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General Information

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Production Editor

Anne Sibbel, Reflective Practice, Western Australia

Editorial Board

Meg Smith, Social Justice and Social Change, University of Western Sydney

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Tahereh Ziaian, School of Nursing and Midwifery, University of South Australia

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Editorial

Lauren Breen

Welcome to the latest issue of *Australian Community Psychologist* (ACP). This issue is the first to be produced by the new Editorial Board consisting of myself (as Editor), Carol Tutchener (St Kilda Youth Service), Meg Smith (University of Western Sydney), Tahereh Ziaian (University of South Australia) and Anne Sibbel (Reflective Practice). I am very excited to be Editor, but I take on the role with some trepidation as Dawn Darlaston-Jones has left some (figuratively) large shoes to fill. I also want to acknowledge and thank Dawn for her work in managing the review process of one paper included in this issue.

In recent years, the journal has developed in leaps and bounds under Dawn's direction. The journal has gained an ISSN, is indexed in PANDORA, an Australian database and initiative of the Australian National Library (<http://pandora.nla.gov.au/tep/84823>) and moved to its current on-line format, and as a result, is disseminated to and accessed by an international audience. While still maintaining a very local flavour, the journal has included articles from the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand/Aotearoa, and the United States. The journal is also listed in the Excellent in Research in Australia (ERA) journal rankings (<http://www.arc.gov.au/era/indicators.htm>).

Whether we like it or not, metrics-based ratings systems are used to assess the impact and quality of research. My concern with these systems is that researchers working within emerging fields or from non-traditional epistemologies and methodologies may experience greater difficulties in promoting the quality of their research, gaining competitive funding, and achieving promotion, which further marginalises already marginalised research (ers) and further strengthens the status quo (Cheek, Garnham, & Quan, 2006; Rappaport, 2005). Indeed, the 'research enterprise' is and

increasingly entrepreneurial whereby researchers are 'rewarded' for maintaining the prevailing state of affairs. The ERA initiative is designed to prevent any advantage of one discipline or study area over others (Carr, 2008; Universities Australia, 2008), but the extent to which it will be successful in achieving equity remains to be seen. It is however important that the journal is included in the ranking system.

This general issue brings together seven papers from around Australia and the world. First, David Fryer and Adele Laing apply a critical community psychology framework to pose and answer some questions concerning the definitions and uses of community psychology. They warn of the increasing colonisation of indigenous community psychologies and of the incongruence between critical community psychology theory and practice. Their theoretical examination is followed by five empirical papers. Nadya Surawski, Anne Pedersen, and Linda Briskman tackle an important yet under-researched topic – the impact of acting as a refugee advocate – and in doing so, make an important addition to the literature. They demonstrate the financial, emotional, and interpersonal effects of acting as a refugee advocate in Australia. The risk of burnout and potential for long-term harm has implications for advocates' ability to continue in this role in the face of adversarial government policy. Romina Iebra Aizpurúa and Adrian Fisher present their study of the acculturation experiences of Latin American women in Australia and demonstrate that acculturation is a lengthy and ongoing process rather than short-term and finite. Lyn O'Grady and Adrian Fisher utilise an innovative methodology, Photovoice, to privilege the perspectives and experiences of young people and their neighbourhoods. Lynn Priddis, Gail Wells, Kathie Dore, Janelle Booker, and Noel Howieson describe a collaborative community development partnership between a university

team and a community organisation aiming to improve parent-infant relationships. The programme was evaluated as successful and has been incorporated into the community organisation's suite of services.

These empirical papers are followed by two more theoretical papers. Bernard and Pauline Guerin reflect upon the formation and maintenance of relationships in remote Australian communities and illustrate that working with remote communities requires an understanding of remote relationships, accessible service delivery, and the sustainability of these services. Finally, Bróna Nic Giolla Easpaig and David Fryer consider the psychology textbook. They show that psychology textbooks have tended to be complicit in constructing 'truths' about gender and reinforcing oppression, yet also demonstrate their potential to subvert patriarchy and heterosexuality. These diverse papers are followed by two book reviews – Damien Riggs reviews Derek Hook's *Foucault, Psychology and the Analytics of Power* and Brian Bishop reviews *International Community Psychology: History and Theories*, edited by Stephanie Reich, Manuel Reimer, Isaac Prilleltensky and Maritza Montero.

Generating an issue of *Australian Community Psychologist* requires the work of many individuals, and this issue is no exception. I'd like to acknowledge and thank all of the contributing authors, the manuscript reviewers, the Editorial Board, and the College of Community Psychologists' national committee.

In keeping with attempts to produce a special issue and a general issue every year, the first issue of 2009 will be a special issue devoted to showcasing the work of students. I encourage current and recent students, at undergraduate or postgraduate level, to consider submitting a manuscript. Manuscripts may be of a theoretical or empirical focus and may be drawn from research or practice. For example, manuscripts might be derived from research projects and theses, coursework

assignments (individual or group-based), and reflections on practice issues. Please email manuscripts to me by January 15, 2009.

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Address correspondence to

Lauren J. Breen, PhD, MAPS
Centre for Social Research
School of Psychology and Social Science
Edith Cowan University
email: l.breen@ecu.edu.au

Community Psychologies: What are they? What could they be? Why does it matter? A Critical Community Psychology Approach

David Fryer

University of Stirling, Scotland

Adele Laing

University of Glasgow, Scotland

What is community psychology? Whilst some might assume this, superficially straightforward, question could be adequately answered by citing a definition given by an influential community psychologist, a popular text book author, quoting from a website such as that of the Society for Community Research and Action (<http://www.scra27.org/>) or an editorial statement in a journal like this, we regard community psychology as part of the critical project within which authority is problematised and contested so, rather than giving an answer to the question “What is community psychology?”, we problematise the question itself and use the process of problematising to construct understanding of manifestations of community psychology which are part of the problem or part of the solution as far as understanding and contesting popular oppression are concerned.

Rather than seeking immediate answers to the question “What is community psychology?” we are ultimately interested in answers to the critical questions: Who has the authority to construct ‘community psychology’? How can such authority be resisted? Through which social processes is that authority achieved i.e., by virtue of what and whom is that authority constructed and legitimated? Whose interests are served by the various constructions of community psychology achieved through the deployment of, or resistance to, that authority?

There are many, very different, sets of concepts, techniques and practices which have been positioned through the deployment of different discourses as ‘community psychology’ by different interest groups at different times in different places. Just to confine ourselves for now to textbooks of community psychology written by academics,

we have read such textbooks claiming to explicate community psychology by academics from: the United Kingdom (e.g., Orford, 1992, 2008); South Africa (e.g., Seedat, Duncan & Lazarus, 2001); New Zealand and Australia (e.g., Thomas & Veno, 1992, 1996) and the United States of America (e.g., Dalton, Elias & Wandersman, 2001; Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005; Rappaport, 1977).

What is constructed as community psychology in one textbook is sometimes rather different from, and sometimes rather similar to, that presented in another textbook. Even within one country, what is presented as community psychology at one time in that country’s textbooks is often very different from that presented at another time in other textbooks. For example, compare community psychology as explicated in Rappaport (1977) and Nelson and Prilleltensky (2005). The same textbook author may present different versions of community psychology at different times such as when textbooks are revised (for example, see the two versions of the text book by Orford, 1992, 2008). On the other hand, different textbook authors writing at the same time in different countries sometimes present very different versions of community psychology. For example, compare Seedat, Duncan and Lazarus (2001) with Dalton et al. (2001). Sometimes textbook authors writing at different times in different countries explicate surprisingly similar versions of community psychology. For example, compare Rappaport (1977), and Orford (1992). To make it even more complicated, sometimes there are obvious similarities between different accounts in different places and what are superficially different accounts are revealed on closer examination to be surprisingly similar at a deeper level, for example, Dalton et al. (2001)

and Nelson and Prilleltensky (2005).

Since there are a variety of community psychologies constructed differently in different textbooks published by various authors at different times in different places, it is clear that there are diverse community psychologies and clear that different community psychologies, like other social phenomena, are products of the time, place and conditions of their construction. This raises the question as to which, if any, should be taken seriously by whom, why and for what purposes?

However, definitions of community psychology are merely one conventional way in academia in which various community psychologies are explicitly constructed, maintained and legitimated in formal texts. There are also myriad less obvious, implicit, ways in which community psychologies are constructed. These are sometimes explicit and sometimes implicit. However, being explicit or implicit is not, from a critical perspective, just a matter of specificity of prose but also relates to whether the accounts are positioned within dominant or subjugated discourses. Bringing these to critical awareness, or surfacing them is, in part, a function of the extent to which readers' subjectivities are saturated by, or manifestations of internalised, dominant discourses and the extent to which collective critical literacy has been facilitated by radical reflexivity, popular education, conscientisation, etc. Reading a textbook of community psychology is, in other words, an active process involving critical processing of discourse and the 'surfacing' of community psychologies constructed within and through those discourses.

Although, we have concerned ourselves so far only with textbooks, the latter are not the only nor the prime means through which community psychologies are constructed and legitimated: different community psychologies are also produced in and through presentations, journal articles, lecture courses, DVDs, conversations, IT forums, email, papers like

this and also techniques, practices and procedures.

Because it gets so long-winded to keep listing textbooks, journal articles, lecture series, techniques, practices and procedures, etc., in this paper we refer to them all as 'texts'. In everyday language 'text' is usually used to refer only to what is written but within Foucauldian approaches 'text' is used more widely to refer to any interconnected tissue of symbols.

By referring to community psychologies being 'produced in' diverse texts, we are distancing ourselves from any suggestion that the relation between community psychologies and texts is anything other than an active one of enactment and emphasising that community psychologies are actively constructed out of socially given materials including discursive resources.

There are, then, many different community psychologies. However they are not all as prominent. Some are more dominant than others: some are repeated more frequently, with more force, in contexts positioned as more authoritative within dominant discourses etc. than others. The dominance of these community psychologies has little to do with 'truth' or 'reality' or effectiveness, in the orthodox sense of these terms, but everything to do with the cultural and political power to dictate of those who promote them.

The question with which we started out, "What is community psychology?", has now turned through the process of problematising into a far more complicated and interesting set of questions. What socially constructed and maintained community psychologies, whether explicitly defined or implicit in diverse texts, practices and procedures, can be surfaced? Which accounts are dominant as opposed to subjugated? How has this dominance been achieved and maintained? How are accounts given the status of knowledge of what is the case, or as we prefer to put it, how are they 'truthed'? What are the power implications of this knowledge? Which local and wider social, political, economic and other interests are

served by these various community psychologies¹?

Let us now ask some of these questions of one of the currently dominant community psychologies: United Statesian (we use this term to avoid using the term 'American' as the community psychologies constructed by – at least some – Central and South Americans are radically different from how those constructed by many United Statesians).

The dominant US community psychology, which has been socially constructed and maintained, explicitly or implicitly, in many 'texts', and which is legitimated by many narratives, such as the claim that community psychology emerged in the USA in the 1960s out of US domestic political events (Fryer, 2008a), serves the interests of US community psychology and thus also the interests of those who benefit from that. It is important to be clear that, from our critical community psychology perspective, when it is asked whose interests are served by US community psychology, this is not meant in just the narrow sense of which US individuals (authors) or sub-groups of US psychologists benefit personally. The interests served go way beyond those of United Statesian community psychologists to those of powerful groups who benefit from things staying the same oppressive way they are due to the generally acritical and ideologically reactionary nature of US community psychology.

United Statesian community psychology is very powerful in many ways and text book versions of what community psychology is, which are ideologically anchored in the individualistic 'culture' of the USA have been powerfully exported and have found their ways into many other community psychologies through processes which constitute, essentially, intellectual and cultural colonialism.

The USA globally dominates community psychology textbook and journal production. The USA has a relatively large and effective professional organisation in the Society for

Community Research and Action which promotes the interests of US community psychologists. The USA has more postgraduate community psychology training courses than any other nation, more money to fund studentships and thus more potential to attract overseas students, train them in US community psychology then export them, together with the US version of community psychology back to their countries of origin as community psychology 'cuckoos'. The USA has more community psychology academic staff than any other nation and these US staff have, collectively, greater access to more resources to enable them to travel the world professing US community psychology than staff from anywhere else. US community psychology has the resources to e-dominate community psychology globally via discussion lists (with their disciplinary function) electronic 'platforms', and the use of IT (e.g., an attempt by community psychologists in the USA to use 'You Tube' as a means to promote community psychology amongst young people).

Put bluntly, the USA has the resources and personnel to promote its community psychology in exactly the same way that it promotes its soft drinks industry, fast food industry and film industry. The ideological domination of community psychology by United Statesian versions of community psychology is arguably just another manifestation of United Statesian global military, economic, cultural and intellectual domination.

There is a risk of USA community psychology obliterating diverse thriving models for community psychology in other parts of the world, for example, in South Africa, South and Central America, supplanting fledgling de-colonising approaches of community psychology found in the practices of indigenous peoples, for example, in New Zealand and Australia and also, we believe, in Europe.

As an example of US community psychological colonisation, consider the "2nd International Conference on Community

Psychology: Building Participative, Empowering and Diverse Communities – Visioning Community Psychology in a worldwide perspective" which was held in Lisbon, Portugal from 4-6 June 2008, following on from the first in this series in Puerto Rico. Whilst there have been a number of conferences with international attendance organised in Australia/New Zealand (the Trans-Tasman biennials), in the USA (SCRA Biennials) and in Europe (Biennial Conferences of the European Network of Community Psychology – now superseded by the European Community Psychology Association), the 2nd International Conference on Community Psychology in Lisbon could claim to be more international than most. After all, its Organising Committee was composed of members from Australia, Canada, Chile, Japan, Portugal, Puerto Rico, South Africa, Spain, UK and the USA, and its Scientific Committee was composed of members from Australia (Chair), Brazil, Chile, Columbia, Germany, Italy, New Zealand, Puerto Rico, South Africa, Spain, USA and Venezuela. Turning to content, the programme of the 2nd International Conference on Community Psychology in Lisbon included over 350 verbal presentations and over 130 poster presentations whose abstracts referred to contributors from at least 30 countries including Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Columbia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Mozambique, New Zealand, Norway, Palestine, Poland, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Mexico, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, UK, USA and Venezuela.

However, having people from a variety of countries serving on high status conference committees or traveling to a conference to read papers does not necessarily mean that a conference is international in any sense important to community psychology, any more than Hollywood film stars jetting around the world to attend film premieres and gala screenings means that the USA film industry is

international.

It is noteworthy that the 2nd International Conference on Community Psychology sub-title ("Visioning Community Psychology in a worldwide perspective") closely echoed recent preoccupations of the United Statesian Society for Community Research and Action (SCRA) with 'visioning' in general (Wolff, 2006); "The Vision" currently dominating the SCRA website in particular and other SCRA activities³.

It is also noteworthy that six of the seven pre-conference 'Institutes' before the Lisbon conference were run by United Statesians; that the only Keynote Address at Lisbon was given by a United Statesian; that three out of the eight 'Thematic Keynotes' were given by United Statesians; and that one in five of all presentations at Lisbon were given by United Statesians, although the USA was only one in thirty of the countries represented at the conference.

However, for us, the major problem with USA domination of community psychology is not limited to its tendency to obliterate diversity with a mono-cultural vision but that, from our critical standpoint, much of the community psychology exported/promoted by the USA is ideologically problematic. Despite adoption of a progressive rhetoric, much US community psychology is individualistic, naively ethnocentric, increasingly formulaic, acritical and hardly distinguishable from the mainstream discipline, especially in practice. Much of US community psychology is, in other words, effectively acritical mainstream psychology business as usual.

It would be easy to illustrate this by reference to one of the many parochial, acritical, US text books of community psychology. However, instead we focus on one of the strongest and, rhetorically at least, most critical textbooks produced by community psychology editors who are widely regarded as being amongst the most critically oriented of community psychologists in North America. Isaac Prilleltensky and Geoff Nelson have been

responsible for a series of critical publications including *The Morals and Politics of Psychology: Psychological Discourse and the Status Quo* (1994), *Community Psychology: In Pursuit of Liberation and Well-being* (2005) and *Doing Psychology Critically: Making a Difference in Diverse Settings* (2002).

Nelson and Prilleltensky's (2005) community psychology textbook, *Community Psychology: In Pursuit of Liberation and Well Being*, whilst relatively strong on critical community psychology in theory, is critically weak, in our opinion, when it comes to critical community psychology in practice. Despite provisos about the difficulty of defining community psychology (p. 4) and although they admit (table 3.3 p. 61) that whilst support for community structures, social justice, holism and accountability have amongst the most potential for social change, they are currently amongst the least prominent in community psychology, Nelson and Prilleltensky (2005) write that, "the central problem with which CP is concerned is that of oppression, and that the central goals of CP are to work in solidarity with disadvantaged people and to accompany them in their quest for liberation and well-being" (p. 24).

Given their commitment to contesting oppression, solidarity with disadvantaged people, promotion of liberation and well-being and support for community structures, social justice, holism and accountability, Nelson and Prilleltensky's (2005) text book evangelising a critical version of community psychology, might have been expected to showcase inspiring exemplars of critical community psychology in action. It is therefore all the more of an anti-climax to read the volume's treatment of disabling practices or, as Glen White puts it, 'Ableism', in Chapter 20 of Nelson and Prilleltensky (2005).

Although White's chapter starts with a warm-up exercise asking what community psychologists can do to reduce discrimination against 'people with disabilities' and although it suggests the 'challenges for community

psychologists' relate to 'power', 'diversity', 'partnership and collaboration', 'subjectivity and reflexivity' and although White claims the 'work is guided by values consistent with the aims of CP' including 'participation/ collaboration, diversity and social justice', the actual practice described falls well short of this. Here is an example of explicit and implicit community psychologies being quite different in the same work.

White gives 'two recent examples of our community-based work addressing the concerns of people with disabilities', previously stated to be exclusion, discrimination and access'. The first example White gives is 'The Action Letter Portfolio'. This 'self administered guide helps users write their own personal disability concern letters.' Not only is this an ameliorative, cognitive, individual level change intervention based on victim-blaming, skill-deficit, assumptions but it was not even effective in the sense that 'the skills that participants demonstrated under training conditions' did not even transfer to their own personal letter writing outside the training. The second example White gives is an intervention to increase physical activity levels in 'women with severe disabilities'. White notes:

The study goal was remarkable because it encouraged women to self-direct their increases in physical activity in their homes or selected community sites. This approach was a more realistic alternative than regularly working-out at a fitness centre because of the barriers posed for the participants (cost, need for accessible transportation and the lack of physical and programmatic accessibility). (p. 419)

This example is again critically deeply problematic in that it is an individual level, cognitive, ameliorative intervention which positions women's lack of enthusiasm for exercise (in assuming encouragement is an

appropriate intervention) as the problem to be addressed and accepts the physical and economic inaccessibility of public fitness facilities and transport as a given to which the women should accommodate.

White admits that his community psychology interventions have ‘most often’ been ‘ameliorative rather than transformative’ directed at achieving individual level ‘first-order’ change such as ‘increasing a desirable behaviour’ (e.g., physical activity) or ‘decreasing an undesirable behaviour (that is powerlessness)’. That White sees powerlessness as individual level behaviour is worrying in itself. White then draws upon his wider knowledge of the community psychology literature but can only come up with what he describes as “two strong examples of transformation, where second order change has truly occurred” (p. 419). One ‘resulted from consumer complaints about inappropriate wording and portrayals of people with disabilities . . . and led to the development of a nationally recognized resource for the media on how to write about and report on people with disabilities.’ The other ‘showed that handicapped (sic) parking signs clearly indicating the potential amount of fines that one could incur for parking illegally were more effective when compared to the standard handicapped (sic) parking signs’ (p. 420) and this led to some states changing their signs. These do not seem to us “strong examples of transformation” and it is a sign of the limitedness and ineffectiveness of 30 years of community psychology disability research if these are the most critically informed transformatory interventions which White is able to cite. It is not just that no real impact on discriminatory disabling practices and procedures has been achieved, the discriminatory status quo is of course well defended. It is more that there seems no serious engagement with the task. The commitment in theory of community psychology to tackle injustice and to promote the liberation and well being of disabled

people seems purely rhetorical.

In contrast with White’s acritical community based disability work, we next describe some Scottish ‘community critical psychological’ praxis which has attempted to resist, in theory and practice, ideological and intellectual colonisation by the United Statesian version of what community psychology is and to get to grips critically with disabling practices, procedures and policies. This work, achieved by a participatory collective including one of the co-authors, Adele Laing, was an engagement in sustained praxis over several years in relation to disabling practice, procedures and policies in several Higher Education Institutions in Scotland.

As we use it, ‘praxis⁴’ refers to an ongoing, irreducible, collective process through which is enacted, in one and the same process, ‘knowledgementing’ (the construction and legitimation of knowledge claims), ‘radical reflexivity’ (the bringing to awareness and critical problematisation of interests served by what is thought, said and done by all relevant parties), and ‘ideologically progressive social action’ (the pursuit of emancipatory process and just outcomes and the contesting of ‘external and internal⁵’ institutional oppression).

We locate praxis within a critical frame of reference which rejects naïve realism and positions reality as socially constructed but, none-the-less, as having ‘real’ effects. Crucially, in our frame of reference no distinction is drawn between power and knowledge: power-knowledge is irreducible and the components cannot be separated. As Foucault (1997) puts it: “power and knowledge directly imply one another . . . there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relation” (p. 27). For more on our thinking about power see Fryer (2008b).

This praxis rejects accommodationist, North American style, Community Psychology and is informed by the work of Michel Foucault (e.g., 1977), Paulo Freire (1972), the British Disabled

Peoples' Movement (<http://www.bcodp.org.uk/>) and associated scholars, Paul Hunt (1966) and Michael Oliver (1992), and explicates the way disability is constructed and maintained in Scottish Higher Education Institutions through interconnectivity between (or as Foucault might have put it assemblages or apparatuses consisting of) interconnected practices, procedures, policies, discourses and other key frames of reference.

The praxis involved problematising interviews with various members of Scottish Higher Education Institutions or associated public organisations, through which unjust interpretations of 'disability' were co-knowledgemented, critically co-problematised and co-challenged, with their ideological nature co-exposed and alternative, more just, interpretations co-explored; paid and voluntary work with various personnel tasked with providing disability related services and support during which oppressive activities were surfaced, institutional interests served identified and reactionary means of action and interpretation problematised; participation in a Higher Education Institution's high level working group tasked with amending disability policy and procedures knowledge menting oppressive ways institutional decisions are made to maintain/enhance existing disabling policies and procedures; supporting a disabled students' group to establish themselves and then to surface and contest the problematic way in which the institution had silenced their critical voice from a wide reaching institutional audit required by national legislation and in which their inputs had been distorted to represent the institution's interests; meeting law and policy makers from the national parliament to problematise existing policy and procedures and to champion alternative arrangements which were more likely to support just ends; and the creation and running of an on-line inter-institutional critical disability studies course offered to members of various Scottish Higher Education Institutions to enable those who enrolled not only to

individually earn a module credit fulfilling bona fide university degree module requirements but to allow them to collectively engage in: de-ideologisation and sustained critical conscientisation of dominant conceptions of what constitutes disability; theoretical discussion and shared co-construction of new accounts of disability; familiarisation with and critique of accessible accounts of the legislative duties to which institutions were accountable; scrutiny of organisational disabling practices and procedures. The aim of this dimension of the praxis was to provide course members with the resources to pursue and ensure their civil and human rights to education and contest discriminatory practices, procedures and policies.

The praxis collective demonstrated, sought to understand and challenge why, in spite of apparently progressive practices, policies and procedures, well intentioned people, and despite students battling hard to succeed, Scottish Higher Education Institutions are still disabling places, that is, still places where the likelihood of success or failure is distributed unevenly and unjustly across the population to the detriment of certain students who become disabled by the way the institutions operate. Why, despite all the amendments to legislation and proposals to amend existing policies, practices and procedures in order to make universities places which do not disable or operate in discriminatory ways, little has changed or where it has done, has changed for the worse in recent times.

The praxis collective constructed an account which exposed the wider economies at work producing disability in Higher Education, and how those economies function to prevent emancipatory change but instead to produce and maintain disability through various apparatuses of disciplinary power functioning together, interlocking components of a disabling machine which keeps oppressive practices, procedures and policies the same no matter what changes are attempted.

The praxis collective, as do we as community critical psychologists, strived to problematise ideologically reactionary aspects of mainstream ‘knowledge and practice’ (rather than collude with them), develop epistemologically sophisticated knowledgementing practices (rather than default to formulaic methodology), develop innovative socio-structural inter- and pre-ventions (rather than default to traditional intra-psychic blame or change), collaborate with collectives (rather than work unilaterally on or for individuals), promote social change (rather than psychological adaptation), engage in emancipatory process and outcome through progressive redistribution of power (rather than collude with or contribute to oppressive (re) distribution of power), make processes of psychological oppression visible and contest them (rather than camouflage, mystify and collude with them), provide new legitimated knowledge, demonstrate new ways of producing knowledge which are participatory and socially just, and offer new ways to people to engage with us in emancipatory social research. Note that here we are, effectively, making explicit a community critical psychology to which we are committed which is implicit in the praxis described.

We believe that community psychology is becoming increasingly endangered as a critical alternative to mainstream disciplinary ideology, theory, procedure and practice. We believe that community psychology is becoming increasingly colonised and dominated by acritical United Statesian versions of community psychology. However, we also believe this transformation is not inevitable and could be checked or reversed by community psychologists taking a critical turn in theory, ideology and practice and engaging in praxis, building upon work such as that we have described above.

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Notes

- ¹ We note in passing that the same reconstruction through problematising could be carried out with other questions such as: “What is clinical psychology?” or indeed “What is psychology?”.
- ² “The Society for Community Research and Action will have a strong, global impact on enhancing well-being and promoting social justice for all people ...” (SCRA Executive Committee, 2007).
- ³ For example the 12th Biennial Conference of the SCRA bears the title, “Realising Our New Vision”.
- ⁴ This notion of praxis is more fully explicated in Laing (2008).
- ⁵ The distinction between external and internal oppression is not clear cut because oppressive societal discourses and ideologically reactionary frames of reference are often internalised and experienced as ‘subjective reality’.

Address correspondence to

David Fryer
University of Stirling, Scotland
email: drdavidfryer@yahoo.co.uk

Adele Laing
Section of Psychological Medicine
Division of Community Based Sciences
Faculty of Medicine
University of Glasgow
Scotland
email: adelelaing@hotmail.com

Author note

David Fryer is relocating to Charles Sturt University, New South Wales, Australia in early 2009.

Resisting Refugee Policy: Stress and Coping of Refugee Advocates

Nadya Surawski

Anne Pedersen

Murdoch University

Linda Briskman

Curtin University of Technology

While there is clear evidence of the negative effects of Australian policy with respect to people seeking asylum on our shores, there is little research regarding the experiences of their advocates. In the present study, two main aims were investigated. First, we examined the stress levels of advocates and their coping strategies. Second, we examined changes in personal relationships and positive experiences as outcomes of the involvement with refugees. Eighty four refugee movement advocates completed an on-line questionnaire. Results indicated that they experienced moderate to high levels of stress in their refugee advocacy. While they used emotional support significantly more than other coping strategies, they found emotional support and instrumental support the most effective. Regardless of the high costs involved in such advocacy (e.g., financial, emotional, and interpersonal), participants noted a number of positive outcomes such as new friendships and personal growth. The findings are discussed in terms of long-term implications in relation to immigration policy and community support.

For a long time, Australia has been involved in assisting international victims of crises occurring within their own countries. A large number of refugees escaping the dangers of civil disorder or ethnic, political and religious persecution in their homeland have successfully resettled in the safe democratic country of Australia. While welcoming those who waited to be accepted as refugees offshore, Australia has not been so generous toward refugees arriving onshore without official authorisation, usually by boat¹.

Radical changes to refugee policy were made in 1992 by the then Labor Government with the introduction of legislation for the mandatory detention of unauthorised arrivals. In 1997, the regulations for refugees living on a bridging visa E (BVE) were introduced, restricting work rights (most are not allowed to work) and Medicare access. Then, in 1999, the three-year temporary protection visa (TPV) was introduced which prohibited refugees who arrived without official authorisation to sponsor their family to join them, return to Australia if they left the country during that time, and to be eligible for resettlement benefits. The conditions of a BVE and TPV

denied individuals certainty, hope and material security – the conditions necessary to start healing after experiencing torture and trauma in their countries (Crock, Saul & Dastyari, 2006) and, in many cases, mandatory detention.

In August–September 2001, the crisis around Tampa, a Norwegian cargo ship carrying 433 refugees rescued from a sinking boat, was the next milestone in tightening the refugee migration legislation. The crisis developed around the time of the September 11 terrorist attacks in the USA and just before the Australian federal elections in November 2001. Howard Government representatives used this opportunity to link boat people with the possibility of terrorist attacks in Australia (Crock et al., 2006; Pedersen, Watt, & Griffiths, 2007). Over time, the attitudes of the Australian public toward refugees became increasingly negative (Betts, 2001) which allowed the Howard government to justify prolonged detention of unauthorised arrivals until their status was thoroughly assessed which, for some refugees, involved a very long wait indeed (for one Kashmiri asylum seeker, the wait was seven years). This prolonged wait is despite the fact that approximately 90% of

asylum seekers are found to be 'genuine' refugees (Burnside, 2008).

Implications of Australia's Onshore Refugee Policy for Refugees' Well-being

Many refugees arriving to Australia have experienced the trauma of persecution in their own country. According to the director of NSW Institute of Psychiatry, Dr Louise Newman, detention can contribute to refugees' traumatisation and increase feelings of isolation, loneliness, voicelessness and helplessness (ABC, 2006). Evidence of the negative impact of prolonged and indefinite detention was documented in the reports of Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (2004) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (1997) (also see Austin, Silove & Steel, 2007; Briskman, Latham & Goddard, 2008; Steel, Silove, Brooks, Momartin, Alzuhairi, & Susljik, 2006). Refugees on TPVs or BVEs find themselves in the conditions of 'unacceptable hardship' defined by McNevin and Correa-Velez (2006) as numerous health and welfare crises, such as homelessness, growing debt, poor access to health care, family breakdown, and social isolation. There are also a number of people who were deported to their homeland 'voluntarily' after being persuaded by Immigration Department officials that it was safe to return to their countries. Many faced either death or danger upon the return to their homeland (Briskman et al., 2008; Corlett, 2005).

Implications of Australia's Onshore Refugee Policy for advocates' Well-being

The impact of mandatory detention, TPVs, BVEs and potential deportation on the physical and mental well-being of refugees motivated many Australians to engage in activist endeavours and to support refugees. The refugee movement called on the Howard Government, and later the Rudd Government, to comply with international obligations and core principles of humanity (Briskman & Goddard 2007; Briskman et al., 2008). Many Australians formed alliances to support

distressed and disadvantaged refugees and endeavour to overturn the policies. Thousands of people took part in activities within the refugee support movement (Mares & Newman, 2007; Pedersen, Kenny, Briskman, & Hoffman, 2008). Refugee advocates housed individual refugees at their homes, visited them in detention centres, and assisted them with legal cases. Political activists strived to bring change to Australia's onshore refugee policy. They attended and organised protest rallies, and lobbied politicians. Many people took part in both political and supporting activities. Refugee support groups were active in capital cities and in regional Australia and included professionals and volunteers working with refugees.

Yet there are few studies which examine refugee advocacy. Gosden (2006) explored the milestones of the refugee movement in Australia. She found that while some advocates had prior involvement in other social justice areas, many others joined the movement in order to respond to the issues of human rights abuses within the Australian onshore refugee policy (this was also found by Coombs, 2003). Reynolds (2004) studied advocates' background, knowledge of Australia's onshore refugee policy, motivations for the involvement, and the ways of helping refugees detained in isolated areas of Australia and in the Pacific. One of the findings of her study was that there were different motivations for the refugee involvement from feeling empathy with refugees to disagreement with the 'unjust and un-Australian' policy. Raab (2005) also explored the reasons motivating Australians to become involved in the refugee movement. The most common motivations named by the advocates of her study were: important values violated by government policies, wishing to show dissent from the government policy, feeling distressed angry or guilty because of the refugee plight, and already being involved in activist networks.

Helping traumatised refugees can negatively impact on the advocates' mental and physical health. It has been noted elsewhere that

some advocates appear to be traumatised by the whole refugee situation (Gosden, 2005; Australian Council of Heads of Schools of Social Work [ACHSSW], 2006). Gosden (2005) pointed to anecdotal evidence of vicarious trauma, also known as secondary trauma (e.g., Hesse, 2002) experienced by advocates who were intensely involved with refugees affected by the onshore refugee policy. There is very little research in this field, so in discussing the extent to which advocates may experience stress, it is important to look at how helping people in distress may negatively impact on workers in other fields. We do so now.

The HEAVINESS of Helping

Research with helping professionals indicates that the costs of helping can be high. Stress, which can be defined as a general reaction to traumatic or disturbing events (Hesse, 2002), occurs when the demands and challenges facing a person exceed their available resources (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). People's responses to stressful events can be expressed in their emotions (distress, despair, helplessness, irritability, lack of control), thoughts (worrying excessively, pessimistic, and confused), physical reactions (headaches, rapid heartbeat, sleep problems, and general weakness), and behaviours (frequent crying spells, impatience, blaming, and poor interpersonal relationships) (see Resick, 2001; Morrissette, 2004). For helping professionals and volunteers, feeling compassion and empathy for their patients or clients can increase the probability of experiencing stress (Gueritault-Chalvin, Kalichman, Demi & Peterson, 2000). A number of studies have reported significant levels of stress across occupational groups such as physicians, nurses and social workers, and across health care disciplines, such as midwifery, oncology and HIV/AIDS care (Demmer, 2002; Huensberg, Vedhara, Nott & Bradbeer, 1998; Linzer, Gerrity, Douglas, McMurray, Williams, & Konrad, 2002).

Individuals can employ different coping strategies in order to deal with a stressful situation. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) differentiated between problem-focused coping, which attempts to alter or manage the situation and emotion-focused coping which attempts to reduce or manage emotional distress. Problem-focused coping includes direct action, planning and evaluating. Emotional-focused coping consists of various processes, such as emphasising the positives of the situation. Lazarus and Folkman argue that problem-focused coping is more likely in situations when something constructive can be done about the stressor whereas emotion-focused coping is more likely when the situation is one that must be endured.

Carver, Scheier and Weintraub (1989) described 13 coping strategies of the COPE scale; some of which we briefly described below being relevant to the present study. Instrumental support refers to active behaviours for assisting the person in need. Emotional support is the ability to confide and express feelings to others and their ability to listen empathically (Resick, 2001). Venting of emotion is the tendency to focus on distress that one is experiencing and to ventilate those feelings (Carver et al., 1989). Relying on one's religion and spirituality may be important to many people, and may play a significant role in coping with stress related to the present issue given the amount of support refugees receive from advocates who come from religious organisations (Pedersen et al., 2007). Positive reframing, a type of emotion-focused coping, is aimed at managing distress emotions rather than at dealing with the stressor (Carver et al., 1989) and refers to looking at things in a better light leading the individual to move toward active, problem-focused coping.

Overview of our Study

Our study examined the effect of involvement in the refugee movement on advocates' well-being. For the purpose of this study, refugee advocates and activists will hereafter be referred to as 'advocates'. In order

to achieve this aim, quantitative and qualitative data were simultaneously collected through an electronic questionnaire. Although, as noted by Yardley and Bishop (in press), there are profound differences in these perspectives – quantitative often being associated with scientific paradigms and qualitative often being associated with interpretative/constructivist paradigms - there are many benefits in both methods if pitfalls (e.g., not using explicit theoretical frameworks) are taken into account. In fact, Yardley and Bishop argue that if we really want to understand the human experience, we need to draw on a range of methods to do so. Specifically, in our study, the qualitative data enabled the exploration of the context in which stress and coping took place as was then expressed in the quantitative self-reports. A thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was used to examine the qualitative data. As these authors note, this method is recommended for the use in under-researched areas. As such, it is the most suitable for the purpose of the present study because stress and coping of Australian refugee advocates has not been specifically studied. The following steps were taken with respect to the reasons for perceiving refugee work as more stressful (if in fact participants did), the Critical Incidents, and positive experiences. Firstly, common themes emerging from the data were identified, named, and all data relevant to each theme collated. Secondly, the frequency with which each theme was mentioned by participants was established.

In this study, four specific objectives were identified. A minor first objective was to investigate whether advocates were previously involved in social justice movements; if so, whether they found refugee advocacy more or less stressful, or there was no difference. If indeed there were differences, we were interested in why this may have been the case. The second was to examine the level of stress reported by the participants. The third was what coping strategies were most used and perceived as successful. Finally, the fourth was

to explore the outcomes of refugee involvement in terms of changes in interpersonal relationships and positive experiences.

Method

The questionnaire was posted on-line; 84 questionnaires were returned over eight weeks from May to July 2006. Participants completed the survey in a single session which took approximately 30 minutes. Invitations to participate, including a link to the questionnaire and a request to send it on to other individuals and groups, were emailed to 13 refugee support groups across Australia. The second and third authors of this paper were included as participants.

Respondents were asked to state their age in years, their education level (1 = did not complete secondary school, 6 = postgraduate degree), political orientation (1 = strongly left, 5 = strongly right), sex (1 = male, 2 = female), and religiousness or spirituality (1 = neither religious nor spiritual, 2 = religious, 3 = spiritual, 4 = both religious and spiritual). They also responded to the questions about their refugee involvement: length of time (from 1 = less than 1 year, 4 = more than 5 years), potential impact on their finances (1 = yes, 2 = no), type of work (1 = political action, 2 = refugee support, 3 = both political action and refugee support), closeness to a supported refugee (1 = not close at all, 4 = very close), and experience in other social justice areas (1 = yes, 2 = no). In addition, participants who had experience in other social justice areas also responded to an open-ended question about the reasons for perceiving refugee advocacy as more stressful (if they had indicated that this was the case).

The Critical Incident technique (Flanagan, 1954) was used to enable participants' recollection of a stressful event from their advocacy work. The Critical Incident provided context in which participants experienced stress as, for many advocates, the most stressful episodes associated with their refugee involvement happened in the past. Participants responded to the three open-ended questions

asking: (a) what actually took place, (b) what the advocates' reactions and feelings were, and (c) what the actual or potential consequences of the incident were. Participants who had experienced a Critical Incident were asked to respond to all of the remaining questions, and their answers were included in the analyses of stress, coping, changes in relationships and positive experiences. Respondents who had not experienced such an incident were instructed to complete the demographic and advocacy background information only.

Stress was measured using the Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen, Kamarck & Mermelstein, 1983). The scale was reported to have adequate reliability and validity. Ten of the 14 original items of the scale (six of them negative and four positive, reverse scored) were kept as they were the most relevant questions referring to advocates' stress related to the Critical Incident. Some questions were amended for reasons of clarity to fit the present study. The questions asked participants to respond on a five-point scale how often they experienced certain feelings ('never' to 'very often'). Higher scores on the scale indicated greater stress.

Use of coping strategies was measured with the COPE scale (Carver et al., 1989). Five subscales of the scale containing four items each (as in the original scale, totalling 20 items) were retained, namely: instrumental support, emotional support, religion, positive reframing, and venting of emotion. Of the four items of the religion subscale, two were replaced with the similar items from a later version of the scale (Carver, 1997) and two other were reframed to include spirituality due to the diversity of beliefs in Australian society. Of the four items of the positive reframing subscale, three were the original and one was suggested by a participant of a previous pilot study (beyond the scope of this paper to elaborate upon). Respondents were asked to indicate whether certain ways of coping with stress at the time of the Critical Incident were true of them using a five-point scale

('completely untrue' to 'completely true'). Higher scores referred to greater use of a coping strategy.

A similar format of the inventory was used for rating the effectiveness of coping strategies. For each coping option, participants assessed how successful it was in helping combat stress using a five-point scale ('never successful' to 'very successful'). The higher the scores, the more successful the coping strategy was perceived. In addition, they were also asked four questions, both closed and open-ended, to indicate the use of professional support in dealing with stress.

Participants were asked a closed-ended question regarding changes in relationships with their friends, family and work colleagues, and an open-ended question about the ways of such changes. They were also asked an open-ended question to indicate positive experiences they had during their refugee work.

Results

Demographic Information and Advocacy Background

The sample of 84 advocates was primarily female (87%). The average age was 46 years (range 18–76 years). The majority of the respondents were highly educated, with 80% of the sample holding a degree or postgraduate qualification. The political viewpoint of the sample was left-wing (36% of 'strongly left' and 50% of 'somewhat left'). A total of 76% of the advocates had been involved in refugee advocacy for more than three years, and 91% were still involved at the time of the survey. The involvement in the refugee movement had impacted on the finances of 62% of the advocates. The majority (74%) worked with refugees as volunteers. Only 7% of the advocates were involved in political action only. Most of the advocates either supported refugees (47%) or were involved in both support and political activism (46%). The majority of participants as a whole (81%) reported they were either very close or quite close to the refugee/refugees they supported;

Table 1
Descriptive Characteristics of Scales

Scale	Mean (SD) Range	k	α
Stress	3.44 (.60) 1-5	10	.86
Coping use			
1. Instrumental support	3.62 (.93) 1-5	4	.72
2. Emotional support	4.03 (.93) 1-5	4	.87
3. Venting of emotion	3.74 (.90) 1-5	3	.71
4. Religion/spirituality	2.43 (1.48) 1-5	4	.95
5. Positive reframing	2.73 (1.21) 1-5	3	.84
Coping effectiveness			
1. Instrumental support	3.91 (1.04) 1-5	-	-
2. Emotional support	3.84 (1.05) 1-5	-	-
3. Venting of emotion	3.15 (1.13) 1-5	-	-
4. Religion/spirituality	2.32 (1.56) 1-5	-	-
5. Positive reframing	2.57 (1.32) 1-5	-	-

this number grew to 85% of those who reported experiencing a Critical Incident.

Over two-thirds of our participants (69%) were active in other social justice areas before becoming involved with refugees. A thematic analysis of reported social justice areas revealed that the most common category was social justice relating to Indigenous Australians (20%). Other common social justice areas were belonging to human rights organisations such as Amnesty International (11%), unionism (9%), environmental issues (8%), women's rights such as victims of domestic violence (8%) and work with people with disabilities (7%). Of the advocates who had been involved in social justice work beforehand, most (83%) rated their refugee involvement as more stressful than their previous social justice involvement. The three most important reasons given were past refugee trauma or current suffering (21%), higher personal involvement, or closeness (20%), and critical nature, life and death situations (18%). Less common, but relevant, responses were injustice in policy (16%), achieving little results or feelings of

hopelessness (14%), and higher levels of effort (11%).

Scale Descriptives

Table 1 presents the descriptive characteristics for each scale, setting out the scale means and standard deviations, the range of scores and the number of items in each scale. The table also includes the scale α coefficients. By the removal of one item from the venting of emotion and positive reframing scales, reliabilities were increased to $\alpha = .71$ and $.84$, respectively. All scales had satisfactory reliability.

Stress Related to Critical Incidents

Most Critical Incidents took place in 2003 and 2004. A total of 82 Critical Incidents were obtained from 68 participants (81% of the sample), while 16 participants (19%) did not report one. The rest of the results will summarise the information obtained from these 68 participants. Six categories of Critical Incidents were identified by thematic analysis. The two primary themes were self-harm, suicide: concerns or incidents (17%), deportation (actual or fear of) or fear of persecution following deportation (17%). Four less prominent, but still relevant, themes were

general policy: operations of or changes to (15%), behaviour of detention/immigration staff (15%), impact on own life (8%), and refugee family issues (3%).

The mean stress levels of our participants were generally on the high side ($M = 3.44$ out of a 5 point scale). Dividing the stress scores of participants at the 33rd and 66th percentiles resulted in only 3% of participants with low stress (scores 1.0–2.3), 58% with moderate (scores 2.4–3.6), and 39% with high (scores 3.7–5.0) levels of stress. Most participants (87%) related their stress to ongoing involvement in refugee advocacy rather than to a single acute event. We also found high levels of vicarious trauma as measured by the Morrissette (2004) scale which was significantly correlated with stress scores ($r = .77$). This adds to the validity of the stress scale, but is beyond the scope of this paper to take this finding further.

Coping Strategies and their Effectiveness

The two most used coping strategies were seeking emotional support and instrumental support. However, the difference between the mean scores of the two coping strategies was significant, $t(65) = 2.38$, $p < .05$ indicating that participants used emotional support significantly more often than they used instrumental support. However, the two most successful coping strategies were instrumental support and emotional support. Both strategies were perceived as equally successful, $t(64) = .66$, $p > .05$.

Only 27% percent of participants sought professional support (e.g., counselling) to assist in coping with stress at the time of the Critical Incident, almost half of them (44%) from an official organisation. All (100%) of them reported the professional support was helpful.

Changes in Relationships and Positive Experiences

Most of the advocates (69%) reported changed relationships with some of their friends, family, or work colleagues as the result of their involvement in refugee

advocacy. For 15% of the respondents, the relationships changed in a positive way (e.g., found support, the quality of relationships improved). For over a third of participants (39%) the relationships changed in a negative way (e.g., lost a friend, became distanced from the family) and for almost half (46%) relationships changed in both positive and negative ways (e.g., strengthened relationships with some friends, but alienation from the other). There were nine themes of positive experiences as revealed by thematic analysis. Overall, 57 participants (84%) reported 118 incidents. The three primary themes were new friendships or broadened networks (29%), personal growth (19%), and appreciation of life/humanity (12%). The less reported themes were understanding of others' cultures (9%), the developing of strengths (9%), the developing of new skills (8%), awareness of politics or social justice (7%), satisfaction from or value originating from the work (4%), and finding meaning in one's life (3%).

Discussion

We now discuss the four major findings, and compare such findings with previous research. Finally, the findings are discussed in terms of implications in relation to immigration policy and community support.

Stress Levels Compared with Previous Advocacy

The negative impact of the refugee regime on the refugees themselves has been well documented (e.g., Austin et al., 2007; Briskman et al., 2008). Not surprisingly, many concerned citizens who in the past were seeking social justice for other disadvantaged and discriminated people (e.g., Indigenous Australians; victims of domestic violence; people with disabilities) formed alliances to support refugees. Indeed, over two-thirds of the advocates in the present study came to the refugee movement with experience in other social justice areas. This finding is in line with one of the motives for refugee involvement as reported by a quarter of the advocates of the Raab (2005) study: they were already involved

in activist networks. It is also in line with the finding of Gosden (2006) that some advocates had prior involvement in other social justice areas. However, it would appear that our sample were more likely to have had previous experience with social justice work. Why this is the case can only be speculated upon. Clearly, there were differences in method used – different channels of dissemination; the accessing of different individuals and groups. However, one notable difference between the studies is that Raab's research took place a few years before the present research; similarly Gosden's research went back as far as 2003. It may be that the participants who continued longer with such advocacy may have been more experienced with such work generally and thus more robust (Gosden, D., personal communication, January 20, 2008).

The nature of the problem with which advocates were dealing defines their perception of refugee work as more stressful than previous social justice work. In the conditions of refugees' uncertainty, deprived freedom and endangerment, over four-fifths of their advocates saw this as more distressing compared to other social justice involvement. The critical nature of refugee advocacy, which can be a matter of life and death, is well expressed in the words of one of the advocates: 'So many times my refugee friends faced deportation and possible death, torture, imprisonment. This was a lived, real possibility for them, and greatly effected (sic) me ...'. The fear described by this advocate regarding a refugee returning to his or her homeland and being killed is not without merit. As briefly discussed in the introduction, it has been found that some refugees who were returned to their country of origin were not only brutalised and tortured on their return but some were killed (Briskman et al., 2008; Corlett, 2005).

Levels of Stress

Approximately three-quarters of the advocates worked with refugees as volunteers, and of course there were costs associated with that. They responded to the situation of

refugees by providing money, housing them, giving presents, sending parcels, and visiting them at detention centres. It is no wonder that most advocates felt a significant impact on their financial situation as expressively depicted by a refugee advocate: '*We have had a great deal of expense. We have paid for airline tickets, rent for family left behind, support for returned refugees, donations and fees to migration agents, support for a family to live in our home, necessary items. It is impossible to estimate the expense. Probably \$30,000. It just goes out week after week*'.

Results revealed that the advocates experienced not only financial hardship but emotional hardship too. Were advocates more stressed and traumatised than helping professionals in other fields? The anecdotal accounts of advocates' experiences of stress (Gosden, 2005; Mares & Newman, 2007; ACHSSW, 2006) were generally supported by the results of the study. The majority of the advocates reported either moderate or high levels of stress. It is not possible to make direct statistical comparisons with previous stress research as different scales and categorisations have been used. However, judging by mean stress scores, it would appear that our advocates' stress levels ($M = 3.44$) were higher than the stress levels experienced by AIDS workers ($M = 2.60$; Demmer, 2002) and physicians ($M = 2.40$; Linzer et al., 2002). In the Demmer study, service providers reported a lack of support, societal attitudes toward AIDS, poor salary, and deaths of their clients to be major triggers of stress. Similarities can be found within our own sample. Refugee advocates did not experience much structural support for their position and certainly, societal attitudes toward refugees were negative (Pedersen, Watt, & Hansen, 2006). Their finances were depleted, and they often feared that the refugees they supported may be deported and face death. In another study, Raviola, MacKoki, Mwaikambo, & Delvecchio Good (2002) found that AIDS carers reported feeling highly stressed because of the absence of a cure for the disease. Again, similarities can be

found within our own sample. It is possible that advocates had little hope for positive outcomes for the refugees they supported at the time of their Critical Incident (as there was 'no cure' for AIDS patients) which added to their stress levels. Most Critical Incidents occurred in 2003 and 2004 when there didn't seem to be very much likelihood of political change eventuating (there was some positive change in the middle of 2005 where many detainees were released into the Australian community; see Pedersen et al., 2008).

Relevantly, our participants' stress levels were greater than those reported in a recent Australian study using similar measures (Lincoln, 2008). The Lincoln study examined the stress experienced by direct service workers who assisted refugee trauma survivors. Specifically, these professionals' stress levels ($M = 2.62$) were very similar to the Demmer (2002) study; thus, lower than those reported in the present study. We suggest that these differences may be due to the following reasons. First, most advocates were close in a very personal way to the refugee(s) they were supporting; the Lincoln participants were trained professionals where a professional separation would have been more likely. Second, the Lincoln participants could leave their jobs without the potential for dire consequences for the refugee(s): someone else could take over. Third, the advocates did not receive formal support as is likely to have occurred with the Lincoln participants. As noted by Lincoln, her participants felt they worked in a 'supportive and caring work environment' (p. 47). Fourth, many advocates were volunteers who were holding down jobs as well as dealing with these issues in their 'spare' time; their lack of relaxation time is also likely to have contributed to their stress levels. Finally, the future of detainees was less secure than for recognised refugees; this uncertainty must impact on their advocates. In short, it would seem that, because of their unique situation, refugee advocates were at additional risk for stress.

Approximately four-fifths of the advocates were able to recall experiencing at least one stressful event from their refugee involvement. For example, one advocate noted the distress of one family during lip-sewing incidences at the detention centres. She was told the experiences of one detainee '*in a very animated and agitated manner and culminated the story by telling me he did not want to sew his lips together at that time like everyone else because he wanted to be able to cry FREEDOM through the fence. He was 8 or 9 years old.*' How would it be possible for an advocate not to be affected by such a scenario?

Advocates' reactions and feelings to the Critical Incident reflected the symptoms of stress as described by Resick (2001). As one advocate described her feelings during her participation in a detention taskforce at one of the detention centres while already under stress from providing legal aid to refugees:

*Overwhelmed, exhausted,
everything in my life appeared
trivial and absurd, compared with
the problems suffered by my clients.
I found communication with non-
refugee advocates tiresome and
annoying. I found myself laughing
inappropriately at a movie when
others were crying - it just seemed
so silly. I was hyper-aroused,
sleeping poorly, wracked with guilt.*

The content of many statements indicates that the advocates were highly affected by the Critical Incidents, and that balance to their lives needed to be restored which maybe easier said than done. The extent of the stress can be related to the work of Cunningham (2003) who examined vicarious trauma (as noted previously, highly correlated to stress in the present study) which was humanly induced (e.g., sexual abuse) and which was naturally induced (e.g., cancer). She found that vicarious trauma levels were higher for clinicians working with humanly induced

clients; perhaps due to being exposed to so much human 'evil'. Like Cunningham, refugee advocates' stress is humanly instigated rather than being a natural occurrence. It never needed to have happened.

Coping

The results revealed that advocates used emotional support as the main coping strategy. However, they perceived both types of support – emotional and instrumental – as the most successful coping strategies. Given the success of instrumental support, why was it not used as much as emotional support? It may be that if advocates felt that the problem causing stress was beyond their control, they sought moral support and understanding. It is in line with the Lazarus and Folkman (1984) argument that emotion-focused coping is more likely when the situation is one that must be endured. Alternatively, there were not many people who were capable of providing instrumental support, given the fact that advocates stood outside of society on the issue of refugees with respect to the Howard government's hard-line stance and the Australian public's support of such stance (see Pedersen et al., 2005). Interestingly, in the Lincoln (2008) study with direct service workers, it was found that, like the present study, the two most effective strategies used were instrumental and emotional support. Unlike the present study, however, instrumental support was used just as much as emotional support. As noted by Lincoln, her participants were paid workers, not volunteers, and as such they were more likely than volunteers to receive formal (instrumental) support which certainly was not the case in the present study. As also occurred with the Lincoln study, and as seen in Table 1 in the present study, multiple strategies were in fact used and valued.

Our results may help understand the complexity of the coping process and the role of support in overcoming negative effects of stress. It seems that advocates mostly relied on emotional support because, in the refugee field, it is often hard or even impossible to control

the problem that causes their stress. It could have a negative implication for those advocates who do not seek professional help, given all the advocates who used that type of support found it helpful. It would be beneficial if refugee organisations had such services (e.g., counselling, debriefing) available for their stressed advocates (however, we acknowledge the difficulty of doing this with limited budgets).

Only a quarter of the advocates sought professional help for combating stress and it was helpful for all of them. Given that professional help was a useful strategy, why might it be that most advocates didn't seek help? It may be that advocates have never had other crises of this magnitude in their lives and, in a sense, were 'learning on the job'. Interestingly, Cunningham (2003) found that clinicians who were new to the job suffered more vicarious trauma compared with those more experienced. It also may have been that advocates felt they had enough support within their networks or they did not have the spare cash (as noted above, many advocates' finances were depleted). Or perhaps the advocates who did not seek professional help believed they did not have the right to feel stressed while refugees were in a far worse state. As one advocate noted: *'There is the shadow of guilt we have probably all felt for those inside - we can visit but we can also walk away'*. Another said: *'I feel I was stressed but, of course, one cannot look at one's situation in the face of what these people have endured and feel sorry for oneself...'* However, the neglect of negative psychological symptoms may lead to ongoing distress for advocates. As noted by Hesse (2002), self-care is the primary key for working successfully with trauma victims.

Positive and Negative Outcomes

For over two-thirds of the advocates, the high personal involvement with traumatised refugees resulted in changed interpersonal relationships (Lincoln, 2008, similarly found that her direct service workers also reported both positive and negative experiences). For

just one-sixth of the advocates, relationships with their significant ones improved or new friendships emerged. For over a third of the advocates, their commitment to the refugee movement brought about only negative outcomes for relationships with their significant ones. But for almost a half of the respondents, it resulted in the improved relationships with some people and more distant with the other, as in the case of this advocate:

I couldn't speak to a lot of my friends. I just felt I no longer had things in common. My circle of friends shrunk. Also - I didn't have as much time to see them. Some family members grew to hate me for my views on and support for refugees. We no longer speak.

Other family members joined me to actively support refugees - and we have become closer because of this.

Clearly, for advocates, there were not only financial and emotional costs of supporting refugees and bringing change to the refugee policy but interpersonal costs too (also see Four Corners, 2008, for a description of the trauma reported by detention guards).

Though advocates felt highly stressed from working with refugees, many reported experiences affecting their lives in a positive way. Indeed, some of the positive experiences reported by the advocates are similar to the three domains of post-traumatic growth (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1998). According to these authors, stressful and traumatic events may result in the re-evaluation of the individual's world views and development of new schemata and coping strategies. Individuals report positive changes in one of the three domains: *one's sense of self* (e.g., increased self-reliance and coping abilities), *relationships* (i.e., increased emotional closeness with others and understanding others' suffering), and *spirituality or life philosophy* (e.g., changed life priorities and increased wisdom). In the present study,

advocates developed strengths and grew personally, found new friends, and began appreciating life and humanity to a greater degree. For many advocates, involvement with refugees resulted in practical positive outcomes such as gaining the knowledge of politics, social justice and other cultures, and developing new skills.

Overall, the challenges of supporting refugees and fighting for their rights significantly impacted on advocates' relationships with friends, family and work colleagues. At the same time, advocacy brought about positive changes in their lives and enriched them as individuals.

Conclusions and Implications

What can we learn from the present study? One important finding is that the mean reported stress levels were higher for refugee advocates compared with other carers such as AIDS workers, physicians, and professionals assisting traumatised refugees in Australia. It is clear that burnout is a key concern. When starting this advocacy work, there was no way of knowing its harshness or longevity and thus the risk of long-term harm. If the advocates knew then what they know now, they may have been better equipped at handling the situation. One avenue that would have been useful would have been by having more formal support. For workers in refugee organisations, this is more readily available. But for the volunteers, the refugee situation was unlike many other situations. As mentioned previously, advocates were primarily working against the wishes of the former government. Under these circumstances, emotional support was more likely to be available than instrumental support and indeed this was found to be the case.

Steel et al. (2006) documented the risk of complex mental-health related disabilities in refugees with a history of immigration detention and ongoing temporary protection. The present study documents the implications for mental health of the advocates who work

with distressed and traumatised refugees. For advocates, there were many negative effects of the refugee policy: financial, emotional and interpersonal. Regardless of the negative experiences, most participants saw some beneficial outcomes. As one participant noted, 'We have made some fantastic friends, both in the Australian community and amongst the refugees'. However, it could be argued that the situation should not have arisen in the first place. If a more balanced and humane treatment of refugees were implemented, refugee advocates would not need to get involved and unnecessarily suffer high psychological distress, and this is aside from the trauma to the refugees themselves.

To conclude, as the political situation stands at the moment, although there have been positive changes brought in by the Rudd Government since the 2007 election (e.g., the abolishment of temporary protection visas; the closing of detention centres in Nauru and Manus Island), some issues are still problematic (e.g., the use of Christmas Island; some Australian territory remaining excised for the purposes of migration; the detention debt) and the positive changes have not been legislated. If more refugees arrive unauthorised, there is no guarantee that Australia will not end up with the same situation again resulting in both trauma for the refugees themselves and for their advocates. The past decade has shown serious human rights violations with respect to refugees; we do not want a continuation of this situation. Let Australia learn from past mistakes.

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Note

¹ For the purposes of the present study, the term 'refugee' will be used as a general labelling of the people who seek refuge in Australia, as opposed to the distinguishing between a 'refugee' who is accepted as one offshore and an 'asylum seeker' whose claim for a refugee status is yet to be determined.

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Address correspondence to

Anne Pedersen
School of Psychology
Murdoch University
Murdoch WA 6150
email: A.Pedersen@murdoch.edu.au

Together but Separated: The Acculturation Experience of Latin American Women in Australia

Romina Iebra Aizpurúa
Adrian T. Fisher
Victoria University

Immigrants to a new land face significant acculturation issues. Although definitions of acculturation reflect a mutual change, most research and positioning considers this to be, mostly, a one-way process. It is also perceived as a process that seems to have an end point, and is reasonably comparable across all members of a group. In the current research, the position of 13 Latin American immigrant women, with an average of 32 years in Australia, is considered. Data from interviews indicated that acculturation is still an ongoing process for these women, with many barriers imposed. English language proficiency is seen as a key element for them to integrate, but they still face issues of overt and covert discrimination on grounds of accent and skin colour and expectations of assimilation. The challenges of acculturation are compounded for the women as they were often excluded from the original decisions to emigrate, had to establish a new household and life – but did not have the necessary formal and informal social support networks on which to draw.

Although individuals immigrate for diverse reasons and within complex contexts, the decision is often connected to the hope of more satisfactory conditions of life in the new country and a better future for their children. The adaptation processes of immigrants in a distant culture represent a complex readjustment of taken-for-granted values, ideals, and ways of behaving and expressing thoughts and emotions.

When individuals seek to adjust to a different culture, acculturation takes place. Acculturation is a phenomenon experienced not only by immigrants, but also by the receiving society, who is affected by new members from other socio-cultural backgrounds. Redfield, Linton and Herskovits (1936) indicated that acculturation was the “phenomena which results from when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups” (p. 149).

John W. Berry, who explained immigrants’ adjustment as the result of a relatively free-choice strategy (Berry, 1980, 1990, 1997), developed one of the most cited models of acculturation. Berry (1990)

identified four possible acculturation outcomes: integration (when immigrants decide to balance and incorporate parts of the broader culture while maintaining their ethnic culture and identity), assimilation (when immigrants do not maintain their ethnic background and adopt the receiving society’s values and culture), separation (when immigrants place great value on their own ethnic background and try to avoid interaction with mainstreamers), or marginalisation (when immigrants do not have any interest in interacting with the broader society). According to Berry, acculturation is observed as the result of the selection of a specific strategy by the immigrants.

Although Berry (1990) suggested that most immigrants are relatively free to select an adjustment strategy, the acculturation process is a phenomenon where intra and intergroup relations take place, and where immigrants and the host society attitudes meet and relate. The dominant society’s expectations of immigrants’ acculturation greatly impact on the final outcomes and the place immigrants have in the host country. According to Sonn and Fisher (2005), acculturation is not the outcome of a unidirectional process, rather a bi-directional social exchange where immigrants and host

cultures impact and influence on each other. While more research is needed to better understand the content and intention of host society's attitudes and expectations towards acculturating groups, some authors (e.g., Horenczyk, 1997; Ward, 1996) have already stressed on the impact of these attitudes on immigrants' adjustment process.

A key phenomenon leading to a positive adaptation among immigrants is the ways they balance the cultural maintenance and the contact interaction with the new society (Berry, 2005; Berry, Kim, Power, Young, & Bujaki, 1989; Phinney, 2002). However, the integration outcome only takes place when minority groups adopt some values of the receiving community, while the dominant group accepts institutional and cultural changes that would reflect the needs of a multicultural society. As Berry, Poortinga, Segall and Dasen (1992) indicated, a multicultural environment needs to establish certain conditions to promote integration: an extensive acceptance and freedom to express and maintain cultural diversity; relatively low levels of discrimination and racism, positive attitudes among different ethno cultural groups; and a certain level of identification with the main receiving society.

Immigrants' adjustment outcomes are a direct result of a combination of factors, some of them developed prior to relocation – such as reasons and contexts that lead to immigration, age, educational background, knowledge of the host country's language and gender (Berry, 1997) or while the acculturation takes place – such as intergroup relationships (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) where immigrants and host members' attitudes and expectations over acculturation influence each other (Horenczyk, 1997; Leong, 2008; Nesdale, 2002).

Gender and its Impact on Acculturation

While general patterns related to international immigration and acculturation outcomes have been studied, little work has focussed on the gendered nature of the immigrant experience. According to some

researchers (e.g., Dion & Dion, 2001; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992; Raijman & Semyonov, 1997), gender compounds the immigration and acculturation outcomes, as immigrant women often experience greater hardships than immigrant men.

As the academic interest in female immigration emerged in the United States during the 1970s (Pedraza, 1991; Sinke, 2006), researchers were able to identify that women, especially from minority groups, often experienced discrimination and a complex combination of challenges, struggles and responsibilities while adjusting to a new country (Dion & Dion, 2001; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992; Staab, 2004; Sullivan, 1984; Toro-Morn, 1995). This often has negative impacts on their lives, especially in the case of immigrant mothers, who without family support or new established social networks in the new country had to combine an overloaded routine of outside work, domestic duties and childcare (Fernández Kelly, 2005; Raijman & Semyonov, 1997).

The complex phenomenon involved in the adjustment of immigrant women needs to be investigated further – especially as the experiences of immigrant women to Australia is little evident in the extant literature. Although there is some academic data analysing the acculturation process of Latin Americans in Australia (Amézquita, Amézquita, & Vittorino, 1995; Botzenhart, 2006; Lopez, Haigh, & Burney, 2004) and the subsequent identity changes of their children (Vittorino, 2003; Zevallos, 2003, 2004), research related to Latin women's acculturation experiences is scarce (Moraes-Gorecki, 1991) and mostly published within community centres as brief reports (Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, 1985; D'Mello, 1982; Stone, Morales, & Cortes, 1996).

Latin American Immigration to Australia

From the late 1960s onwards, Australian officials were sent to South America to develop immigration programs in order to increase the Australian population. The major Latin American immigration wave occurred during the

1970s and 1980s. After that period, the number of Latin immigrants stabilised, a change related to the end of dictatorships in most affected countries and more favourable economic conditions. The Latin immigration in Australia can be divided in three major periods of time, occurring during the late 1960s, and then during the 1970s and the 1980s. Most Latin American immigrants related two main causes to leave their countries: economic hardships and political persecution (Botzenhart, 2006).

The understanding of the complex – and often conflictive – factors involved in Latin American women's adaptation to Australian labour and socio-cultural contexts seems necessary in order to pinpoint when, how and why immigrant women experienced challenges and conflicts, the opportunities they had to resolve them and what could be suggested to facilitate a better acculturation outcome of immigrant women in Australia. This research, therefore, aimed to explore how Latin American women experienced immigration and acculturation processes; the impact of these on their personal and professional lives; and the perceived acculturation outcomes for them.

Method

Participants

This paper presents findings from interviews with 13 South American immigrants in Melbourne (between the ages of 45 – 75 years) who moved to Australia in the late 1960's, 1970's and early 1980's. At the time of the research, these women had been living in Australia for an average of 32 years. All participants are natives of Spanish-speaking countries in South America (Argentina, Chile and Uruguay). Participants were recruited through a number of social agencies and through responses from Spanish language radio interviews. Participants had to have come to Australia as adults, and had lived in Australia for at least 20 years.

Instruments and Procedure

Qualitative data in the form of personal

narratives and responses to questions were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews. The interview schedule was developed within a phenomenological perspective, expecting to derive interpretations and not general facts or universal laws. This approach facilitates the intersection of personal biographies, specific historical context and broader cultural and social values (Smith, Flowers, & Osborn, 1997; Smith & Osborn, 2004; Willig, 2001). Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) is a qualitative methodology developed by Jonathan Smith specifically for psychological research. This methodology takes an idiographic approach and – in contrast to nomothetic studies – seeks to understand contingent, specific and subjective phenomena. IPA assists the researcher to understand how and why individuals experience certain phenomena, being able to derive main themes and sub themes related to the research questions.

Results and Discussion

Much of the previous literature on immigration and acculturation provides an understanding of the impact of separate variables. From this research it was possible to identify the compounded effects of low levels of English knowledge, restricted work and educational opportunities, limited social and family support in Australia, unaffordable childcare services, and economic constraints on the ongoing acculturation processes of the participants.

Language, Education and Labour Challenges

Women with low levels of education and limited communicational skills in English were consigned to work at factories or cleaning services. The high concentration of immigrant women in semi-skilled or unskilled positions in Australia was identified by many authors (Alcorso, 1991, 1995; Amézquita et al., 1995; Cox, Jobson, & Martin, 1976; Pettman, 1992; Stone et al., 1996). Similarly, this study found that immigrant women often deal with harsh

psychological and physical consequences of these work settings. Within this scenario, individuals rarely feel rewarded and work long hours under unpleasant, stressful and, sometimes, unhealthy conditions. This outcome negatively impacted on women's psychological wellbeing, often leading to feelings of sadness, helplessness, frustration and stress. Apart from working under difficult conditions, these women were also expected to run the households and look after the children, following traditional gender roles:

My first job was as a cleaner, there I cried the biggest tears of my life. Later I started working at the factories and that was another storm to pass through. I would sit to work at the factory, and I wouldn't be able to even look at my side! (...) You work like an animal until you reach home completely exhausted! On top of that, I had my own family, so I would go home and kept on working... (Mara¹)

Overcharged with responsibilities, the only available time they had to pursue any educational training was after work. The restricted access to low fees childcare services, combined with no established family or social support networks in Australia worked as a trap for the immigrant women who were willing to upgrade their professional and educational skills:

I felt particularly frustrated because the years passed and I couldn't finish my education. Here I had the barrier of the kids! Because I didn't have anyone who could take care of them! Now, I am 53 years old and I'm trying to take some courses, but you find that the language barrier is still there. That you are still missing something in English... (Mara)

Similar barriers to achieving personal and

labour outcomes by immigrant women in Sydney were identified by Cox et al. (1976) who concluded that childcare represented the major problem working immigrant women face in Australia. Work, education and language outcomes were often related to their domestic reality and the available resources to assist them with childcare. According to Cox et al., Australian government policies overlooked the needs of working women by not fully considering the difficulties and traumas of immigrating to a new country with no family or social support resources, balancing paid work with domestic responsibilities.

Although most of the women saw English language facility as a key to integration in Australia, their capacity to pursue language education was directly connected to the availability of free classes and childcare services. During the 1970s, free language programs were offered during the first two years after arrival. This was not very helpful to most participants, who often did not recognise the availability, or who had other priorities during the first couple of years in Australia. Looking for permanent and affordable accommodation, finding job offers, schools for their children, and taking care of domestic and childcare duties represented common priorities for most of them. When they felt more adjusted to their new reality, and were able to attend English classes, frequently the first two years had already passed and the classes were no longer free. Apart from that ineffective timing, the lack of low fee childcare services was identified as another negative factor compounding the language learning process. Most participants, as new immigrants, had neither relatives nor an established social support networks to rely on and ask for assistance from. Consequently, even if they were motivated and willing to pursue further language and professional training, they often did not have many opportunities to do so.

As D'Mello (1982) indicated, many immigrant women who worked in factories, cleaning services or hospitality could not afford

to pay regular childcare fees. Apart from receiving low wages, they also had to face the high costs and consequences of the international relocation. Moreover, immigrant families often added to their expenses some kind of financial help to relatives who remained in their country of origin. According to the author, even in the cases when immigrants can afford to pay low childcare fees, most kindergartens and day care services in Victoria do not give working parents – especially those who work in factories – the opportunity to match their working hours to the opening and closing times of the centres.

As a result of women's limited English, they remained in manufacturing and cleaning jobs for many years, often experiencing low levels of self-satisfaction, feeling helpless and isolated:

I used to cry, cry and cry. I cried so much because I didn't know the language and I didn't have any relatives. I couldn't communicate here. My life was work at the factory – what my mum always feared us to do - and home, nothing else. I couldn't understand the TV, I couldn't read, it was very difficult to learn it. With time, I overcame the language problems by studying everyday by myself, or with my kids, using the dictionary all the time. But it was hard...(Stella)

I worked at the factory for 28 years. I stayed there because it was good that I could go back home quickly to be with the kids. I couldn't take any English classes because I had to go back home and take care of the kids, my husband used to work many more hours than me and I couldn't leave them alone all day. I started taking some classes close to home and I used to take the kids along

with me. The problem is that the kids were already tired after 7 hours of school, feeling hungry, and ...it didn't work. The lack of family support also affected me in the sense that I didn't have time to study English, so that's why I stayed at the factory. Whatever English I learnt I did it listening to people at the factories, a very bad spoken English, a language spoken by immigrants...talking like Tarzan! (Rita).

Social Challenges

According to Vega, Kolody and Valle (1987), the satisfactory adjustment of immigrants is also related to their capacity to resolve interpersonal stressors associated with breaking-up social networks in the homeland and replacing them in the new country. The relevance of immigrants' social resources and the relationship with mental health outcomes was the research focus of many authors (e.g., Kuo & Tsai, 1986; Lin & Ensel, 1989; Lin, Ye, & Ensel, 1999; Thoits, 1982; Vega et al., 1987) while others have investigated the impact of specific ethnic support from immigrants' own community (e.g., Lopez et al., 2004; Miranda & Umhoefer, 1998; Noh & Avison, 1996; Noh, Beiser, Kaspar, Hou, & Rummens, 1999). As participants were not able to fully express thoughts and feelings in English, they tended to socialise with co-nationals, or other Spanish-speaking individuals in Australia. As a result, they were cut-off from interacting informally with members of the host society. Some women described the impact of limited language skills on their social life:

I don't feel integrated in Australia because I don't have friends. I have some English-speaking friends, but very few, we can't talk and have a conversation. I don't know how to express myself as I haven't

studied English...I've been living in this house for 3 years and I don't exchange anything else than "good morning" and "bye bye" with the neighbours. My friends are only Spanish-speaking people and Latinos (Lucia)

When I arrived I made many Spanish-speaking friends, as I couldn't speak English. After many years I told my husband how I used to suffer, I used to cry every time I would receive letters from my parents. You come to this country and you don't feel loved because you feel so lonely! (Rita)

Although other participants improved their skills in English and reached efficient communication levels, they constantly reported not feeling part of the broader society, not having close relationships with Anglo-Australians and facing different types of discrimination and segregation. According to Leslie (1992), it would be naïve to simply suggest immigrants to establish stronger social networks with individuals from the host society if the mainstream culture is not genuinely open to immigrants and their cultural heritage. The limited identification with Australian culture and the restricted friendship with members from the broader society was a common phenomenon among the Latin American women who participated in this study:

I would say that the case of Latin immigrants mixing only with Latinos it's even justifiable. Here the culture doesn't open to you with strength and doesn't open its arms to the point you can say "this person it's a true friend of mine!" Australians are very simple people, but they don't offer you that kind of friendship, so what remains is that Arabs will get together with

Arabs, Argentineans with Argentineans... because Australia doesn't deliver something strong (Isabel)

The last intimate contact never happens, you always remain wanting for more... So... those immigrants' marvellous stories, so shocking, so meaningful, they are not a part of the national mentality. They are often lost... (Carmen)

One always has that thing of being the "wog"... Even if you speak the language, even if you are a citizen (...) you are always treated as you are not from here (Dora)

The lack of close relationships between Latin American and members from the broader community was exacerbated by discrimination episodes frequently related to immigrants' English skills or, most frequently, accent:

Discrimination? The accent might be. I felt it when I applied for a position at a phone company. They said that my accent was too strong (she laughs). That was discrimination! I said that my accent could be strong, but that I was speaking in perfect English with them! Afterwards I said "no... it can't be possible"...these are moments that make you realise that "no...I can't be one of them" (Laura)

At my workplace, everywhere, you always feel some kind of hidden racism. If you have an accent picking up the phone, they assume that you are the cleaner (Elsa)

If you apply to any job and you don't speak 100% or you do it with

an accent, you are lower than the rest. Discrimination is in everything you do. Then, you feel upset, helpless...I wonder why I can't do anything else...why I can't (Mara)

Conflictive experiences due to participants' accent were frequently reported as a continuous struggle. Language and accent-related discrimination have been analysed by various authors (Alcorso, 1989; Colic-Peisker, 2002; Stein, 1984) working with non-English-speaking immigrants in Australia. As Colic-Peisker indicated, language had been a major setback for many immigrants. Although communication skills were not an entry requirement during the 1960's and 1970's in Australia, the low levels of English knowledge once in the host country represented a severe integration barrier. As the author indicated, high levels of communicative English might not be indispensable for unskilled or low paid jobs, but without good language mastery immigrants remained alienated and unable to feel "at home".

Colic-Peisker (2002) also indicated that immigrants in Australia are recognised and "ranked" as members of diverse ethnic groups according to their own ethnic language and accent in English. Ethnic languages and accents are often interpreted as a mark of immigrants' social and labour status. In most cases, immigrants with non-Australian native English accents are still observed as "cultural insiders" while non-native English speakers (carrying any level of foreign accent) are considered as "cultural outsiders". Native English language is considered, then, as a relatively hidden, but strong core value for anyone to fully belong to the Australian nation. This phenomenon was also pinpointed by Callan and Gallois (1987), indicating the rejection of foreign-accented speech by Anglo-Australian listeners, opposed to the positive reception to educated British accents. The authors observed that most immigrant groups experienced some level of pressure to perform

or imitate the English accent of the broader community in order to feel completely integrated to Australia.

The gender factor aggravated the challenges of the acculturation process. Although women's place in society have experienced a major change since the 1970s with their large incorporation to the labour market, advanced birth control methods, and the influence of feminist values, Latin American women are still under the influence of traditional family values (Amézquita et al., 1995; Iebra Aizpurúa, Jablonski, & Féres-Carneiro, 2007). This was common among participants:

Although I call myself a feminist, I still do 3 or 5 times more things at home than my husband to maintain all the things that I want, my independence, and at the end I maintain everything! Women are absolutely overcharged of duties. I see myself as a fighter, as the head of the family, that's why I've tried to overcome the difficulties. I believe that if the woman breaks down, all the rest breaks down. Sometimes I say "I am a weak-strong person". Always fighting for our kids, for our families, with the fact of being an immigrant... (Elsa)

As a woman in Uruguay you are in charge of all the domestic duties, and if you decide to work outside home...then, patience! You still have to do everything the same way! That is your role, that is your function! But women here still work a lot. I think that women here are overcharged of duties, I see it in my family (Iris)

These factors pushed women to a difficult reality, juggling between outside paid work, domestic and childcare duties. Although women have gained many rights and social spaces in

today's world, their daily routines have become more complex, demanding and often conflictive (Darvishpour, 1999; Raijman & Semyonov, 1997). The maintenance of traditional gender values within Latin American immigrant families have then compounded the challenges encountered in Australia due to the accumulation of duties without any kind of support from family, friends or childcare services.

The Compounding Effects of the Acculturation Challenges on Women's Lives

As a result of the conditions and experiences encountered while adjusting to Australia, participants experienced limited degrees of integration to the broader Australian community. Frequently, feelings of homesickness and perceived social distance between host and immigrants' values and culture, limited skills in English and discrimination episodes worked as influential factors impacting on the acculturation outcome. Apart from that, the combination of low levels of education, lack of childcare services, and limited family and social support deeply impacted on immigrants' availability to learn the host country's language, a key factor towards integration:

I don't feel integrated 100%. You really have to spend time with English-speaking people, be integrated. But I feel there is always a barrier, maybe because I didn't work in anything professional. It's like you feel limited, you can enjoy the Australian day but you know you were not born here, and my kids, although they were born here, they don't feel it either (Laura)

My own adaptation was very difficult, because you have the language barrier, and also the fact that I couldn't finish with my education. That was really difficult to me. On the other side, it's the adaptation process to

another culture. I found Australians and their culture much colder than us, that kind of coldness that you don't know how to brake into. Now it's different. Although I don't feel integrated I feel 100% adapted (Mara).

Despite adjusting to Australian life, most women were feeling socially separated from the broader community, regardless their level of English, labour outcomes or motivation to integrate. The feeling that Australian mentality does not absorb and integrate immigrants' background and life stories as part of the national picture was a frequent comment. Many indicated that, although they worked towards their own integration process, they often did not feel accepted as equal members of the Australian society:

My adaptation happened with tears of blood. Because they don't accept you, even if you speak the language and you are a citizen. It was hard (Dora)

Until today, 30 years later, people still ask me "what do you do? When did you arrive? Why did you come?" It makes you feel that you never belong to this place! Here I feel like they have a second thought when they ask me that, like... "and when do you leave? (Elsa)

Until today I say that I am adapted and not. Slowly we started getting into the society, slowly...slowly. I do all that is necessary here and go everywhere. But I don't stop thinking about my things in Argentina, my friends, the music, the barbecues and all our food, ...our things... I'm here and I cry! I'm there and I cry!...it's something that you can't get out

of your mind... (Alma)

Conclusions

Immigration and acculturation are certainly challenging transitions in life. However, these experiences do not necessarily need to translate into conflictive and traumatic issues. Negative acculturation outcomes take place if immigrants do not possess the skills and opportunities to overcome the relocation and acculturation challenges, and if the receiving society is not prepared to support and integrate minority members into its social, educational, labour and political environments. The main findings of this research indicate that many of the issues and conflicts encountered by this group of 13 Latin American immigrant women, after an average of 32 years in Australia, remained unresolved and emotionally challenging.

Findings showed not only that acculturation represented a continuous process for immigrants – not just an outcome – but also that it should be better understood as a two (rather than one) dimensional process rather than just one. According to Ward (1997; Ward & Kennedy, 1993), Berry's acculturation model should be distinguished into two separate domains: psychological (individuals' levels of mental health, psychological wellbeing and personal satisfaction in the new country) and socio-cultural adaptation (connected to a social learning framework, refers to the acquisition of adequate social skills and behaviours to successfully adapt to daily routines in the new environment). Ward (1996, 1997) made the distinction between acculturation processes and the different strategies immigrants follow is not clear in most research on acculturation and needs further investigation. This research's participants presented low levels of both, socio-cultural and psychological adaptation.

Due to the specific challenges encountered in Australia and their

compounding effects, many factors necessary for a positive integration remained unresolved for these women. Limited language knowledge skills, lack of social and family support, and restricted childcare services often translated into a handicap for women's integration to Australia. As a result, many women not only remained trapped within unskilled or semi-skilled services, interacting mainly with other immigrants in similar conditions, but also did not have the resources to deal with the emotional consequences of those conflictive issues. As a consequence of not being able to integrate into other labour and socio-cultural environments, participants suffered restricted levels of personal satisfaction with their lives as members of a new society. The Latin American women interviewed in this study learnt to adjust themselves to life conditions in Australia, but the limitations experienced while exchanging with the broader community remained mostly unsettled. Alma's narrative: "*I'm here and I cry, I'm there and I cry...it's something that you can't get out of your mind*" is a way to exemplify this phenomenon. To most of them, acculturation represented a process and a difficult emotional transition that continues to confront them. Thirty-two years later, participants still felt that being an immigrant woman in Australia was a never-ending experience, mostly associated with its demands and the unavailable resources to find a positive psychological and practical resolution. As Laura described, the idea of moving to Australia was part of an adventure, but one for which she paid a high personal and emotional price. The experience "*still goes on*", as she explained while breaking into tears.

Another finding is directly connected to the legacy of the White Australia policy and the assimilation ideals and its impact on the expectations held by members of the mainstream society towards immigrants. Although Australia has officially embraced the ideology of multiculturalism, seeking the integration of immigrants from all ethnic backgrounds, participants experience a different

reality. After more than three decades in Australia, many women still felt like outsiders, not treated as locals by the broader community. Questions from host members regarding language skills, accent, skin colour, ethnic background or their reasons to immigrate worked as constant reminders that they were different and not considered members of the Australian community. In spite of Australia's multicultural discourse, the official goal to integrate immigrants is daily translated to an expectation of assimilation. Informally, being Australian is still associated to the white Anglo-Saxon identity (Colic-Peisker, 2002, 2005; Zevallos, 2003, 2004).

Accepting and following assimilation in Australia would signify on immigrants' giving up their own ethnic identity and the connections to Latin American values and ways of behaving. Living in a community that expects minority members to assimilate and give up their sense of self could lead to high levels of personal conflicts. As many participants experienced and acknowledged, to successfully integrate to a new country immigrants need to efficiently speak the dominant language and to possess the necessary labour and social skills to become a contributing member of the society. However, this research showed that those factors are not enough to be considered locals in Australia. For that to take place, immigrants need to reduce as much as possible their ethnic differences, looking, talking and behaving as close as possible to members of the mainstream. The contradiction between an official political discourse supporting integration and the daily reality immigrants faced – pushed to assimilate – reinforced the cultural distances between Australian values and immigrants' sense of identity.

The lack of connections with the Australian community – due to perceived cultural distances or discrimination episodes – also reflected on a constant melancholy, loss and frustration for not being able to be accepted and feel “at home” after spending

most part of their lives in Australia. According to Ward and Rana-Deuba (1999), psychological adaptation is necessary to cope with several types of stress encountered in inter-cultural interactions. It is strongly predicted by effective sources of social support. The lack of family support in the new country or restricted relationships with members of the mainstream community had a negative impact on participants' wellbeing, as Elsa described:

“It's always a continuous fight, you have to be on top of everything, because you don't have any other kind of support. Here, you don't have a grandmother or an auntie or anyone to share all that involves kids, work...marriage. It's a bit “too much” just for one self!”

Acculturation proved to be a difficult process to most participants, as summarised by Lucia:

the impact of being an immigrant woman almost all my life hasn't been very good. I mean, good in a sense, but leaving your own country, your family and friends, that doesn't worth it for what you gain. What you leave behind, the spiritual, what you love, people and neighbours who talk to you and want to see you, that kind of support and connection. I love that and you can't have it from here, it's not possible, it's something lost.

As a result, women remained socially isolated from the mainstream society. Being different was perceived as a negative phenomenon by both dominant and minority groups and translated, over time, into social separation and the reinforcement of a sense of rejection. These issues remained unresolved to most participants, who although recognised the benefits of immigration to Australia, were not able to feel accepted and feel at home after more than three decades.

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Note

¹ All names are pseudonyms to protect the privacy of the participants.

Address correspondence to

Adrian T. Fisher
School of Social Science and Psychology
Victoria University
PO Box 14428
Melbourne VIC 8001
email: Adrian.fisher@vu.edu.au

Psychological Sense of Community as a Framework to Explore Adolescence and Neighbourhoods

Lyn O'Grady
Adrian Fisher
Victoria University

Adolescence is considered a time of change, and, to some extent, upheaval. Psychological Sense of Community has been utilised as a framework for understanding adolescents' experiences in their neighbourhoods. The present study explored the experiences of 10 adolescents from two urban schools in eastern Australia, a specialist setting for students with a mild intellectual disability, and a mainstream school. Using a modified version of Photovoice, participants were actively engaged in taking photographs about their day-to-day lives in their neighbourhoods. The photographs were supplemented by individual semi-structured interviews and small group discussions. The role of neighbourhood, including factors the participants considered important in their neighbourhoods, as well as other aspects of their lives were discussed with similarities found between the two groups. Both groups of participants were involved in community activities although participants with a disability required more family support in accessing activities. The dynamic nature of neighbourhoods and broader concepts of communities, including the role of technology, were also explored during the research project.

Adolescence is defined as the period between the onset of puberty and early adulthood. During this time, individuals are faced with a myriad of rapid and complex changes – physical, cognitive, social and emotional – which may lead to a range of experiences with some unprecedented challenges. An increased discrepancy between sexual and psychosocial maturity has arisen due to earlier pubertal changes and social and economic factors resulting in increased dependency on parents during early adulthood (Kleinert, 2007; Patton & Viner, 2007). Although adolescence has traditionally been characterised as a period within one's life cycle when storm and stress is more likely to occur than at any other life stage (Arnett, 1999), an exploration of contemporary thoughts on adolescence within western culture suggests that this is not always the case.

Recent research has recognised the importance of protective factors and has begun to explore the promotion of resilience in adolescents (e.g., Resnick, 2005; Vassallo, Smart, Sanson, & Dussuyer, 2004). Australian researchers have clearly defined the critical

roles that families, schools and communities play in supporting adolescents in negotiating the challenges that arise during this life stage (Fuller, McGraw, & Goodyear, 2002). This contrasts with previous research which tended to focus on the individualistic, and often negative, aspects of adolescent development, such as risk taking behaviours and antisocial behaviours (Maggs, Frome, Eccles, & Barber, 1997; Moore & Parsons, 2000).

Adolescents are not, however, a homogeneous group, although much previous research has only considered the experiences of those adolescents attending mainstream schools. Historically, people with intellectual disabilities have tended to be excluded from decision making, community involvement and research projects, despite integration having been advocated for some time (Wituk, Pearson, Bomhoff, Hinde, & Meissen, 2006). The experiences of adolescents with intellectual disabilities have only recently been explored (Bramston, Bruggerman, & Pretty, 2002; Pretty, Rapley, & Bramston, 2002). This research considered how community connectedness is related to the perception of quality of life in

adolescents with an intellectual disability, particularly through the use of community facilities and feelings of belonging, and how this relates to subjective quality of life. They found similarities in the perceptions and use of community facilities by both adolescents with and without an intellectual disability.

Research undertaken by Bramston et al. (2002) explored the association between quality of life and community belonging measures and found a correlation between both measures, suggesting that having activities, friends and support was associated with higher life satisfaction for adolescents with an intellectual disability. Self-reported quality of life domains of belonging and empowerment were found to be significantly lower for adolescents with an intellectual disability, when compared to their non-disabled peers: "Despite attending the same schools and living in the same neighbourhoods, those with an intellectual disability felt significantly less belonging and less control over their choices than their matched counterparts" (Bramston et al., 2002, p. 394).

Increasingly, questions have arisen in relation to the contemporary meaning of "community" and the possibilities of alternative definitions to physical locale or place-based communities, such as neighbourhoods or towns. It has also been observed that an individual may belong to more than one community. Traditional concepts of community may no longer apply as technological advances create new opportunities for social engagement and interaction. Accordingly, the role of relational communities (such as communities of interest and virtual communities) has been considered by some researchers (Brodsky & Marx, 2001; Obst, Smith, & Zinkiewicz, 2002).

McMillan and Chavis (1986) defined the elements that make up Psychological Sense of Community (PSOC) as membership, influence, integration and fulfilment of needs, and shared emotional connection, defining it as "a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that

members matter to one another and the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together" (p. 9). They described strong communities as those that "offer members positive ways to interact, important events to share and ways to resolve them positively, opportunities to honour members, opportunities to invest in the community, and opportunities to experience a spiritual bond among members (p. 14).

PSOC, as the "fundamental human phenomenon of collective experience" (Peterson, Speer, & McMillan, 2008, p. 62), has been considered in relation to its relevance to adolescents (Chipeur & Pretty, 1999; O'Grady, 2000). The components of PSOC go some way in explaining the role of neighbourhood as one aspect of community in supporting adolescents. Neighbourhoods have also been recognised as an instrumental factor in child and adolescent development as they influence behaviour, attitudes and values and provide a range of risks and opportunities (Boardman & Saint Onge, 2005; Brooks-Gunn, Duncan, Klebanov, & Sealander, 1993; Mead, 1984).

PSOC has provided researchers with a framework to understanding adolescent behaviour and needs in a range of settings. Whitlock (2007) found that adolescent connectedness to community was influenced by factors such as quality of adolescent-adult exchange, availability of outlets for creative engagement; well advertised opportunities for meaningful input; safety and perceived welcome in public spaces. Pretty (2002) argued that perceptions of one's community and experiences within it, particularly PSOC and community attachment, can be important factors in the development of an adolescent's community-minded self. She claimed that an adolescent's experiences in the neighbourhood provide information as to his or her identity as a community member.

Issues of inclusion and exclusion apply when one identifies with a particular

community. Puddifoot (2003) named elements such as identification, distinctiveness and orientation that may form a model of community identity. Gustafson (2001) described “place” as having many meanings to individuals, meanings which can be broadly classified under three poles: the individual and inter-related themes of environment (physical environment and distinctive features); self (often expressed as experiences and memories) and others (through the perceived characteristics, traits and behaviours of inhabitants).

This paper describes a research project which explored the perceptions of 10 adolescents from two urban schools in eastern Australia: a specialist school for students with a mild intellectual disability, and a mainstream school in relation to their experiences within their neighbourhoods, their meaningful connections to others and their wellbeing. This was considered of particular relevance as notions of community and traditional supports for adolescents may be changing at a time when adolescence as a life stage is becoming longer and more complex. The PSOC framework was used to explore these ideas with an emphasis on the role that neighbourhoods may or may not play in the development of a young person’s identity.

Methodology

The use of a modified version of Photovoice, an ethnographic research method, aimed to engage the participants as well as add to the knowledge base as a methodology which respectfully aims to develop a greater understanding of adolescents through the course of their daily lives (Wang, Cash, & Powers, 2000). Photovoice is an approach which has been used extensively in international research projects, especially with marginalised and disempowered groups who traditionally tend to be excluded from research projects due to accessibility and language barriers, is Photovoice (Booth & Booth 2003; Streng et al., 2004; Wang et al., 2000; Wang & Pies, 2004). A qualitative research method

closely related to the naturalistic approaches used in ethnographic research, Photovoice draws on theoretical underpinnings from Freire’s Critical Consciousness, Feminist Theory and documentary photography. It uses photographs generated by the research participants as the primary data source (Wang et al., 2000). The photographs are then supplemented by narrative and interview data. A modified version of Photovoice was used in the present study as a research tool as the subsequent policy steps of Wang et al. were not included.

Participants

Participants were 10 adolescents (4 males and 6 females) in an urban locality in eastern Australia. Five participants attended Year 10 in a mainstream government secondary college and were aged 15 or 16 years. These participants resided in close proximity of their school, usually walking or catching public transport to school. The other five participants attended a government specialist school for students with a diagnosis of mild intellectual disability. Whilst the participants from the specialist school had a primary diagnosis of a mild intellectual disability, they were relatively high functioning within the school and community settings. These participants travelled from a number of suburbs to attend the school by train, tram and/or bus. They did not have any physical disabilities. These participants were aged 18 or 19 years.

Demographic data was gathered in relation to the length of time the participants had been members of their neighbourhood. Two participants (both from the specialist school) had resided at their current residence since birth. The other three participants from the specialist school reported residing in their current residence since preschool or for one participant “a few years”. One of the participants from the mainstream school reported having resided at her current residence for over 13 years and another lived in the same house for eight years after having moved from a neighbouring street. The other three participants from the mainstream school reported having moved within the last two years, with one participant

reporting several moves since his parents' marriage break up.

Procedure

The stages undertaken in Photovoice are important in setting the scene for the process as well as utilising the opportunities it provides to discover meaning. The induction workshop provided an opportunity for the researcher to meet with the participants, explain the purpose of the project, establish ground rules about the use of the camera and begin initial data collection through discussions which took place. Participants then collected the disposable cameras to capture their day to day lives. The cameras were returned and the photographs developed by the researcher. Individual interviews took place with each participant using the photographs to explore what is important in their lives.

A constructivist, grounded theory approach was used in the development of the research project and data analysis. Interviews were transcribed and an initial thematic data analysis was undertaken by the researcher to develop common themes arising from the discussions and to consider what issues may require further elucidation. Small discussion groups were then held to explore issues within a small group setting. Further transcription and thematic data analysis then took place to identify common themes between the two groups of participants as well as within groups. Copyright release forms were signed by the participants and their parents authorising the release of photographs for the purposes of academic publications.

Results and Discussion

Long and Perkins (2007) described PSOC as a multilevel construct with both place and social elements, which are inextricably bound. They also suggested that PSOC is closely related to social capital and other factors, including place attachment and community satisfaction. The participants in the present study were asked to explore the way they spend their time in their neighbourhood. In keeping with Long and Perkins' argument,

the participants from both groups relayed social experiences with neighbours as well as the role of the neighbourhood as a place from which they gain access to the broader community and activities outside of the neighbourhood.

Mead (1984) referred to the neighbourhood as a place for children to learn to become members of their society through exploration and adaptation. The role of various adults in the neighbourhood was considered crucial in this regard. The importance of the neighbourhood in the lives of the participants was explored in the present study. It was found that the participants from both groups of participants identified relationships with neighbours. This often involved ambivalence as neighbours were identified as providing support, but also surveillance of their life. As outlined by Mead, the neighbourhood increasingly served as a gateway from home to the external world where the participants accessed communities of interest and ventured to meet friends or visit family.

Regardless of which school the participants attended, those who had resided at their current home for most of their lives tended to know more neighbours than those who had recently moved. This supports research undertaken by Chipeur et al. (1999) which found that adolescents who had lived at their current address for 10 or more years reported more support in their neighbourhoods than those who had lived there for less than 10 years. This suggests that these participants' needs were more likely to be met in their neighbourhood if they knew more neighbours. However, some of the participants in the present study who had resided in their neighbourhood for a long time reported not talking to some of their neighbours or not knowing those neighbours who were new to the neighbourhood.

Conversely, another participant detailed regular activities undertaken in her street with neighbours such as an annual street barbecue. She reported that she knew people in every couple of houses. Another participant, who had recently moved, stated that although he had not

yet met his neighbours his family kept in regular contact with people from his previous neighbourhood, suggesting that important bonds have been formed through relationships in neighbourhoods which are considered valuable and worthy of maintaining despite distance. Some participants reported only knowing the neighbour immediately next door, whilst others named up to five neighbours they knew. A participant from the specialist school reported that one of his neighbours drives him to the railway station each school day. Accordingly, the PSOC framework held true for some participants, whose needs were met through the support of neighbours and who maintained relationships formed within the neighbourhood. For other participants, the PSOC framework was less useful in explaining their experiences.

Participants reported knowing friends from their current and previous schools and sporting as well as from activity groups out of school. One participant reported having friends in his street, although not spending as much time with them as he had in previous years. Participants, therefore, reported having to use technology, such as the internet (MSN or email) and telephone, to keep in contact with their friends from school and other areas. In this way, the local neighbourhood no longer met the participants' needs as their interests and contacts broadened to communities of interest rather than geographical communities. This supports research undertaken by Obst, Zinkiewicz, and Smith (2002) which explored the place of identification within PSOC. They compared geographic communities with communities of interest (science fiction fandom) and found that participants reported higher levels of global PSOC with fandom than with their geographic communities.

Participants reported feeling more belonging, ties, shared values, and influence with fandom than with their local communities (Obst, Zinkiewicz, & Smith, 2002), suggesting that interest rather than locality is more significant. It would appear from the present

study that the ability to travel outside of their neighbourhood combined with technological advances, such as the internet, may be enhancing accessibility of communities of interest for adolescents. Many of the participants reported being close to shopping and youth activity centres, but also reported having to travel out of their neighbourhood to participate in certain activities, such as karate, school and to visit friends.

Previous research (O'Grady, 2000) explored what adolescents liked and disliked about their neighbourhoods and found that interactions with people were important, as was access to amenities such as shops, transport and things to do. Participants in the current study identified similar factors they did and did not like about their neighbourhoods. Both groups of participants were able to clearly identify those things that were aesthetically pleasing as well as their relationships with neighbours.

Location close to shops, activity centres, the beach and friends was considered important by participants. Participants reported that they did not like graffiti, drag racing and noise in their neighbourhoods.

Safety

Safety has consistently been associated with the experiences of adolescents within neighbourhoods and communities and has been explored in relation to its association with PSOC particularly for adolescents. It was identified by Chipeur and Pretty (1999) as a significant factor in the Neighbourhood Youth Inventory and feelings of unsafety were explored by Zani, Cicognani, and Albanesi (2001). Similarly, O'Grady (2000) found that safety was the main recurring theme in her research with Year 10 participants who identified a range of safety concerns, including parental concerns about allowing their children to spend time in the neighbourhood, street lighting being inadequate, differences in attitudes towards safety between males and females, and changes over time in relation to community safety.

In the present study, various aspects of safety, including personal and community safety

within the neighbourhood were raised during the discussions. Sometimes the neighbourhood was perceived as a safe place for activities, such as playing in the park. John, a participant from the specialist school, in describing the park shown in Photograph 1, revealed that "... It's pretty safe there... I have to tell mum when I get back. .. Um she worries that I might fall over, stuff like that."



Photograph 1. Photograph by John². The park.

Violence and noise tended to be the main criteria by which participants determined whether their neighbourhood was safe or not. Christopher, from the specialist school, described his neighbourhood as safe:

Yeah it's [neighbourhood] very safe really. Umm it's good that it's safe I don't really see any bad people there in the court but sometimes down at the milk bar behind our house you can hear a lot of burnouts and that. No seriously where I live is quite safe there's no stabbings or nothing nothing's bad it's just safe

Safety concerns were raised during discussions about the neighbourhood with participants, particularly those from the mainstream school, who may have had greater awareness of risks than participants from the specialist school. Issues of safety included both personal safety in relation to the participants' health as well as community safety:

Lots of kidnappings around my area and school. I take [dog] with

me for safety and medical help if I need it. One time he went and got help for me because of my illness. (Aleisha, mainstream school.)

I've been a bit concerned about the neighbourhood. There have been some stabbings. I'm scared about my little brother he's three and has autism... Just a couple of days ago a guy tried to take my bike. He made a grab for it... I told my mum about it. My mum said you couldn't do much about it... I'd never had anything like that happen before. (Ben, mainstream school)

And I've got my work and I've got a misty one [photo] of my work because that was one of my safe places but there's been big brawls outside of my work so that's not a safe place anymore. (Lisa, mainstream school)

Perceptions of safety appeared to be significant for some of the participants who tended to rely on anecdotal evidence in relation to gangs or appeared to associate graffiti with gangs.

[Do you feel safe walking in your area?] No not really because the place that we live is just a 10 minute walk from a known gang area... [How do you know?] There are tags there and from friends that got beaten up around there. (Crystal, mainstream school).

For Lisa, the presence of a Safety House Zone, Photograph 2, offered a sense of safety and she associated this with friendliness within her neighbourhood:

There's a primary school just around the corner from us and we're in a safety zone and we've got all the safety houses and stuff. It's really good. Everyone is really friendly.



Photograph 2. Photograph by Lisa. Safety House zone.

Neighbourhoods as Places to Develop Relationships

As suggested by Long and Perkins (2007), PSOC involves the binding of social connections with place. For many participants, their neighbourhoods represented relationships with others and discussions often included examples of ways the participant or their family members interacted with others. In this way it appeared that the participants had developed a sense of belonging and history with their neighbours, both important elements of PSOC. This was particularly evident during the group discussion at the specialist school.

*Yes they mum and dad talking to some woman I forgot her name.
Yes she's an older woman.*

The neighbour next door if she's going away she asked us to um collect her mail and if we don't go away ... Oh mail we take the mail for them... And the one next door if they go away and they've got pets sometimes we feed it.

The neighbour on that side they buy us things like chocolates at Christmas ... and they've got a garden light and they've got hot peppers. Yeah and they're so nice. My old next door neighbour came to my 18th.

As noted by Chipeur et al. (1999), these interactions often included tangible support or friendly gestures. Similarly, Wood (1974) found that neighbourhood for adolescents involved more than residence but a deeper connection between the people and the place.

For some of the participants, particularly those from the specialist school, PSOC was not necessarily evident as they identified that whilst they may see people they had attended school with, they would not necessarily be included in their friendship groups. "Some of them my old high school friends live down there but I see them sometimes. They wouldn't hang with me (laughter) I don't see them that much" (John, from specialist school). This suggested that John did not view himself as belonging to his neighbourhood in the same way as adolescents without disabilities, providing support for Bramston et al.'s (2002) assertion that living in and feeling part of the community are not the same.

Shared Public Spaces in Neighbourhoods

McMillan and Chavis (1986) described strong communities as those that offered positive ways for community members to interact and honour each other. Research has found that public spaces, such as shopping centres, can be problematic for adolescents as they can be the subject of, and subject to, the gaze of others. In this way adolescents may not always feel included in the neighbourhood, but rather judged and monitored within it. Adolescents' unsupervised presence in public space represents adolescents as in-between, not children or adults. This has led to media and adult representations of adolescents as disruptive and threats to the safety of themselves and others (Panelli, Nairn, Atwool, & McCormack, 2002). Regardless of this research, it was agreed by participants in the current study that the local shopping centre provided a safe place for young people to gather:

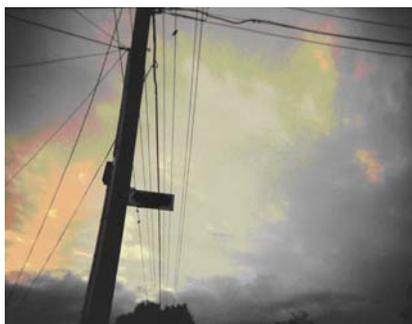
There's never been a fight down there. The Plaza's probably one of the safest places... There are people around if something happens they'll

see you. In the streets if it's dark no-one will see you. (Aleisha, mainstream school)

We get no trouble at all just sitting around and talking... Although one time I was drinking a bottle of "V" and they're [security guards] like you're not allowed to drink that here and I'm like what do you mean and they're like no alcoholic substances on the premises and I'm like no this is a "V" it invigorates you. (laughter) Yeah they're like sorry man so I was being blasted for nothing I'd done wrong it was one of those maybe you should have checked before you... (Martin, mainstream school)

Lisa described her neighbourhood (as symbolised by her court sign in Photograph 3) as a special place for her:

It's kinda got all of the clouds and everything... it's always very foggy in the morning and stuff. I love it, it's mystical. I'll look out my bedroom in the morning and I'll just see all these clouds and it's so pretty. I love it. So I pictured the court sign and the clouds... I wake up and see the fog. I walk to school. I used to go to [name of school] and um I'd walk to school in the morning and it would feel like I was walking in the clouds. It was so nice.



Photograph 3. Photograph by Lisa. My court sign.

Lisa, in reflecting upon her photograph again during the small group discussion, described how circumstances had changed for her since taking the photograph:

And um I've got pictures of my area but they were like misty because I said that was my mystical place. I don't know I don't feel like that anymore that's changed. [Ok so what's different? Why was that important at the time?] I don't know. I just it was my safe little place...

It appeared that for Lisa, despite the relative short time span between taking the photograph and discussing it during the small group, her feelings about the neighbourhood had changed and she struggled to explain how it had been more important to her previously. This suggests that feelings and experiences do not remain static, but change over time. This may be particularly the case for adolescents given the rapid developmental changes they are undertaking. It could be that day to day experiences impact on the way they feel about the neighbourhood, resulting in different feelings and attitudes at different times.

Neighbourhood as a Place for Activities

Maton (1990) found that meaningful instrumental activity was positively related to life satisfaction, independent of social support from friends and parents. Bramston et al. (2002) found that adolescents with an intellectual disability accessed community facilities less than those without a disability. Accordingly, the present study aimed to explore the types of activities undertaken and the level of participants for both groups of adolescents.

Whilst an initial analysis of data in relation to activities undertaken by both groups suggested that the participants from the specialist school tended to be involved in passive and indoor activities, further discussions and data analysis suggested that there was a wide variety of activities that participants from both school settings engaged in. These included:

- Sporting activities – watching Australian

Football League football, watching family members play sport, informal and formal sports participation;

- Spending time with family and friends, including parties, shopping and going to restaurants;
- Playing computer games and talking on MSN;
- Music – playing guitar and drums, listening to music.

Although some of the participants from the specialist school participated in disability-specific programs such as soccer and the circus, they also participated actively in many mainstream activities, such as going to the Australian Football League football, bowling, movies and the gym. Bramston et al. (2002) identified that adolescents with a disability tended to participate in community activities less frequently than their peers without a disability. The current research did identify differences between the two groups in relation to some opportunities for participation. This was particularly evident for one of the female participants from the specialist school who stated:

I want to [play sports] but I don't know what team and my mum and dad goes oh what are you going to do that for? They always say stuff like that. I hate that. My brother says you're good at it you should play.

Similarly, John, from the specialist school, acknowledged the difficulties he encountered as he became older and the demands on him increased: “[I’ve played] cricket for 10 years now. One year to go, I’m not good enough to be in the seniors.” Participants from the mainstream school reported performing (singing and dancing) and writing (songs and a book) – activities not shared by participants from the specialist school. Martin, from the mainstream school, was a member of a local community group which organised music

events.

There was a greater reliance on the support of family for participants with a disability, with many activities (such as bike riding, going to the library and attending the gym) undertaken with family members. This finding confirmed previous research which found that parents played a crucial role in enabling the participation of adolescents with a disability in school and community extracurricular and recreational activities (Kleinert et al., 2007).

Participants from the specialist school also included their work experience and TAFE activities when discussing ways they spend their time. It appeared that they tended to participate in more organised and structured activities than participants from the mainstream school. John, from the specialist school, did identify playing football by himself in a local park and Jayne, from the specialist school, reported that she sometimes goes shopping independently by herself or with friends. Participants from the mainstream school appeared to be more independent in their activities although spending time with family members was included. One of those participants reported that her ill-health had reduced her ability to participate actively in sports and had also impacted on her interest in socialising with friends. These experiences confirm the desire for autonomy and potential barriers (such as illness) which affect adolescents from both groups as they strive to negotiate the developmental trajectory between childhood and adulthood (Noom, Dekovic, & Meeus, 1999).

For participants such as Clare, from the specialist school, football was supported at a local level with her brother’s involvement (Photograph 4). Clare’s family regularly watched him play with friends and extended family members. The politics of the game and loyalty for her brother was reported by Clare who expressed considerable frustration at her brother not being chosen to play:

... but now the coach said that he doesn't really get a game anymore. I don't know why but yeah. I'm

starting to get angry... Because he shouldn't you know whenever he comes he goes on the bench and it's not fair to him. Everyone else gets a game and I think my brother should tell the coach what's happening and that and sometimes I have like tea there and yeah...

Photograph 4: Photograph by Clare. Brother playing football.



The support provided by a local sporting club to which the family belonged was acknowledged by Lisa, from the mainstream school, who reported family involvement with the football club as her brother had played, her father had coached and she had been the club photographer. She described the support provided by the club following a family tragedy:

Yeah we're still close with everyone we've sort of had the football club organise a fundraiser for our family so we're very close with them but yeah dad just doesn't he's been coaching for the last four years and he's decided not to coach this year. And [brother]'s messed up his knee quite a lot.

Discussions about belonging to football teams suggested that this involvement allowed participants to experience PSOC as their participation involved membership of the team,

provided fulfilment of needs and a shared emotional connection with others. At times they were able to influence their family or friends with their opinions about the team's performance or predictions about future progress. There were usually symbols such as scarves and jumpers which acknowledged their membership. Their membership of the team may also have involved an identity with the team but also with others who shared the membership.

Having a space away from home was also identified by John as useful when his grass at home is too wet to play football (Photograph 5). Whilst he identified the park as a place to play, it also provided interaction with others (which he did not always welcome).

... [Yeah and is there anybody else that sort of hangs around the park or is that ...] Ahh little kids but they get in the way they get in my way... They get in the way when they try to play on the playground. [O.k. so they're a bit annoying?] They're all right. Just one kid that tries to put me off when I kick the ball... He goes are you going to miss it this time? [Laughter]

Photograph 5: Photograph by John: The park at the junction.



The park provided a thoroughfare in her neighbourhood for Crystal, from the mainstream school. She identified her friend's house as being close to the park. The pathway through the

Photographs 6 and 7: Photographs by Crystal. Park I walk through to get home.



park led to her school as well as the broader community.

Growing Up and Away from the Neighbourhood

Adolescence, as a key developmental stage, has proven to be a challenge for researchers in identifying the relevance of PSOC to adolescents (Pretty, 2002). Exploration of the activities within the neighbourhood often led to a discussion about changes that occurred during adolescence and the loss of childhood and associated activities, some of which had occurred within the neighbourhood with friends. For some participants, they had played as children within their neighbourhood – riding bicycles or spending time with friends. As their interests changed and they no longer rode bikes they tended to report spending less time with friends in their neighbourhood. This resulted not only in spending less time within the neighbourhood but a different way of viewing themselves as they began to identify with people outside of their neighbourhood.

Yeah when I was younger a lot more time. I used to go on bikes yeah you know kick a footy yeah and maybe play a little bit of basketball because my body you know our bodies have changed so much like you just talk and that ... Yeah because when I was younger I used to ride bikes a fair bit (Christopher, specialist school).

... but I don't know I'm not around my area much when I go to see friends. It's not like my little area anymore (Lisa, mainstream school).

Conclusion

PSOC was explored as a framework to understand the role of neighbourhoods in the lives of adolescents. It was shown in the present study that PSOC as a model, whilst relevant at times, did not capture the essence of those things considered important and meaningful to the participants. The elements that make up PSOC – membership, influence, integration and fulfilment of needs and shared emotional connections – were reported to have varying levels of importance in the lives of the participants. The sense of membership and belonging was found to be important in relation to a number of communities, such as family, sporting groups, school and neighbourhood. It appeared that the adolescents' sense of wellbeing was related to interactions and relationships within multiple communities rather than one community only, providing support for research undertaken by Evans and Prilleltensky (2007) and Obst, Zinkiewicz and Smith (2002). Shared emotional connections were significant for all participants and often appeared within the context of family relationships.

The participants did not appear to have influence within their communities. Importantly, they did not seem to seek to have influence either, preferring to have fun and connections with others rather than responsibilities that they

may have considered to be more adult like. School was cited by some participants as a place where they could have some limited influence through participation in community projects and junior school council. For most participants, however, school was referred to as a place for socialising and fun, aspects not well captured by PSOC.

All participants identified features of the neighbourhood that held significance for them, but acknowledged that, at their life stage, their participation within the neighbourhood was less active and played a less important role than when they were younger. Instead, the neighbourhood for the participants served as a gateway to the external world, providing access to communities of interest. It was also identified by some participants as a place of surveillance as neighbours monitored their behaviours. Some participants did acknowledge the potential support they provided and received from neighbours. This was related to the number of neighbours they knew and how long they had lived in their neighbourhood, supporting previous research (Chipeur et al., 1999; Pretty, Andrews, & Collett, 1994).

There were similarities between the two groups of participants in relation to their level of participation within the community; however, those with an intellectual disability required considerable support from family members to access community activities. Many activities were also undertaken with the support of the school in the form of work experience rather than developed independently within the neighbourhood or community for those with an intellectual disability.

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Address correspondence to

Lyn O'Grady
Department of Education & Early Childhood
Development
P.O. Box 223
Werribee Vic 3029
email: ogrady.lynette.j@edumail.vic.gov.au

Tuned In Parenting (TIP): A Collaborative Approach to Improving Parent-child Relationships

Lynn E. Priddis

Curtin Health Innovation Research Institute (CHIRI)

Curtin University of Technology

Gail Wells

Ngala Family Resource Centre

Kathie Dore

Ngala Family Resource Centre

Janelle Booker

Curtin University of Technology

Noel Howieson

Perth, Western Australia

This paper describes a collaborative partnership between a community early parenting agency and a university psychology department to develop and deliver an innovative programme for relationship issues in young families. The programme was to be in keeping with the research and practice parameters of the agency. The processes involved in the development, trial and evaluation of the programme are outlined. Known as the Tuned in Parenting (TIP) Programme it aims to promote reflective awareness in mothers and to build sensitive and responsive parenting. Agency staff members conduct a DVD-based intervention in a reflective and collaborative manner with a small group of mothers who engage in discussion around DVDs of their own interactions with their child. Qualitative analysis of participant interviews established that mothers perceive the programme as valuable in increasing sensitivity to infant cues and engaged in reflection on their own style of parenting. Parallel processes between organisations, between nurses and their clients, and between mothers and their babies facilitated genuine change on many levels. Theory and practice from this project now underpins service delivery for the agency and review, evaluation, and adjustments are continually made as the agency moves towards best practice.

A challenge facing professionals of many disciplines today is how to keep up with current research and to find ways to implement new ideas in a planned and comprehensive manner into everyday practice. This paper describes an innovative response to this challenge undertaken by Ngala Family Resource Centre, in Perth Western Australia. One of a consortium of five similar resource centres around Australia that established a research collaboration in 2001 to guide the adoption of evidence based approaches to the provision of services to Australian families, Ngala was challenged to implement an initiative identified by the consortium: the Parenting Skills Development Framework (PSDF) (Tweddle Child & Family Health

Service, 2006). This framework guides clinicians in multidisciplinary services to establish a collaborative relationship with parents and build commitment to reach goals. The primary goal of the framework is to enhance parenting confidence and competence.

Ngala was confronted with the task of making an ideological shift in order to fully embrace this goal. Staff required professional help to deliver chosen goals but were somewhat fearful of being sidetracked by outside 'expert' advice. The agency's first step was to approach the first author with whom they had had a previous relationship, in which she had demonstrated her method of working collaboratively with parents to improve their parenting skills. They requested the first author

sit down with them, listen to the objectives of the centre, consider whether her methodology could be adapted to them and if so, whether she could work with them to achieve the competence needed to deliver the resultant programme within their facility. The Tuned in Parenting Programme (TIP) as it is today, is the result of this collaboration.

Evidence-based intervention programmes to improve parent-child relationships have been reported (Cooper, Hoffman, Powell, & Marvin, 2005; Juffer, Bakermans-Kranenburg, & van Ijzendoorn, 2008), with many of them using video feedback for intervention at both the maternal representational level and the behavioural level (Bakermans-Kranenburg, van Ijzendoorn, & Juffer, 2003; McDonough, 2005). One such attachment-based programme designed for delivery in groups is the Circle of Security programme (Marvin, Cooper, Hoffman, & Powell, 2002), but as with most similar programmes, training in this methodology is intensive and expensive. For small agencies wanting a large-scale training programme, such costs are prohibitive. In addition, agency personnel once trained would then have the task of introducing the programme in the local setting and working out details of its implementation.

For these reasons, Ngala sought to develop a programme in collaboration with an expert familiar with the goals and methodology of attachment-based interventions. Since their own objective was to establish a collaborative relationship with parents and build commitment to reach goals with the aim of enhancing parenting confidence and competence, it was hoped that this expert could work with them in a way that mirrored these skills.

Families who attend the Ngala Resource Centre mostly request assistance and support with problems in their young children in the areas of sleep and settling difficulties, feeding, nutrition and behavioural issues. Many of the mothers themselves show high screening test

scores for stress level, depression and/or anxiety and the impact of these stressors on the parent-child relationship was apparent to staff at the agency. Maternal state of mind and maternal sensitive responsiveness have both been found to act directly on infant attachment security (Atkinson et al., 2005) and on healthy mental development of the infant (Schoore, 2003). When a mother is depressed, her capacity to accurately interpret the emotional needs of her infant is considerably impaired, as is her ability to provide the emotionally-supportive environment that is required for optimal child development (Murray, Cooper, Wilson, & Romaniuk, 2003). The quality of parent-infant interactions during the first years of life has a direct influence on the child's social, emotional, cognitive and physical development (Juffer et al., 2008; Mantymaa, Puura, Luoma, Salmelin, & Tamminen, 2004).

As with the programmes discussed above, our approach has at its base the understandings about mother-infant relationships described in Attachment theory by Bowlby (1969, 1973, 1980) who proposed that healthy development occurs in the context of a supportive and attuned environment. What happens in the relationship between the mother and her child on a day-to-day basis becomes the template for future relationships. These patterns repeated over time are internalised by the child and drive her external behaviours. Bowlby emphasised the reciprocal nature of the child's ties to her mother explaining that each is adapted to the other in the sense that where the child's behaviour fits that of her major caregivers and social environment, then her emotional and social development will follow a normal course. Developmental anomalies will occur when the child's attachment strategies are not well adapted or are adapted to less-than-adequate social environments. He recognised that one of the strongest influences on the parenting that an infant receives and the developing parent-child relationships comes from the parent's own childhood history and the sense the parent makes of this.

Infant attachment theory has been thoroughly researched over the 40 years since Bowlby's first publication, and is now generally accepted. Mary Salter Ainsworth pioneered a standardised laboratory situation known as the Strange Situation (Ainsworth & Wittig, 1969) to examine attachment and found evidence of differences in quality of attachment that are influenced by maternal responsiveness to the infant (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978). Responsive and attuned parents are those who are sensitively aware of their baby's signals; who accurately perceive and interpret their infant's attachment signals; and who respond to them promptly and adequately (Ainsworth, Bell, & Stayton, 1974; Stern, 2002). The parent is aware of the infant's mounting affect and mirrors the affect across modalities, accepting and soothing negative affect and showing pleasure in infant satisfaction or excitement. The outcome is an infant who feels understood by his/her parent and who can trust her parent to respond appropriately to his/her behaviours so that distress is alleviated and he/she is given comfort when it is needed (Stern, 2002). It is in such relationships that infants learn to soothe themselves and to manage their own affect. Infants naturally respond to sensitive and responsive care co-operatively and become secure and well-socialised. Babies who experience relatively insensitive parenting tend to be fussy, demanding, uncooperative and generally difficult to handle (Ainsworth et al., 1974). Empirical studies have confirmed the important role that maternal sensitivity and responsiveness play for later mental health of the child (Atkinson et al., 2005; van Ijzendoorn & Bakermans-Kranenburg, 1997). The mother's internal representation of her own attachment relationships has been shown to affect her ability to provide such optimal parenting (Main, Kaplan, & Cassidy, 1985). A mother's capacity to think about and understand behaviour, both her own as well as that of her child and others in relation to mental states such as thoughts, feelings, desires

and intentions has recently been shown to be associated with her ability to respond sensitively to the child (Allen, Fonagy, & Bateman, 2008). Where conditions are less than optimal for whatever reason, then intervention is indicated so that parents are empowered to respond sensitively to their infants' needs and in turn to create a nurturing environment conducive to healthy mental development (Sameroff, McDonough, & Rosenblum, 2005).

The Collaboration between Curtin University and Ngala Family Resource Centre

Through discussion, it became apparent that what was required at Ngala was threefold:

1. The intervention programme itself;
2. A system for the initial training of staff to carry out all aspects of the programme with a built-in mechanism for future training of staff in the programme to become self-managed within the resource centre; and
3. Procedures for the initial evaluation of the suitability of the intervention and the continued evaluation of the efficacy of the programme.

The results of deliberations on each of these components are discussed below.

The Programme

The intervention developed through the collaborative process has been named The Tuned In Parenting Programme (TIP). The TIP programme aims to increase the caretakers' awareness of the importance of and the nature of sensitive attunement to infant signals and optimal responsiveness to the signals. It is designed to offer an environment in which parents working reflectively with facilitators and other group members explore their own responsiveness styles. The programme employs a small closed group format and, using video clips of mother/child play sessions, focuses on building on the strengths of each individual participant, while providing a supportive environment within which participants can explore some of the challenges that they experience within their own parent-infant

relationship. In the terms of attachment theory (Bowlby, 1998), the facilitators and fellow participants provide a secure base in which each mother might explore the relationship with her child in a collaborative manner.

The collaborative viewing of oneself on video is a technique that has widespread use in feedback delivery across many training contexts and is used in many internationally accepted parent-child intervention programmes (Berlin, Ziv, Amaya-Jackson, & Greenberg, 2005; Juffer et al., 2008; McDonough, 2005). This technique gives opportunities for young parents who in real life must respond immediately to the signals of the baby to reflect on their interactions. This reflection occurs through later viewing of video clips of their interactions with their infants and the opportunity, for analysis, reflection and the generation of new ideas about how to respond. The primary aim of the TIP group is to increase the sensitive responsiveness of participants, which in turn will improve the mental health outcomes for the children.

The programme as developed for Ngala, forms one component of the centre's current service provision for self-referred clients and is offered to parents for whom it is deemed by staff to be potentially useful. It is delivered in a small group (3 to 6 parents) setting that meets for eight weeks and for two hours' duration. Each parent-child dyad is filmed for about 12 to 15 minutes prior to the group's initial session in an unstructured play situation with two brief separations and reunions. Parents only attend the group; their infants are held in mind by their presence in the film. The TIP programme requires that two leaders facilitate each group and a third staff member films the sessions with permission of the participants.

Sessions 1 and 2 are introductory and supportive in style. These sessions feature an explanation of the collaborative philosophy that underpins the group, introduction of

basic concepts, and a warm up to group processes. Prepared DVDs of parent-child interactions are introduced and the facilitators encourage discussion of participant reactions to these, based on gentle inquiry from an empathetic stance. The facilitators observe and monitor emerging themes of group interaction.

Sessions 3 to 6 focus on the DVDs of the participants' own interactions with their children. The parent who with her child is the subject of the DVD is the focus of the session and her experiences are processed first. The facilitator demonstrates sensitive responsiveness, as she works with the mother, focussing on positive aspects of the parent-child interaction in the DVD, and accepting that disjunctions will occur. Other group members are encouraged to be aware of their own emergent feelings as they watch the interaction.

The final two sessions revolve around closure. A variant of the Photovoice technique (Wang, Yi, Tao, & Carovano, 1998) is used as part of the closure. Participants choose significant stills from their DVDs and compose a phrase that is meaningful to them about their experience in the TIP group. They share these with other members of the group and take the photo with printed caption to remind them of their experience.

Staff Training

The programme requires intensive staffing. For each intake of mothers into the programme, specific personnel are required to interview parents, run screening measures, enter data, assign some mothers to groups and others to "wait" control groups, take charge of the children during the sessions, and to collate and analyse data. It was agreed that agency management would attend to these tasks. In addition, the TIP intervention requires skills in filming infant-mother interaction, skills in observing the interactions and being able to discern and describe these, and skills in managing a self-reflective parent group in a facilitative fashion. Agency management committed to facilitate training for selected staff in all three key areas. The goal was to

orchestrate training so that the university involvement was gradually phased out and training at the resource centre would become self-managed.

The implementation of the training programme. Since Ngala required that as many staff as possible be briefed on the introduction of the new programme and on its goals and basic methodology, the entire staff of the agency, including those in administration, community, child and mental health nurses, mothercraft nurses, and social workers as well as psychology students attended two professional development sessions of two hours each designed to inform them about the basics of attachment theory that provides the framework for the programme, and about the nature of the programme itself.

Clinical staff were then invited to attend additional seminars from which a committed group (n = 8) was formed (self selected and or encouraged by management to attend) who undertook further training in parent-child observation on a regular basis (90 minutes weekly for 15 weeks). Training involved detailed observation of master tapes with particular attention to the parents' facial expressions, use of voice, and positioning in relation to the child. The pattern of turn taking and the nature of support offered the child after separations was also observed closely. In these sessions, staff members were encouraged to explore strengths and weaknesses that they themselves bring to parent-infant observation mirroring the encouragement for self reflection given in the group sessions with the mothers. They were encouraged to observe from the point of view of the baby, parent, relationship and context including culture. Over time as in the parent groups, a spirit of trust and collaboration grew in which staff could discuss non-defensively what each brought to the observations.

The second stream of the training focussed on the technical competence involved in filming and replaying the parent-child interactions. This included both setting up the

room and continued digital camera focus for optimal observation of interactions, and filing and replaying the tapes. Five staff developed the required skills.

The third area of essential specific training involved conducting the TIP group. Qualities of a collaborative and therapeutic group leadership style as outlined by Farrell-Erickson, Endersbe, and Simon (1999) were considered in selecting the leadership pool from among those expressing interest. The potential leaders were introduced to theoretical aspects of group leadership and group processes (Ringer, 2002; Whitaker, 2001; Yalom, 1995) which were discussed with relevance to their application to the video-based reflective nature of the planned TIP groups. Wherever possible the first author modelled for the training group the collaborative and reflective stance expected for leading the TIP group of mothers.

To establish the iterative training process the first author facilitated the first two groups with a trainee co-leader, while a third trainee filmed the procedures. Weekly post-group debriefing sessions were conducted in the continued spirit of self-reflection and collaboration. For the third mother group, the previous co-leader acted as facilitator with a new co-leader trainee. The first author continued to meet weekly with all trainee personnel to debrief and discuss the sessions. In this way, a mechanism for the training of future leaders and co leaders for the agency was set up.

Framework for the Evaluation of the Programme

The focus of the collaborative project was to bring the TIP programme into the agency and modify it for ongoing use in that specific setting. In keeping with the mission to use evidence-based practice, one aim of the collaboration was to investigate the effects of participation in the intervention programme (TIP) for parents who had attended a day or overnight stay at the family resource centre. A framework for evaluation to ensure that the programme was meeting the agency's goals was

established and a process set up that would allow for continual monitoring of the programme's effectiveness. This framework will be described and details of the evaluation results for the first two groups given.

Design of the continuing evaluation process. Qualitative analysis of semi-structured interviews that occurred before and after the intervention provided outcome data for the evaluation of the efficacy of the group programme. A wait-listed control group was also interviewed. Due to the applied nature of the project the assignment to groups was unable to be randomised. The intervention groups as planned were too small for quantitative statistical data analyses. Since the whole programme takes a phenomenological approach, a qualitative methodology is appropriate. Nevertheless, concurrently, a more formal tool to track changes in parent sensitivity and responsiveness is being developed for later use should circumstances warrant more formal evaluation procedures. The evaluation is conducted in line with ethical requirements of Curtin University Ethics Committee and in keeping with those of the Australian Psychological Society. The interview data are supplemented by demographic information and screening instruments.

Screening instruments. The Mini-International Neuropsychiatric Interview (MINI) (Sheehan et al., 1997) is a short diagnostic structured interview designed to generate 17 DSM IV or ICD10 Axis 1 diagnoses in a 10 to 20 minute interview depending on the symptoms presented. The interview is used frequently by general medical practitioners and has been translated into over 30 languages. Good reliability, sensitivity, specificity have been reported in clinical and normal populations (Lecrubier, Sheehan, Hergueta, & Weiller, 1998). Its function in this study was to provide a psychiatric profile of the group participants.

A semi-structured interview was devised for the purposes of this project drawing upon

the attachment literature (Cooper et al., 2005; Slade, Sadler, & Mayes, 2005). It included general questions that required participants to reflect on and talk about various aspects of the mother-infant relationship, daily interactions within that relationship, how the mother interpreted her infant's ambiguous behavioural cues and how she responded to them. Many of the questions asked respondents to provide a specific example or incident, rather than give general responses that may lack detail and/or accuracy. The interviews were of 25 to 45 minutes' duration and were recorded on audiotape that was later transcribed for the purpose of analysis.

Evaluation of the Group Programme

Pre-intervention assessments for the control and intervention group participants were conducted in the fortnight prior to the commencement of the group. These consisted of the MINI screen, the filming of the parent-child interaction, and the semi-structured interview. Research assistants external to the group programme conducted the post intervention group structured interview for group members and controls in the week following the end of the group.

Participants

Two intervention groups of six parent-infant dyads each and six control group dyads were planned, with infants aged between 6 to 18 months. Participants were invited to join the project based on the presence of symptoms of maternal depression or relationship difficulties with their infants noted by clinical staff on exit from the regular programme. For the first group, six parents agreed to participate in the full intervention group procedures. Only four actually began in the group, and one was forced to withdraw after four sessions due to work commitments. Only one mother agreed to be assessed as a control.

The improved identification and recruitment procedures for the second TIP group resulted in seven parents agreeing to participate and five continuing for the life of

Table 1.
Frequency of Self-reported Diagnostic Symptoms in TIP and Control Groups at Week 1

Diagnostic Symptoms	TIP	Control
Dysthymia	1	2
Suicidal ideation	1	0
Manic episode	2	1
Phobia	6	3
Obsessive Compulsive Disorder	3	1
Excessive alcohol use	4	2
Traumatic event	5	3
Generalised Anxiety Disorder	4	3

the group. For this group there were five control group participants who were offered first choice in a participation group should funding become available later. Control group participants continued to receive regular child-health related services.

Data Analysis

Content analyses of the semi structured interview data were undertaken by two research assistants according to the principles and rigor outlined by Patton (2001). Pre and post-intervention interviews from participant and control groups were de-identified and treated as one sample, initially. After themes were identified for the whole sample, the differences between groups were explored.

Results and Discussion

All caregivers in the participating dyads in the study were female biological parents of the children. There was an even distribution of gender in the children across participation and control groups with seven males and seven females. The mean age of the children was similar across groups; however, the range was affected by the inclusion of one participant who was 18 months old, three months older than the other participating children, yet within the target range of the study. One notable difference between the two groups was that the TIP groups included considerably more first-

time mothers than the control group with only one of six control group participants being a first-time mother compared with five of eight TIP group participants being first-time mothers.

All participants interviewed with the MINI screen indicated the presence of potentially disturbing symptoms in at least one category. There was very little difference between the control and TIP participants in the number and types of symptoms present (Table 1).

Although the sample is small the changes identified in the interview data are promising and are reported here in some detail. Thematic analysis of the interview data yielded ten sub-themes that were grouped around three themes: Relationship strain, In-tune relationship and Interpretation of cues (see Table 2). These are discussed in relation to each group (TIP and control) across the pre and post interviews.

Theme 1. Relationship Strain

Five of the ten sub-themes that emerged from the data were clustered around the theme of Relationship strain. Included in the discourse around this sub-theme were statements that explicitly or implicitly referred to feelings of guilt, shame and inadequacy as a mother as well as guilt specific to not giving

Table 2
 Themes and sub-themes elicited from the interview data

Theme 1 – Relationship strain
<i>Sub-themes</i>
1. Guilt/shame in mother-infant relationship.
2. Mother-infant relationship represented as being hard work.
3. Emphasis on action.
4. Emphasis on routines, rules, ‘right way’ of doing things.
5. Mother experiences relief from anxiety when infant is happy or achieving.
Theme 2 – In-tune relationship
<i>Sub-themes</i>
1. Mother loves child <i>and</i> feels loved in return.
2. Mother values ‘being with’ the infant.
3. Mother-infant relationship is harmonious and relaxed.
Theme 3 – Interpreting child’s cues
<i>Sub-themes</i>
1. Awareness of infant’s physical needs only.
2. Awareness of infant’s emotional needs (in addition to physical needs).

equal time, attention or nurturance to their infant in comparison with their older children when they were babies. An example of this follows;

...I think even though I don't take it out on him, in my mind I think I lose patience more with him than I ever did with L but then I think "don't beat yourself up about it because there are a lot more demands going on" but I never take it out on him and I really try and make sure that he doesn't pick up on that either, but even I feel guilty about that....

While the TIP group participants frequently expressed this sub-theme in the pre-test assessment, there were considerably fewer examples of it in the post-test assessment (two compared with nine). Importantly, five of the eight TIP participants demonstrated this sub-theme at the pre-test period and this number

reduced to two at post-test. This suggests that participation in the TIP group might have reduced the guilt, shame and/or anxiety that had been experienced by some of the participants in relation to their role as a mother to their infant.

Second, there were statements describing mothering as tiring, difficult and intense and anxiety-provoking. There was added strain in trying to be a “good mother”. Participants in both the TIP and control group were almost equally as likely to mention this theme in both pre and post intervention interviews, and for both groups the number of instances the theme was mentioned was less in the post intervention interview.

Third, the participants made action statements with a focus of the mother on being busy, getting things done (often housework), teaching the child things that would enable him/her to accomplish and achieve in life and an emphasis on the child performing for others. One participant was concerned that her habitual

'busy-ness' was becoming hazardous for her son. Commenting on a recent run of minor accidents in the home, she stated

I just thought "Oh, I shouldn't have been doing it. I should - I should have just forgotten about it and - and focused on M" and, you know, "while they're awake, they're awake and that's the way it is" but I'm too busy. I'm not too busy, I'm too determined to get things done to do that.

Statements where parents described themselves as active and busy were included in this sub theme as well as statements about the children's activity. In some cases the activity was important to the mother, as for example, the child correctly naming colours or animals in picture books. At other times, the mothers' delight was about an action that brought a sense of mastery to the child. Below is one such example of the sub-theme 'action':

"just when she does something like when she started walking or she does animal noises which I still get teary just thinking about the first time she did animal noises in front of people, and people were laughing at her and you think "Oh, she's mine!"

The within-group change across time was notable in relation to this sub-theme. In the TIP group pre intervention interview, seven of the eight participants recorded this sub-theme of 'action' 17 times while in the post interview for this group five participants recorded it seven times. By contrast, the number of control group participants who reported this tendency increased over the same time period from five to six participants, as did the frequency with which it was identified in the data (from 12 to 19 times). One of the emphases of the TIP group programme is the child's need for closeness and interaction with his/her mother, and it is hoped that participants become aware through their observations of play sessions that these needs are frustrated by

mother's busyness and would be even more so in the home with activity such as housework. This finding suggests participants took this aspect of the programme on board and after their experience in the group were less likely than their control group counterparts to emphasise action and accomplishment (by either the mother or child) in order to derive value as a mother.

Fourth, the participants made statements emphasising routines, rules and the 'right way'. This is not a surprising theme to find since many clients of Ngala employ the services of the agency in order to receive instruction on these aspects of caring for the child. For a mother who is feeling highly anxious, sleep-deprived, or frustrated in her mothering role, the belief that Ngala staff are the experts and have all of the solutions to their parenting difficulties may be a very reassuring one. As such, this theme may not be as prevalent in the general population of mothers.

The frequency with which this theme was identified was the same in the pre-intervention interview for both TIP and control group participants. Where participants were invited to talk about a time they had spent with their child in recent days that stood out for them, their discourse was characterised by a description of their care-giving routine, or the following of 'rules' set by someone else who was deemed to be an expert, or anxiety about performing caregiving functions in 'the right way.'

Finally, the mothers made statements expressing feelings of relief from anxiety when the child was happy or achieving. All mothers appeared to feel re-assured when they observed positive behaviours on the part of the child (e.g., laughing, performing, or being happy), that they were 'doing a good job'.

Theme 2. In-tune Relationship

Three of the ten sub-themes identified in the data, clustered around the theme of mother and child being 'in tune'. Common to these three sub-themes was a sense of reciprocity, and an emphasis on the relationship with the child. Two examples of this theme are:

...I came through the door the first afternoon that she's had the babysitter and she just - her face lit up and she just had to eat me. You know, she gave these big, big, big mouth-open kisses all over my face and my arms and just, just "Oh, Mum! Mum! There you are." Yeah, just, you know, just all over me.

...just having her around and when she looks at you and you know that she does want you and she does want you to look at her for a minute, not 'cause she needs anything just she does want to be a part of you.

This theme was found substantially more frequently in the control group than the TIP group at the pre-intervention interview (nine times compared with three). However, this balance had reversed post-TIP. While for the control group the number of mothers who demonstrated awareness that their infants loved them remained constant over time, the number of TIP group participants who demonstrated the same awareness increased to from three of the eight participants to five after completing the TIP group programme. This suggests that participation in the TIP programme is associated with a positive change in the frequency with which mothers experience a sense of reciprocal love with their infant.

In order for a mother to provide an optimal emotional environment within which to mirror and respond to her infant's emotional needs, the mother must be able to feel that she herself is loved (Fraiberg, 1980). At the beginning of the TIP group, DVD footage of the sessions indicate that some of the participants did not feel worthy of love and believed that their children were as likely, for example, to want to go home with one of the investigators, as with them. The literature suggests that any positive change in this aspect of the mother-child relationship will have a

beneficial influence on the child's social and emotional development.

The second sub-theme was an emphasis on 'being with' the child. This was identified where participants pronounced delight in simply being with their children or where participants reported a tendency to choose to spend time with the child purely because their child appeared to want to be with them. At the pre intervention phase of the study, control group members were much more likely to evidence this theme in their discourse than were TIP group members (18 times compared with seven). However, at the post assessment phase, the result was reversed, with 24 instances of this theme being identified in the TIP group compared with 13 in the control group. This result is consistent with the results for the theme 'emphasis on action'. In both cases the tendency for mothers in the TIP group to prioritise their time in terms of their own needs decreased substantially over the intervention time while for control group members it did not. The TIP group programme focuses on 'tuning' mothers in to the needs of the child these findings maybe an indication of the effectiveness of the programme.

The third sub-theme was characterised by a harmonious and relaxed mother-infant relationship. This sub-theme describes a sense of the mothers being calm and confident in their role, and enjoying their relationship with their children. This sub theme was not identified in any pre-intervention interviews with TIP group participants but was evident in the control group statements. By contrast, while the control group gave a similar frequency of this theme post-intervention, identification of this theme in the TIP group at the post-intervention assessment went from zero to five of the eight. It may be that participation in the TIP group increases the confidence of group members to follow their child's lead and trust their own strengths as a mother, and that this leads to a reduction in performance-anxiety and an increase in

enjoyment in their role as mother. In addition, some TIP participants demonstrated an increased acceptance of themselves as individuals, suggesting that they no longer felt (or felt less) inadequate as a person, and therefore as the mother of their beloved child. One example of this follows:

I suppose I'm not so obsessed about everything being "right" and the way that you treat one another as being "right" but I think that generally I'm more relaxed about who I am and I feel like I've learnt more about myself and that I'm OK.

It could be argued that when a mother is accepting of herself as a person and a mother and, therefore, less preoccupied with her own internal state of mind, she is more emotionally available to her infant and his emotional needs.

Theme 3. Interpretation of Child's Cues

In this theme, mothers articulated how they interpreted their children's cues, particularly in response to questions such as 'how do you understand the times when you and your child do not get on well together?' and 'what do you do when you are unsure about what your child is wanting from you?' This theme was also evident in responses to unrelated questions. Mothers in both groups were almost equally as likely to identify physical needs only, as the basis of their children's ambiguous cues (e.g., crying, whinging, crankiness) in the pre-intervention and post-intervention phases of the study. One example of this theme follows:

...I'll run through my mind, I'll think "what's the time of day? Have I done his nappy? Could he be thirsty, could he be hungry?" The standard things. Could he be tired? But it is always around that. But he's kind of like a real textbook baby.

The control group identified emotional needs as well as physical needs in the pre-intervention interviews more often than the

TIP group participants did. Post intervention, the TIP group was twice as likely as the control group to identify the emotional or inner world of their child when discussing their child's ambiguous cues (increasing from 2 to 13 times). In this sub-theme, there was consistent evidence that mothers gave first priority to physical needs (such as the child being hungry, tired or sick) but that equal emphasis was given to their child's cues regarding their emotional needs (such as need for comfort, relationship and reassurance). In the post-intervention interview of one TIP group member, this theme was identified as follows:

Interviewer: How do you think your child is feeling when she is whingey or cranky?

Horrible, sometimes I don't think she knows what she wants so it doesn't matter what you try and put in front of her or give her it's not going to help so I think she just needs to know that I'm there if she wants to come and sit, cuddle, cry or whatever, so I just sort of try and see if she's showing me anything that she might need like a drink or whatever or if she just needs me, I suppose.

The above example illustrates a maternal state of mind that takes into consideration the internal world of her child. This skill is crucial in providing an environment in which, at least some of the time, the infant's emotional world is understood and that understanding is mirrored by the mother, who provides opportunities for the infant to receive comfort and, importantly, learn to soothe herself or himself. It also demonstrates a mother who is attuned to her infant's emotional state and is available to provide comfort should the infant cue her that that is what he/she needs.

Summary of Changes over Time

There is support in the data for the efficacy of the TIP group in increasing the sensitive-responsiveness of the intervention

group. TIP group participants in the pre-intervention assessment were substantially more likely to describe their mother-child relationship in terms of 'relationship strain' (85%), with an in tune relationship rarely described (15%), than were control group participants who evidenced the themes 'relationship strain' (55%) and 'in-tune relationship' (45%) to a more equal degree. These different baseline levels recorded by the two groups of mothers in how they spoke of their relationships with their infants, suggests that for a sub group of mothers, the role of mother and the mother-infant relationship itself generates a substantially higher degree of stress and anxiety than that experienced by other mothers. In the post-intervention interviews the TIP group participants were twice as likely to describe an 'in-tune' relationship (32%) as they were to talk about 'relationship strain' (67%). Importantly, this group also substantially decreased in their claims to feel guilty or inadequate as a mother, and in terms of their tendency to articulate their mother-child relationship in terms of routines and expert rules and advice. Instead, they were more likely to report feeling relaxed in the role of mother and to delight in their infants, without reference to their behaviour and accomplishments. In one mother's post-intervention interview, reference was made to the way in which she tended to respond to her infant before participating in the TIP programme:

(I would think) "Oh great, she's happy, I can go and do the washing, she's quiet and whatever and she's not making a noise so good I can get on with this or quickly make that phone call or..." whereas now other things don't seem so important, I'm happy to spend the time with K and interact with her, much better.

This is an encouraging result because it suggests that participation in the TIP group

program is effective in improving the relational environment between mother and infant, thereby improving the availability of mothers to be attuned to their infants. In a similar vein, the TIP group participants were more than twice as likely as the control group to take into consideration the emotional experience of their infant post intervention. Once again, there were different baseline levels, however, for the control group this tendency remained relatively unchanged over time, whilst there was dramatic improvement in the intervention group. Post-intervention TIP participants also demonstrated improved awareness of infant cues indicating need for emotional support, which represented a change from 25% of the mothers in the pre interview to 75% in the post-intervention interview. This result indicates that there was a trend towards an increase in maternal sensitive attunement to infant cues for emotional soothing or comfort and provides an initial indication that the TIP group programme was effective at increasing mothers' awareness of the emotional experience of their infants.

Organisational Outcomes from the Collaboration

The project brought together participants with a range of skills and knowledge, from which to contribute to thinking about a Parenting Skills Development Framework and to forge a common way of thinking about parent-child relationships. Three focus group sessions held after training in the TIP programme allowed staff to discuss their experiences of the collaboration. Themes identified from analysis of focus groups transcripts included improved interdisciplinary communications, confidence in application of new knowledge to practice, practical changes in the organisation, and new energy for infant mental health promotion and research. Brief examples to support the latter claim follow.

Interdisciplinary Communication

One nurse at managerial level described, "We have moved from being a multidisciplinary team to an interdisciplinary team", while

another stated, *“This increased knowledge of attachment issues and the importance of reflective thinking has benefited not just the staff involved in the programme but raised awareness and interest across the organisation.”*

Confidence in the Application of New Knowledge to Practice

For the agency this change is best evidenced by the development of a new sleep curriculum in the agency that incorporates attachment theories, early brain development and has the baby/child foremost in mind when determining strategies. One staff member cited a greater awareness of, *“Seizing the moment when there is some positive interaction happening and using this as an opportunity to talk about the importance of connecting, how it feels and to encourage continuing to tune in.”* Another nurse says *“I use this awareness all the time now sometimes I will just find myself thinking ‘how would we reflect that back in a TIP group?’”*.

Practical Changes in the Organisation

In addition to the new sleep curriculum, there have been some very tangible outcomes from the collaboration. These include the creation of a position of counselling/clinical psychologist for the first time in the 110 year history of the agency; the enrolment of one senior nurse in management into a doctoral research programme to further the research culture established; the establishment of an active research committee in the agency involving university personnel from four different disciplines.

New Energy for Infant Mental Health Promotion and Research

The project resulted in raised awareness of the mental health issues faced by parents and young children. Increased awareness was evident by the large number of staff who attended open TIP based training sessions and in the increase in referrals to TIP 2. Parents who participated in the intervention groups also reported taking their growing awareness of infant mental health issues back to their

local communities. A number of agency staff also joined the local branch of the Infant Mental Health Association.

Promotion of Research in the Field of Infant Mental Health

A further outcome of this joint venture has been the growth in awareness of the resources that are required for infant mental health intervention programmes to be evaluated in community organisations. These include staffing issues, time allocation, technical support and child care issues. A nurse at managerial level summarised the collaborative process in this way:

We believe, quite strongly, in capturing positive moments and building on what is working well. This has been a wonderful journey and we have learnt so much from this collaborative partnership. Identifying how we can in our everyday work, promote the concepts of ‘being a tuned-in parent’. Our way of working with clients is building on the strengths that parents bring to the relationship with the child. Therefore looking for opportunities where there is positive interaction is important. We discovered if there is ‘passion’ and a desire to incorporate new knowledge into practice, then with persistence ways can be found to accomplish this. It is an ongoing process.

Conclusions

This paper has reported on a community development programme where the goal was to find a way to understand, develop and deliver a programme for young families where relationship concerns between parents and their children were reported or evidenced. The programme was in keeping with a research and practice framework embraced by the consortium of agencies to which Ngala belonged. A collaborative partnership was developed between a university and the early

parenting organisation to choose a suitable programme to deliver the set objectives, and to plan an organisation wide shift of focus to deliver the programme. An innovative parent/child intervention methodology based on an Attachment Theory framework, was chosen as the basis for the new programme.

The collaborative team adapted the TIP intervention to meet the needs of the agency and worked out a detailed plan of organisational change within this unit of service delivery. This involved: Introducing the shift in focus to as many staff as possible within the agency; more fully informing a self selected group of interested personnel; choosing from this group a team of staff for training in the various tasks within the programme; and establishment of a framework for the evaluation of the performance of the programme in meeting the goals of the agency. When these parameters of the programme were in place two intervention groups with control groups were run through the determined procedures.

Qualitative data from semi-structured interviews with the participants has been shown to be promising but is not definitive. The parents who participated in the intervention programmes appeared to become aware of the importance of sensitive attunement to infant and child cues for proximity, attention and comfort and engaged in reflection on their own styles of parenting. The collaborative group considers that perhaps a better measure of outcome might be provided by the semi-structured Parental Development Interview (Slade, 1999), which yields an estimate of the reflective capacity of the mother and can track changes in this function. Parallel processes between agencies, within the agency, between nurses and their clients, and between parents and their babies facilitated genuine change on many levels. Innovative theory and practice from this project has now become part of the service delivery for the agency.

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Address correspondence to

Dr L Priddis
C/- Department of Psychology
School of Health Sciences
Curtin University of Technology
GPO Box U1987
Perth 6845
email: l.priddis@curtin.edu.au

Relationships in Remote Communities: Implications for Living in Remote Australia

Bernard Guerin

University of South Australia

Pauline Guerin

Flinders University of South Australia

There are issues with living in remote regions of Australia that arise from the different forms of social relationships. In this paper we outline three forms of relationships that are useful in teasing out issues when living in remote regions. We then consider several ways that relationship issues might arise in remote communities and some solutions through examining the interactions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, settlers and service providers. We also show how a graphic drawing of relationships from the perspective of remote communities can be utilised to help communities to plan their own solutions.

Australia has between one and two thousand settlements in its desert regions, from very small outstations of a few people up to a few major centres such as Alice Springs (Newman et al., 2008). There are many social properties of living in remote¹ regions that do not depend upon the personal characteristics of the people involved but rather, upon the situation, and that are neither good nor bad in themselves but which can be used strategically for varied ends (Cocklin & Dibden, 2005; Folds, 2001; Foster, Mitchell, Ulrik & Williams, 2005; Moisseff, 1999; Oeser & Emery, 1954; Walsh & Mitchell, 2002; Young & Fisk, 1982).

In this paper we discuss several ways that living in remote Australian communities is affected by the different forms of social relationships commonly experienced, especially from the residents' reliance on remote services. We outline several ways that various groups around the world have tried to overcome the properties they find undesirable. The main question is how to best deal with these changes and tensions in relationships.

What are Relationships?

In the remote regions of Australia there are a variety of communities, and they are organised in different ways. Relationships in an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander² context are different to relationships in most non-indigenous contexts, despite the attempts

by successive governments to assimilate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to non-indigenous ways. Settlers in remote regions also brought specific ways to interact, as have governments and government service providers. However, when discussing relationship issues between groups or people in remote Australia, such as between settlers and Aboriginal people, problems are often delegated to or 'explained' as arising from essential differences between the groups of people, or from 'traditional ways' (Guerin & Guerin, 2007). In this paper, however, we will show how we can make this a little more concrete and less essentialistic by suggesting three forms of relationships that help tease out relationships and their issues in remote regions (Guerin, 2004). These are not meant to be firm or fast categories and many exceptions and variations occur, but are merely meant to inspire thinking in terms of diversity of relationships while still providing something concrete that avoids essentialisms.

People enter into relationships when they exchange goods, attend events, bolster reputation or provide opportunities, through interactions or structural events. This broad interdisciplinary idea covers many sorts of relationship interactions and prevents thinking about relationships merely in terms of liking or attraction as the sole source of relationships, because not all functional

relationships centre on liking or attraction (Guerin, 2004).

Table 1 presents a brief summary of the approach showing seven social properties of the three forms of relationships, drawn from literature across all the disciplines of social

sciences. These are not meant to be mutually exclusive nor rigid, but a guide to social properties of some typical clusters. There is no 'best' form of relationship because there are good and bad features of them all, and this also depends upon people's reputation in

Table 1.

Three Types of Social Relationships and their Main Social Properties (adapted from Guerin, 2005)

Strangers:

Form of reciprocity: Exchange with a society of strangers is done via money

What you can get done is typically by paying someone and can be done at a distance, and in principle: there are no other social relationships involved; there are no other social obligations; they do not usually impact on other areas of life

Personal influence depends upon having economic (resource) status, often contextualised as a show of commodities

Monitoring: Will often not see them again, and others will not see each other

Accountability is mainly through public rule following and policing, institutionalised

Avoidance and escape of consequences is easy especially if wealthy, and people can easily withdraw from social relationships. Secrecy and lying therefore are also easy.

Conformity & norms: Will usually be towards what is publicly available and especially on media and through government and high status citizens

Friends and family social networks:

Form of reciprocity: specific supports that are returned (emotional, social, material, etc.)

What you can get done depends upon your networks and the reciprocity you provide. The people are usually relevant in other arenas of life

Personal influence will depend upon status within networks

Monitoring: Will see some of the people regularly, but not others. The others will not all see each other regularly, except if family

Accountability through public rules and policing, and through network members' contacts

Avoidance and escape of consequences is only easy if constantly changing networks or if high status within networks, or there are coalitions within networks (cliques).

Conformity & norms: Usually directed towards what best friends or closest family perceive is important

Kin-Based groups:

Form of reciprocity: taken for granted obligations

What you can get done depends upon the family social relationships. The same people will be relevant in most arenas of life

Personal influence will be important and depend upon status in the family and community networks. Time is therefore spent talking rather than rule following.

Monitoring: Will see most of the people regularly, and others will see each other regularly

Accountability is through complex family systems with historical context frequently utilised

Avoidance and escape of consequences is difficult and is limited mostly to secrecy and language strategies, or forming coalitions

Conformity & norms: Usually directed towards what the community sees as important and often reflected in historical precedence or ritual practices

relationships. Moreover, the majority of people have different types of relationships with different people. For example, many people in western systems have many daily interactions with strangers while maintaining a network of close family ties and both close friends and weak ties, but they do not have experience in the relationships making up large, kin-based communities.

Living in a western society, the majority of relationships are with *strangers* (for example, at work, in education, in shops), and these relationship interactions are arguably the most frequent, even if not the most satisfying. These are generally handled politely through interaction rituals and, even though the persons involved are strangers, these relationships are not usually cold, hard or impolite and can easily develop into friendships depending on the context (Goffman, 1967). The main exchanges with strangers are conducted through money, in that people must pay others to paint the house, teach children, fix cars, etc., and in that people do things for others because they are given money, either directly or indirectly (Simmel, 1978/1907). One key property of western stranger relationships is that there are no obligations to those in the relationship once the exchange or service has been paid for – there is no obligation to continue the relationship although these relationships can sometimes develop into acquaintances or more.

Many people in western societies, however, also have a small group of *close friends* and *immediate family* with whom they spend a lot of ‘quality’ time, even if this is only on weekends or during holidays. Such relationships also work through social networks that can link people to acquaintances, partial strangers or ‘weak ties’ who are not known but can be approached through family or friends for better exchanges (Granovetter, 1982).

Finally, some people live within larger communities of extended family or *kin-based communities* in which most contacts and

exchanges will be with someone who is related by birth or fictive kinship. In this type of relationship almost all properties of relationships and exchanges are with people who are related, and hence, affect almost all social behaviour. For example, greater monitoring is common due to the greater interaction of people in the network and results in less anonymity. This is not necessarily aversive, however, as it would be if it happened within stranger relationships. Exchanges in kin-based communities are typically reciprocated with obligations for other goods, events, reputation or opportunities, and being offered money can be seen as rude or condescending (as it can also be for *close family and friends*). Kin-based groups are varied but include many religious communities such as the Exclusive Brethren that are not based on an ethnic or racial group.

Table 1 shows seven of the key social factors in relationships, although there is not space here to elaborate on these. The point is that the same interactions can occur but with very different social properties maintaining the relationship, and moreover, people typically immersed in one form of relationship can find it difficult to understand how relationships function under another set of social properties. In the present case, this is common between those with frequent relationships with strangers (even if formally friendly) and those immersed in the social properties of kin-based communities. Similarly, people who function in one set of social properties may also have certain expectations about how others should act, their motivations, their reciprocity, and what might be considered satisfactory about an interaction.

Common Relationship Issues in Remote Australia

The reason the different types of relationships become important for the present discussion is that in colonial countries such as Australia, there are typical interactions across these types of relationships that have produced very similar results to other colonised countries

(Guerin, 2004, chapter 6; Moody, 1998). Many Indigenous peoples, refugees, migrants, peoples of slave background, and peoples from developing countries form very strong kin-based communities to this day but come into regular contact with people who typically live within a set of stranger relationships alongside a small number of close friends and immediate family. There are also settlers and descendents of settlers in remote areas who have come from stranger relations but have had to depend on others to a larger extent than is necessary in urban centres. The mix of these three groups produces many of the issues we now discuss.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities

In the case of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, belonging to kin-based communities and obligations is one of the most frequently cited properties that sets them apart from other Australians (e.g., Poirior, 2005). To understand the minutia of behaviour and behaviour patterns, an understanding is needed of how people in kin-based communities function and how the whole system works together. Kin-based communities should not be construed as perfect or conflict free, as systems models often portray (Guerin & Guerin, 2007), but the whole system functions differently from a stranger society built on monetary exchanges with strangers (which can also be complex, intricate, satisfying, conflictual, subtle, etc.).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have had strong kin-based relationships in which people rely on one another and have long-lasting and serious obligations to others. A large part of what people in these groups accomplish is through family obligations as a 'way of life', and these obligations are taken for granted. For example, if children need to be looked after there will often be a family member who can do this (but perhaps with some grumbling), instead of paying someone for baby-sitting. The ties (exchanges) are very strong, even when conflictual, so phenomena such as avoidance

relationships occur in which, because of the structure of family relationships, certain people cannot be in the same room or sit with one another (e.g., Poirior, 2005). Some small Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander settlements are even physically structured so that different family groupings live apart from one another.

In terms of the distances of remote communities, many people in these relationships report finding it aversive to be away from one another for extended periods, which can inhibit travelling to cities for employment, education or medical treatment. However, this does not mean that people do not want to leave the community. Indeed, much work has reported the high geographic mobility of Aboriginal people in remote communities (Biddle & Hunter, 2005). Resistance to moving away from remote communities might therefore relate to an aversion to being surrounded by strangers, or people who treat you as strangers, rather than from being away from kin *per se* – that is, from relationship issues of another nature. People living in urban areas often have more contact with strangers and are forced to deal with strangers on a regular basis. Although people in remote Australia certainly have experience in dealing with strangers, they are perhaps still used to forming stronger and more trusting relationships before allowing strangers to influence them. This is why building relationships is so important for researchers and service providers in remote regions, since the manner of interacting is just as important as how people speak and behave (Zimmermann, Davidson, Cacciattolo & Mahon, 2007). Just being paid to do some work for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in remote communities does not guarantee that a relationship of any other sort will develop, and the way in which westerners can switch relationships and obligations on and off in such a controlled manner with strangers can be confusing for someone from a kin-based community.

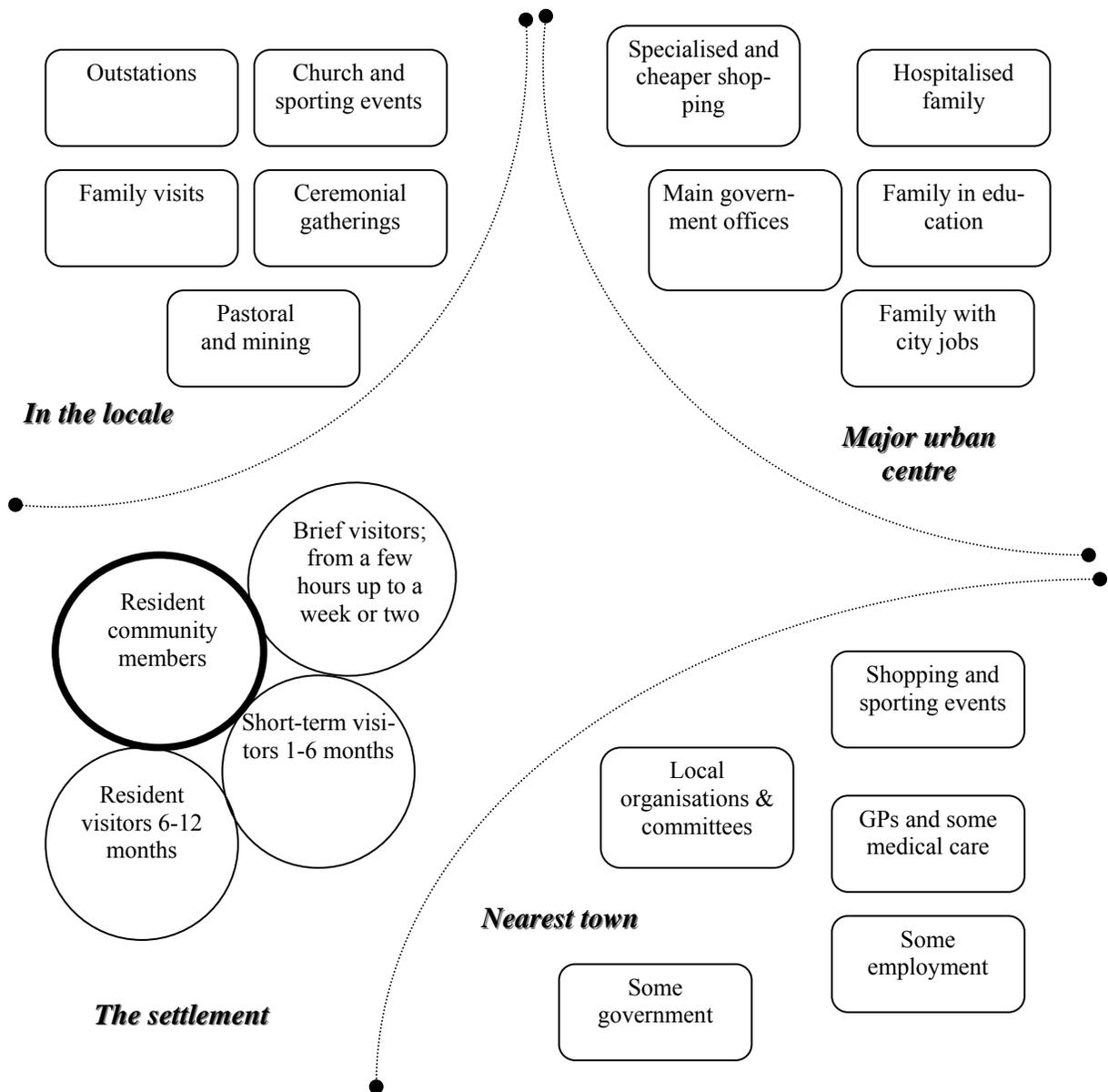


Figure 1. Typical groups needing to maintain relationships in remote Australia (based on extensive discussions with community members).

To give a feel for the different groups with which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in a remote community engage, we have tried to draw a ‘community plan’ from talking with many groups involved in one remote community in Central Australia. While there are several ways to draw community profiles (e. g., Walsh & Mitchell, 2002), none focuses sufficiently on the relationships involved. For confidentiality we

will not provide details of the community involved, but this material was compiled over several trips to the community over two years, during which we talked with community members as well as service providers. In any event, it is not meant as definitive or representative, but is given here as illustrative.

Figure 1 shows that there are several layers of contact that must be maintained for sustainable living in remote regions, all of

which for urban dwellers can be accessed relatively closely without much travel. Many of these contacts are at a great distance, but the point here is that there are many types of relationships that must be broached, and in many cases they are infrequent so little can be done to sustain relationships if that is what you are expecting (from living in a kin-based community). Dealing with all these strangers and their ways of interacting on rare trips must also make travel uninviting. The high mobility, therefore, is more about travelling to areas in the locale where there are family members, or to urban areas to visit families (Biddle & Hunter, 2005).

Similar points arise from Figure 1 when sending family to large urban centres for employment or education. Maintaining relationships in those cases is not just about maintaining the family connections and exchanges at a distance, but also having to deal with a large number of stranger relationships by necessity. In the case of secondary and tertiary education this often means some years away from the community and family.

Health is also complicated in this regard because although most small settlements have some form of local health services, albeit usually with few facilities, these often employ many outside people who are not local, do not have family in the community, do not stay long, and are working under conditions of poor resourcing. Even with excellent, dedicated and caring professionals, working in these situations is difficult at best and at the worst is not sustainable. Moreover, for chronic or serious health matters, moving to a nearby town or major urban hospital is often required, for either short visits or permanently (Wakerman et al., 2005). For example, most small settlements do not have dialysis machines and so those needing such equipment on a regular basis have to move to an urban centre or big town since the small health units cannot acquire or maintain one. This causes much distress for families (Devitt & McMasters, 1998a, 1998b).

Service Providers in Remote Communities

Remote Australia also has a large band of service providers who are occasionally locally raised but much more likely to move from cities to remote Australia on employment contracts (Haslam McKenzie, 2007). Those who are brought in typically have family ties elsewhere, so a person from Sydney might take a position in Alice Springs for a short time. This shows an interesting contrast to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who often must leave their home for employment or education with some resistance, and it shows the strong employment advantage of 'westerners' in such situations: that the family ties are often not so strong that they need to be in constant contact. In many western families members can be out of contact for some years with only intermittent interaction (by phone, for example, or just visiting once a year at Christmas) and still maintain the family relationship. This property is as useful today for mobile employment as it was for colonists to settle in remote regions.

Some government officials go to remote communities for very short terms, often only a day or two (see Figure 1), and then return to close family and friends, but the main government offices that have control over desert settlements are typically in remote urban centres rather than in the bush. In some cases, a nearby town has branch offices of government but these are often small and do not include all services or the responsibility to act or implement changes. The main medical and education centres are likewise in remote urban centres and health inequities reflect the associated problems (e.g., Underhill, Goldstein & Grogan 2006). Most remote settlements have some health facilities relatively nearby and perhaps schooling up to primary level, but the fact is that for most people in remote communities, serious or chronic medical problems and obtaining an education requires moving out of the settlement.

Most service providers and government officials who go to remote communities have been raised within western relationships

(usually in cities) and most start off with little or no understanding of kin-based communities, how they function, and the obligations assumed even when a stranger relationship is broached (Dillon & Westbury, 2007). While this is advantageous in so far as it was mentioned above (i.e., that this means they can travel to remote areas for extended periods without feeling too much distress from being away from their own families), it does mean that problems are likely to accrue because they usually do not understand how relationships in remote regions are maintained and function.

Despite being able to stay away from family longer than for those immersed in kin-based communities, service providers also tend not to stay for extended periods (years or decades) so it is common to have high turnover. This is very problematic for most remote communities around the world. The frequent requirement to induct and form relationships with new service providers is both stressful and time consuming. Even in the western context, high staff turnover is seen as problematic, though the structures often accommodate such turnover. The importance of developing relationships in remote communities challenges the ease of substituting staff.

Service providers often deal with issues that require some specialised knowledge and history not often included in training programs, and this cannot be taught overnight when one set of service providers is substituted for the previous ones. Learning these things is usually left up to the initiative of the new worker, or worse, considered unimportant. Whereas those living in a city can substitute one greengrocer store for another without much of a problem, high turnover of service providers in remote communities can cause multiple relationship disruptions and much frustration and stress to those living there because of the forms of social relationship in addition to any service delivery issues.

Settlers in Remote Regions

The other main group in remote Australia, who account for much space even if numbers are smaller, are the settlers, pastoralists, and descendents of settlers. Settlers form an interesting mix of the types of relationships characterised in Table 1. Unlike service providers, settlers do not have close family in distant places since after many years in one spot they usually have most family close by for support. This also means, however, that they must rely on those around them more than the transitory service providers in the same area, and this changes the relationships settlers make and how those relationships are sustained. Settlers might form closer ties with each other even though not kin-based, but the relationships might not be utilised or realised except in emergency situations.

Some of these suggestions were outlined in comments about the early pastoralists of the far North of Western Australia, and their relationships with the local Aboriginal workers (such as the Peet brothers below). How pastoralists handled and developed relationships depended on the *potential* reliance or dependence they might have:

Their husbands who were out and about with the workers did not seem to be gripped by the need to keep themselves separate and, with real work to do, did not suffer in the same way. These men, like Mr. Campbell, were even known to invite the lowly mail drivers indoors for a cup of tea when they called each week. The Peet brothers, grateful for any consideration shown to them on their long hot run, knew whenever such an invitation was issued on such stations that the missus was away. It would never happen otherwise... They also noticed the change in attitude as soon as they entered the Gascoyne area further north. There the stations were even more remote and consequently

more mutually dependent. None of the whites could afford to consider themselves better than the next: after all, no-one knew just when they would require help, or from whom. Up there the mail drivers were treated like one of the family... (Dingo, 1998, p.151)

Again we see that distance relates to relationships, that as one became more and more remote, relationships needed to change for potential help, but our point is that this no longer applies to the service providers who only come for short stays. If they require help they will typically get it from their family or organisation back in the urban centres.

Solutions to Issues in Remote Relationships

Relationship problems are not the only or biggest problems for small settlements in remote regions. Lack of employment (Fuller, Caldicott, Cairncross, & Wilde, 2007) and cost of transport are two other major problems that need new solutions, for example, as does health servicing (Panagiotopoulos, Rozmus, Gagnon, & Macnab, 2007; Underhill et al., 2006; Wakerman et al., 2005). However, underlying the lack of solutions to these other problems, as we have tried to show, are the problems of maintaining relationships both across far distances and also across the different types of relationships that typically exist in remote Australia. We explore some possibilities to the relationships issues raised above, rather than attempting to provide solutions to all problems of living in remote Australia.

Although many solutions to relationship issues have been attempted over many years, there are probably possibilities that have never been documented, which means that others cannot take advantage of them. Luckily, solutions to similar problems around the world have been documented and might be adapted these to remote solutions (e. g., Nikora, Guerin, Rua & Te Awekotuku, 2004; Nikora, Rua, Te Awekotuku, Guerin & McCaughey,

2007; Panagiotopoulos et al., 2007; Teddy, Nikora & Guerin, 2005).

Overall, there are two main relationship issues that require solutions. First, explicit strategies to bridge the different types of relationships need to be developed. Currently, for example, the strategy is for people who will be working in these new relationship scenarios to attend 'cultural awareness', 'cultural competence' or 'cultural safety' programs (Aboriginal Resource and Development Services, 1994; Bourke, Bourke & Edwards, 1994; Congress for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Nurses, 2002; Hill & Augoustinos, 2001; Kiselica, Maben & Locke, 1999; Lindsley, 1998; Partington, 1995; Reid & Holland, 1996; Taylor & Wright, 2003). While these programs can provide people with some knowledge, understanding, and sometimes skills for working 'cross culturally', they do not explore the *functionality* of different types of relationships and the *contexts* of those relationships.

More practically, people in kin-based communities must also be prepared to work with the relationship functions of others, and vice versa. People from remote kin-based communities moving into urban centres might also find it useful to prepare for the ways of action required to get things done (Table 1), otherwise there might be a heavy reliance on the few kin-folk who may already be living there. Likewise, people accustomed to working amongst strangers and moving to kin-based communities might find it useful to prepare for the ways of action required to get things done, or else there might be a reliance on others who are very similar to themselves, thereby creating social divisions within these communities.

There is one interesting proviso to this 'mutual appreciation' stance: entering into western relationships is by their very nature easier than entering into a kin-based relationship, providing one has some form of self-sustaining income. As long as a person has money, he or she can enter into stranger relationships since there are few other expected

obligations or necessary social ties (see Table 1). Entering into kin-based communities, on the other hand, sometimes cannot happen at all except through birth (which people typically do not have control over), although some intermediary forms of affiliated or fictive “kinship” are often granted based on outsiders’ trust and commitment to the community. But for those entering into relationships with people from kin-based communities, the relationship will never be the same as for members of the kin networks. Relationships can still be satisfying, fun, long-lasting and productive, but they will not be the same as for family. This point is one strong argument for having *local people determine solutions* since they are in the best position to implement any changes. Some of the problems will be resolved if local people are employed as the service providers, etc., but this in turn will most often require further education or training which might need a long visit to an urban centre.

The second main point for developing solutions is about spanning the remoteness of distance rather than relationship. For the cases shown in Figure 1, in which people from kin-based communities need to visit or move to towns or cities, relationships need to be explicitly handled. Some groups around the world in similar situations form associations or kin-based groups within the cities to support each other (Nikora et al., 2004; Walker, 1975). A nice variation on this is the New Zealand Tūhoe community who live in a nearby town and organise sports groups and host an annual sports event on the homelands that everyone need to attend (Nikora et al., 2004). This insures that family all visit the homelands at least for the sports events once a year, although having to get away from work or education commitments once a year still causes some disruption in life. (However, it must be kept in mind that the “long distances” involved are not long by Australian remote standards.)

Another common strategy is for people moving to a town or city to stay with family as

boarders for the duration of their visit (Nikora et al., 2004; Nikora et al., 2007). This can put pressure on families but these pressures probably have easier solutions, such as affordable houses that are larger. Innovative uses of telecommunication can also alleviate some of the stress of living away from kin. Most migrating groups now stay in contact with kin they have left behind through phone, internet or video links (e. g., Teddy et al., 2005), and the use of videoconferencing still holds much promise for unique solutions to these problems although repeated waves of enthusiasm since the 1960s has not led to much progress in ordinary life.

Rather than adapting to living away, some services can be re-designed to come nearer or into settlements. Many of these solutions have been tried and some tested. First, utilising local populations as a workforce is a sensible solution although there are also difficulties in doing this. For example, local people in remote communities may not have had the access to education and training needed to take over any jobs provided. But, overall, these issues can be addressed with long-term planning to improve children’s access to education and by thinking 10 or 20 years into the future.

Following this point, too often it is thought that education can only take place in centralised areas. However, much tertiary education has now been re-designed into intensive teaching blocks – even university courses that have traditionally been taught as a series of lectures spanning two or three months. This means first that visits to cities can be done as intensive visits rather than as a three-year stay to obtain a bachelors degree or diploma, and secondly, it means that intensive courses can potentially be brought to the remote regions more easily than a long series of lectures. Some teaching institutions are already doing this, it should be noted, but much more remains to be done. There is also an increasing availability of online and distance education programs.

Medical care and hospitals have other concerns, and remote treatments are less likely

to happen, although some solutions are possible (Congress for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Nurses, 2002; Panagiotopoulos et al., 2007; Underhill et al., 2006; Wakerman et al., 2005). Other than the government buying the same equipment for all small settlements and providing the professionals to run it, people in remote communities with chronic conditions needing specialised care will still need to travel to major towns and cities. This means that solutions mentioned above for better negotiation of family networking in major towns and cities are needed. This is a problem everywhere and needs new considerations (Devitt & McMasters, 1998a, 1998b).

A number of ways could be explored to better handle maintenance of treatments for chronic conditions in remote areas. Where there are strong kin-based networks it makes sense for people with chronic conditions to have a community mentor to help with treatment maintenance. However, this person would need to be chosen by the community and would need the same training and monitoring that would be the case in major towns and cities, but should provide strong support in maintaining treatments without the need for medical consultation.

A Note on Long-term Solutions

The way we think about remote settlements, homelands, and communities might need to change. For example, thinking that the settlement or homeland is the 'hub,' where most people should reside in order to be considered community members, leads to certain ways of approaching issues, and many of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities view their homelands in this way. It is possible, though, to consider that the settlement or homeland is a community centre and a 'place' where people have ties, but most of the members will live outside of that region, in remote urban areas, for at least some of their lives. In this way, the importance and integrity of 'home' remains, but the ways in which this is sustained become different. There are

examples in the Pacific and New Zealand in which the focus has changed so that homelands are seen as the origin or spiritual hub of the community (for example, in Māori this is called the *iwi takiwā*, or tribal region) but the majority of community members live outside of that (Guerin, Nikora & Rua, 2006).

This change, however, requires a change in social organisation to ensure that the sense of community (i.e., the sum of kin-based relationships) does not disappear altogether. That, then, is the challenge: how to have most people living outside of the community settlement without losing the sense of community and kin-ship – how not to lose the forms of relationship engendered by having kin-based communities (as shown partially in Table 1) when most people live elsewhere for at least part of their lives.

For long term sustainability of remote communities, utilising the power of kin-based relationships to adapt into new relationships would be an advantage. One of the powerful benefits of kin-based relationships is the cooperation and sense of obligation to do things for each other. Most government solutions have ignored this because of not wanting to trust community members to work as a whole, and from trying to pin responsibility onto individuals rather than whole communities, as western forms of relationships require (Table 1). But the power of kin-based communities to 'get things done' could be better harnessed in future solutions if communities are given more power to choose their own futures (Dillon & Westbury, 2007; Moran, 2004; Smith & Hunt, 2006; Waltja & WAVE, 2005).

Figure 1 as a Tool for Communities?

What can be done, and this is one goal for future research, is to develop some community development 'tools' that explicitly address the concerns of this paper and facilitate communities finding their own specific solutions, rather than expecting a solution that will fit everyone. For viability and sustainability, the community as a whole can learn to negotiate relationships of different functions and across large distances. People in communities can discuss the problems and

solutions noted here, can draw different versions of Figure 1 for their specific circumstances, and can design ways to maintain those relationships that are necessary (cf. Walsh & Mitchell, 2002). Part of this might require the education of their relationship partners as well as community members. It might also require a sort of reverse cultural awareness training for some kin-based communities to provide ways of interacting better with those used to stranger relationships. It might allow roles to develop for certain skilled community members to deal with some of the relationships in Figure 1 that are necessary, rather than spreading this across the whole community and trying to educate everyone at once. The hope is that if communities, and those who deal with communities, can better manage relationships and how they function, then many of the other difficulties experienced in living in remote communities might be solved.

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Notes

¹ There are definitional arguments about what is remote and what is rural (or other terms).

We will not go into this as it differs between countries as well. We think that the approach of Hugo (2005) is the most sensible option: defining in terms of accessibility rather than physical distance, but we will not pursue that here.

²As is well known, there are other ways of referring to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including “Indigenous” and using local names such as Kurna. In this paper we use the first of these out of respect for the people of the Adelaide plains who prefer “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders” when a specific group is not being referred to.

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Address correspondence to

Bernard Guerin
 School of Psychology
 University of South Australia
 St. Bernard's Road
 Magill 5153
 Adelaide 5001
 South Australia
 email: bernard.guerin@unisa.edu.au

Textbook Answers?

Bróna Nic Giolla Easpaig
David Fryer
University of Stirling, Scotland

This paper is written within a community critical psychology frame of reference, that is, one which is equally committed to exposing and problematising aspects of exploitative, oppressive, unjust and pathogenic societies and also exposing and problematising reactionary aspects of the discipline of psychology which construct, maintain or collude with oppressive societal arrangements.

This frame of reference involves a commitment to problematising ideologically reactionary aspects of mainstream psychological ‘knowledge’ and practice, including pedagogy; developing alternative ways to construct knowledges and promoting critical thinking about them; making visible and contesting processes of psychological oppression; and developing innovative socio-structural inter- and pre-ventions to reduce oppression through emancipatory social change which progressively redistributes power. Community critical psychology means: “engaging with the way societal hierarchies are set up and maintained through wealth, class, labour market position, ethnic dominance (majority/minority status), gender etc., and the way societal structures impact on people both objectively and through their subjective understanding of them” (Fryer, 2008, p. 242).

In this paper, we attempt to do community critical psychology by simultaneously addressing gendered societal oppression and the collusion of mainstream psychology with it. In this paper we use ‘discourses’ in the Foucauldian sense to refer to “historically and culturally located systems of power/knowledge” which “construct subjects and their worlds” and which are not only “bodies of ideas, ideologies, or other symbolic formulations” but “also working attitudes, modes of address, terms of reference, and courses of action suffused into social practices” (Holstein & Gubrium, 2005, p. 490).

We use the term ‘dominant discourses’ to refer to discourses which “privilege those versions of versions of social reality which legitimate existing power relations and social structures” (Willig, 2001, p. 107).

Introductory psychology textbooks are positioned within dominant discourses as essential reading for most undergraduate courses, providing ‘foundational knowledge’. For example, even two textbooks of community psychology likely to be familiar to readers of this journal, which are widely regarded as more critically oriented than most textbooks, reproduce this discourse on their covers. *Community Psychology: Theory, Method and Practice – South African and Other Perspectives* (Seedat, Duncan, & Lazarus, 2001) self-describes on its back cover as: “giving the reader a thorough introduction to the theory and methodology of the field . . . this is a vital text for social science and public health students and practitioners” and Nelson and Prillettensky’s (2005) *Community Psychology: In Pursuit of Liberation and Well-Being*, self-describes on its back cover as an “up-to-date and highly engaging text” which “provides students with an introduction to the history and foundations of community psychology”.

However, within subjugated, critical, counter discourses, the textbook is positioned as socially, economically, politically constituted and thus potentially ideologically problematic. This article is written from such a critical standpoint. In this paper we are not using the term “critical” as it is often used in everyday language as equivalent to ‘fault-finding’ nor as it is often used in mainstream psychology as evaluating claims against a set of narrow pre- and pro-scriptive, fundamentally positivist, naïve realist, criteria – ironically this is to use “critical” to mean “acritical” (see Fryer, Duckett & Pratt, 2004 for a development of

these ideas).

Rather we use “critical” as it is used in critical theory and particularly by Foucault (1981/2002) who asserted that being critical:

...does not consist in saying that things aren't good the way they are. It consists in seeing what type of assumptions, of familiar notions, of established, unexamined ways of thinking the accepted practices are based”, in “showing that things are not as obvious as people believe, making it so that what is taken for granted is no longer taken for granted. To do criticism is to make harder those acts which are now too easy. (pp. 456-457)

More particularly, Foucault (1978/2007) wrote that: “critique finds its anchoring point in the problem of certainty in its confrontation with authority” (p. 46). According to Foucault, this involves “not accepting as true ... what an authority tells you is true, or at least not accepting it because an authority tells you that it is true” (p. 46). Whilst this resistance is, perhaps, easily understood in relation to textbook claims, for Foucault, resisting pedagogy is but one form of resistance to “all the arts of governing – the art of pedagogy, the art of politics, the art of economics . . . all the institutions of government, in the wider sense” (pp. 43-44).

Resistance to ‘governmentality’, in the Foucauldian sense, is not a matter of resisting all government, that is, of being anarchic but of resisting being “governed like that, by that, in the name of those principles, with such an objective in mind and by means of such procedures, not like that, not for that, not by them . . .” (Foucault, 1978/2007, p. 44). Resisting governmentality includes resisting being governed through our own ‘mentality’ through our internalisation of ways of understanding the social world and ourselves within it, internalisation which serve the interests of the status quo through our deployment of our own agency against

ourselves thus rendering ourselves compliant.

In this paper, we engage in community critical psychology by arguing that what is accomplished through psychology textbooks is not as obvious as some people believe, by undermining the authority of the textbook, by challenging a pedagogical means through which governmentality is accomplished in the interests of those benefiting from patriarchy and heterosexuality and, in particular by problematising the oppressive discursive construction of women and the complicity of the discipline of psychology in this via its pedagogy and its pedagogic tools such as textbooks.

In this paper, we analyse two textbooks and explore how women are constructed and de-powered in them within discourses of ‘moral development’. Our analysis draws on Queer Theory as a theoretical resource (for more on Queer Theory see Plummer, 2005) and deploys Foucauldian discourse analysis as a tool. Our paper raises issues about how women undergraduates can critically contest discourses which oppress them and are constructed and maintained through the discipline’s practices which they enact as students within its pedagogic practices.

The Politics of the Textbook

“Little attention has actually been paid to that one artefact that plays such a major role in defining whose culture is taught – *the textbook*” (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991, p. 1). The textbook is a widely used tool at many levels of education, and is often positioned, explicitly or implicitly, as reproducing ‘objective knowledge’ which is neutral to the nexus of forces within which it is produced. However, Apple (1990) argues, on the contrary, that the textbook is a socially constructed function of complex power-battles within society, and that knowledge is always produced in the context of political, economic, cultural conflicts in relation to power.

Critical discourse analysis has also revealed the politicised nature of knowledge (Derrin, 2004) and critical scholars have argued

that textbooks must be considered in terms of whose interests are served – not simply the interests of individuals benefiting from their production and sale but also from the wider ideologising and colonising in which they are implicated (Fryer & Laing, this issue). Apple (2001) demonstrates how gendered discourses are reproduced in educational institutions, practises and tools, in terms of (de)prioritising, and (de)valuing various knowledges. Previous research has found dominant oppressive discourses in biology textbooks in the form of underlying assumptions, omission of information and reluctance to engage in critical discussion (Snyder & Broadway, 2004).

Queer Theory

Queer theorists like Judith Butler (1990) seek to challenge and destabilise the taken-for-granted constructed categories to which people are assigned, particularly concerning sexuality and gender. Queer theory rejects any suggestion of an ‘essential’, stable, sexual or gender identity but sees these as constructs constituted and sustained through discursive and other social practices (Stein & Plummer, 1996). Queer theory draws from the work of Foucault (1978) which theorises of power not as a thing which is possessed but rather as fluid-like and enacted through being exercised. Queer theory does not presume the existence of the ‘subject’ and assumes there is no pre-existing, gendered, woman but that gender is ‘done’, or ‘performed’: “There is nothing behind the expression of gender, gender is performatively constituted by the very ‘expressions’ that are said to be its results” (Butler, 1990, p. 25). Queer theory is, thus, a theoretical resource which provides a deconstructive methodology and also a conceptual framework through which wider issues can be problematised.

Critical Discourse Analysis

The analysis, through which a queer deconstruction of power relations and reproductions embedded in the text was achieved, was based on principles of critical discourse analysis put forward by Parker

(1992).

The research questions posed were: how are women positioned in discourses dominant within the moral development literature and what are the implications for women’s interests? A preliminary reading was then carried out, through the ‘queer lens’, to identify, select and group together pieces of text that concerned gender in moral development. The focus of the analysis looked at how women, men, morality, gender and sex were constructed as subjects or objects. This was done by detailed critical examination of the texts with attention, specifically, to how subjects and objects were constructed and positioned within the discourses which made them meaningful. Whatever was positioned as lacking agency and having things done to it was regarded as an object. Whatever was positioned as agentic and as doing things were regarded as subjects. How categories of sex and gender were deployed in the text was examined and the implications surfaced, for example, sex differences in a text would position the object or subject in a biological discourse whereas gender would position the object or subject in a social construction discourse. Morality was analysed as a socially constructed concept defining the terrain upon which power struggles take place. Constructions of subjects and objects were drawn together from the different extracts of text, themes for the drawing together made explicit, themes positioned in relation to one another, consistencies and inconsistencies exposed and contrasting ways in which objects were constructed identified. For example, the way in which women were constructed and positioned within different conceptualisations of morality by the two theorists were compared and contrasted and the ways in which the text legitimised and privileged certain theorists or ideas considered. Next, how various discourses sustained or subverted ideologies, how the texts reproduced power relations outside themselves, whose interests were at stake in any particular discourse and who benefited or lost from the reproduction of certain discourses were

examined from a queer theory perspective.

Although the above is presented as a series of steps, in line with the recommendations of Parker (1992), the process was neither sequential nor rigid but moved iteratively back and forth between the sub-processes as seemed appropriate.

The textbooks critiqued were *Psychology for A2 Level*, an introductory A-level text by Michael Eysenck (Eysenck, 2001), a prominent mainstream male British professor of psychology, and *Deconstructing Developmental Psychology* by Erica Burman (Burman, 2007), a prominent feminist female British professor of psychology. Both books were marketed as for beginners in psychology. The full analysis is too lengthy to include but below we include a summary of the findings drawing on the research process.

In terms of moral development, Eysenck's (2001) text, *Psychology for A2 Level*, supports the widely known Kohlbergian stage theory of moral development in which men are positioned as achieving higher levels of moral development than women. The text privileges this theory in a number of ways. The authority of Gilligan's work was undermined in the text by Eysenck, by being positioned along with Freud's but in contrast to Kohlberg's, as lacking good empirical support, that is, as being scientifically suspect. For example, when Gilligan's criticism of Kohlberg's theory is described, the text neutralises it by the addition of a comment that "It might be worth noting that the findings of Gilligan's original research study involved a relatively small number of women, and a rather unsystematic and potentially biased method of interviewing" (p. 406). Eysenck's text reproduces a discourse of 'sex differences' which are positioned as being undeniable manifestations of an essentialising biological 'reality' amenable to standardised, empirical measurements, which is consistent with Kohlberg's but not Gilligan's theory and within which discourse females are less morally developed than males as a matter of

biological fact.

This discourse is reproduced throughout the text through the way in which most major studies have an evaluation box which tokenistically states the 'sex' differences'. In this textbook, gender was positioned as irrelevant to the understanding of the topic because it could not be empirically quantified and was thus unrelated to the pure, 'objective' nature of psychology (as the dominant discourse would have it). From a queer theory standpoint this categorisation is extremely dangerous as it shackles in a way which is pre-determined and therefore unchangeable. Furthermore, this separates and dismisses the role of society in the construction of women, men and morality, rendering an individualistic, essentialistic explanation as the only option for explaining women's failure in development.

Tellingly, Erica Burman's textbook, *Deconstructing Developmental Psychology*, did not have a specific chapter or section on gender but unlike the Eysenck text but rather addressed throughout the whole text how gender is implicated and embedded in all psychological inventions and issues. In the chapter discussing moral development, the core assumption is of gender differences rather than sex differences. Burman's (2007) textbook strongly privileges the work of Gilligan, and quickly separates it from the other models: "Carol Gilligan (1982) points out that both Piaget and Kohlberg derived their norms from studying boys and men" (p. 289). These models are criticised on their methodological shortcomings, but this comment also illustrates how many prominent theories of moral development have been formed from a male perspective.

With respect to Kohlberg's theory of more development, Burman claims that Gilligan:

...argues that it subscribes to a model of morality based on individual rights and freedoms of the kind enshrined in Western legal systems, whereas, she i.e. Gilligan holds, women's moral development

is characterised by a much more contextualised morality concerned with conflicting responsibilities and care – that is, concerned with responsibilities and relationships rather than rights and rules. (p. 289)

This constructs the Western legal system as a male dominated institution from which our conceptualisation of morality is based. This is evident in the text as the Kohlbergian work tends to see justice and morality as one in the same, or at least as the most important component. Gilligan proposes a gender-based approach consisting of two separate moral orientations: the female orientation concerned with issues of care and responsibility; and the male orientation concerned with issues of rights and justice. Both orientations are positioned as equivalents in terms of development.

This powerful rejection of the sexist discourses embedded in the ‘sex differences’ based theories, and the critical awareness of the male dominated institutions such as the legal system, have enabled a groundbreaking re-conceptualisation of the field driven by critical thinkers such as Gilligan and Burman. In trying to move a little further forward, this paper attempts to be critical of the critical. Gender has been used successfully, as a deconstructive tool, but we must also consider how gender can be problematic.

The text does reflect on the potential problems with a gendered morality – “While there are problems with the idealisation of women’s qualities within this account (see Spelman 1990: Elam 1994) the value of the work lies in demonstrating the limited application to and far-reaching devaluation of women structured within the cognitive developmental model” (p. 290). Aside from this reflection, the text generally shows a strong privileging of gendered assumptions and Gilligan’s work. In Burman’s textbook (2007) gender was deployed to challenge ‘sex differences’ in re-conceptualising morality.

Sex differences were explained in terms of gendered moral orientations. This is highly problematic as gender ceases to be explored in terms of a complex process but is reduced to dualistic concept, each gender summed up with a simple set of attributes. The binding of men and women into these categories leads to moral development and gender becoming reflective of one another i.e. certain paths of moral development reflect on your ‘femaleness’ and vice versa. In society we are expected to live within a category of gender or sexuality (Epstein, 1996). The categorisations are highly stereotypical and there is a lack of serious concern about the idealisation of women’s virtues. In Gilligan’s theorising of morality (according to Burman), the categorisations function in the same manner. In moral development for boys and girls there is a distinct line of progression, certain attributes associated with the category and certain aspiration within the category. The categorisations position women as subjects on stereotypical and gender-biased terrain. The Burman analysis thus attempts to include women’s experience conceptualising gender, but instead functions to pigeon-hole. In this respect there was the potential for the dualistic gender category explanation to marginalise, exclude and be itself situated within a stereotypical and oppressive discourse. Tronto (1993) argued that the notion of ‘women’s morality’, which risks excluding many to privilege a few, has not worked in the past.

Our analysis highlights the need for feminist work to move toward a process through which the perspectives and experiences of women are valued whilst recognising and attending to the vast diversity within these contributions.

Conclusion

Texts validate and reinforce their authority over readers. Through privileging dominant discourse by appealing to notions of objective science and valid measurements, both the academic and institutional practises involved are reinforced as well as the authors’

authority on the matters. Both texts use exactly the same mechanisms to de-legitimise and legitimise: through praise or criticism of the methodology used in empirical studies. Whilst this may be nothing new for the mainstream textbook, the Burman text is appealing to the very discipline that it is attempting to deconstruct. Furthermore, it is appealing to a form of objectivity. Whilst many readers of Burman's text will likely be used to reading more mainstream texts, which use these principles and whilst it could be argued that this text is 'using the master's tools' to subvert, this strategy has widely been considered problematic by feminists citing Audre Lorde's (1984/2007) dictum that "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" (p. 110). The analysis showed that when an oppressively constructed category was challenged, two more categories which were potentially as oppressive and biased as the original category and essentially produced the same discourses were presented as alternative by a critically oriented author. Dominant discourses, such as sexist discourses, are held in place in relation to one another in powerful ways, and are implicated and embedded in every social interaction and event. If we deconstruct a particular category, we must be alert to the potential for whatever replaces that category to be just as ideologically problematic.

The reader might ask herself why we have not here also problematised the discursive construction of men. Our aim is to find ways to move towards redressing the imbalance of power relations, not only between the authority of the institution and student learners but between women and men. The construction of the male is important, as constructions of the male and the female are interdependent, for example the same discourse which positions women as deficient as regards sense of justice, positions men as being well endowed with a sense of justice. The reproduction of oppressive constructions of women will not be

addressed without addressing the reproduction of privileged constructions of men. We are therefore in favour of further analysis of the construction of the male, but as a resource for addressing power relations which are oppressive to the female. This analysis could also be useful in providing a critical awareness of the micropolitics of gender relations in terms of how dominant discourses are constructed and reproduced. The privileged, that is, men have an important role to play and a responsibility in problematising these oppressive discourses.

However, we are committed to emancipatory process which tries to redress oppressive power imbalances by surfacing and contesting such oppression and working to promote the interests of the depowered group. In our view women are systematically discriminated against and depowered in neo-liberal societies and therefore the primary purpose of this paper is to conscientize the reader about the ways in which dominant discourses oppress women and privilege men and how they are deployed through the medium of the undergraduate mainstream, malestream, psychology textbook.

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Note

Bróna Nic Giolla Easpaig and David Fryer are relocating to Charles Sturt University, New South Wales, Australia in early 2009.

Address correspondence to

Bróna Nic Giolla Easpaig
bronanicgiollaepaspaig@googlemail.com
 David Fryer
 University of Stirling, Scotland
drdavidfryer@yahoo.co.uk

Book Review

Foucault, Psychology and the Analytics of Power
 Derek Hook
 Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan

Reviewed by
 Damien W. Riggs
 School of Psychology
 University of Adelaide
 South Australia 5005

In this review I focus primarily upon the aspects of this text that pertain to an application of the work of Foucault to psychological practice, and in particular its utility for further developing modes of practice that are amendable to those working in the field of community psychology with its focus on respect for diversity. The book itself also provides extensive attention to applications of Foucault's work to the development of research methodologies for use within the discipline of psychology, and to the study of specific topics such as racism, paedophilia and the construction of gated communities. Some of these topics are addressed in a separate review published elsewhere (Riggs, 2008).

Throughout the early chapters of the book Hook provides a thorough explication of psychology's role in the promotion of disciplinarity, or more precisely subjectivisation: a process differentiated from subjectification (the production of intelligible normative subject positions within any given social context) by its emphasis upon the ways in which particular regimes of truth (such as psychology) encourage people to apply such normative subject positions to themselves. Certainly in regards to my own counselling work this made me think of the ways in which contemporary practice discourse surrounding 'patient rights' and 'confidentiality' may actually serve to perpetuate disciplinarity and subjectivisation through positioning those who seek psychological intervention as inhabiting particular subject positions that come with a range of attendant expectations that must be enacted or claimed by the individual.

Furthermore, it made me reflect upon how this increased (or at least differentially enacted) emphasis upon the subjectivisation of clients serves to shift attention away from those who *provide* services and their investments in the process of disciplinarity. These musings, directly derived from my reading of Hook's text, are closely related to community psychology's aim to move away from an emphasis in practice upon inadequacy or failure (an approach largely made possible through the aforementioned modes of practice that render clients the primary focus of intervention), and toward a focus on strengths and the location of individuals within social contexts that variously promote or negate individual wellbeing.

Hook's writing also consistently deconstructs the temporal flow of psychological knowledge claims, whereby rather than seeing supposedly empirical 'facts' about individuals (such as those produced through psychological testing) as leading to psychological knowledge, psychological knowledge is instead seen as leading to the construction of particular individuals. In other words, Hook outlines Foucault's directive for the ongoing interrogation of how psychological constructs serve to produce particular intelligible subject positions that are typically framed in the negative sense as a fundamental failure or inability to approximate certain social norms deemed as 'healthy'. In this regard, and whilst Hook spends considerable time elaborating Foucault's emphasis upon the fact

that networks of social power are not enacted by any singular sovereign subject, he also outlines how particular social contexts are constitutive of agents who are variously invested with power on the basis of social markers deemed more or less intelligible and thus more or less worthy. In this sense, Hook usefully emphasises a relational understanding of power, whereby not only are individuals positioned in a relationship to social norms variously enacted upon bodies through institutions such as psychology that privilege particular modes of being over others, but where the relationality of power makes possible resistances to hegemonic ways of being. Such an account of power is vitally important for a community psychology seeking not only to challenge the imposition of normative social forces onto the bodies of marginalised individuals, but also to recognise the incompleteness of normative power relations: they forever fail to truly encompass or exclude all modes of being, thus suggesting that social change is indeed possible.

In addition to examining the broad ways in which psychology as it is typically practiced is complicit with modes of disciplinarity in relation to the regulation of bodies and wellbeing, Hook also examines the spatial and micro-interactional instances where psychology functions to perpetuate particular modes of being. For example, and in relation to psychology's role in engendering 'confessional' modes of being, Hook outlines how the specific spaces produced within practice settings engender modes of relating that maintain the client-practitioner binary. Hook also examines how claims to 'non-judgmental' and 'non-moralising' practice may actually serve to further the project of disciplinary surveillance by eliciting 'confessions' from clients. Empirical research conducted by Hook and his colleagues would suggest that whilst these types of approaches may often be seen as ethical modes of engagement, they may nonetheless function to encourage subjectivisation on the part of

clients. Rethinking the ethics of psychological practice, as has long been the task of community psychology, must therefore involve constant examination of how practitioners represent themselves to clients as individuals themselves invested in particular outcomes and modes of being.

Finally, Hook outlines an application of Foucault's work on genealogy as a research method that I would suggest has important implications for practice. Hook suggests that rather than examining (or indeed constructing) linear trajectories or finite histories, genealogical work is about exploring the spectrum of discontinuities, shifts, and marginalised knowledges that produce a context for events. In regard to practice, this could involve looking at how a range of 'similar enough' events cohere to produce mental health outcomes that, if disaggregated, could produce quite a different picture for the client. Rather than being about identifying antecedents or causes, such an approach would instead be about locating a range of events that make possible a particular intelligible subject position, and how the role of clients in activating this subject position through subjectivisation may be renarrated and thus shifted.

Overall, and whilst the main focus of Hook's text may not be practice, it nonetheless provides a clear series of injunctions for applying Foucault's extensive (and historically shifting) body of work to understanding both psychology as a discipline, and the specific practices of psychology that may serve to contribute to marginalisation or which may ignore the diversity of experiences held by clients. By recognising these limitations and drawing upon the alternate histories rendered evident through genealogical work, it may be possible to continue the project of community psychology to develop modes of engagement that are not only strength focused, but which are able to skilfully

negotiate the multiple and often conflicting demands placed upon us all to function as intelligible subjects within a range of social contexts that typically promote certain subject positions as more 'healthy', acceptable, or deserving of sanction than others.

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Book Review

International community psychology: history and theories
 S. M. Reich, M. Riemer, I. Prilleltensky & M. Montero (Eds.).
 New York: Springer. 2007
 443 pp.

Reviewed by
 Brian Bishop
 School of Psychology
 Curtin University of Technology
b.bishop@curtin.edu.au

International community psychology: An essay review

This edited volume is the result of discussions at the last but one biennial SCRA conference in New Mexico. It consists of 22 chapters written by authors from Latin America, Europe and the Middle East, Asia-Pacific, Africa and North America with an introduction and summary/analysis written by the editors. Each chapter is a description of the origins of community psychology (CP) in a country or region, its theoretical development, some of the practices and future directions. The diversity in all of these aspects reflects a sense of vigour and concern for social justice.

I will not try to elaborate all of the chapters, but in general terms it is very refreshing to see that there is little of the US-centric rhetoric that dominates much of the CP literature. It is very pleasing, for example, that the US chapter is written from a refreshing feminist perspective and not by some tired old male academic. This puts much of the work in perspective. While the Swampscott conference is cited by many textbooks as the origin of CP, we find that in many countries what became to be recognised as CP actually arose in response to local social issues and oppression. CP theory was a retro fit in many cases and the local concerns drove the nature of the expression of CP. There are a few notable exceptions, these being the USA (naturally) and Australia (with our cultural cringe reflecting in the development of CP here).

The book is dedicated to all the community psychologists around the world who struggle to promote well-being and liberation from oppression. While this is a common theme, the issues differ from chapter to chapter, as does the notion and structure of community. For example in Cameroon (Nsamenang, Fru & Browne) the notion of community has developed is from village type communities characterised by collective mutual assistance, through colonial impositions of European notions of community as a civilising contribution to "backward" Africa, to a service related outreach concept, and finally to human services psychology developing as an academic discipline for community-based practitioners. The authors point out that there is some conflict between the African-centric approach to serving social needs through indigenous communitarianism and what they label as the Ivory Tower approach of academic CP. The academic CP, as framed by the Swampscott conference, is interventionist and they argue that fails to recognise the existing communitarian activities, and thus reflects a latent colonial attitude. They present an important dialogue essential to understanding participation as integration of indigenous social systems and CP theory and practice.

In many regions community based activities preceded the development of US CP. These activities focused on resisting or

reacting to a legacy of colonialism and/or indigenous power inequalities. CP has become a convenient label that allows conversation between different researchers and professionals across the world. This conversation has at least two important functions. One is to empower researchers and practitioners through a collective identity. The second is that cultural and historical differences allow the discipline opportunities to reflect and thus continue to develop theory through critical thought.

Montero and Díaz discuss social-CP in Latin America and point out that much of the development started in the 1970s. They acknowledge the importance of Marxism. Although only briefly acknowledged, is the impact of Vatican II and liberation theology. Kurt Lewin's influence is also significant. Montero and Diaz put together a very important summary of the developments of CP identifying such antecedents such as the social sciences approach to communities and the militant and engaged critical research in sociology and adult education in the period 1955 to 1974. Following that were the creation of participatory methods and in 1977 the term participatory action research was coined to denote a participatory style of research that had been undertaken since the 1950s. In the early 1980s liberation theology informed most of Latin American CP. Then in the mid-80s there was discussion on the practice of community strengthening and empowerment. In the late 80s through to the mid-90s there was a deconstruction and analysis of the notions of power. This led to a greater emphasis on understanding the epistemological and ontological bases of CP and critical theory in general. Also important in the 90s was the emergence of consideration of emotion. The authors of this chapter make the important point that the emergent CPs reflect local history, thinking and issues (and a general philosophy that is a mixture of local indigenous understandings, European culture, and a radicalised and socialist Catholic religion, Smart, 1999). Montero and Díaz go

further to suggest that the differences between CPs across the globe offer opportunities for insights based on the contrasts of social and historical contexts and the nature of the development of the discipline.

The chapter on CP in New Zealand by Robertson and Masters-Awatere is significant given the close ties between New Zealand and Australian CP. The differences in origins and practices are important for CPs both sides of the 'ditch'. CP in New Zealand had its origins at least 15 years before Swampscott. The importance of the treatment of Maori cannot be under emphasised. The development of CP has been informed by the social movements of Maori from the Treaty of Waitangi through to the re-emergence of Maori culture. The authors acknowledge that while the term CP was imported directly from the United States, the theoretical roots of the field are its own and were more related to social conditions in New Zealand.

This book represents a rich source of information about CP as practised across the world. While the editors point out that fundamental notions such as community do not necessarily exist in all cultures, what is loosely described as CP in various places has significantly communality to make a collection like this useful. In trying to summarise the similarities and differences across the world they had knowledge that it is a difficult process but they do quote the British authors (Burton, Boyle, Harris & Kagan) who see CP as "a framework for working with those marginalised by social systems that leads to self-aware change with an emphasis on value-based, participatory work and forging alliances." They reflect Dalton, Elias and Wandersman's (2001) comments that CP "concerns the relationships of individual to communities and societies. Through collaborative research and action, community psychologists seek to understand and enhance the quality of life for individuals, community, and society". What

is clear from their summary is that differentials in, and (mis)use of power, has led to the rise of CP in very many places. CP often grew out of NGOs and other community based work, either indigenous or as service provision. There is a general recognition that the struggle against oppressive forces is a central defining feature of CP. While there is still considerable diversity across the world in terms of what CP is, how it is defined, its history and practices what is notable about this book is that the editors have been able to find 22 sets of authors who are able to engage in conversation about the nature of their work and the work of colleagues in terms that is understandable to all those people who label themselves community psychologists

The editors noted that CP arose out of a critical reflection, mainly through social psychology, of what anthropologist and sociologists had been doing for some time. This observation seems to be true for many of the regions reported. It does raise the critical issue though and that the place of theory in CP. Sarason (1982) made the comment that he felt that American psychology had been poorly served by an obsession with the theory. At some levels this is reflected in this book. The editors emphasise the fact that this book represents a conversation between researchers and practitioners from various parts of the world. It is somewhat unfortunate that the language of that conversation is dominated by the US lexicon, as the editors discuss in the concluding chapter. Many of the chapters reflect the development of what might be better called psychology (or social psychology) in the community, where the role is in keeping with Reiff's (1968) concept of the participant conceptualiser; someone working in the community, with the community, but retaining a reflective stance. There is a paradox that the theoretical developments of notions of empowerment and participation, for example, have been dominated by US academics. In seeking to provide a language for mobilising and working with indigenous community

structures, the rest of the world has borrowed a language of US CP. For example, the US notion of empowerment, although framed in concepts like participation, capacity building and engagement reflects the desire to work *with* communities, the language still has the nuance of professional intervention.

While there are references to critical theory in the development of CP, the need for critical stance this is only argued for more overtly in a few chapters, such as from the US, Germany, Italy and in the editors summary, for example. The US chapter (Angelique & Culley) is interesting in that it is presented from a feminist perspective and has the ring of critical theory embedded in it. The importance of maintaining a critical perspective is not elaborated as this frequently as it should. CP arose out of critical thought and needs to maintain that perspective, as David Fryer frequently reminds us. It is also emphasises the importance of understanding, and being critical, of our values and worldviews. Just as these psychological phenomena are useful in deconstructing the nature of social issues they should also be tools for understanding our role in society.

A glaring example of the opportunities a collection of essays like the ones presented here is a critical deconstruction of the notion of community. The issue of what constitutes community is addressed by a number of chapter authors and is reiterated in the summary. Implicit in much of the writing is that the received wisdom about community is based on European and North American notions. Even in Turkey, Degirmencioglu points out that the concept of community has been tainted historically by the rapid secularisation imposed after the fall of the Ottoman Empire and community was associated with banned religious communities. Even here the issue of the term is seen as important. In many cases the concept of community arose as a juxtaposition to dictatorship or oppression, as

in Latin America (Montero & Díaz; Saforcada et al.), Spain (Martin & López) and South Africa (Bhana, Petersen & Rochat), for example. In Greece CP is thought of as 'going into the community', as a process (Triliva & Marvakis). In Norway, community is the dumping ground for de-institutionalisation (Carlquist, Nafstad & Blakar). Francescato, Arcidiacono, Albanesi and Mannarini do embark on a definition of community and provide a voice of where one useful debate can occur. It is unfortunate that North American notions of community dominate usage as it does not serve critical debate well. As a discipline we need to address our assumptions about community. It appears to be largely an all embracing term which is not well understood. It appears to be a word that is well understood at a preconscious level, yet is not well articulated in theory. Cultural insights from the 22 regions could provide a valuable way to deconstruct the notion of community as Dudgeon, Mallard, Oxenham and Fielder (2002) indicated. A good place to begin this potential research program would be for a careful analysis of how the term is used throughout this book.

It would be unfair and inappropriate to judgmental of the editors for not addressing such issues as the aim was to explore the diversity of the discipline across the globe. The structure and space limit what can be achieved. Rather this book provides insights into the varieties of approaches that have become known as CP. It is a robust book and is in terms of what it sets out to do, it does it well.

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Title Page should contain:

Title: Should be short and informative.

Recommended length is between 10 and 12 words.

Running Head: Short title with a maximum of 50 characters

Author: This should include the author's name in the preferred form of given name, family name.

Institution and Affiliations: This identifies the location where the author(s) undertook the investigation.

Corresponding Author: Provide the name, exact postal address with post code, telephone number, fax number and email address of the author to whom communications and requests for reprints should be sent.

Specific Formatting Requirements

Paper Size, Margins, Alignment

A4 page, ALL margins 2.5cm.

Spacing

All text double spacing, left aligned (not justified) unless otherwise specified.

Font & Size

Times New Roman, 12pt unless otherwise specified.

Paper Title

14pt, bold, centred, sentence case.

Place one line after the paper title.

Abstract and Keywords

12pt, italics, left aligned.

Place one blank line before and after the abstract.

The abstract must be no more than 200 words.

Place up to 6 (six) keywords.

Normal Text

12pt, Times New Roman double line-spacing, left aligned (not justified)

Do not leave line spaces between paragraphs but indent the first line of each paragraph.

Long Quotes (roughly, quotes of 30 words or more)

12pt, italics, indented 1 cm left and right

1st Level Heading

Sentence case, bold, centred, not italics.

1st Level of Subheading

12pt, italics, sentence case, left aligned.

Leave one line space before this level of subheading.

Do not number subheadings.

2nd Level of Subheading

12pt, italics, sentence case, left aligned. Text should continue on the same line.

Leave one line space before this level of subheading.

Tables, Figures, and Diagrams

Captions in 12pt and typed below the figure, as required by Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association Fifth Edition. These should be black and white and inserted in the correct place within the body of the text. Do not allow a figure or table to be split over two pages or to be separated from its label or caption.

Diagrams, illustrations, graphs, etc, must be 'screen readable'. This means fully legible and readable on screen when displayed at widths that ideally do not exceed about 750 pixels and certainly should not exceed 1000 pixels.

Page Numbers

Insert page numbers at the top of the page, right aligned, beginning with the title page.

Footnotes

Avoid using footnotes.

References and Citations

Use the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association Fifth Edition citation and reference style. List references under the 1st level subheading,

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