Decolonizing Social Work Field Education

Final Report

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Executive Summary

Decolonization is a process and an act of glocal (global and local) determination which involves refusal or reversal of the impacts of colonization and an assertion of self-definition. It embodies both a journey and a commitment on both global and local scales, encompassing the defiance or undoing of colonial legacies and reaffirming self-determination. The impacts of colonization run deep within and across systems, services and policies. They are embedded within professions and education systems and played out through varied processes and their interactions and assumptions. Social Work is not immune to colonization, in fact, the profession has a history of implementing policies that have resulted in trauma and genocide for First Nation and Black, Asian and minority ethnic people (FN and BAME). Despite extensive discourse on the broader subject of decolonizing social work education, scant attention has been given to decolonizing social work field education. The purpose of the scoping review was to examine internationally published literature on what is known about decolonizing social work field education. This final report encapsulates both the process used to undertake the scoping review and highlights from findings from the scoping review. The Scoping Review in full is not included here as has been published elsewhere (see 9.2: Project Outcomes and Future Directions Jones et al, in press).

Research Design and Methods:

The research team met monthly online and each of the meetings was recorded. The researchers engaged in a dialoguing method to recreate knowledge, learn from each other and transform social relations. The meeting transcripts were coded using NVivo auto-code and sections of dialogue were extracted from the meeting transcripts to demonstrate the themes.

For the scoping review: Decolonizing systematic and relational search and scoping review combined with collaborative team reflexivity was undertaken. Inductive thematic analysis was undertaken on the understandings of decolonisation and deductive analysis of the learnings for social work field education and the conflict zones.

Results:

Regular monthly dialoguing provided opportunities for self-reflection, greater mindfulness and accountability from First Nations (FN) social work colleagues across international borders. It also expanded our individual understandings of decolonisation and conflict zones including the challenges and struggles of dismantling and resisting Western epistemologies.

For the scoping review: Forty-three studies were considered eligible from searching 10 databases. Fourteen countries/regions were represented and there was an exponential increase in the publication of decolonising social work field education articles since 2020. All were published in English, some included phrases in First Nations languages. Articles were retrieved from Africa, Australia, Canada, China, India, Israel, Hong Kong, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Pacific region, Palestine, Sweden,

United Kingdom, and United Stated. The scoping review describes the types of research undertaken, samples within studies, country of origin, authors' identification, language use, understandings of decolonization, learnings for social work field education and understandings of conflict.

Understandings of decolonisation in the articles included the recognition and incorporation of Indigenous knowledges, challenging white dominance and racism, reconstruction of spaces and curriculum, critical reflection and unlearning colonial ideologies, resistance and sociopolitical context. Both ameliorative and transformative decolonising practices were identified as being implemented in Field Education. Conflict zones were interpreted broadly within the articles and included political, epistemic, or material injustices.

Discussion and Implications:

This project highlighted the needs for critical reflection about impact of colonization on FN and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Social Work students and academic colleague and the need to address these not only in the academy but also in practice including Field Education. It also highlights the need for constant accountability and transparency with non-White, FN and BAME students and Social Work academics colleagues.

From the scoping review: The literature highlighted that the emphasis of the decolonising practices in Social Work Field Education have been primarily ameliorative in nature. The review highlights cultural and epistemic injustices embedded in SW Field Education that marginalise of non-White, FN and BAME social work students practice experiences It contributes to the body of knowledge decolonising social work field education.

1. Rationale and Purpose of the Project

This international project sought to 'turn the gaze' (Green & Bennett 2018, p, 263) upon the existing international social work knowledge regarding the significance of a decolonial perspective in conflict zones. We refer to a broad understanding of conflict zones, to encompassed war zones, conflict zones in cities, and personal and local experiences of epistemic violence. All these zones can represent spaces where social work students carry out their field education placements. Although research studies exist on decolonising social work education little was known about decolonising social work field education placements particularly in conflict zones. Connecting student placements with a decolonial perspective will provide an innovative and important contribution to the broader aims of decolonising the social work curriculum.

2. Action Plan

1) Undertake a scoping review of the literature (including non-English language publications) on decolonising social work practice education focusing on the concept of conflict zones.

2) Facilitate and record online discussions. Present the findings of the scoping review with interested parties within in the IASSW network (at Social Work and Social Development conference) and publish in peer reviewed journal.

3. Description and Process of Implementation

The international network originally brought together by Assoc Prof Henglien Lisa Chen for the purposes of this project met monthly online from July 2022 to May 2024. These monthly meetings were organised by and chaired by Assoc Prof Michelle Jones and held on Zoom. The focus of these meetings varied depending upon the stage of the project. Initially they were primarily discussing grant opportunities, then once a grant was secured we focused on the method and approach for the scoping review. This was followed by searching and reviewing the literature, analysis and reporting the findings. The network included social work students, practitioners and academics. First Nations, Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups were represented on the network, as well as members who identified as White settler. All network members spoke English and so this was the language spoken during the online meetings.

4. Challenges

We faced multiple challenges such as managing to meet across six time zones, various seasonal teaching and semester breaks, war zones, changes in universities, collaboration across multiple institutions, illness, family loss, teaching and research loads.
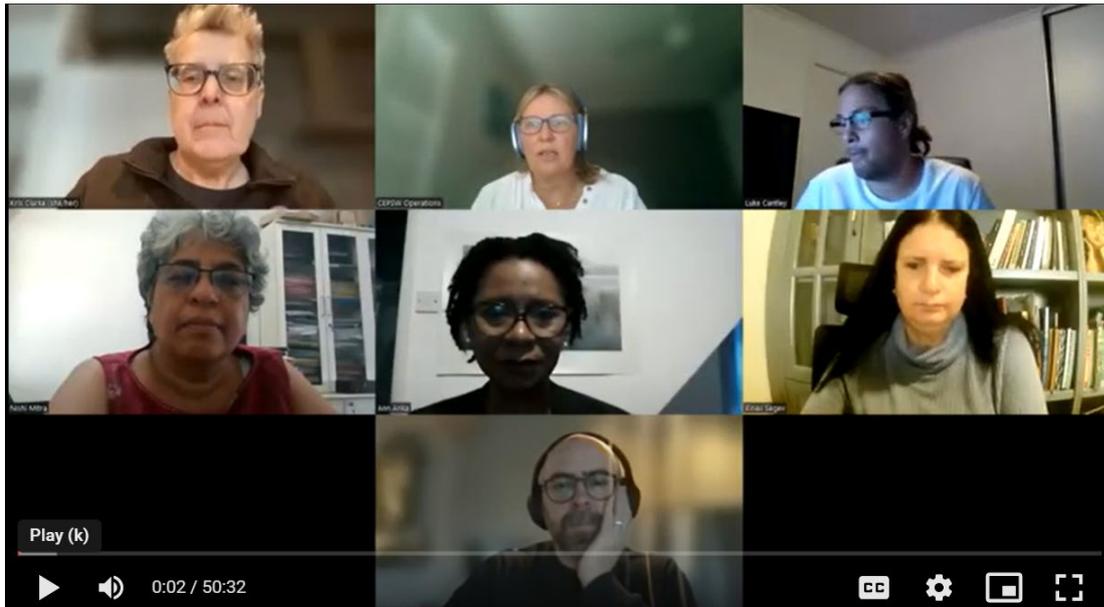
Figure 1A: Screenshot from Zoom Meeting

5. Dialoguing as method

We used dialogical method (Shor & Freire, 1987) as a means to determine the methodology, method and undertake the review of the literature. We borrowed from Shor and Freire's (1987) method and saw dialogue as means to recreate knowledge and transform social relations, and ultimately a form of liberatory education. We engaged in dialoguing to determine the approach to be undertaken in the study in our monthly online research meetings. Dialogue was used as: 'a moment where humans meet to reflect on their reality as they make and remake it' (Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 13). The dialoguing meetings were also used to share analysis and compare findings across the team. All Zoom dialogues were recorded however not all were included in the analysis as the recordings were not downloaded prior to deletion. Analysis of the Zoom transcripts was undertaken using NVivo auto-code.

6. Findings

Eight themes emerged from the data analysis relating to our monthly group meetings dialogues. The dialogues have been captured and used in the reporting of the IASSW funded project. The findings are reported under the themes. Quotes are used to illustrate what group members said. Participant comments have been identified. Findings from the scoping review is reported separately (see 9.2: Project Outcomes and Future Directions Jones et al, in press).

We begin our report by including dialogue about coming to the decision to capture our dialogue and recognise our learning and social and personal transformations.

6.1.1 Capturing dialogue

In the following dialogue the researchers identify how we might capture and represent our dialoguing to understand the review literature:

Contributor A: So I just want to follow up,... everything you say there about challenging the epistemologies and the theories and methods, and what [concepts] we use. I mean, we can't let that go unreflected upon in this article. I think in some ways it would be wonderful [if we can do this reflection]. I don't know what that would look like but maybe, if you're to fantasize and imagine what would an article look like if it represents the essence of what we are talking about, that reflexivity in decolonisation dialogue captured! That's the glocal perspective, the tension between trying to standardize and trying to represent diversity. So it's kind of resistance and reflection that in some ways, if a paper could somehow capture those essences... it would be decolonizing in process. And maybe it's about space in the paper, too. We have a dialogue in some part about of our methodology, and we show respect to that in some way. I don't know how. We then move that forward into the next phase, but I think it has to have space to bring these issues up and allow for individual voices. I'm just saying, let's imagine what a paper would look like if we're respecting all these points which have been brought up.

Contributor B: I think that will come into the richness of the analysis. All the things that we've been grappling with will come into the richness of the analysis....

Contributor C: Yeah. I think I agree with you initially. I want to ask, what's our target, from this project? Do we know that? The clear target, we know what we want to achieve at that end. But I think it is very important that they hear from all of us. We are a different group, and everyone, brings a different thing. we should ask ourselves, what we want to achieve, in which condition, in what context, or what is that concept that I want to address. Also when we talk about building bridges, I think we can build the bridge. But this kind of bridge would be different from every country, and I think it's very important to a look for this, this bridge and the process of building it, and how it's locked in minorities all over the world, because there are diversities in Indigenous people around the world. the definition of the problem will be different. There are people in a power position who define the problem for us as social workers or as a social worker educator. We have to work it out, to find a solution for this problem that the somebody defined for us.

Contributor D: Thank you. I think reflecting back on what we're talking about, [may be a good way to represent this process] I wonder if it is capturing dialogue in some way in an article, I don't know where it could be published might be a good idea.

6.1.2 Possibility of dialogue through Yarning

We considered the possibility of engaging in yarning. The following dialogue is about alternative methods such as Yarning as is used in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultural practice and whether we might use it as a possible approach:

Contributor B: … what decolonising method methodology we can use for this work. And the reason I asked is that I stumbled into something that I'm not familiar with, maybe you may be familiar with it is called yarning. The literature talks about social and research topics here in terms of collaboration and therapeutic healing. I thought if you really want to decolonise, we could draw from this concept because we [are] talking about it, and we are doing research and its collaboration... it as also an Indigenous methodology …

Contributor E: ... Yarning is definitely something that is used within Indigenous culture here in Australia for as long as Indigenous people have existed and essentially it's a process of sharing an oral history or knowledge or passing on wisdom to next generation. There is complexity around the use of it though. It's a culturally protected space as it's obviously something that's practised amongst Indigenous mobs in this part of the world. New Zealand has something similar, but it's very difficult to operate outside of known Indigenous peoples, say when you get a bunch of non-Indigenous people together because there's some cultural protocols. There is an argument around whether non-Indigenous researchers can truly connect with the process … Can there be appropriate cultural connections if there's only one

group people that can use it? It's absolutely one of the core Indigenous methodologies that I talk about. A lot of people talk about it in research but it certainly tricky.

Contributor B: thank you

Contributor A : I have colleagues who have written about how to use yarning in the social work classroom and its good effects with students learning, but I'm not sure she highlighted the terms of the cultural appropriateness or otherwise …

Contributor E: Yeah it's definitely the new buzz term that social works' picked up in the last year or so that I wish it will be yarning well actually technically as a white social worker you can't but the concepts are still the same, but there are protocols. Like how you and I are talking now we're having some conversations but people say this is a yarn we are yarning, but there are protocol around who is in the room acknowledging what knowledge they bring it, and then is it lessons or teachings that people growing and sharing as a result as opposed to just talking so it's definitely a contested space…You'll see people will grab chairs and throw them into a circle and say we did a yarning circle today, and you're like oh who was the Elder, or who was the First Nations person there that facilitated and they don't know what you're talking about so it definitely has some connotations around it and it gets quite difficult but I think that social work is starting to the this is a thing we should be doing it so it's just about educating and just making sure people understand we're actually talking about and we're doing it's quite effective and it's really a proven method for data collection within First Nations communities.

Contributor D: And so there is a fine line between colonising the practises when you pick up yarning and certainly I don't use yarning in research with non-Indigenous people …and I won't initiate the yarning circle unless I have an Indigenous colleague … and [recognise] that [it is] inappropriate for me as a non-Indigenous person to be part of [yarning] and so really recognising the importance of those cultural protocols.

Following this discussion, dialoguing was used rather than Yarning as we wanted to respect Aboriginal cultural protocols and not colonise or appropriate yarning processes.

6.2 Decolonization as methodology

We learnt from each other about our local understandings and experiences of decolonization. These understanding varied by our Nation States and our own cultural and religious backgrounds.

Contributor F: [In the context of our present socio-political-economic situation and our international location] we're in a kind of deep crisis in academia. With the kind of nationalist sentiments and aspirations everywhere [it is challenging for academics to speak or] keep quiet actually in terms of talking about evidence based talking about what is whether knowledge which is being circulated is actually scientific or not so I think there is need for us when we're doing this exercise in terms of legitimising and validating processes is which are decolonizing or attempting to decolonize. We also need to be very careful about what does it mean for academia and for curriculum, keeping in context the present political economic in different countries, as well as globally …

Contributor G: there is a writing … about the rigor of decolonisation methodology. I've read several articles linking about it I can send it to put it in the share file.

Contributor C: I saw the language that we use in methodology, we talk about decolonisation but we used western tools, the language is very important …how to use the western tools with Indigenous people in the country we work in so it's all a sensitive. Another important thing I want to note when we talk about decolonisation in another countries in that context and the concepts and different it's very complicated. In our country we started to talk about the Indigenous knowledge and decolonisation, it lasted 2 two years it's important to rethink how we can create the safest space for researcher, the safe space possible social workers, is not enough to give them the tools to the defiled to use the decolonisation, but how we can

create the safe space for them, I think that it's also important aspect of the research….

Contributor H: … what is our approach and what are we going to call it? How are we going to make sure we are doing it? Is it we need to make sure the scoping review is decolonised, and the research talks about how we do that or is there something else we should be doing? There are lots of other methodologies that are decolonised in nature so things like collaborative auto-ethnography, narrative interviews …

Contributor I … well what's the relationship between decolonization and decolonising the methods and the research rigorous, where the research rigor is another thing that we need to decolonise, which is a big question for me…

Contributor J: … I think that this is something that the really we tried to ponder and use a decolonizing method also in the sense of how do to reach at these methods not to have a traditional presentation mode…

Contributor D: … I might start collecting information for everyone [and place in a] drive [like] I did about their country/nation state for context the other one was around methodology and so I suppose starting to write to and [bring] pieces together [for the] methodology and then maybe [draft] a section of what our methodology is but maybe what makes it decolonizing…

Contributor H: how we decolonise methodology … but I think we are taking a decolonised approach.

The dialogues about decolonisation were both in relation to the methodology and methods used as well as in relation to the concepts of decolonisation used within the sample literature.

Figure 1B: Screenshot from Zoom Meeting

6.3 Dialoguing about the methodological struggles to decolonise the scoping review process

We struggled in attempting to decolonise western research paradigms, that we are steeped in and employed within, while also aiming to produce an academically rigorous publishable product. We recognised that only certain methods and journal articles would survive the peer review processes. The following methodological struggles were identified within the thematic analysis: searching strategies, the selection of and access to the databases for searching to ensure articles in multiple

languages were included, discussion regarding the search terms used, the inclusion and exclusion criteria, screening and review processes. This included abstract and full-text review, quality appraisal tools and whether to quality appraise, the data extraction and analysis methods.

6.3.1 Relational searches

The following extract was from a dialogue discussing the search approaches to be used, access to data bases and the desire to include non—dominant languages in the search. In the previous meeting we had decided to focus on the inclusion of languages colleagues in our group spoke:

> **Contributor F**: You mentioned that we have to locate articles in our local text, now this is not pragmatic for us we don't teach in [the local language] or provide the texts, and we do not have the possibility to do this I will thinking that there has to be a strategy which is you know embedded in the realities of our teaching not to do search the in library or elsewhere but go onto our university Moodle or this or where all essential readings and recommended readings are listed on the website or on the on this disc so you know portal for the different courses so we can look at what is being recommended to the students in the different courses of the different programmes and there from that we can look at materials that are engaged with the question of decolonizing.

> **Contributor D** Yeah, at this point if it's too hard or you're unable to find materials in [the local language] then we totally appreciate that and so it's more about whatever you have access to in terms of those articles that might be of relevance to the topic and so it doesn't necessarily need to be a systematic search but if you've got ones that you're aware of then please forward them to me and I'll include them. Colleagues have sent ten articles each that they found and titles of articles with doi numbers and I was able to check whether they were already in the sample and add them to the endnote library if they weren't in there. So we're trying to get as good coverage as we can and so if there are publications that you're aware of that are in the area then please forward them

This suggestion was not practical or relevant for all group members and so a process of relational searching was adopted. This involved each group member undertaking a local search of literature, which served to supplement the systematic search of western online databases.

6.3.2 Conducting quality appraisals.

The following dialogue was taken from a meeting when discussing the need for and type of quality appraisal to be conducted as part of our review study. Quality appraisal is the process whereby researchers systematically assess the sample of review articles to check if they meet necessary criteria to be considered trustworthy.

> **Contributor A**: You also mention that maybe the step in between the need to go through the articles and on the assess the quality.

> **Contributor D**: yes I'll send a few links for those as well so I most frequently used JBI which is the Joanna Briggs Institute which is developed up a whole heap of quality appraisal tools (JBI, 2024) there's a variety of different ones that perhaps I might share (Lockwood et al., 2015; McArthur et al., 2020) primarily qualitative appraisal tools because not many of our articles are, well the ones I've read there's not many that are quantitative or fit that kind of criteria so I think the qualitative ones are going to be the most relevant; have other people read lots of quantitative articles that I haven't

> **Contributor I** : no

> **Contributor D**: Perhaps we'll use that and we can make some decisions about which tool would decide to use, or create own decolonizing one, it could be interesting actually thinking about those questions that we had at the start around the different quality and access to resources and using Indigenous knowledges and methodologies and how they're interpreted through these quality appraisal tools will be interesting

Contributor A: So, you mean looking at the articles to assess what degree they have in themselves the decolonial approach in their research methodology gap data gathering inclusion of voices

Contributor D: yeah I'm suggesting that in effect these quality appraisal tools are steeped within the Academy the western Academy and ways of understanding what quality research is so thinking about what that might mean in our application and reading of them

Contributor E I have a paper from one of the fellas I used to work with a SAHMRI a Aboriginal fella who has written a quality appraisal tool specifically within Indigenous focus that I can send that out (Harfield et al., 2020)

Contributor D: Oh please, that would be great!

Contributor A: based on your readings over no how much does it differ then I guess the JBI that **Contributor D** is referring to

Contributor E: so yeah it's a similar process for example JBI talks about a lot of streamline things that you expect to see in an article whereas this paper is written with Indigenous contexts it provides a cultural lens if you're working with Indigenous people how is that acknowledged in the paper and it's definitely something I've been looking at in terms of the papers that I'm writing at the moment and just list it as a guide and it's pretty similar in terms of the JBI like the same process that you're looking for the same key elements, it's just making you think differently about you know how we're talking about our Indigenous people here

Contributor A: I think it would certainly be one of the extraction focuses that we're looking for within the articles to apply this lens as well as others perhaps but certainly I can see it being a theme of discussion from analysis of all the articles to what extent do they who did they privilege, what and how and whose voices are present and so that could be super fascinating reading

Contributor D: Yeah because in effect we have been focusing on the content of the articles not necessarily the research process and these tools will then allow us, you know taking a critical lens to the research process or decolonizing lens to the research process

At the next meeting we continued to dialogue about whether we undertake quality appraisal processes as part of our review of the literature.

Contributor F: I had some questions, because when you asked initially, you asked us to identify some articles, and to pass on to you. And I did some hand search and send some pieces. I also understand you know there are different practices of writing papers. … I could see the totally different way of writing and presenting, and I also felt, you know, while in one of the papers there was an attempt to make partnership, it was actually appearing to me to be a very colonial way of working in the kind of judgments on standardization. So I also think that you know, while the work attempts to decolonize the frames of reference remain very much belonging to the you know, advanced nations, or White centric perceptions and practices of writing. So, I'm not sure whether this, all this work while it attempts to standardize, also makes for a kind of circumscribing or silencing of alternative voices. So, we are trying to have the alternative voices, but we also have the 2 checklists you shared with us. How do you actually deconstruct these frameworks themselves. Which particular voices, and which critique other voices as not being academic enough. …

Contributor D: And I think you've picked up on exactly the thing that came up in one of the articles that I looked at today is that white knowledge underpins social work. And also underpins, like the discipline and practice of undertaking a review of the literature. you've mounted quite a good argument as to maybe why we shouldn't do quality appraisals.

Contributor F: We must write and some sort of an apology for it. Also, that we try to do collaborative learning. We can go only so much because the other part of it is. which is the more pragmatic part we speak to voices which are more local and around us, you know, and it's we can sit in these meetings, and we can try to deconstruct ourselves to learn from the

others but especially within social work where are we most effective We are most effective amongst populations. Because we have a shared worldview. We have some sort of resonance of things that are happening, and we are a different as well as we are able to understand it. So you know, I have grave doubts about any processes of standardization. Then because they take away the diverse approaches. And one of the articles that I read, which was actually this coming together of two very reflexive social workers. This particular piece one of the researchers was coming from Indigenous background from Turtle Island, and the other person is somebody who is a queer Asian settler, how she's defining, and it's talking about meeting on a bridge opposing whiteness in social work education, and practice (Khan & Absolon, 2021), and when they are talking about it, they say we have to deconstruct epistemologies, ontology, bodies, everything. So, if you deconstruct everything and then what you know, do you think there would be a common frame left still? And you are then always questioning that actually, your very existence is posing violence and is causing harm to the other. So, if you and you have to work towards having an approach that is healing which is healing home really healing oneself and healing the other, and you have to check with the other all the time. Even in this deconstructive piece, the relations of power were quite, quite written in the locations they were sharing both the researchers. So I think when we are doing this work we have to write a note. Which is both talking of its possibilities as well as its threats. You know I would call it threats. Because it's the pressure of a converging or of disciplining oneself is going to be felt by the already marginalized, and the already disempowered.

Contributor D: I think that was evident. Evident in your comments around. You know, have you done the right thing? Is like that question itself is a means of disciplining yourself and fitting into the potential criteria.

Contributor A: But can I ask a question, is there a way of piecing this type of review in a way which, I guess, is more in line with F's points of view in terms of is there some way? Sorry.

Contributor F: I would say. What happens is that the minority status it's something which is both objective and subjective. So the constitution of the group may make certain minorities in numbers, but it's all. Not just that it's the qualitative aspect of it. So when we are working towards any standardization purely we are pulling different. Versions of understanding and writing about truths. We are pulling them together, and we are trying to work on them. So I do not know if it would be giving oneself too much importance to say my version but I think there are cultural practices. There are language practices…, and there are thinking practices which may be quite different, and that makes it very problematic to do, because, you know, some of the papers, for example, the paper which I found the most speaking to me did not have a big sample. It was just two social workers speaking to each other and deconstructing themselves. That is the paper that spoke the most to me because I could see the truth and the and the vulnerability of both that was laid out in that. But can we keep doing this work all the time? We can do that work all the time? We find ourselves helpless in front of larger realities and fact. So we have to work towards our own standardization to occupy academic spaces. And within that we have to justify it. I have to justify why I'm doing this work which is more meaningful, and has much more political implications.

Contributor B… So we got two versions of the quality appraisal paper, and it's aim to capture it all. I think one of the things that we're struggling with is about identify whether authors identify who they were and the implications for that.

…

Contributor D: Do we do the quality appraisals or not? It is that pushing it towards standardizing methods, which is what colleagues are suggesting that we don't., Do we need to have those quality appraisals to be able to publish it as a review? And so that then we're kind of fitting ourselves into the box that might be required for kind of the academic publication.

Following this rich dialogue we considered practices used in previous scoping review and dismissed the need for quality appraisals within our scoping review (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005).

6.4 Understanding conflict and warzones within the sample of articles

There were several conversations about the nature of conflict and understanding conflict within the sample literature. These conversations were reflective of our own positionings and experiences of living and working in conflict and warzones.

> **Contributor D**: and so maybe our next reading then of the [articles] is to look at that final sample around and note what the conflict is because I was very broad in my concept of conflict when reading through and including the [articles] from sort of this students ideological conflict within themselves around their experience of placement, all the way through to conflict war zones, like that kind of global view of conflict zone.
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> **Contributor** E: Same
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> **Contributor** A: I would agree
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> **Contributor** D: I have been including the things that are identified here that I would see as the conflicts. So, these are kind of the internal student conflict. But also the failure [of the student] is a conflict with the university. …
>
> **Contributor** F: And I want to say that this comment one on conflict and its wider definition. I mean that is how I talked to at the time we were discussing initially that given some of the countries represented in the larger, you know, there could be very obvious focus on peace & conflict issues, but there could be much more you know aspects of existential conflicts etc that that come up in terms of doing social work programmes for students and the cultural diversity they have to confront in terms of environmental requirements especially with global mobility, so I think that is about the definition part of it too.

In a later meeting, concerns about the warzones that were impacting our global community were raised and dialoguing ensued:

> **Contributor** K: There is a need to talk about it, about decolonisation in social work and I think what's happened in the world now it's a reality. … I'm thinking it's a time to collect what happened here and then to talk about it. … We talk about the need of social work practice for anti-racism. And we talk. But we need action all we have ever done [is] just to talk about that.
>
> **Contributor** B: Thank you. I have been thinking about this, the project is about working in conflict zones, it is about decolonization. This is our topic. it's working with conflict. So how are colleagues managing? in that context…
>
> **Contributor** F: I think it's very important. What news are you saying, and maybe we could initiate a dialogue paper. We are coming from different parts of the world and just witnessing what is happening, around the world but also this is resonating in our context and making for big dilemmas in terms of even you know our understanding of colonization, decolonization, decolonizing conflicts, etc. So maybe it could be like, we could imagine a paper that we initiate. Given the context of the work that we have already initiated, in fact, reading the papers and making these tables I was just thinking I was so thankful to the group, because just doing this work of international social work and training and reflexive with you all around the world. I was just thinking that it's marked - issues come alive. Some of those papers, it's like a training of trainers. reading the reflexive writing is making for resonance inside us. It makes us think about issues. This event of global impact and significance is happening. So, it would only be important that we start some kind of a writing on it and look at the different voices that we hear in the world around us. And how do we approach them from our different locations … One of the papers I read was talking about decolonizing is not out there. It's got to do with us inside trying to look at ourselves so you know, just conversations could develop …
>
> **Contributor** K: yeah, thank you

> **Contributor D**: …in terms of our colleague's context, the level of conflict is so very different to the experience, at our local area I'm thinking about the [Voice for the Indigenous peoples in my country] the referendum that we've had here, and the rejection of Indigenous voices within that process has been a very silent process. But your experience . I was really moved when I read your paper just sort of thinking about the constant battle that you engage in your everyday teaching including the interpersonal conflicts around what to share and what not to share with the students. And then you know how that's actually happening in a war zone. And the multiple layers of the conflict.

The dialoguing regarding conflicts and living in a warzone during war was one of great struggle for the network. We cast doubt on the value and purpose of the network as we worked toward decolonisation and anti-racism. We struggled as we saw the pain and fear in our colleagues and hoped that they (and their families and communities) would remain safe between each meeting.

6.5 Reporting country/location within the review

A further area of dialoguing was in relation to reporting in the literature review sample characteristics table in particular the Nation States or Countries within the journal articles. The country of origin of the university [or affiliated organisation] that the first author works/ed for is the country that is usually reported. This was troubled within the following dialogue:

> **Contributor D**: One of the other issues that came up as I was looking at the sample tables was this notion of country of origin of the study. And I wondered if this is something that we actually kind of potentially need to unpack as part of our decolonising approach. Partly because mainly [as I've extracted data] I've referred to the country in which the study was undertaken. Other times I've referred to the country where the authors are from, and generally where they are from lines up with where the study is. But that's not always the case. So for example, , this first one, The study is located in Africa, and only one of the authors was from a University in Africa (Ayim et al., 2023). But then I'm very aware of thinking about whether other countries sited are the right country to locate some of the texts, as the author may reside there but the study is located elsewhere. So there are some studies conducted within a particular area. for example (Lee et al., 2022). You know the national politics and wanting to seek some input into thinking through that.

> **Contributor H**: That's a really interesting one. Hmm! I think with some of the studies, there's so many of them to unpick, and then to decide whether or not, politically, that we're talking about. And I think some of them do specifically talk about the geographical challenges (Sousa et al., 2019). But sometimes that's experiences of Minorities groups within dominant groups (Alhuzail, 2021; Mahajne et al., 2021). And so it's the idea. I think everyone, every single one of them, needs to be unpicked a bit, I think, for the ones that we're really unsure about. I don't know. We might want to contact the actual authors and see what they would want to have referred us.

> **Contributor D**: That's not a bad idea actually to do that.

> **Contributor** B: I like the way you described it. I thought if you could capture that, and then put it in some of the issues that we struggle with. So we weren't sure about which country. And then we can say about the political things, too. But we really want to know about what decolonization is. And we are interested in the countries where the articles were published and who the authors are?

> **Contributor** H: I think, as you both say, it's really important for us to make that a statement within the article, because I would imagine that, I'm thinking as, potentially an author of one of the studies we're looking at the whole article is about decolonization in that respect (Sousa et al., 2019). We would then be in a situation where we could potentially be re-colonising if we were to then refer to that as study in a conflict zone.

> **Contributor D**: Yes, so they're just some of the things that I was thinking about. These once, and I don't know whether it's pronounced Jönsson et al but it was set with both the

Norwegian social work students context, with an author from two countries, and so I included kind of both in those as well (Jönsson & Flem, 2018; Jönsson & Lian Flem, 2022). Even though the corresponding author was Sweden. But it kind of got quite complex with articles such as this first one where it is talking about social work practice in Africa, and there was a combination of locations where the authors are from. The fact that the study is about social work practice in Africa, and so located it in Africa.

Contributor H: And I think for me, it makes more sense to yeah, to locate it that way. But I think other people would argue that we should locate it in the context of potentially even just a corresponding author, but it wouldn't really make sense if we did it if we did. In this case, I think. Is the corresponding author from the UK.

Contributor D: It was Alhassan, who is now in Australia.

Contributor H: Yep and it'd be interesting to say it'd be situated in Hong Kong. Yeah. That's the nature of migration, isn't it?

Contributor H: Yeah.

Contributor D: And so that might be one where we approach authors. … and just sort of make some sort of comment around where they were sourced from. …

At the next meeting we revisited the discussion regarding the country or origin which was then expanded to a dialogue about the ethics of secondary analysis and decolonising publication practices. The following quote captures the essence of this dialogue:

Contributor D: The other thing that we talked a little bit about last time was the identification of the country of origin of the papers and the sensitivities around that. And just kind of thinking through that and what that might mean in terms of decolonization. And how we might look at decolonizing that in some way.

Contributor G: I think it's very important. We also talked about the process of the research should be decolonisation, should be a decoloniser. And this point is very important. But the question is, how do we explore this meaning of location. For instance, do we, when I read a paper, do I look for how the writer of the paper relate to that issue? If at all? How do you recommend us to check it or to examine it? It's a methodological question. Yes, because I think it's relevant to all countries, because what our colleague was talking about just now, . For example, when some our colleague writes they, sometimes self-identify with the social identity that they are comfortable with. So how is this identification, how will it be addressed in our work. I don't get it … If you can share your thoughts, how can we deal with this?

Contributor B: And I did mention that I never self-identify in any of my work. I'm glad that we've added unknown to the inclusion criteria so previously we had yes and yes and no. But now we can include unknown.

Contributor D: This draws my attention to the boundary kind of conflicts. And that's what I was kind of unpacking, and I do wonder if maybe it is about recognizing somehow in the paper, and I don't know whether perhaps we write to it. In findings or whether we have a category of it. And perhaps it's actually in the conflict section. That it's actually picked up. So expanding upon that and what those boundaries mean. The other ones that I wondered about was there was one paper, and I'm not sure I can't remember the author who identified their country location And so just thinking about the politics of location.

Contributor B: I was looking at one paper in a conflict zone, they don't identify themselves. But then it made me think about, this conflict I was thought carefully about the language I use. That it doesn't incite violence, or conflict. The conflicts in that geographical area is very contextual. If you mention one word about that would incite conflict itself. So writing about that. And because I'm aware of the background, I thought alright. So I just put down political conflict but then what was at stake is that if I put political conflict, it doesn't truly reflect the extent of the conflict. When I thought, of course, I need to choose my words carefully. Yeah. It's really interesting.

Contributor D: [this] highlights the sensitivities of the work. How do we construct the conflict through the lens that we bring to it? As well. And because I was wondering as I was reviewing the articles I was thinking, I wonder if the lens I was using as an outsider has interpreted and extracted the data that colleagues who have lived the conflict would want that represented in this review. In the way that yes, they would have hoped.

Contributor B: This made me think about issues of ethics, I never used to think about. So we really focus a lot on primary research, ethics and less so on when you do secondary data analysis. But these are ethical issues. These are key ethical dilemmas that secondary data analysis also bring.

Contributor G: Hmm! We can write about now about our experience. … I think it's good because we are a group. we can add our experiences…

Contributor D: [we have covered topics for] example, like the ethics of secondary data analysis. And then, you know heading around the politics of location, and you know, and just do a bit of a stream of consciousness of what we've discussed, and then let everyone else play with it and message it and expand on it.

Contributor D: Yeah. Just as a starting point for people because I think the process in itself has probably highlighted, a lot in terms of cross border working and thinking and kind of building the paper like, just I mean, some of the things around. Just the access to data systems. And I think that is It is really important, because in talking to some of my colleagues here, they won't publish in certain journals because of the history of those organizations. The colonial histories. And so where they publish is guided by you know those histories and experiences as well. And so I think that that sort of thing is also important to kind of highlight and think about, too.

Contributor B: It's interesting that you mentioned. I remember the very first time that I was someone called me in and said, you need to do decolonization. And when I started, begin to read the literature, I was interested about research, how to decolonize research. That was my first interest. And I thought about. Where are we publishing? Where do Minoritised groups publish? And I'm thinking, what kind of criteria do they use? And how does that criteria then impact the way that we write? Yeah, and therefore limit your academic capital. So the publication itself has an impact. And who is sitting on editorial board, for example…

Contributor D: That's a really good point in if and actually do some sort of analysis at where these articles are located. Yeah.

Contributor B: Mmm

Contributor G: Because maybe some journals are more open to decolonisation, and some less or some kind of materials will go to, I think there is a political agenda also in the journals. What you are mentioning. Yeah. What kind of material do I want to exclude or include?

Contributor D: Yes, I think if we reflect on that somewhere in our analysis, as well. I think it will. It would be an important kind of contribution, but it also. Yeah. Made me think about the not only the journal. But the publishing house those journals sit within and you know who and what, as well as the editorial committees. That our colleague was talking about as well.

Contributor B: That will link in with the notion of structure that's not only at the individual level about decolonization. But decolonization is also about dismantling other structural houses or issues that preserves it. Yeah. I think one of the papers I can't remember which one that talks about. It's not just about the individual - its about the structure. we need to go beyond that. …

Contributor D: You know that power and analysis of power, that we're kind of talking about, you know the fact that decolonization is threatening people's power bases. And what that then might mean.

The regular research team meetings were thematically analysed and dialogues between international colleagues were used to demonstrate the rich learning environment about decolonisation, conflict zones and conducting literature reviews.

7. Scoping Review Early Findings

Decolonisation garnered significant attention within social work, with scholars from the literature review offering diverse perspectives. Key themes emerged and are summarised in figure 2.

Figure 2: Themes of understanding decolonisation identified from the literature.

We used Adam's (2020) dimensions of injustice framework to understand the conflicts within the sample of literature (figure 3).

Cultural and Epistemic Injustices	Political and Geopolitical Injustices	Material Injustices
• Dominance of western, white knowledges in SW practice education, understanding social problems and interventions • Racism in university, placement organisations • Gender, secular/religious conflicts • Field Educators internal ethical conflict in failing students	• Impacts of the globalisation of neoliberalism • Personal/professional conflicts in preparing SW students for SW Field Placement in warzone	• FN students access to SW education/ higher education • Resources to undertake SW Field Placement e.g. FN & BAME students access to childcare, professional wardrobe

Figure 3: Application of Adams dimensions of Injustice to understand conflicts identified in the literature.

These are expanded upon within the full publication (see 9.2: Project Outcomes and Future Directions, Jones et al, in press).

8. Conclusions

From our scoping review, we've learned that to decolonize social work field education, you need to focus on the following five critical areas in the development of a local action plan for decolonising FE curriculum review:

Critical Self-Awareness: It's crucial for students and field educators to analyze their own biases and assumptions. This can be fostered through structured supervision, safe spaces for reflection, and diverse field placements.

Cultural Competence as Collaboration: Students can benefit from viewing communities as experts, demonstrating genuine respect for Indigenous knowledge. Partnerships with Indigenous agencies and opportunities to learn directly from diverse communities are essential.

Social Justice in Action: Field education can connect students to community organizing and policy advocacy, aiding their understanding of the root causes of injustice.

Transforming Education: The curriculum itself warrants change. Integrating Indigenous voices, deconstructing Western dominance, and empowering students to advocate for inclusive learning is key.

Justice as Practice: Supervisors can facilitate critical dialogue, promote humble practice, and focus on action-oriented learning that promotes social change.

Crucially, decolonizing field education is a complex and ongoing process that necessitates investment and collaboration with First Nations and marginalized communities.

9. Project Outcomes and Future Directions

The following outcomes are linked to this project:

9.1 Conference Presentations

A presentation and a workshop were held at the Social Work and Social Development conference in Panama 2024:

- Jones, Michelle., Segev, Einav., Allasad Aluhzail, Nuzha., Mohamed, Omar., Wallengren Lynch, Michael., Cantley, Luke., Mitra vom Berg, Nishi., Laver, Samantha., Hammond, Libby., Henglien Chen, Lisa., Anka, Ann., What is known about decolonising social work practice education (field education)? A scoping review of international published research papers. Social Work and Social Development Conference, Panama. 3-7 April 2024.

Figure 4A: Photograph of Omar Mohamed, Ann Anka, Henglien Lisa Chen and Michelle Jones at the Social Work and Social Development conference. After years of working together online, this was the first time some of us met face-to-face.

- Henglien Chen, Lisa., Anka, Ann., Segev, Einav., Allasad Aluhzail, Nuzha., Mohamed, Omar., Wallengren Lynch, Michael., Cantley, Luke., Mitra vom Berg, Nishi., Laver, Samantha., Hammond, Libby. Jones, Michelle, Decolonising Social Work Field Education Workshop. Social Work and Social Development Conference, Panama. 3-7 April 2024.

At the Social Work and Social Development 2024 conference in Panama Assoc Prof Henglien Lisa Chen and Omar Mohamad led a workshop sharing the findings from the Scoping Review and with a larger than expected workshop group brainstormed podcast ideas for an EASSW grant lead by Assoc Prof Henglien Lisa Chen. Thanks to all who participated, there were over 50 participants from over 30 different countries. While we could have spent the whole-time hearing from participants (there was not enough time) the workshop generated a healthy list of potential podcast ideas.

Figure 4B: Photographs from Social Work and Social Development workshop on Decolonizing Social Work Field Education

9.2 Publication

- Jones, Michelle., Anka, Ann., Segev, Einav., Allasad Aluhzail, Nuzha., Mohamed, Omar., Wallengren-Lynch, Michael., Cantley, Luke., Mitra vom Berg, Nishi., Laver, Samantha., Hammond, Libby., Henglien Chen, Lisa. (In press) Decolonising Social Work Practice Field Education: A scoping review. International Social Work DOI: 10.1177/00208728241303596/

9.3 Podcast

- Decolonising Social Work Field Education www.dialogueswfe.org
- Kris Clarke & The Social Work Routes Podcast: 'Episode 9 S2: Health inequities and decolonization with Luke Cantley' https://krisclarke.org/episodes
- Kris Clarke & The Social Work Routes Podcast: 'Nordic circle on decolonizing social work' https://krisclarke.org/news/nordic-circle-on-decolonizing-social-work

9.4 Future Directions

- The Decolonizing Network established by Henglien Lisa Chen has grown, including the following people:
  - Omar Mohamed, Social Worker, no affiliation, UK;
  - Samantha Laver, UniSA, Australia;
  - Libby Hammond, SAHMRI, Australia;
  - Catherine Ellis, University of East Anglia, United Kingdom.

9.5 Associated research projects

- European Association of Schools of Social Work grant titled: Using international participatory action approach to co-create teaching materials on decolonisation in social work curriculums led by Associate Professor Henglien Lisa Chen.

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