the possibility of creatively drawing upon the knowledge from…the diversity of Indigenous cultures…or creating new Indigenous knowledge applicable to contemporary social challenges" (p. 56). Social workers regularly use critical theory to analyze policies, practice, and research. Hart (2009) identified the crux of the problem with the application of critical theory to Social Work practice in his statement that, "most social workers do not write directly about anti-colonialism" (p. 25). Grande (2004) found that critical theory could not be effectively applied to American Indian education and practice, and perpetuated colonization. Therefore another theoretical approach, which includes a post-colonial perspective is needed.

A post-colonial approach includes the *worldviews* and *cosmovisions*[5] of the Indigenous peoples who have been and continue to be affected by colonization. The term post-colonial is not intended to describe a period of time after colonization, since colonization continues today. Post-colonial resistance and discourse began at the beginning of colonization; there has always been resistance by Indigenous peoples, which continues today (Ashcroft, 2001). The Indigenous peoples in the Americas and Canada have survived and resisted colonization, as have many Indigenous peoples around Mother Earth. Mi'kmaq educator Marie Battiste (2004) wrote:

> Postcolonial is not a time after colonialism, but rather for me represents more an aspiration, a hope, not yet achieved. It constructs a strategy that responds to the experience of colonization and imperialism…it is about rethinking the conceptual, institutional, cultural, legal and other boundaries that are taken for granted and assumed universal, but act as barriers to many including Aboriginal people, women, visible minorities, and others. (p. 1)

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5   *Cosmovision* is a view of the world and the cosmos, including spirituality (Tamburro, 2010).

The hyphen in post-colonial writing is a marker, which separates *post-colonial* from *post structural* and *postmodern*. Post-colonial theory provides a theoretical *home* for the discourses and ideas of people who have been and continue to be effected by colonization (Ashcroft, 2001). Post-colonial thinking also includes the descendants of people who have benefitted from the colonization and the Indigenous peoples who are still experiencing the negative effects of colonization. Post-colonial writers have examined *Eurocentric, Western* thought, discourse, and writing, with a focus on understanding colonization (Gandhi, 1998; Loomba, 1998). Social Work is a profession based on European concepts and problems; however Social Work practice is strengthened by a variety of points of view. Post-colonial theory provides a theoretical basis for the inclusion of the voices, stories, and cosmovisions of Indigenous peoples who have been, and continue to be colonized.

Post-colonial discourse provides space in the Social Work curriculum for Indigenous people to speak about their everyday lives. The inclusion of personal stories into the curriculum has been identified as the most effective way for educators to sensitize students to the issues of social justice and help create cultural change (Pinar, 2004). For example, students can gain a better understanding of colonization through Indigenous centric stories such as those in *Strong Women's Stories* (Anderson & Lawrence, 2003), which provide students with insights in a very personal manner, based on lived experiences.

A number of Indigenous authors examine and rebut the verbal and written descriptions of Indigenous people by Western writers (Baikie, 2009; Battiste, 2002). Post-colonial scholars have explored the effects of colonization on themselves and other Indigenous peoples and relationships between people who are colonized and those who continue to colonize. Post-colonial theory gained status in the academy through the field of literary criticism (Gandhi, 1998; Loomba, 1998). Writers from countries that have been colonized such as India, Palestine, Canada, the U.S. and countries in Africa have all contributed to the development of this theory. Post-colonial theory grew out of the resistance of colonized and formerly colonized people.

Post-colonial theory provides terms, concepts, and perspectives that help explain the experiences that colonized people have in common such as, poverty, lack of health care, and unsafe living conditions. This theory began to gain status in the academy in the late 1970s, when Edward Said, a Palestinian living in the U.S., began to examine how Eurocentric writers described people from Asia. Said's early writing was influenced by critical theorists including the work of French post-structuralists about discourse analysis (Ashcroft et al., 2000; Gandhi, 1998). In his often-cited text *Orientialism*, Said (1978), utilized text analysis to critique the writing of Western authors who constructed a European way of describing the Orient and Asian peoples. Eurocentric writers described the peoples and

cultures of Asia in ways that were not supported by the evidence (Said, 1978). This approach is labeled *othering*, because it creates a false impression that Asian and European peoples have very little in common and European people are superior. The descriptions fit the way Western writers *wanted* to view Asian peoples and cultures, not how they were. By utilizing an Indigenous worldview, post-colonial writers distinguished themselves from critical writers who utilize some of the same techniques but have a Western worldview. Post-colonial critique examines power, resistance, and punishment. This analysis exposes the connections among culture, knowledge, the economy, and politics, leading to continued colonization and also the possibility of decolonization (Loomba, 1998). The violence of colonization includes taking land, children, and resources. In addition, the thoughts, beliefs, and actions of Indigenous people can become part of the colonizing process, this is called *genocide of the mind* by Cherokee author MariJo Moore (2003). Post-colonial theory offers a way to understand and deconstruct the thinking, institutions, and histories of colonizers (Loomba, 1998).

Another concept utilized by critical and post-colonial theorists is *hegemony* (Payne, 1997), which represents the worldview of dominators as the *only reality*. Understanding hegemony helps to explain how colonizers achieve domination through control over the economy, education, media, and government, so that the interests of those in power are represented as the best interest of all in society (Ashcroft et al., 2000). Hegemony helps explain how the colonization of Indigenous peoples is still tolerated in Hawai'i, Canada, and the U.S. This perspective continues today, through what is and is not included in educational curriculum, media, and literature (Justice, 2004). Many colonizers still believe they are spiritually, culturally, intellectually, and technically superior and attempt to force and convince those who they colonize to believe marginalized and colonized people are inferior. This hegemonic process contributes to poor self-esteem, creating a context where Indigenous people struggle with themselves, and other Indigenous peoples. Social Work, as a profession has been part of this hegemonic belief system, with an emphasis on *charity* instead of *empowerment*, and imposing other Eurocentric social structures, and belief systems on the Indigenous peoples of North America (Blackstock, 2009; Weaver, 2005). Hegemony has been, and continues to be, analyzed by scholars interested in decolonization (Battiste, 1996; Graveline, 1998).

Post-colonial theory utilizes the concept of *Re-membering*, which encourages the reconnection to what happened in the past and can help Indigenous peoples restore cultures and languages (Bhabha, 1994). Therefore, unique histories of diverse colonized peoples should be in Social Work curriculum, to *re-member* Indigenous pasts and heal from the oppression of colonization.

Post-colonial theory foregrounds the common concerns, themes, and approaches to recovery from colonization among diverse Indigenous peoples. This theory also emphasizes the differences among the Indigenous peoples of North America. For example, the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) peoples are very different culturally from the Blackfeet/Blackfoot, Native Hawaiian or other Indigenous peoples. However, all of these Indigenous peoples have had European-based state borders imposed on their cultural homelands. Today, Indigenous communities continue to respond to colonization (Blackstock, 2009; Frideres & Gadacz, 2008; Weaver, 2005; Wilson & Macdonald, 2010). Through gaining insights into the unique histories, circumstances, and strengths of colonized peoples, social workers can support positive *re-membering* and changes within the Indigenous communities, colonial social structures of society, and academic programs.

Post-colonial theory provides strategies to *decolonize* that have been utilized by various Indigenous communities (Ashcroft, 2001). A theoretical *home* is provided for Indigenous voices, space, and credibility in the academy and in Social Work practice. Post-colonial theory brings Indigenous writers from the *margins* into the *center* of academia (Gandhi, 1998; Loomba, 1998). This theory supports the credibility, voices, cosmovisions, multiple knowledges, histories, skills, stories, and values of Indigenous peoples.

Although each *settler colony*[6] is unique, there are many similarities, which continue to affect Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples today (Hoxie, 2008). The effects of colonial Imperialism have had a negative impact on how Indigenous peoples are viewed by the governments that have historically controlled social services, including residential schools and child welfare. Colonization has also influenced the perspectives and privileged status of social service providers including social workers, who are often employed by, and represent the interests of, governmental agencies. How Indigenous peoples are viewed by themselves and society has a great deal of influence on social workers (Baskin, 2002; Weaver, 2005).

Post-colonial theory differs from other theories by focusing on the processes of colonization, as well as colonizers, and those who are colonized. Recognizing ways in which Indigenous peoples are being presented in Western versions of education about Indigenous history and current social issues is essential in order to decolonize Social Work education. Some Indigenous Social Work authors have begun to reference post-colonial writers and utilize decolonizing themes including Hart (2009), Harris (2006), Weaver (2005), Baskin (2009, 2010), and Baikie (2009).

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6   When colonizers move in and take over Indigenous communities to establish a colony, they create a settler colony (Ashcroft et al., 2000).

RELATING POST-COLONIAL APPROACHES TO SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AND PRACTICE

Colonies or former colonies have inherited the constructed system of colonization; however, we are often unaware of these influences in everyday life (Hoxie, 2008). Canada and the U.S. continue to colonize Indigenous peoples today (Baikie, 2009; Sinclair, Hart, & Bruyere, 2009). For example, there were thousands of Indigenous languages, many technologies, social structures, ceremonies, belief systems, and ways of life fully developed before colonization began (Dickason & McNab, 2009). Many of these languages, belief systems, ceremonies, and ways of life still exist and would enhance the understanding of social workers.

Indigenous peoples are over-represented in social services due to the effects of colonization including discrimination, poverty, residential schools, the removal of Indigenous children from their communities, and urban relocation programs (Blackstock, 2009; Dickason & McNab, 2009; Weaver, 2005). Social Workers are most likely to work with Indigenous people in urban areas. One reason for an over-representation of Indigenous people in urban social services in the U.S. was the American Indian Relocation Policy in which the U.S. Congress attempted to terminate treaties and relocate the people to urban areas in the 1940s to the 1970s (Tyler, 1973). Tribal members were paid to relocate to large cities such as New York, Chicago, Seattle, Denver, Minneapolis, Indianapolis, and Los Angeles. According to the U.S. National Archives at Chicago, this policy "eliminated much government support for Indian tribes and ended the protected trust status of all Indian-owned lands" (paragraph 1) and shifted the majority of American Indian people to urban dwellers. In Canada, as a result of residential schools, the majority of Indigenous people live in urban areas, bringing them into contact with mainstream social services (Blackstock, 2009; Frideres & Gadacz, 2008). Therefore, social workers practicing in urban areas are likely to be working with some Indigenous people.

To create a society that is equitable and fair, the colonizers and their descendants must work together with the Indigenous peoples to find solutions to decolonize society and to address the inequities that were brought about by the colonial system. Post-colonial writers have examined the issues of colonization, exploitation, resistance, healing, recovery, and transformation, which are important themes for social workers (Gandhi, 1998; Loomba, 1998). A post-colonial lens provides useful insights on how to create social justice. Post-colonial writers ask questions useful to Indigenous peoples. As an example, the relationship of Indigenous identity to social services could be questioned in more depth. Post-colonial writers also explore ways that colonized people *re-member* their history and reclaim their self-determination. These scholars may then explore ways in which cultures recover and re-form after

being colonized. This theory addresses the transformation of people who have been colonized while providing insights into ending oppression for those who are oppressors (Ashcroft, 2001).

The most effective social services for Indigenous people and communities utilize decolonized community-determined approaches focusing on community goals, values, and strategies (Baskin, 2003; Cross, 1996). Local communities should provide *guidance and control* in the development and provision of social services in partnership with social worker allies who aid in the recovery (Blackstock, 2009; Weaver, 2005). One specific example cited by both Canadian and U.S. scholars is the U.S. Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 with (ICWA) (Blackstock, Cross, George, Brown, & Formsma, 2006). The ICWA was passed in response to an over-representation of American Indian children being removed from their communities, effectively accomplishing the same goals as residential schools, that of cultural genocide (Portley, 2000; Red Horse et al., 2000; *U.S. Code: Title 25: Indians Chapter 21 - Indian Child Welfare*, 2003). In the U.S., ICWA established child welfare courts controlled by federally-recognized tribes and requires court systems to recognize the sovereign right of a federally-recognized tribe to have jurisdiction of their children (Portley, 2000). Recognizing that Indigenous children belong to their parents and their First Nation Band(s) or American Indian Tribe(s) presents an important Indigenous perspective for social services providers, who are expected to respect the jurisdiction of the Tribe over foster placements of tribal members or children who are eligible to be enrolled as members.

The exclusion of accurate Indigenous history and cultural knowledge led to social workers participating in unnecessary removal of Indigenous children, which is a form of *cultural genocide* (Weaver, 2005). For example, a misunderstanding of what constitutes family in non-Western cultures, has led to the unnecessary removal of Indigenous children by child welfare workers. An Indian child left with a relative might be considered abandoned by child welfare workers but not by the Indigenous community (Blackstock, 2009; Weaver, 2005). In Canada, this *child abduction*[7] was known as the Sixties Scoop, since the removals began in the 1960s when the federal governmental began funding foster placements because of the terrible living conditions on Indian reserves and these practices continue today (Sinclair, 2007, 2009). Instead of social workers advocating for better living conditions on reservations and reserves, many Indigenous children were removed from their homes and communities unnecessarily (Blackstock, 2009; Sinclair, 2007, 2009; Ungar, 1977).

The U.S. considers American Indian Tribes dependent sovereign nations, based on the court case, Cherokee Nation v Georgia in 1831 (Deloria & Lytle, 1984). By the mid-1970s self-determination, supported by the civil rights movement and American

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7   Child abduction is a Canadian term for the removal of children.

Indian Movement pushed Congress and the courts to shift control over social services back to federally recognized tribes (Cornell & Kalt, 1998). According to Cornell and Kalt (1998), since the mid-1970s, federally recognized tribes made significant progress toward rebuilding their "governments and economic strategies" (p. 188). These authors identified the importance of nation-building vs. development on for American Indian tribes, despite the attempts of a number of states and Congress to reduce self-determination.

From a social service perspective, the importance of self-determination was supported by the research of Chandler and Lalonde (2004) who indicated that 90% of the First Nations youth suicides in British Columbia come from 10% of the 200 Bands. Although the suicide rate of First Nations youth is higher than that of mainstream youth, Bands with the *most* self-governance had the least number of suicides; in fact those with the most self-governance had *no suicides*, (Chandler & Lalonde, 2004).

A barrier to the support for developing self-governance by Social Work has been the lack of respect of Indigenous cultures or peoples (Blackstock, 2009). "Historically, the social work and psychology professions have acted as an extension of Amer-European systems imposing colonial processes of oppression" (Duran & Duran, 1995, p. 11). "There is much anecdotal evidence from Aboriginal helpers on how current social work education does not represent them, their world views or the situations in their communities" (Baskin, 2005, p. 2). The Canadian Association of Social Workers wrote to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples of 1996:

> Ethnocentric practices and disrespect of Aboriginal cultures have produced anger [and] distrust…among Aboriginal peoples towards the profession. Aboriginal people recognized long ago the need for fundamental changes to social work practices within Aboriginal cultures and have been calling for these changes for many years. (as cited in Hart, 2002, p. 11)

A Social Work curriculum that incorporates a post-colonial lens would include Indigenous knowledge, skills, and values in all aspect of the curriculum, including policy, practice, values and ethics, diversity, human behavior in the social environment, and research. For example, a critique of policies specifically designed to colonize and control Indigenous peoples should be included. In Canada such policies include: the Indian Act, Bill C-31, Potlatch Laws, Residential Schools, Sixties-Scoop, the Millennium Scoop, and treaties. In the U.S., policies include treaties, the Indian Removal Act of 1830, boarding schools, Indigenous Hawaiian sovereignty issues, and the Indian Child Welfare Act. Additional U.S. laws and policies that affect American Indian people include: *The General Allotment or Dawes Act of 1887*, *Indian Reorganization Act of 1934*, *Public Law 280*, *The Termination Era*, *The Indian*

Education Act of 1972, and *The Indian Self-Determination Act of 1975*, *American Indian Religious Freedom Act, 1978*, *Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, 1990.* These policies address the unique colonization of Indigenous peoples and do not fit into a narrow multicultural approach.

A post-colonial analysis of Indigenous Social Work curriculum must also identify the *null curriculum*, what is *not* included, identifying the gaps (Eisner, 1985). Since an understanding of alternate worldviews is necessary for social workers to work effectively with Indigenous peoples, each Social Work curriculum component (policy, research, practice, ethics, human behavior/human development) needs to incorporate Indigenous perspectives, and content. This inclusion of Indigenous histories and voices into a post-colonial discourse of Social Work education will help to decolonize Social Work practice and provide a foundational context for the transformation of Western social and educational systems. A historical context is then provided that can help students understand the multi-generational trauma of Indigenous peoples. This understanding is a key to developing positive solutions to many of the issues facing Indigenous peoples (Duran, Duran, & Yellow Horse Brave Heart, 1998).

In summary, post-colonial theory supports the argument that Indigenous voices must be brought into mainstream curriculum after centuries of marginalization. In this discussion, the concepts of post-colonial theory, such as *othering*, *re-membering*, *hegemony*, the many manifestations of power by colonizers, and cultural devastation caused by colonization have been included. These concepts provide an understanding of why and how the education and practice of Social Work can be decolonized. Challenging the *denial* and *social amnesia* has been one of the contributions of post-colonial writers, who call for the re-membering of the past as part of the healing. Instead of ignoring or denying these issues, the profession of Social Work can join with Indigenous peoples to resolve the problems caused by colonization, industrialization, and Western encroachment, cloaked in the concept of *civilization*. The issues identified by post-colonial theory that inform Social Work curriculum includes the need for greater respect for and encouragement of Indigenous-centered epistemology, an understanding of historic background and current issues, support for self-determination, and self-government.

CONCLUSION

More effective social services can be developed when social workers understand and are committed to developing methods that support Indigenous communities in their cultural recovery and self-determination efforts. For social workers, these insights can increase when Indigenous worldviews, cosmovisions, epistemologies, knowledges, and dialogues are accurately and sufficiently represented in Social Work practice and educational curriculum. A dialogue among those who utilize Western

perspectives and those who have Indigenous perspectives, including post-colonial approaches, are a useful part of this process. To think that Indigenous knowledges and abilities to solve problems, that have existed for thousands of years, have no place in today's society "is not only hostile, but makes poor economic and strategic sense" (Chandler & Lalonde, 2004, p. 118).

Through local control of social services, self-governance, and self-determination, social workers can support the recovery of Indigenous communities and people. Therefore, it becomes the responsibility of individual Social Work faculty and programs to determine what Indigenous content will prepare their students to be culturally competent with Indigenous peoples. Based on the historical context, Indigenous clients, students, social workers, and scholars have a right to have their voices included in the academy and in Social Work practice to ensure their views on history, ideas, interpretations, and beliefs are included (Baikie, 2009; Baskin, 2010; Sinclair et al., 2009; Weaver, 2005). Indigenous and non-Indigenous Social Work practitioners and faculty can assist with the decolonization of Social Work through the development of a clear understanding of the consequences of colonization, including the current cultures and issues of Indigenous peoples. An important key to decolonizing Social Work curriculum is the inclusion of the cultural inheritance and voices of Indigenous peoples of Canada and the U.S.

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