

SWSD 2014 Melbourne

Challenging Managerialism through Ethical Leadership

Mike Webster, University of Auckland

David McNabb, Unitec, Auckland

Content of presentation

- Ethical leadership challenges to organisational social work leadership
- Origin and nature of those challenges
 - New public management and neo-liberal organisational thinking
 - ‘Scientific management’ (Taylorism)
 - Market philosophy ‘colonising’ state sector social workers (Carey, 2008)
- So, what is needed?

Content of presentation

- Apply ethical leadership to social work organisations drawn from
 - IFSW Statement of Ethical Principles
 - National Codes of Ethics
 - The literature
- Apply social justice as the profession's 'central organising value' to the organisational context (Ife, 2010; Marsh, 2005)
- Exercise leadership approaches which enable those values

The neo-liberal challenge

- An overriding focus on measuring outputs and outcomes
- Outputs as policy advice, administering legislation, and direct service delivery eg child safety
- Outcomes as societal results sought by government to which outputs contribute
- Applied to state sector and NGOs by virtue of the 'contract crunch'
(Boston, 1995; Lane, 2005; Tennant, 2007)

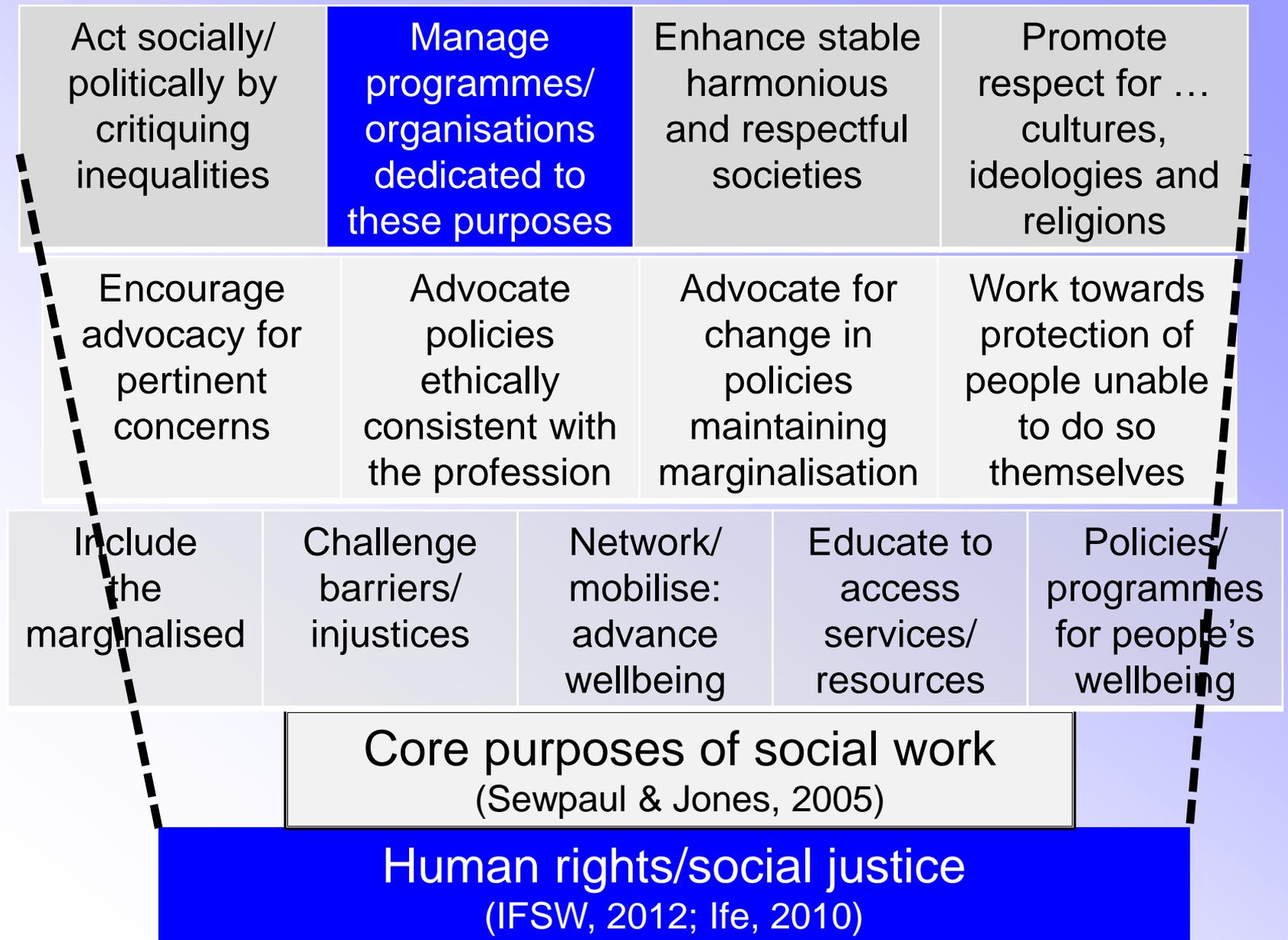
The neo-liberal challenge

- Quantitative measurement may marginalise the quality of practitioner-client interactions (Carey, 2008)
- Shift from social work values to organisational accountabilities enabled by ICT (Burton & van den Broek, 2009)
- Statistical reporting has moved the emphasis on process accountability to accountability for results (Boston et al., 1996; Webster, 2010)

A social work response to the neo-liberal challenge

Apply social justice as the
profession's 'central
organising value' to the
organisational context

(Ife, 2010; Marsh, 2005)



Leadership approaches to enable those values

Leadership in the context of the

context of the

- Māori renaissance
- Ethical, authentic and spiritual leadership

Ethical Leadership in the context of

- Authenticity
- Spirituality
- Servant leadership
 - Personal and professional integrity
- Indigenous approaches
- Biological complexity thinking

Pauline Leonard's (2009) 'journey' towards personal and professional authenticity offers such an expression by capturing essential ethical properties with a vision of social justice:

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

(Leonard, 2009, pp.253, 255)

References

- Boston, J. (Ed.). (1995). *The state under contract*. Wellington, N.Z.: Bridget Williams Books.
- Boston, J., Martin, J., Pallot, J., & Walsh, P. (1996). *Public management: The New Zealand model*. Auckland: Oxford University Press.
- Burton, J., & Van den Broek, D. (2009). Accountable and Countable: Information Management Systems and the Bureaucratization of Social Work. *British Journal of Social Work*, 39(7), 1326-1342.
- Carey, M. (2008). Everything must go? The privatization of state social work. *British Journal of Social Work*, 38(5), 918-935.
- Ife, J. (2010). Human rights and social justice. In M. Gray, & S. A. Webb (Eds.), *Ethics and value perspectives in social work* (pp. 148-159). Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- International Federation of Social Workers. (2012). Code of ethics. Berne, Switzerland: International Federation of Social Workers.
- Lane, J.-E. (2005). *Public administration and public management: The principal-agent perspective*. Abingdon, New York: Routledge.
- Leonard, P. (2009). Ethics, values, and social justice leadership: Embarking on a moral quest for authenticity. In A. H. Normore (Ed.), *Leadership for social justice: Promoting equity and excellence through inquiry and reflective practice* (pp. 243-256). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

References

- Marsh, J. C. (2005). Social Justice: Social Work's Organising Value. *Social Work, 50*(4), 293-294.
- Sewpaul, V., & Jones, D. (2005). Global standards for the education and training of the social work profession. *International Journal of Social Welfare, 14*(3), 218-230.
- Tennant, M. (2007). *The fabric of welfare: Voluntary organisations, government and welfare in New Zealand, 1840-2005*. Wellington: Bridget Williams Books.
- Webster, M. (2010). Complexity approach to frontline social work management: Constructing an emergent team leadership design for a managerialist world. *Social Work & Social Sciences Review, 14*(1), 27-46.