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General Information

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Editorial

Special Issue Showcasing Student Research

Amiee-Jade Pember
Advanced Personnel Management

Welcome to the first issue of the *Australian Community Psychologist* for 2009. This issue is a Special Issue Showcasing Student Research, and the purpose of the issue was to provide students with an opportunity to engage in all aspects of the publication process.

I was selected as Guest Editor working alongside Lauren Breen (Editor), who assisted me in developing the skills necessary for overseeing the production of a journal issue, and also developing an understanding of the editorial process. This was quite a commitment, as I graduated from my Master of Psychology (Community) and commenced full-time employment whilst undertaking the Guest Editor role. However, I am pleased to have been given the opportunity, as I learnt so much about the publication process.

I remember publishing my Honours research (Pereira & Pooley, 2007) and feeling frustrated by the time it took from submission to seeing the manuscript in print. I remember wondering why it took so long. Now I know! Those involved in the publication process do so in their own time, often after business hours and on weekends when they are not at their 'day jobs'! Furthermore, Editors not only have to seek submissions, but also reviewers. Editors are responsible for remembering when submissions, reviews, revised submissions and final manuscripts are due, and remind authors and reviewers of these deadlines. And there's the proofing process – typos, spell-checking, grammar, formatting, and identifying missing references or page numbers for references. This is a time consuming process! So aside from refining my communication skills, organisation skills, writing skills, and editing skills, I have now developed a greater

understanding of the work involved in the production of a journal. More importantly, I now have a greater appreciation for the efforts of those who make journals, and other publications, possible. I am glad to have undertaken the Guest Editor role prior to publishing my Masters research. I will definitely take much more time to prepare my manuscript in order to minimise the work of those on the other side of the publication. Hopefully this will make for a smoother editorial process.

Approximately 20 students from around Australia and overseas actively engaged in the production of this issue, either as Guest Editor, authors, or reviewers. Student authors were responsible for submitting their manuscripts, liaising with myself and Lauren, considering the feedback that they received from reviewers, and deciding how to respond to this feedback. Student reviewers actively sought advice on the review process and feedback on their responses to the manuscripts, providing them with an opportunity to develop their critical thinking skills and skills in communicating their feedback constructively to colleagues. In addition to the students who contributed to the production of this issue, I would also like to acknowledge the efforts of the experienced mentors and supervisors who encouraged students to submit papers and those who participated in the manuscript review process. It is through your recognition of the abilities of the future community psychologists that this Special Issue has come about.

Some people may assume that a journal issue written, reviewed, and edited by students would not be at the same standard of an issue produced by more experience authors, reviewers and editors. I would like to emphasise that throughout the production of the issue, we focused on maintaining the standard quality of the *Australian Community*

Psychologist. With this in mind, all reviewers (students and experienced reviewers) were reminded to review the manuscripts in the same way they would for any other issue of the journal. Student authors therefore experienced a critical review process as they would have if they had submitted to any other issue of the journal.

This Special Issue consists of two sections; Research Papers and Articles. The Research Papers section includes research conducted at fourth year and postgraduate levels in the areas of cultural issues, diversity, resilience and empowerment. Amy Quayle and Christopher Sonn utilise Foucauldian discourse analysis to explore the construction of Muslims as 'Other' in the print media following the Cronulla riots in Sydney, Australia. They demonstrate the importance of considering discourse as a medium through which racism occurs in everyday lives. Lütfiye Ali and Christopher Sonn explore the experiences of second generation Cypriot Turkish people living in Australia using Critical Whiteness studies. They consider how Anglo Saxon dominance and privilege affects the construction of identity for Cypriot Turkish people. Jay Marlowe also considers cultural issues, but with a focus on his personal experience working with Sudanese men resettling in Australia. Marlowe emphasises the need to provide the men with the opportunity to discuss their experiences in a respectful and empowering manner, in order to assist them in the process of liberation whilst resettling. Brent Munro and Julie Ann Pooley explore the relationship between resilience and university adjustment and focus on the differences in resilience and university adjustment between school leavers and mature entry university students. Interestingly, although they found a relationship between resilience and university adjustment, Munro and Pooley found no difference in the adjustment of the two cohorts, and no difference in their levels of resilience. Finally, Daniel King considers excessive video game

playing amongst adolescents and adults, and identifies empowerment, recognition, control, and completion as themes relevant to understanding such behaviour.

The Articles section of the Special Issue includes four papers in which students reflect on issues in practice. Chris Kirk provides an analysis of community psychology through his eyes as a novice community psychologist. Kirk's paper encourages us to reflect not only on where community psychology has come from, but also where it is heading, in the current global context. David Mander and Lisa Fieldhouse reflect on their experience of developing an education support programme for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary school students in Western Australia. They discuss practice issues around working cross-culturally, and within the various systems that impact upon the students' lives. In his paper on the SPECS model, Tim MacKellar examines the interface between health and community psychologies. He considers the relevance of the SPECS model throughout psychology, and argues that it provides a more holistic framework for understanding health and wellbeing. Finally the Special Issue ends with a critical examination of the inclusion of 'culture' in community psychology. David Jackson and Richard Kim argue that substance abuse and mental health need to be understood within the cultural context of a community, using the Federated States of Micronesia as an example.

I am sure you will agree that the papers in this issue serve to remind us of the need for continual reflection on the theory and practice of community psychology, and of considering the perspectives of those new to the field, which often provide a fresh view of issues that our communities, and community psychology as a field, are facing. On that note, I hope you enjoy reading the fantastic work that the students from around Australia and internationally are undertaking as they develop professionally. And students, thanks again for working with myself and Lauren in the development of our Special Issue Showcasing Student Research!

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Reference

Pereira, A., & Pooley, J. (2007). A qualitative exploration of the transition experience of students from a high school to a senior high school in rural Western Australia. *Australian Journal of Education*, 51, 162-177.

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The Construction of Muslims as “Other” in Mainstream Australia’s Print Media: An Analysis of Discourse

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The Cronulla riots signalled the existence of a banal everyday form of racism operating in Australia that works to construct Muslims as ‘other’. In this article, racism is explored as ideology, (re)produced through, and reflected in social practices and processes, such as language and communication. Media representations are considered, a site where dominant social narratives manifest and where racism happens. Using Foucauldian discourse analysis, several strategies employed to construct ‘in- groups’ and ‘out-groups’, following the riots, were revealed in newspaper discourse, and dominant understandings of Muslims, multiculturalism and racism became apparent. Discourses identified that problematise Muslims, included the construction of the ‘inassimilable, misogynist and criminal other’. Discourses that effectively legitimate deny and justify this othering, thereby maintain Australia and Australians self image as a fair, just and tolerant society, included the construction of ‘the good nation; Howard’s diverse country’. Findings reflect the importance of understanding everyday forms of racism, operating in and through social narratives, which function to construct particular groups in particular ways. This research offers important lessons on the importance of examining taken for granted ‘text and talk’, as a site of racism.

It has been suggested that Australian Muslims are living in an environment where the significance of their ascribed religion is “being reshaped through media discourses, public policy and, at a conceptual level, the newfound salience of the apparent incompatibility of Islam and modern secular political forms of society” (Celermajer, 2007, p. 3). The Cronulla riots of December 2005 were a frightening example of the hostility held towards Muslims, Middle Easterners, and Arabs in Australia, which some have labelled “Islamophobia”, an overt form of racism (Dunn, 2004; Gale, 2006; Poynting & Mason, 2006; Poynting & Mason, 2007). This hostility highlights much more than the existence of bigoted, uneducated or ignorant individuals within the Australian community, as traditional psychological accounts of racism have typically conceived. Rather, these hostilities can be viewed as an indication of banal everyday racism, constructed discursively through the social practices and processes of everyday life. If viewed in this way, everyone is implicated in racism and we therefore need

to examine how racism is produced and maintained through powerful institutions such as the media, in coming to an understanding of racism.

If racism is viewed as ideology, maintained through everyday social practices, language and communication, ‘talk and text’, become the focus of research rather than individual ‘attitudes’. Foucault (1972) wrote, “As a pre-eminent manifestation of socially constitutive ideology, language becomes the primary instrument through which ideology is transmitted, enacted and reproduced” (p. 56). Therefore, through analysis of linguistic structures and discourse strategies, with consideration of their interactional and wider social contexts, it is possible to reveal the ideologies and retrieve the social meanings expressed in and through discourse (Teo, 2000). Indeed, it is through discourse that justifications in defence of processes of racial domination, marginalisation and exclusion are formulated and transmitted (Ratele & Duncan, 2003).

Therefore mediated communication, such as print media, can be viewed as a site of

racism. Analysis of media discourses would thus be an appropriate strategy for understanding racism. Indeed critical and community psychologists have proposed that critical engagements with the media are important in order to achieve social change (Prilleltensky & Prilleltensky, 2003). Accordingly this research investigated ways in which Muslims are socially constructed as 'other' against a particular 'insider' in the Australian community. Discourses pervading mainstream Australia's print media following the Cronulla riots were examined for the presence of a subtle form of racism operating to exclude this particular community, whilst simultaneously affirming Australia's image as an egalitarian, fair and just society. Discursive approaches to psychology, which inform this study, will be explored as a means of conceptualising racism as ideology.

Discursive psychology: 'The turn to language'

The development of discursive psychology, made possible through the 'turn to language' of the 1970s and the emergence of social constructionism, has been indispensable in coming to terms with racism (Burr, 1995; Hosking & Morley, 2004; Willig, 2001a, 2001b). The development of a social constructionist epistemology entailed increasing interest in the ways in which language, or more specifically discourse, constrains, determines and influences our knowledge of the world (Burr, 1995; Willig, 2001a, 2001b). The role of language in creating and reproducing meaning in everyday social interaction became the focus of research with the assumption being that "psychological processes occur not in the heads of self contained individuals, but between or among multiple, differentially positioned speaking subjects" (Foster, 1999, p. 341).

Consequently, discursive psychology involved a major shift from the traditional view of language as a tool for description and as a medium for communication, to a view of language as social practice, as a way of doing things. People use language to justify, explain,

blame, excuse, persuade, and present themselves in the best possible light (LeCouteur & Augoustinos, 2001). The major assumption of discursive psychology then, is that the phenomena of interest in social and psychological research are constituted in and through discourse (Potter & Wetherell, 2004). Consequently, racism is viewed as located within the formal and informal language practices and discourses of society, it is through these that relations of power, dominance and exploitation become reproduced and legitimated (Augoustinos, Tuffin & Every, 2005).

In many western countries, there is a mounting body of discursive research on majority group members' text and talk regarding issues concerning race and racism, multiculturalism, nationalism and immigration (Augoustinos & Reynolds, 2001; Augoustinos et al., 2005; LeCouteur & Augoustinos, 2001). Conducted across a range of sites, including the media, parliament and everyday talk, this research has shown a commonality in the discursive resources of the contemporary language of racism across western liberal democracies (Augoustinos et al., 2005; Augoustinos & Every, 2007). The research suggests there has been a discursive shift in the way inequality and oppression, are justified (Augoustinos et al., 2005; Augoustinos & Every, 2007). New racism refers to this discursive shift, which is strategically organised to deny prejudice and racism, in a society where explicit racism has become taboo (Foster, 1999; Leach, 2005). By redrawing the boundaries of what may legitimately be defined as 'racist' the category of racism can be used to position a person or group as 'not racist' by placing their own behaviour and views outside of these boundaries. The notion of new racism highlights the importance of seeing racism as discursive, as constantly being reconstructed, and renegotiated through text and talk.

The notion of new racism

The notion of new racism is based upon the argument that "racism now manifests in more muted or veiled terms, in contrast to the

old fashioned, blatant or red-necked forms which were shaped in constructs of hierarchy and claims of superiority of one 'race' over another" (Foster, 1999, p. 332). Emphasis instead shifts to cultural aspects of human behaviour such as language, beliefs, religions and customs, or 'ways of life' (Barker, 2002; Lentin, 2005). According to Hopkins, Reichter and Levine (1997), new racism is entrenched in arguments suggesting the existence of a natural affinity towards members of the same race, as well as a natural tendency towards avoidance or antagonism between members of different races. Furthermore new racism is said to involve assertions that power relations and structural inequalities are not requirements for analysis and understanding of racism (Reichter, 2001), which has the effect of "naturalising inequality and blaming the victim" (van Dijk, 2002, p. 34). Therefore, the people who practice this new racism believe in and uphold the basic values of democratic egalitarianism and would thus emphatically deny that they are 'racist', while articulating views that are exclusionary and oppressive in their effects (Augoustinos & Every, 2007).

While the notion of new racism is a valuable concept in understanding the masked language of racism in contemporary Australian society, everyday racism calls attention to the embeddedness of, and inescapability from, racism in our society. Effectively this means that the ideology of racism becomes part of who we are, and how we operate in the world at large, whether we are aware of it or not. The inclusion of everyday racism in the conceptual framework of this study reflects a commitment to tackle racism as more than just an individual level problem, but rather, as something in which we are all implicated in some way or another.

The notion of everyday racism

The concept of everyday racism opposes the view that racism is an individual problem, asserting that it is not simply a question of "to be or not to be a racist" (Essed, 1991, p. 3). Instead it is argued that racism needs to be

acknowledged as an everyday problem, thereby alluding to the normalcy of racism (Essed, 2002). Along similar lines, Harvey (1999) characterised the everyday processes of oppression in normal life as "civilized oppression". Essed (1991) argues that racism is more than structure and ideology. As a process it is routinely created and reinforced through everyday practices. Everyday racism connects structural forces with routine situations in everyday life. Thus new racism and everyday racism, serve ideologically to (re)produce a process of racialisation, and justify and defend existing racialised inequalities and exclusions, or structural relations of oppression, albeit in more subtle ways (Foster, 1999).

The media as a site of racism

These theoretical understandings of racism imply that, in contemporary Australian society, the media, as a form of social practice, should be recognised as an institution capable of obfuscating, legitimating and naturalising the ideology of racism, and hence perpetuating the oppression of minorities. Indeed news media, particularly newspapers, have played a crucial role in the emergence of the new language of 'race' and nation (Gale, 2006). The media can convey and broadcast pervasive and negative narratives, images and ideas about racial and ethnic minorities that can have a significant effect on the collective beliefs of mainstream Australia (Anti-Discrimination Board of New South Wales [ADBNSW], 2003). Thus, while drawing on traditions of objectivity of fact, news media have the power to marginalise and construct racial or ethnic minority communities as 'other' (ADBNSW, 2003; Campbell, 1995). The assumption that there is the possibility of neutral media refutes the fact that media commentators do not live in a social vacuum; the ideology of racism is deeply embedded in society, therefore members internalise aspects of the ideology and the self-perpetuating cycle continues (Campbell, 1995; Ratele & Duncan., 2003).

Events are often explained in racial terms. This labelling has the effect of

legitimizing prejudice and discrimination against particular minority groups (ADBNSW, 2003; Duncan, 2007; Poynting & Morgan, 2007; Poynting, Noble, Tabar & Collins, 2004) often resulting in what Poynting et al. (2004) describe as moral panics about 'ethnic others'. The overwhelming force of racialisation of media and public discourse makes resistance to common sense explanations difficult. Racist ideologies become naturalised within society and begin to be seen as simple 'common sense' (ADBNSW, 2003; Fulton, 2005). Van Dijk (1992) identified several patterns in media discourses, which allow for the perpetuation of racism. These include negative representation of the 'other', denial, mitigation, reversal, and naturalising inequality and blaming the victim. These patterns parallel the functioning of both new racism (Hopkins et al., 1997) and everyday racism (Essed, 2002).

Vilification of Muslims in the Australian context

Since September 11 2001, Muslim minorities have experienced intensive othering in western countries, particularly those associated with the US led 'war on terror' involving the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq (Dunn, 2004; Gale, 2006; Kuhn, 2006; Noble, 2005; Poynting & Mason, 2006; Poynting & Mason, 2007). An abundance of research attests to the fact that the many diverse Muslim communities of Australia have become the focus of intense negativity regarding a supposed link to terrorism (e.g., Aly, 2007; Dunn, 2004; Gale, 2006; Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission [HREOC], 2004; Kuhn, 2006; Noble, 2005; Saniotis, 2004; Sivanandan, 2006). HREOC (2004) launched a study in March 2003, following September 11 attacks and the Bali bombings of 2002, exploring Muslim and Arab Australians perceptions of racial vilification. Responses by Muslim Australians suggested that there had been an intensification of existing, ongoing and everyday forms and patterns of vilification, which had continued since the 1990s and before (Poynting & Mason, 2006).

Responses suggested that incidence of discrimination and vilification peaked and waned, corresponding with various local regional, national and international crises including, the Bali bombings in October 2002 and the war in Iraq in 2003, but authors emphasised that it was always present (HREOC, 2004).

The main themes implicit in the vilification experienced by Muslim Australians were identified in the HREOC (2004) research. They were that Australian Arabs and Muslims are seen to share responsibility for terrorism or are potential terrorists, that there is no place in Australia for Arabs or Muslims, and finally there was an underlying expectation that new migrants to Australia should assimilate and discard their foreign dress codes, languages and cultural practices (HREOC, 2004; Poynting & Mason, 2006). Importantly, responses emphasised not only the significance of blatant acts of hostility, but also more normal everyday forms of discrimination, such as unwarranted police attention and suspicion, unfriendliness as well as biased media representation.

Noble (2005) argues that forms of social incivility, like the harsher experiences of vilification, amount to the affective regulation of social belonging and participation. Social incivility for Noble refers to everyday behaviours of others that are felt to be rude or insulting, even as their significance is dismissed. Corresponding with Essed's (1991) notion of everyday racism this might include "name calling, jokes in bad taste, bad manners, provocative and offensive gestures or even just a sense of social distance or unfriendliness or an excessive focus on someone's ethnicity" (Noble, 2005, p. 110).

The affective regulation of difference amounts to an active process of othering and exclusion, and this exclusion does not simply involve economic and political deprivation, but entails social and cultural dimensions, such as notions of agency and power (Noble, 2005). Our ability to be comfortable in public settings rests on our ability to be acknowledged as

rightfully existing there, that is, to be recognised as belonging (Noble). Significantly, he points out the opposite of recognition is not invisibility but the “active, affective regulation of the inappropriate existence of others, a constant reminder of inadequate existence” (Noble, 2005, p. 114).

While the current study does not endeavour to understand the psychological effects of these everyday instances of racism and exclusion for the minority community, it can suggest what the creation of the categories, ‘us’ and ‘them’, accomplishes in the larger scheme of things. Moral exclusion is described as “the process whereby individuals or groups are perceived to be outside the boundary in which moral values, rules, and considerations of fairness apply” (Opatow, 1990, p. 5). If particular communities are seen as outside ones moral community, or ones ‘scope of justice’, they are viewed as psychologically distant and as non-entities undeserving of fairness or resources (Opatow, 2001). Therefore, unfair, unjust and inhumane treatment and/or conditions continue to occur with impunity. Arguably then, the construction of Muslims as ‘other’, preceding and during the Cronulla riots, works to justify/excuse the racism and hostility that was blatantly evident throughout the riots. It also helps to understand how the social incivilities and vilification experiences, reported in much of the literature, can occur with impunity, in an egalitarian nation whose citizens are supposedly “relaxed and comfortable” (Noble, 2005, p. 107).

The Cronulla Riots

The Cronulla riots occurred in December 2005. The riots began as a beachfront brawl involving a handful of young men in Sydney and developed into a “violent racist mob attack of thousands of angry white Australians on anyone they suspected of being of ‘Middle Eastern appearance’” (Poynting & Morgan, 2007, p. 158). These riots highlighted extreme hostility existing towards the Lebanese Muslim community within Australian society. The vilification of peoples with Lebanese ancestry,

or people of ‘Middle Eastern appearance’, during these riots came to be conflated with the vilification of Muslims in general, as reflected by prominent slurs such as “Go nulla, fuck Allah” during the riots, subsequent media reportage of events, and the perception and causes of events as demonstrated by letters to the editor, and in editorials. Analysis of newspaper discourse following the Cronulla riots was chosen to explore the functioning of racism in the media, because this event ignited public debate about Muslims and Islam and more generally about multiculturalism and racism within Australia.

Methodology

Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

Foucauldian discourse analysis (FDA), seeks to expose and ultimately resist social inequality by taking a “critical, progressive and political stance to the truth claims made by discourses, which help maintain oppressive power relations, and to increase the voice of marginalised discourses” (Burr, 1995, p. 119). From a critical post structuralist perspective, “discourses facilitate and limit, enable and constrain what can be said, by whom, when and where” (Parker, 2002, p. 245).

Within this framework discourse may be defined as a set of statements that construct objects and a variety of subject positions. Thus, there is a concern with what discursive resources people draw on, how these resources come to be culturally available and the effects they have in terms of the kinds of objects, subjects, and positions, which they make available (Willig, 2001a). This construction of objects and subject positions through discourse, ultimately make available certain ways of seeing and certain ways of being in the world (Willig, 2001a, 2001b).

Parker (1992) and Burr (1995) describe the goal of discourse analysis from a Foucauldian perspective as being “deconstruction”. Deconstruction refers to attempts to take apart texts and see how they are constructed in such a way as to present particular images of people and their actions

(Burr, 1995). Foucauldian discourse analysts do not seek to understand the “true nature” (Willig, 2001a, p. 120) of psychological phenomena. Instead they seek to understand the social and historical conditions, which support certain discourses at particular times and therefore try to map the discursive worlds people inhabit and to trace possible ways of being afforded by them (Willig, 2001a). Given their emphasis on the constructed nature of language, discourse analysts see the researcher as an active ‘author’ of interpretations and thus no analysis is presented as the only ‘true’ reading, rather it is presented as one possible reading or version of the world (Willig, 2001a). The identification of discourses is largely an intuitive and interpretive process (Burr, 1995; Parker, 2002; Willig, 2001a).

Data sources

Media representations of the Cronulla riots and associated issues were explored as a specific site, within a societal dialogue, where understandings of Muslims, racism and immigration in Australia, are not only reflected but also (re)produced. Newspaper content was viewed as social practice, reflecting wider social narratives about Muslims, racism, and immigration in the Australian context, effectively making available certain ways of seeing, and certain ways of being in the world. This approach is considered appropriate because the stories presented by the media do not occur in a social vacuum, instead they “emerge within a larger universe of beliefs, values, and worldviews” (Hodgetts, Masters & Robertson, 2004, p. 460). Media framing and analysis of the event draws upon ready-made social narratives about Muslims, racism and immigration operating in Australia. Analysis that explores such shared symbolic resources enables us to begin to understand how Muslim’s are positioned in the Australian context, how this positioning is achieved, as well as how it is justified (Hodgetts et al., 2004).

Newspapers printed following the

Cronulla riots were analysed. The ‘Australian’, a national daily broadsheet newspaper, was chosen because of its national appeal. Newspapers were analysed from the 12th of December 2005 to the 29th of December 2005. Analysis also involved focus on letters to the editor, which serve as forums for opinion, dialogue and debate. The inclusion of prejudice and everyday racism in such letters therefore stands as an indication of the extent to which racist views have become part of what is seen as normal by the dominant group and an indication of a newspaper’s differential perceptions of the ideological boundaries of legitimate and fair comment (Essed, 1991, 2002). Article and editorial content, positioning and structure, including accompanying pictures, were also included in the analysis, providing an overall reading of the discourses at work in the texts. Newspapers were read extensively until the event disappeared from headlines and letter pages, thus making further reading redundant.

Analysis of newspaper discourses

There is no standardised form of discourse analysis or FDA, due to a belief that dictating a specific sequence of steps would only lead to discourse analysis becoming plagued with the same limitations traditional psychology encompasses (Hook, 2007). Billig (1987) suggests the analyst simply look for implicit themes within the texts. Rhetorical devices identified by Tilbury (1998) in her analysis of talk about Maori/Pakeha Relations provided further guidance in this study. These included among other strategies; appeal to the ‘facts’, dichotomising, direct criticism of another individual, rhetorical questions, couching ones view as the majority opinion, using personal experience of proof of one’s view, exemplification, overstatement, repetition and emphasis, claiming special knowledge as well as disclaimers.

Parker’s (1992) steps for discourse analysis guided analysis for the current research due to his focus on power and ideology. Analysis proceeded with a close reading of newspapers, whilst attempting to take a critical

distance from language, which implies asking questions about it, and imagining how it could have been constructed differently. What has been left out? What has been emphasised? The overall aim is to reveal the construction of a racist ideology embedded within the structure of newspaper discourse and to show how dominant forces in society construct versions of reality that favour the interests of those same forces.

Items from newspapers were considered relevant for analysis if they were thought to position Muslims and Islam, Australia, race and racism, multiculturalism and immigration in a particular way, whether it was positive or negative. Headlines included in analysis, covered a range of subjects including the Cronulla riots, Muslims, religion (e.g., Why being Christian is cool), Multiculturalism, Immigration, race, violence and aggression, as well as terrorism and the threat of terror. A total of 115 headlines, and their article content were examined, 46 of which were letters to the editor or opinion pieces.

Findings

Of the overall corpus of media coverage, it was evident that the discourse of White Australia as opposed to discourse produced by Lebanese or Muslim Australia, or sympathetic to Lebanese or Muslim Australia, dominated the media coverage. Headlines of articles used in the analysis were counted and contrasted in order to get a general feel of the coverage and whom it was favouring. The first category created to describe what the headlines were doing, was related to the denial and mitigation of racism, including individualising it, blaming it on situational factors and justifying it as inevitable ($n = 21$). The second category included headlines that constructed the negative other ($n = 25$). The third constructed Australia as diverse, multicultural, tolerant and accepting, or drew on Australian symbols and icons ($n = 16$). The fourth category of headlines was used to describe those that were neutral, or gave voice to the minority ($n = 13$), and the fifth included headlines that were

thought to be provoking fear, about the threat of terrorism, or a threat to our 'way of life' ($n = 9$). Many headlines could be considered as belonging to a number of these categories, at the same time. Furthermore while headlines may have appeared neutral further reading may have proven otherwise. While an analysis of headlines is a crude measure of the analysis, it provides a general picture of the coverage, and aided in the analysis process. After reading the entire corpus of 'relevant' media coverage, researchers then met to discuss emerging issues and to establish general trends. Core themes were identified and then further developed, through in depth analysis.

An analysis of discourses in the print media preceding the Cronulla riots

Several discourses concerning Muslims, racism and immigration were identified in newspaper coverage following the Cronulla riots. Collectively these discourses work to, first construct Muslims as a negative other, and then to justify, defend or simply deny this othering or moral exclusion, by redrawing the boundaries of what is defined as 'racism' and what is defined as legitimate and fair comment. Discourses identified were; extremism as a measure of racism, the construction of a negative other (misogynist, inassimilable, and criminal), the good nation; 'Howard's diverse country', an attack on 'elites' and finally an attack on 'cushy Multiculturalism'. Due to space constraints, each of the discourses will not be explored here. Instead the last three interrelated discourses will be elaborated on, in order to demonstrate how they function to justify and defend the construction of the negative other that legitimates the conditional nature of citizenship and belonging. The last three are good examples of 'new racist' discourses, which effectively work to determine who 'belongs'.

The good nation: 'Howard's diverse country'

This 'good nation' discourse, positions Australia and Australian's as being 'warm and friendly' 'tolerant', 'accepting' and 'fair'. This discourse was strikingly apparent in the media

coverage following the riots and is evident in the quotation from the then Prime Minister, John Howard.

Extract 1

I do not accept that there is underlying racism in this country. I have always taken a more optimistic view of the character of the Australian people. This nation of ours has been able to absorb millions of people from different parts of the world over a period of now some more than 40 years and we have done so with remarkable success and in a way that has brought enormous credit to this country. And it's very important that we keep that in mind (Howard, 2003, p. 13).

Australia and Australians are presented as tolerant and accepting, “with good values”, where every other migrant group has successfully been “absorbed”, and where the presence of racism is non-existent or only in a pathological few. By implication it is these Lebanese Muslims who are to blame for their inability and unwillingness to be “absorbed”. As Hage (1998) argues, ‘tolerance’ is problematic because of the unequal power relations inherent in the term. The ability to be ‘tolerant’ implies an equal ability to be intolerant if one chooses to be.

The implied attack on the ‘inassimilable other’ continued as Howard asserts that these values “respect the equal rights and roles of men and women within our community”, eliciting in reader’s minds the discourse of Islam as misogynist and uncivilised, also identified at work in the newspapers analysed. It is clear whom Howard is talking about, though an actual reference to Muslims or Islam would be inappropriate, it is implied however and so mainstream Australians are led into seeing ‘them’ and their culture as the problem. The ideology of them as misogynist is already primed. Thus the whole statement may in fact be read as directed to the Muslim minority, so

that ‘they’, not belonging to the “overwhelming majority”, are seen to not share these “decent values” and “decent attitudes”.

Moreover, this previous statement made by John Howard blatantly ignores the tensions and inequality existing in the country based on racial lines, and any reference to asylum seekers and the “humanitarian crisis”. It also leaves out the fact that Australia had an explicitly racist ‘White Australia policy’, up until the early 70s; effectively painting a rosy picture of Australian immigration, so that what is left out is more telling than what is actually said. Furthermore, it leaves out the struggle that migrants have faced when coming to Australia. Also of importance, is the use of the word “absorb” reflecting Howard’s stance on integration, or more accurately ‘assimilation’.

‘Racism is repulsive but so is self-loathing: An attack on elites’

Extract 1 also alludes to another common discourse in the corpus of newspapers analysed, involving an attack on so-called ‘elites’, ‘academics’ or ‘Howard Haters’. It represents this discourse in the way Howard proclaims; “I have always taken a more optimistic view of the character of the Australian people”. Howard not only explicitly denies underlying racism in Australia, he does so in a way that positions himself as being loyal to this country and to the Australian people. Thus this statement implicitly suggests that those who dare to criticise Australia by suggesting or even considering the possibility that there may be a racial problem embedded in the social fabric, are doing Australia a disservice. It is portrayed as an act of betrayal of the country and of the Australian people. “And I think it would be an enormous mistake if we begin to wallow in generalised self-criticism, because the overwhelming majority of Australians have the proper instincts and decent attitudes and decent values”, he continues, further positioning himself as a defender of this mighty country, mitigating and denying any hint of racism. The discourse of Australian values, is common in the “texts”, and is suggestive of ‘their’

incompatible values and ‘their’ inherent backwardness that we will not tolerate in this country, as a secular society. The rhetorical device, couching ones views as the ‘overwhelming’ majorities, is clearly at work here (Tilbury, 1998). What is more, is that the individual speaking for the majority here is a member of the powerful ‘elite’, who to some extent determines what is and what is not considered legitimate and fair comment (van Dijk, 1992). Further examples of the discourse attacking ‘elites’ are provided in extracts 2, 3 & 4:

Extract 2

*“Let’s not wallow in self pity, self flagellation and self criticism”
“Have Christmas and celebrate the fact this is still the greatest country of the world in which to live, let nobody tell us otherwise”. “There is a tendency among insecure Australians to be too sensitive to allegations of racism and too exaggerate the effect overseas of what happens here. There is also a tendency to declare ourselves international pariahs at the drop of a hat and indulge in self- flagellation without perspective” (Plan to saturate City with Police: PM calls for calm over holidays, 2005, p. 6).*

Extract 3

Suggesting that the nation is swamped by racists that ordinary Australians need some fine moral instructions from the like of Brown is just the latest adaptation of the David Williamson school of thought that treat ordinary Australian with disdain. It’s a form of elitist self-loathing that gets us nowhere in explaining why thousands of people descended on the streets of Cronulla. This is racist and it’s wrong. Vigilantes’ bashing young men and women is criminal. But grabbing

hold of Hansonism every time racism rears its ugly head and tarring the whole crowd with the same racist brush gets us nowhere Goodhart was hounded for suggesting that throwing people of different cultures together can cause friction. Not because of any latent racism but because “we feel more comfortable with and sacrifice for those with whom we have shared histories and similar values” As Goodhart says “To put it bluntly – most of us prefer our own kind”. Even to raise such a notion would have the less thoughtful leftists crying racism. But the sooner we recognise human nature, the sooner we can work out where to go from that starting point (Albrechtsen, 2005, p. 12).

Extract 4

Culture is about how you think and act and can be changed.....a single unifying culture is the national culture is the only way to achieve harmony and peaceful co-existence in a sea of racial and ethnic diversity. And for those who seemingly delight in the denigrating the old Australian ‘monoculture’, evidences of its success are everywhere to be seen. ...If Australian culture is so bad, why do so many migrants still seek to come here in the thousands? Stop the self-loathing and consider carefully why some think and behave in unacceptable ways? (Rodski, 2005, p. 13).

Overall this discourse has the effect of bringing ridicule on those who dare acknowledge racism as a social problem, firmly embedded in Australian society by belittling them as ‘insecure’ and ‘too sensitive’. Therefore, through the accusations of having

ignored the catalyst for the conflict supplied by ethnic gang violence, and exploiting the riots as an opportunity to sneer at ordinary Australian this discourse acts as a repression of alternative discourses (Essed, 1991). This discourse works to discredit and make illegitimate opponents contentions that may implicate Australia and Australians in racism. It appeals to people, as it presents itself as the 'champion of the common man', defender of the 'ordinary Australian', against the whims and nonsense of an all-powerful elite, who are treating them with disdain. The conditional nature of citizenship and belonging is clearly evident in extract 4, with the assertion that 'culture' can be changed. Rhetorical questions feature extensively in extract 4, drawing on the discourse of the negative 'other'.

The description of an elitist accusation of Australia as being 'swamped by racists' is an example of 'hyperbole' (van Dijk, 1992), which presents the claims of these 'elites' as farfetched, seeing as though the general perception of the meaning of racism is something quite different to what the 'elites and academics' would generally suggest. These extracts clearly demonstrate the workings of 'new racism', in that attempts are being made to reshape the boundaries of what is defined as racism. There is an emphasis on culture as opposed to race, and the incompatibility of, and natural antagonism between, different cultures and thus the necessity to change, or adapt to the 'Australian culture' or 'monoculture'. An extremely good example of the covertness of 'new racism', or what Hall (1995) describes as inferential racism is evidenced in extract 4 with the closing rhetorical question, "consider carefully why some think and behave in unacceptable ways?" While, the construction of the negative other, is not the focus here, the problematisation of 'their' culture is inherent in this discourse.

'It's not race, it's culture stupid: An attack on cushy Multiculturalism'

While multiculturalism was portrayed as a 'warm sentiment', ultimately the discourses identified constructed it as "failed social

policies" leading to "inappropriate immigration" (Oldfield, as cited in O'Brien & Kearney, 2005, p. 11). Essentially the problem was presented as being "multiculturalism that highlights differences, promotes divisiveness and spurns the principles of unity given by a singular national identity" (Oldfield, as cited in O'Brien & Kearney, 2005, p. 11).

This neo-assimilation theme was predominant in the corpus of newspaper 'texts'. Integration or assimilation was presented as vital because, "most of us prefer our own kind" and so "the sooner we recognise human nature" the better off we will be. These discourses would suggest that, before, 'we', "the less thoughtful leftists" "cry racism" at such assertions, remember that racism, as John Howard says, is "a term flung around sometimes carelessly" (Kerin & Leys, 2005, p. 4). This has the effect of 'naturalising inequality and blaming the victim' (van Dijk, 1992), which is demonstrated in extract 5.

Extract 5

In Sydney, it has been plain to see for at least a decade, that instead of ethnic communities living happily in the diversity of social pluralism, multiculturalism has bred ethnic ghettos characterised by high levels of unemployment, welfare dependency, welfare abuse, crime and violence (Windshuttle, 2005, p. 13).

The attack on multiculturalism, as politically correct and as a root cause of the social problems displayed during the riots, is exemplified in extracts 5 and 6:

Extract 6

While nobody with any nous is against immigration, people who come to Australia need to integrate into our way of life. Not set up enclaves of seperatism with cultures different from ours. The sooner we get rid of multiculturalism and promote multiethnicity the better we'll be (Henry, 2005, p. 13).

This discourse works to (re)define and thus deny racism, by presenting the issue as the insurmountability of ‘cultural’ differences, and as both extracts articulate, those who express doubts about the multicultural society, are not, as their opponents hasten to call them ‘racist’, as after all it’s ‘race, not culture, stupid’ (Windshuttle, 2005). In doing so, this discourse attempts to reconstruct the boundaries of what constitutes racism and what constitutes fair, indeed necessary social comment, and positions such assertions as ‘not racist’. In fact, there were many suggestions to rename it ‘multiracialism’ as opposed to multiculturalism.

This discourse involved presenting the “socially conservative” police and government as being too politically correct, taking the “softly, softly approach” in dealing with the antisocial behaviour going on at Cronulla and elsewhere, in fear of being labelled ‘racist’ (Kearney & Sexton, 2003, p. 1). This politically correct approach was constructed as an underlying problem, implying that we are perhaps not being ‘racist’ enough. Furthermore there was a strong focus on the discourse of ‘rights versus responsibilities’, the suggestion being that there has been too much focus on a ‘rights’ agenda’ as opposed to a ‘responsibility’ one, so that minority groups take on a “victim mentality” and “cry racism” as an excuse for acting irresponsibly, and not following Australian laws. These discourses, although they were not all elaborated here, helped us to understand the ideology of racism and how it was operating, particularly in terms of how it structured social group identities and belonging, within Australia at the time, as well as how it constructed racism and in doing so justified, legitimated or denied its existence.

Discussion

In order to understand the power inequalities in society properly, Foucault suggests an examination of how discursive practices serve to create and uphold particular forms of social life (Burr, 1995). If some people are said to have more power than others, then an examination of the discourses and

representations, which uphold these inequalities is in order. The power to act in particular ways, to claim resources, to control, or be controlled depends upon the ‘knowledge’ prevailing in a given society at a given moment (Burr, 1995). This ‘knowledge’ comes to constitute ‘truth’, or what we have been referring to as discourses, which construct objects and a variety of subject positions. For Foucault (1972), knowledge is a power over others, the power to define others.

This research identified a number of discourses circulating in mainstream Australia print media, following the Cronulla riots that constructed Muslims as an uncompromisingly, negative ‘other’, against a positive image of Australia and Australians. This othering or ‘moral exclusion’ was obscured behind the language of egalitarianism and tolerance, made possible by the circulation of discourses that effectively redraw the boundaries of what’s defined as ‘racist’. This ‘new racism’, suggests that understandings of racism and multiculturalism, are not static, but rather are (re)constructed and (re)negotiated in and through discourses of our everyday lives. However, as Foucault suggests, some have more power in this negotiation process, as was evident by the discourses dominating print media coverage, following the riots. *New racism and every day racism in mainstream print media*

The mechanisms identified by van Dijk (1992) in the analysis of racism in the media including, negative other presentation, positive self presentation, mitigation, denial, reversal, as well as naturalising inequality and blaming the victim were recognised throughout this analysis, as were the strategies found by Tilbury (1998). It was strikingly evident that those wishing to express negative views about this particular out-group took care to construct these views as justified, warranted and rational (Rapley, 2001), denying, mitigating and excusing negative acts and views towards minorities in order to position themselves as decent, moral reasonable citizens.

The attack on ‘cushy multiculturalism’

and 'elites' involved the prominence of claims commonly made by perpetrators of new racism, that it is human nature to prefer your own kind, that different cultures are naturally antagonistic towards one another and that structural inequalities and power relations are not requirements for examining and understanding racism (Hopkins et al., 1997). Indeed negative feelings of 'white' Australia towards these 'others' were presented as being 'not racist', but rather as justifiable responses to the 'fact' that this minority group transgress central values. However they still function to exclude and have racist premises and propositions inscribed in them (Ratele & Duncan, 2003). These discourses attacking the policy of 'multiculturalism' and the 'political correctness' of 'elites', were aided by the construction of extremism as a measure of racism and of racism as something specifically related to 'race', rather than culture, which was constructed as something that can and should be changed, in order to integrate or be 'absorbed' successfully. These discourses also worked in conjunction with a discourse emphasising the 'tolerance' and diversity of Australia, 'the good nation'.

Implications and future directions

The implication is that new racist discourses circulate through discourses in the print media, and arguably have everyday effects. This suggests that people are made to feel unwelcome, uncomfortable, and illegitimate and that these exclusionary actions are (re) produced at an everyday level. Indeed discussion of immigration and multiculturalism and thus 'belonging', focused on the 'absorption' of non-white Others in a country in which whiteness is the normative mode of belonging. This 'negotiation' of belonging then, threatens what Noble (2005) calls the 'ontological security', of particular 'out groups' who are constantly reminded that they don't belong, effectively limiting their capacity to exist as citizens and feel 'fully human'.

The media in ordering our perceptions of the social world, are central in reproducing dominant cultural frames connecting the

mundane to the wider world and generating a kind of 'common sense' of the world, which naturalises that reality and the relations of power which structure it (Poynting et al., 2004). With the emergence in recent years of a highly racialised framing of current events, involving binary oppositions of 'us' and 'them', 'good' and 'bad', 'victim' and 'villain', 'right' and 'wrong', around crime and terrorism, on a local, national and international level (Poynting et al., 2004), the implications for those constructed as the out-group, as was the case with Lebanese Muslims during, before and after the Cronulla riots are very concerning. Moral exclusion reduces restraints against harming or exploiting certain groups of people (Opatow, 2001). If moral exclusion was seen to influence the way the Cronulla riots were represented, and the way understandings of 'belonging' were constructed, then we need to question, what else it could be influencing our interpretations and understandings of, and the effects of this. Furthermore, even though this event occurred some time ago, the findings of this research are important as arguably similar phenomena are being reflected in relation to the Sudanese in Australia currently, who seem to be becoming a key 'out-group' (Puoch, 2007).

Because new racism is covert it does not appear to be 'racist' and is not as confronting as 'old racism', it is much more likely to become naturalised as taken for granted 'common sense'. Furthermore because new racism is so freely expressed by social actors, such as media commentators and politicians, who are powerful members of society, this ultimately conveys what Barbara Perry calls, a 'permission to hate' (cited in Poynting et al., 2004). Similarly Hage (1998) suggests "violent racists are always a minority. However their breathing space is determined by the degree of ordinary 'non-violent' racism a government and culture will allow" (p. 247). Thus the media as a pervasive site of racism needs to be challenged and counter discourses need to be produced, giving voice to those relegated to 'outsider', 'invader', or simply 'other'. This necessitates

that psychology, an institution capable of influencing the way that racism is understood, has a moral responsibility to critically engage with the media in tackling racism, and avoid the 'reductionistic', 'psychologising' and 'individualistic' accounts that have dominated the social psychology of racism (Augoustinos & Reynolds, 2001; Foster, 1999).

While discourse analysis is a useful and worthwhile means of exploring the banal way that racism operates in contemporary Australian society on a daily basis, future research should focus on the need to give voice to the oppressed within society. It should aim to empower marginalised communities to determine their own social representations, rather than have them determined for them. It should also aim to raise awareness in the dominant culture of the taken for granted ways that racism is reproduced on a day- to- day basis. Indeed it is important to move away from simply trying to 'understand' the 'other', and emphasise the importance of understanding the self in the midst of unbalanced power relationships. There is a growing interest in addressing racism through raising the socio-political awareness of powerful groups, involving the interrogation of how dominant groups benefit from and are implicated in maintaining racism (Duncan, 2007). The power dimension of racism is essential in any understanding of racism. Furthermore, any analysis of the subjective experience of marginalisation needs to encompass everyday forms of racism, that is, the seemingly insignificant ways that people are racialised.

Limitations

The current study was useful as an exploratory start to research in this area, though more needs to be done to really tackle the issue of racism in the media and to understand the psychological effects of everyday and banal forms of racism. While discourse analysis can be useful in tracing the representations/discourses dominant in a particular context, at a particular historical moment, it does not acknowledge the way these are variably taken up. They may be rejected resisted or consumed; people are not

just passive recipients or victims of dominant discourses. Future research should explore the different ways they are challenged, and the spaces where this is achieved.

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Multiculturalism and Whiteness: Through the Experiences of Second Generation Cypriot Turkish

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Multicultural policies have enabled many migrants and their descendents to develop a sense of belonging to Australia. However, national multicultural policies also position the Anglo Saxon descendents as a higher civilised group who are more Australian relative to their 'ethnic' counterparts, who are confronted with ambiguity when identifying as an Australian. By adopting critical whiteness studies as an analytical framework we explore community dynamics by focusing on how the Anglo Saxon ethnic group maintains its dominance and privilege. We examine discourses that second generation Cypriot Turkish people in Australia use to construct their identity. Our analysis reveals the covert and often banal ways in which privilege is maintained. We suggest that whiteness studies provides a set of tools to extend critical community psychology because of its focus on unpacking how dominance is negotiated and potentially reproduced by those who have differential access to racialised privilege.

This article examines dynamics of inclusion and exclusion through the experiences of second generation Cypriot Turkish Australians. In the year 1973 the White Australia Policy, which favoured immigration from certain countries, was officially replaced with the national policy of Multiculturalism. Multicultural policies did not discriminate on the basis of race, culture and religion in relation to immigration to Australia (Department of Immigration and Citizenship [DIAC], 2007). Multicultural policies were also a reactionary move following migrant resistance to assimilation as they redefined their past in a new social and political context (Vasta, 1993). Multicultural policies afforded different ethnic groups the right to practice their cultural and religious beliefs (DIAC, 2003). These policies provided impetus for the construction of new discourses and the emergence of the ethnic identity. In Australia, the ethnic category embraces the identities of many migrants and the descendants of migrants in Australia. However, descendants of an Anglo Saxon background are ostensibly omitted from this category¹. Those of Anglo Saxon background are simply identified as

Australian, as not having an ethnic identity. On the other hand, for many migrant descendants their Australian identity is accessible if it is hyphenated with their ethnic identity. As a result people other than Anglo Saxon have noted ambiguity about their belongingness to the Australian community (Ang, Brand, Noble & Sternberg, 2006; Castles & Vasta, 1996; Sonn & Lewis, 2009; Vasta, 1992; Vasta, 1993; Zevallos, 2003; Zevallos & Gilding, 2003). These processes of identity negotiation, which we describe in this article, demonstrate the relational and contingent nature of ethnic identity.

Ethnic identity is conceptualised as a relational construct which is negotiated with ones world and other people, structures, social conditions expressed through discourses rather than something that is possessed (Hook, 2003; Verkuyten, 2005). Mama (1995) defines discourses as “historically constructed regimes of knowledge. These include common-sense assumptions and taken-for-granted ideas, belief systems and myths that groups of people share and through which they understand each other” (p. 98). Discourses position people in relation to each other socially, culturally, and

politically, -- ‘ethnics’ are positioned in Australia as the other to Anglo Australians who occupy a privileged, dominant and normative position (Hage, 1998; Sonn & Fisher, 2005). This normative and privileged position has been named whiteness (Frankenberg, 1993). Arguably, being positioned outside the dominant culture provides a vantage point from which to make visible dominance and dynamics of inclusion and exclusion (Ladson-Billings, 2003; Sonn, 2004). Challenging normativity and dominance is in line with a community psychology (e.g., Watts & Serrano-García, 2003) agenda that is aimed at deconstructing and transforming taken for granted discourses about race and ethnicity that position self and others in a broader context of power relations. In this article, we explore ethnic identity construction, with a focus on the negotiation of whiteness, from the perspectives of Cypriot Turks who grew up in Australia.

We draw on data from a research project that focused on dynamics of inclusion and exclusion and the discourses that construct the multi-hyphenated nature of the Cypriot Turkish Australian identity (Ali, 2006; Ali & Sonn, in press). In this article we examine the negotiation of whiteness through the experiences of second generation Cypriot Turks Australians. We consider two discourses that are used to construct Cypriot Turkish identity and examine how whiteness is reproduced and privilege maintained through the construction of other identities. Before this we provide background to the Cypriot Turkish identity and review literature on whiteness and whiteness in an Australian context. This is followed by examining whiteness from the vantage point of Cypriot Turkish lived experiences.

Cypriot Turkish identity and migration

Cypriot Turks are descendents of the Ottoman Empire, who remained in power until 1878 when Cyprus was ceded to Britain. During this period the island was governed under the Ottoman Millet system where

anyone who identified as other than Turkish had to pay extra tax shaping the modern bicultural community of the island (Hugg, 2001). Cyprus became an independent state in 1960 following an agreement between Britain, Greece and Turkey, which recognised the two ethnic groups as equal citizens under the new constitution (Gorvett, 1999; Hugg, 2001). However, this constitution collapsed during 1963 when the drive for the unification of Cyprus with Greece gained momentum and ethnic cleansing became widespread. In response, Turkey intervened to prevent the unification of Cyprus with Greece and to protect the Cypriot Turkish population (Peggs, 1998).

The island has since been divided into two, with two separate governments. However, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) is not recognised internationally by any other country besides Turkey (Gorvett, 1999; Rotberg, 2003). Turkish Cypriots remain unrepresented in the international arena unlike the Greek Cypriots who represent Cyprus in international political and social arenas (Bamanie, 2002). Due to the conflict around the legitimacy of TRNC, the voices of Cypriot Turks’ and the representations of Cyprus have been restricted making Cyprus, for those who are not familiar with its history, a Greek Island with Cypriot Greek population.

As a result of these historical and political processes, Cypriot Turks who identify as a Cypriot lose their ‘Turkishness’ as Cyprus is represented as a Greek Island. On the other hand, identification as a Turk leads to the assimilation of their identity with mainland Turks. Although Cypriot Turks have strong ties with the mainstream Turkish community, they perceive themselves and are perceived by mainland Turks as different, on the basis that they are not from Turkey and differ in terms of speaking and cultural values such as level of secularity (Canefe, 2002).

Due to the inter-communal conflict of the 1950s and 1960s and the economical and politically unstable nature of Cyprus during the 1970s and 1980s following the ongoing

embargo imposed on TRNC, many Cypriot Turks have migrated from Cyprus (Robins & Aksoy, 2001). It is estimated that 40,000-50,000 people emigrated from Cyprus during this period (Küçükcan, cited in Robins & Aksoy, 2001). Cypriot Turks began migrating to Australia in early 1960 with the biggest influx in the late 1960s (Sayar, 1988).

Whiteness

Steyn (2006) wrote that critical whiteness studies has provided a site critiquing racial formations by tracing processes that have led to the ways in which white people are socially positioned relative to others. Part of the focus is to understand the implications for identity construction of those racialised into whiteness as well as understanding the mechanisms and process – semiotic, discursive, material and everyday ways – through which whiteness is produced and maintained. Frankenberg (1993) explains whiteness to be a position of privilege, a worldview and a set of cultural practices that are unmarked and unnamed and positioned as normative. Access to whiteness privilege and dominance intersects with other identity makers such as gender, sexuality, class, race, religion, ethnicity, history and socio political context (Frankenberg, 1993; Moran, 2007). Privileges associated with whiteness is not equally accessible by all people therefore the experience of whiteness and white privilege is not uniform (Green, Sonn & Matsebula, 2007; Moran, 2007). Whiteness is a socially constructed phenomenon however it has real implications for ‘non whites’ in their daily lives and their identity construction. It also shapes whites’ sense of self and sense of others. The non ‘white’ experiences of daily life and opportunities are shaped by overt and covert forms of racism. They are aware of being different to the socially valued norm and experience themselves as the representative of their background (Moran, 2007; Noble, 2005).

Green et al. (2007) explain that whiteness is produced and maintained as whites have the power to construct knowledge,

decide who belongs to the nation and the power to name racism. For instance, knowledge around and the representations of Australia’s colonial history is a political endeavour shaped by the normative worldview of whiteness (Larbalestier, 2004). Whiteness also reproduces and maintains its position of dominance as it is linked with ownership of a nation whilst people who do not belong to the white category are made to feel unease with their sense of belonging to a nation due to the lack of representation at a national level (Green et al., 2007; Hage, 1998). Finally, whiteness constructs itself through antiracism practices because white people can assume the power to name what is and what is not construed as racism, and they can deny noticing race including their own racial position (Ahmed, 2004; Green & Sonn, 2005; Green et al., 2007)

Whiteness is not just shaped by daily life and current race relations but also shaped by local, national and international histories (Frankenberg, 1993). Whiteness is embedded in historical and global history of colonial expansion (Frankenberg, 1993; Grosfoguel & Georas, 2000). Social power relations and the present racial and ethnic hierarchies in contemporary world systems are still embedded in Western colonial expansion even though there is no colonial administration (Grosfoguel & Georas, 2000). For instance, in Australia exclusion is particularly evident for people who identify as Muslims (Ali & Sonn, in press; Aly, 2007; Casimiro, Hancock & Northcote, 2007; Elley, 1993; Fijac & Sonn, 2004; Hage, 1998; Humphrey, 2007; Mubarak, 1997; Poynting & Noble, 2004; Zevallos, 2003). The presence of Muslims in Australia is not a new phenomenon (Yasmeen, 2007) however; their visibility has increased following the global events of September 11, Bali and the London bombings (Yasmeen, 2007). This heightened visibility and exclusion is not just a result of the current global climate but rather has a long history of east-west relations. There has been a resurfacing of historical colonial discourses where the east has been constructed as the other

who is weak, barbaric and backward (Said, 1979).

Although the “white Australia policy” has been replaced with policy of multiculturalism, Australian identity continues to reflect colonial ideologies and discourses whilst heterogeneous social and cultural landscape of Australia is downplayed in nationalistic discourses (Green et al., 2007; Green & Sonn, 2005; Moran, 2007). Australian identity is defined by dominant white versions of reality, despite alternative discourses, as they hold and have access to “social, cultural, economic, political and symbolic power” (Moran, 2007, p. 211). Although this has created a sense of belongingness and inclusion into Australia’s landscape for ‘non whites’ it has not challenged the dominant position of the white cultural hegemony (Moran, 2007; Hage, 1998, 2003).

In Australia whiteness is covert. Standfield (2007) explains that the replacement of the white Australia policy, the adoption of multicultural policies, and the referendum acts as a discursive break from a history of racism and the beginning of benign racism. These forms of remembrance and the showing of the ‘goodwill’ of white Australians supports the benign racism, which is built on foundations of structural inequality that centres white Australians as the true citizens of the nation.

Multiculturalism obscures whiteness (Hage, 1998) and there is a denial of dominance, but dominance is maintained due to the normativity of whiteness (Green et al., 2007; Hage, 1998; Moran, 2007). This form of ‘repression’ is one of the mechanisms by which racial hierarchies and systems of knowledge are reproduced (Hage, 1998; Moran, 2007; Riggs, 2007a). In Australia, where whiteness is expressed in symbolic forms and as cultural racism, it is necessary to deconstruct our society’s discourses that shape subjectivities (Green & Sonn, 2005). One way to do this is to look through the lived experiences of ethnic minority groups, a key objective of critical race theory (Ladson-

Billings, 2003).

Ethnic minority groups not only recognise their own position in race relations but also the dominant group’s position, who may be blind to their privileged and normative position and who are generally oblivious to the effects of racism or the significance of race relations of Australian society (Fisher & Sonn, 2007; Frankenberg, 1993; Ladson-Billings, 2003; Moran, 2007). We suggest that we can look into the dynamics of dominance and privilege through the lived experiences of people who occupy liminal spaces (Ladson-Billings, 2003). To this end we explore dynamics of inclusion and exclusion using the lens of whiteness. We do this by examining discourses used by second generation Cypriot Turkish to construct their identity and how these discourses contribute to the reproduction of whiteness.

Methods and Data Analysis

Ten Cypriot Turkish participants from Melbourne were interviewed in 2006 about their identity and sense of belongingness. The participants were recruited through the networks of the first author who identifies as Cypriot Turkish. Four of the participants were men and six were women. All of the participants were born in Australia other than Julide who came to Australia at the age of three. They all identified as Muslims. It was an interactive form of interviewing where the interviewee and the interviewer were both identified as collaborators and co-constructors of knowledge (Burgess-Limerick & Burgess-Limerick, 1998; Burr, 1995).

Discursive analysis was used to explore the relationship between society and individual experience and unveil discourses that create and sustain patterns of privilege, power and of inequality (Burr, 1995; Collins, 2004; Karim, 1997). The particular approach employed was the ‘power and subjectivity’ approach developed by Parker (1992). In line with the aim and the theoretical orientation of the research this approach is concerned with power relations, experiences, and subjectivity, which is multiple, contradictory, fluid, and context

specific. Power is understood to be exercised through discourse rather than being a personal attribute or possession.

We identified four discourses that participants used to construct the Cypriot Turkish identity. These were identified as modern Muslim discourse, language, phenotype and ancestral and generational discourses (Ali, 2006). Similar to many other ethnic Australians, all four men and two of the women from this study did not express hesitation in calling themselves Australians by hyphenating their identity as Cypriot-Turkish-Australians. The remaining four females referred to themselves as Cypriot Turks living in Australia. They explained that they were Australian only because they were born and raised in Australia.

Findings

Here we focus on two of the discourses – the modern Muslim and phenotype discourses. This is not to say that the other two discourses play a less important role in the construction of whiteness. However, these two discourses were most evident in the data particularly due to the political issues in Australia. Initially, we discuss the ways in which the discourses are used to construct Cypriot Turkish identity followed by a discussion on how whiteness is able to maintain its dominant and privileged position through the Cypriot Turkish identity construction. All of the participants' names have been replaced with pseudonyms.

Modern Muslim discourse: "Religion makes us different but we are not that religious"

All 10 participants constructed themselves as modern Muslims. The excerpt here from Halide and Mehmet explains:

Halide

I think the Cypriot Turkish values are a lot more easy going, a lot more relaxed. Sort of reminds me of the Aussie laid back person attitude, relaxed compared to the Turkish Turkey Turk culture and their values because I find that they are a lot more dedicated to their

religion. They will practice; pray more, you see the Turkish women wearing scarfs, they visit mosques more, they will expect a lot more from their children they hang on to the practices. Cypriot Turks could be the same as the Turkish Turks, but they seem more strict not as easy going as us.

Mehmet

Religion makes us different but we are not that religious so I do not feel that different to an Australian. I am Muslim but I do not practice it. But it does make you different from the rest. Not eating pork singled you out. You can have an Australian Muslim because we don't really practice it anyway. We are a Muslim by name.

Although during the Howard period of government there was an emphasis on constructing good Muslims as moderate, the term 'modern Muslim' as it is used here arises out of relational understandings between themselves and mainstream Turks. This positions Cypriot Turks as less invested in religion in comparison to mainland Turks. Through the text we can see that being a moderate Muslim positions them as someone who is not physically different or have very different lives to Australians. This is comparable to the Tatar Muslims in the Netherlands who also draw on discourses that position them as similar to the mainstream group (Verkuyten, 2005). There is fluidity in their position as the other. Because their Muslim identity does not fit the stereotypical image of Muslim they can be part of the Australian society because their Muslim identity goes unnoticed. By being a modern Muslim they can be like 'Aussies'. "Religion makes you different to the Australian population but it depends on how religious you are" (Julide). There is a degree of access to white privilege as they note the benefits of

being a Muslim that do not fit the negative stereotypes of dominant public discourses.

However, their sense of inclusion is context-bound and conditional because whiteness intersects with other social identity markers that determine access to white privilege (Frankenberg, 1993). The modern Muslim discourse, although discrete and not so tangible to others and, besides the noted benefits of being a moderate Muslim, there is a sense of exclusion as members of Australian community through various processes. In the following excerpts we can see a sense of exclusion related to their Muslim identity through processes of stereotyping, scapegoating and othering (Riggins, 1997) of the Muslim identity. These processes work covertly to maintain white race privilege.

Stereotyping. These quotations illustrate how stereotyping of Muslim people by the media has led to a sense of exclusion for the participants (Karim, 1997; Van Dijk, 1997).

Halide

Due to September 11 incidents. I feel that a lot of people are hearing and believing what they see in the media and relating it and judging all Muslims which is quite sad because they are unethical crimes which none of us agree with. I went to this Christian function, I still had a great time but at the back of my mind I wonder if anyone has an issue with me being there.

Sami

I do not know what they are thinking about us. If you watch the bullshit news on (the commercial television stations) they are telling you pretty much every night of the week that we are bad and if you watch those and you believe it, which a lot of people do, they are going to make judgements.

Halide feels uncomfortable due to her

Muslim identity, an identity that has been constructed in the media as a deviant, evil and a threat. She feels like she is not completely welcome in this setting because how she might be perceived as a Muslim person. Sami also expresses concerns about how Muslims are being constructed in the media. He explains that people are going to make judgements based on the stereotypes that are presented in mainstream news.

The dominant discourses within social spaces focus on events that alienate the Muslim population. It does not give value to the everyday multicultural interactions. Instead, immigrants, multiculturalism and Muslims are constructed as problems that have to be dealt with by the white national subject (Hage, 1998). Whiteness maintains its dominance and patterns of privilege through knowledge construction (Green et. al., 2007; Riggs 2007b). In this case, their religious identification is associated with terrorism. The effect is a sense of exclusion and distancing of Muslim identity from normative constructions of Australian.

Othering. Although Cypriot Turks note the benefits of being a moderate Muslim, a sense of exclusion is also experienced through the process of othering.

Ayse

Interviewer: *Does your religion impact on your belongingness more so than your ethnic identity?*

Yes definitely, particularly because that singles you out as someone that doesn't celebrate Easter and Christmas and fasting in terms of Ramadan. So it is much more of an identifier for people. Um and although it would be further exacerbated if I was a much more strict Muslim in terms of wearing a veil so I think it acts as a further identifier in a negative way..

Sevda

Interviewer: *Why can't you be*

Australian?

Cause you are Turkish. You are Australian because you are born in Australia but you cannot be an Australian because you are not Australian you are not an Aussie. It is two different things. Like to say to someone I am Australian that means that they think you are Christian, Catholic or whatever. But you are not you are Muslim so you say I am Turkish but I was born in Australia.

Interviewer: So Australian doesn't represent who you are?

No, it doesn't. It doesn't because if you say to me that you are Australian I am going to straight away think you are Christian, Catholic.

These quotations highlight that Cypriot Turks are positioned outside of the Australian identity because of their Muslim identity and because they are not Christian. They are positioned as the others who do not celebrate the national religious celebrations (Barker & Galasinski, 2001; Nagel, 1994). They express exclusion and uncertainty about their belongingness to Australia because Islam is not a part of the symbolic representations' of Australia.

Whiteness maintains its patterns of privilege by othering other religious celebrations. Whiteness is experienced to be an ownership of a nation (Hage, 1998), which is achieved through promoting only the dominant groups' religious celebrations as central at a national level and others as on the margins, kept within the family or the community.

Scapegoating. This process was another way that led to a sense of exclusion for Cypriot Turkish due to their religion. In this case, Ayse is scapegoated and stigmatised because she was associated with terrorist acts for being a Muslim. In doing so, she expressed feeling less Australian, despite the Howard government claims that the fundamentalist Muslims were

being targeted as not belonging to Australia.

Ayse

Like, I remember during the Gulf war with a surname like Huseyin (pseudonym) we had people that would look up the white pages at Three am in the morning and just call and say is Saddam there?

Interviewer: In terms of being Australian did that make feel in any way less Australian?

Less Australian, yes definitely cause you are sort of targeted and stigmatised or blamed in a way for having a name, for having a heritage. And also when there was the questioning around the terrorism that has happened um the media associated that being Muslim means you support that sort of stuff and you are less Australian.

As objects of the moderate Muslim discourse, people are restricted and limited with what can be said as observed in the following quotation from Halil.

Halil***Interviewer: Has there been times where you felt excluded from the Australian identity?***

Ever since this September 11 thing and all has kicked up a bit of paranoia... you cannot just express you opinion. "Look John Howard, we are not American we do not have the problems that Americans do" you cannot sometimes say things. You can't sometimes say things because your surname is Ali (pseudonym) and "ah you're Muslim" and all the stuff. There are times where you hold yourself back from saying and doing things because you worry if it's going to be misinterpreted because of your perceived background.

The moderate Muslim discourse limits their sense of belonging to Australia. If it is not

observable they can be part of Australian community. The Cypriot Turks' sense of belonging as an Australian is nurtured by not bringing up issues that can challenge views so that their established sense of belonging is not disturbed. Halil feels like he needs to keep silent because he knows that if he is to challenge the hegemonic discourses about these issues his Muslim identity will overshadow his whiteness and Australianness and "be misinterpreted" because of his perceived background. This discourse restricts him in expressing his views concerning government decisions.

This example of being silenced and feelings of having opinions about national issues that are not presented in the public discourses is referred to by Hage (1998) as exclusion from governmental belonging. Halil is excluded from governmental belonging given he felt that he did not have a right to contribute his views to discussions around Australia's involvement in Iraq. Hence, when a person feels this way they are positioned as the other- the other to a national white majority. Ethnic minorities' views, particularly views that are not the norm are silenced and excluded from governmental belonging.

Phenotype: "Australians have more fair, blondish lightish colour hair"

This discourse was repeatedly used by the Cypriot Turkish participants to construct their ethnic identity. Even though Halide calls herself Australian she also notes otherness of her identity. This otherness arises out of her phenotype that is different to the Australian phenotype. For this reason she cannot call herself Australian. She can only call herself Australian through hyphenating Australian with her ethnic identity. Here we see the relational understanding of identity that is informed by racialised hegemonic discourses constructing the Australian identity.

Halide

Interviewer: So you wouldn't call yourself Australian?

I am Australian in that I was born in Australia and all my siblings were born in Australia but we are not Australian in that we do not look Australian. You need to have a particular look and colour that is more Australian um. Australians are more fair blonde lightish colour hair. There are many different colours but the majority are more blue eyed, blond, fair looking Australian people. I feel like I couldn't call myself Australian on its own, I am an Australian Cypriot Turk.

Ayse

Interviewer: Who is Australian?

For me it is around, I don't feel like, I do not look Australian so hence not accepted. For me it is not just about having or being Australian by birth or having citizenship but about looking like the norm. That to me is what defines an Australian in reality.

Feriha

Well when you see someone. If you see someone that is fair with the blue eyes yeah you wouldn't think of them being Turkish Cypriot. Like my son. A lot of people would think he is Australian.

Interviewer: To be Australian do you have to be a certain way?

... When someone looks at me they know I am a wog. They know that I am not Australian. You know, I am not that blond hair blue eye.

The phenotype discourse positions people in relation to the mainstream population depending on their perceived color. This phenotype discourse enables the privilege of whiteness to go undisrupted by limiting the social representations of Australians to people with certain type of phenotype. Similar to

research by Zevallos (2003), phenotype discourses informed who the real Australian is, that is someone who is white, fair, blond and blue eyed and as someone from the Anglo cultic background. The participants have certain Australian capital such as the language or accent however they have accumulated and acquired this capital unlike those who are 'naturally' white (Hage, 1998).

Participants who perceived themselves as having a 'white' appearance were able to pass as an Australian because ethnicity was not physically observable. They also noted the benefits of being "*the right colour*" (Halil) and blending in with the Australian identity. For instance, they know that you can be treated differently depending on your skin colour. In this case skin colour works in their favour.

Halil

I actually cannot think of any downside at all (to ethnic identity). But I think, the thing is that we are quite, how do I say this in a way, quite right looking. So we don't really stand out in a crowd in terms of what we look like. I don't really stand out in terms of how I look. If I was a real karasakal (dark featured Turk) maybe I'll be treated differently. That will have an influence on how you are reacted to. But cause you do not look different you do not sound different so you aren't different, but underneath you are.

Mehmet

I don't feel like a minority. I guess it is because I do not look very Turkish so I never felt persecuted or singled out. I guess I didn't have any problems there. I don't look different to what ever your average Australian is. If I was in a crowd no one would pick me out as different unless I told them my name.

Everyone has this general understanding of an Australian and I guess I fit into that.

Halil expressed feeling silenced about governmental issues due to his Muslim identity. Although he notes that he is "*quite right looking*" and the benefits associated with being white and a fair person he is well aware that his Muslimness can be a threat to his privileged position. Similarly, Mehmet also notes the benefits of his phenotype and the fragile acceptance as a white because his name can be an identifying marker of difference. These two preceding quotations demonstrates how whiteness intersects with other social identity markers (Frankenberg, 1993) limiting access to privilege even for people that are "*right looking*".

Using Hage's (1998) term, these two people are naturalised whites in that they have fair skin and they also have accumulated cultural capital. However, they can still be excluded from the Australian identity because they have 'different' names and a 'different' religion. This adds a level of complexity to Hage's explanation of naturalised and accumulated whiteness. One can accumulate cultural capital and also be white; however this is not sufficient to access the white privilege and governmental belonging because they are not of an Anglo-Saxon background, the aristocracy of all Australians (Hage, 1998).

Although in these preceding paragraphs we can see access and exclusion to white privilege whiteness is also being challenged by arguing the need for indigenous sovereignty. Indigenous Australians are used as a point of reference to position ethnic Australians and Anglo Australians as equal Australia. In doing so whiteness is challenged as it is positioned as another migrant ethnic category, just like all other migrant descendants.

Sami

Interviewer: What does Australian mean to you?

Australian means a person from another culture living in Australia, living in the land of Aboriginals. So basically an immigrant, someone from a multicultural society with heaps of immigrants. I think the only Australians are the Aboriginals. Until they are given their full respect I think only then could we all be Australians.... at the end of the day they are Poms or Irish or whatever No one is from here really. It only two hundred years. Dedenin dedesi (Grandad's, Grandad). That is it.

Taylan

Because everyone knows that you are not Australian. The only true Australian are the Aboriginals. You could call the British that came here Australian but apart from that everyone migrated here. If you say you are Australian you are either Aboriginal or you came here when the Brits came here or you just say the nationality that you come from and everyone basically assumes that you are born in Australia or you came from that country like your parents did.

Taylan also challenges the normative position of whiteness by positioning Aboriginal people as true Australians. However, he then moves and positions Aboriginals and British descendents equally. This example demonstrates how whiteness is negotiated however, whiteness is not problematised and white privilege is not challenged.

Discussion

The discourses discussed in this article demonstrate that the Cypriot Turkish identity like many other identities in Australia are positioned in relation to what Frankenberg (1993) explains a privileged group that is centred as normative and unquestionable, in

this case the dominant Anglo-Saxon ethnic group of Australia. Through these discourses they are positioned as the ethnic Australian, a hyphenated Australian. Cypriot Turks embody their position as an ethnic Australian and it is experienced as a natural category rather than a social category. Although these two discourses are clearly relational it is perceived and experienced as a determinist discourse, it is naturalised and it is experienced as common sense (Collins, 2004).

Participants' understandings of not being the right colour or from the mainstream religion arise through comparison to 'the white Australian'. The participants who embodied the naturalised Australian capital, that is skin colour (Hage, 2003), noted their greater access to privilege to other ethnics who can only accumulate their Australian cultural capital. Even though they have the accumulated capital that has transferred into national belonging to a greater extent in comparison to participants who were not 'the right' colour, governmental belonging has not been accessible. To some extent it translates into national belonging but not as a dominant member, with power to position others in Australia. Muslim identity in Australia does not convert into governmental belonging (Hage, 1998) as Halil and Mehmet have displayed. In comparison to the 'white Anglo Saxon Australians', other forms of accumulated whiteness or even natural whiteness is overshadowed (Hage, 1998).

In this data we can see that whiteness in Australia operates as a 'race' construct – it is in part based on skin colour. However, being white is not sufficient to access whiteness. This makes whiteness something beyond biological understandings of race. Whiteness is not just about being white, but also about belonging to a certain ethno-religious group. Consistent with Imtoul (2007), Muslim identity is positioned as the other to the real white Christian Australian. However, from these examples we see that you do not need to be identified as a Muslim to feel that you are excluded from being Australian.

By creating the ethnic identity and

delegating it as the other, patterns of privilege and power remain invisible and undisrupted (Hage, 1998; Vasta, 1993). Whiteness is maintained through national identity and belonging by othering groups that vary from the white category and positioning them on the margins of citizenship (Green & Sonn, 2005). Frankenberg (1993) and Green and Sonn (2005) explain that in countries people who hold power provide the categories that are used to include and exclude people.

Discursive strategies are employed to create and maintain power structures and to marginalise others by drawing distinctions and hierarchies between the privileged group and others (Van Dijk, 1997). White privilege is protected by constructing the other in terms of religion and phenotype. In doing so whiteness maintains its privilege as it is positioned as the normative and as the real Australians. White people are made to feel comfortable and at home with their nation and minority groups are uncomfortable and as aliens in their nation (Hage, 1998). This "Illusion of truth serves to warrant claims to white belonging in Australia" (Riggs, 2007b, p. 8).

In Australia, these discourses and the implications of being positioned as an other are much more covert because they operate under the discourses of multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism to some extent has created space for migrant descendants. However, their integration is supervised; where the white Australian subject is the supervisor of the integration (Hage, 1998).

There are very real implications that arise out of racism and whiteness. Ethnic social minorities express uncertainty about their belongingness (Ang et al., 2006) as the national representations do not extend to them completely because national belonging is aligned with whiteness. The participants' experiences of exclusion at times have been clearly racially motivated or related to the socio-political climate around Muslims and Islam, however most of the time they experienced banal forms of racism. As Noble

(2005) showed, this leaves behind feelings of being uncomfortable in their everyday surroundings and not feeling at home. Noble, following Giddens, describes this as ontological security. Comfort and ontological security is not ascertained due to the lack of fit between the self and society, but requires that others recognise and accept you as rightfully belonging (Noble, 2005).

In summary, whiteness theory allows us to explore processes of inclusion-exclusion by focusing on the "dynamics of cultural racism, those symbolic and cultural resources and practices that may be everyday and often invisible to those close to the centre of power" (Fisher & Sonn, 2007, p. 31). The vantage point of the other is a lens into whiteness. In this case we have looked at how racism has been mapped onto ethnicity and religion. We have also identified practices of resistance and dominance through the experiences of the second generation Cypriot Turkish. In our view critical whiteness studies from the vantage point of those who have differential access to race privilege provides a useful lens for making visible and challenging cultural racism because of its focus on dominance and normativity.

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Note

¹ The Anglo Saxon category in Australia is socially and politically contingent. We use this category to refer to not only British descendants

but also Irish and Scottish descendents who were once omitted from the privileged category.

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Accessing ‘Authentic’ Knowledge: *Being* and *Doing* with the Sudanese Community

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Coming from backgrounds where issues of trust have often been violated, accessing reliable information from resettling refugee populations can be fraught with dilemmas. Those trying to document these people’s lives without recognising the politics of memory and the danger of re-traumatisation can potentially serve to further silence the narratives of those who have experienced difficulties associated with forced migration. This paper reports on the research process and the necessity of elevating the voices of Southern Sudanese men resettling in Adelaide, Australia to better understand how they have responded to traumatic experiences. Finding empowering approaches that assist these men in expressing their lived experience and future aspirations in sensitive and respectful ways can make progress towards further realising the liberation and well being of those beginning to create a new life far from home. The process of accessing ‘authentic’ knowledge is discussed by forwarding an imperative to establish a relationship with the refugee community. This relationship is further qualified by differentiating ‘being’ and ‘doing’ for those wanting to support and better understand resettling refugee populations.

“You cannot fix a leaking roof in the night.” (Interview participant)

Sudanese resettlement and successful integration in Australia remains a controversial and topical issue within current political and social debates. During October 2007, the then Immigration Minister Kevin Andrews argued that Sudanese people were failing to integrate into the fabric of Australian society. He stated his concern that some groups of refugees "don't seem to be settling and adjusting into the Australian way of life as quickly as we would hope" (Hart & Maiden, 2007). These comments angered and frustrated the Sudanese community and many support organisations working to assist them. The evidence used by Andrews was questionable and illustrated a Sudanese Dinka proverb, *“You can not fix a leaking roof in the night.”* A participant in this study noted the limited voice that the Sudanese community had to respond:

Isaiah

Kevin Andrews’s comments relate to a Sudanese saying that says, “While you are a crocodile in your country, when you go to another peoples’ country, you will be a lizard.” Can you see the difference

between a lizard and a crocodile?

JM *Yes, there is a big difference.*

Isaiah

That was what Kevin Andrews was doing. He said those things because it is his country.

While there is a growing body of knowledge, little is still known about the experiences, hopes and aspirations of Sudanese refugees resettling within Australia. Those who have experienced forced migration have often lived through dangerous and traumatic situations where distrusting others could be seen as functionally adaptive survival strategy (see Kohli, 2006). Thus, it is perhaps not too surprising that accessing reliable information from those resettling can be fraught with challenges acknowledging the power disparity between crocodiles and lizards.

Telling stories are a universally shared human experience. However, the ‘type’ of story that is told may vary depending upon the audience, sociocultural norms, time, place and notions of power. Further, the inherent fluidity of story and expression brings forth controversial and contested notions of what ‘truth’ and ‘authenticity’ might actually represent. Acknowledging this difficulty, there

is a growing recognition that taking an emic or insiders view that considers important elements in a person's life such as culture, language, spirituality, etc are essential to understand how refugees have made sense of their lives after experiences of forced migration (Blackburn, 2005; Goodkind, 2006; Miller, Kulkarni, & Kushner, 2006; Ryan, Dooley, & Benson, 2008; UNHCR, 2002; Yu-Wen, Phillip, Xiulan, & Larke, 1997). These accounts allow us to delve into the thick descriptions (Geertz, 1973) of these people's lives. However, such rich understandings do not happen magically. They can even evolve and change significantly over time (Guerin & Guerin, 2007); and thus, issues of gaining entry into the Sudanese community and accessing reliable knowledge come to the fore.

This paper discusses the experience of working with the Sudanese community in two capacities: as a former social worker and current doctoral researcher. The research study involved understanding Sudanese male's responses to traumatic experience from forced migration as distinct from the effects from trauma. Such a research question has presented many challenging questions about how to engage, interpret and disseminate such sensitive and privileged information with this resettling community. The following methods for this study were used: (1) conducting multiple semi-structured individual interviews with 24 English speaking Sudanese men and (2) participating in community celebrations, mournings and important events all through invitation. The men who participated were from Southern Sudan and had been resettled in Australia at least two years. Informed consent was obtained through a process of meeting with participants on several occasions to explain the research focus, which often required an engaged interaction of several months. This project received ethics approval from the relevant academic institution.

The power of story, memory and representation

"Only the story...can continue

beyond the war and the warrior. It is the story that outlives the sound of war-drums and the exploits of brave fighters. It is the story...that saves our progeny from blundering like blind beggars into the spikes of the cactus fence. The story is our escort; without it, we are blind. Does the blind man own his escort? No, neither do we the story; rather it is the story that owns us and directs us." (Achebe, 1987, p. 124)

There is a rich body of literature that has documented the resulting sequelae of those who bared witness and experienced the atrocities of civil war, conflict, and oppressive regimes (Cienfuegos & Monelli, 1983; Coker, 2004; Fazel, Wheeler, & Danesh, 2005; Goodman, 2004; Jeppsson & Hjern, 2005; Khawaja, White, Schweitzer, & Greenslade, 2008; Mollica, Caridad, & Massagli, 2007; Silove, 1999). Others have directly related their personal experiences as refugees or internally displaced persons in autobiographical or other written works (Deng, Deng, Ajak, & Bernstein, 2005; Eggers, 2006; Menchu, 1983). However, the veracity of past accounts can be contested noting the difficulties in establishing or proving these people's claims of lived experience. These challenges bring forth serious debates about the politics of memory and the medium through which it is expressed: one's story.

Any story requires a minimum of two people: a story-teller and a listener. However, this premise becomes far more complex as the story is inter-woven within the threads of the social, historical, cultural and political backdrops amongst the narrator and audience. While it is acknowledged that immigration officials, embassies, and those processing requests for refugee status need to distinguish between actual and fabricated accounts of experience, making such a differentiation is more difficult than establishing a dichotomy between fact and fiction. A participant in this study stated,

Today we are making a story of

Sudanese people. It is a series or a story of a journey between two worlds. Because our people came from a first world to a second world, you can say. Yes, you can say it is a journey between two worlds and this journey between two worlds- some people will not understand.

Indeed, a refugee may be very cautious about what they say to another person- not because they are inherently dishonest or being devious, but rather because of the very real consequences of a statement being misinterpreted or taken out of context (Jacobsen & Landau, 2003; McKelvey, 1994). In addition, refugee accounts of 'hard' facts may not represent 'objective' reality or possibly presented in conflicting ways (Kirmayer, 2007). Several men in this study have spoken about their perilous journey fleeing civil war and walking hundreds if not thousands of kilometres across Sudan seeking safe haven. Hearing such stories, I have occasionally noted time and date discrepancies between their stories. Does one account negate the other? Arguably not as both stories support an understanding of a long and difficult journey where time as measured by days or in other terms becomes obscured through experiences of hardship and survival. As Eastmond (2007, p.260) maintains:

Stories are never transparent renditions of reality, but partial and selective versions of it, arising out of social interaction.

'Narrative truth' refers to the inescapably imperfect and fluid work of memory, organization and meaning. Narration as purposive action also relies on a certain measure of control and a situation in which... the criteria of credibility and plausibility are known to both narrator and audience, if not shared by them.

This quote illustrates the complexities of

understanding and documenting refugees in resettlement contexts. What then should we take from a person's story if it is clouded by notions of power, opportunity, meaning and context? Kelley (1996) provides an important distinction in documenting such people's lives noting that a person's story may not necessarily accurately portray the past but it does say something about his or her present situation. Such a perspective allows a person's narrative to be explored beyond a false dichotomy between truth and fiction as it thrusts the imperfections of memory into a context situated within a person's present and future. Embracing this concept allows the listener to grapple with and explore the hopes, dreams and aspirations of those who have made a journey between two worlds.

A political exercise- Gaining access and entry

"How stories are told, by whom, to whom, under what circumstances, and for what specific purpose – vary according to sociocultural prescriptions." (Carter-Black, 2007, p.32)

Conducting research with the Sudanese community, it was recognised that my role needed to be as transparent as possible. To establish this position, a number of several key elders and gate keepers provided advice about conducting the study in a sensitive and respectful manner resonant with Sudanese values. These elders emphasised active engagement with the community, and offered myself the opportunity to make public announcements at church and other community events. They spoke of the importance of not only talking about the past but also to ascertain these people's experiences of resettlement and current vision today. However, I was expected to make a stand. Almost without exception, I have had to address my opinions about Kevin Andrew's comments regarding Sudanese resettlement and often my perspective on the two civil wars that raged for decades between

Northern and Southern Sudan. My own person had to become political.

While consulting several Sudanese community leaders and elders to better develop the research question, they stated the difficulties of accessing what they called ‘authentic knowledge.’ From this cautionary tone, they spoke of how their own stories while living in Kenya’s Kakuma refugee camp had been used to benefit or elevate the status of the researcher often with little or no benefit to the teller. They also spoke how they never heard from this person again after they disclosed their experiences. These accounts are further buttressed in refugee-related examples where an outsider’s analysis and resulting dissemination was incorrect, unfounded or worse- lead to negative outcomes for the participants (see Mackenzie, McDowell, & Pittaway, 2007). Miller (2004) notes that initial information from refugees can often be ‘front-stage’ responses, which may be highly rehearsed and of limited accuracy but serves to protect the community from outsiders. He then discusses the importance of trying to ascertain ‘backstage’ information, which is more difficult to obtain but more likely to have a higher degree of authenticity. One interviewee spoke of his experiences sharing his story in Kenyan and Ethiopian refugee camps:

JM *And have you shared your story many times? Have you had a chance to share your story?*

Deng

No. You see, I haven’t had the time to share my story with some people. During the time I was in the refugee camp, sometimes people go and ask me from agencies like UNHCR; sometimes they meet you and they ask you what happened and you tell them. This is not a very long story; they ask what you are facing now- they ask you about the food, have you got anything, if you are tired of living, where you are getting

water, clothes, shelter, and what you are doing. That is part of the history that we share. But we have not gone deeply [talking about their experiences].

‘Going deeply’ and accessing more authentic accounts is easier said than done. As researchers and oftentimes strangers entering into the lived experiences of refugee lives, it is important to recognise that these people may have learned a level of functional distrust that may assist them in what might possibly be a hostile encounter with the unknown (Kohli, 2006). Further, it must be recognised that refugees may feel hesitant in telling their stories of forced migration due to associated feelings of shame, guilt or humiliation. Others may be fearful of reprisals from cultural, societal and/or government responses if they were to speak of their past experiences. While it is certainly arguable that most practitioners and researchers working with refugee populations have good intentions; misinterpretation, misrepresentation and the potential for re-traumatisation can certainly have hostile implications.

Implications of going deeply

“Some of the things I am telling you, they are not out of nowhere. They are out of experience. The issues that have happened... I could tell you more but I don’t want to. I don’t want to go into that.” (Interview participant)

Those displaced through forced migration have often been exposed to harrowing experiences of psychological, physical and/or emotional form of trauma (Momartin, Silove, Manicavasagar, & Steel, 2003; Silove, 1999; Steel, Silove, Phan, & Bauman, 2002; Weine, Becker, McGlashan, & Laub, 1995). Thus, it is imperative that we understand the backgrounds that these people are coming and have an awareness of the potential dangers that a refugee might expose his or herself by telling their story. For example, Goodman’s (2004, p.1184) study of Sudanese youths resettling in the United States found that suppression and distraction was a major coping strategy noting a young man’s comment, “thinking a lot can give

you trouble". In my work with Sudanese people resettling in Adelaide, trying to ascertain the responses to trauma was something that had to be done carefully and patiently. It necessitated prioritising the comfort and safety of the story teller well beyond the needs of the research question or any intellectual curiosities. An interviewee related his experience of fleeing Sudan:

Robert

*I came to Egypt. I ran to Egypt.
[He looks at the map of Sudan]
Difficulties... Very very very bad.
Sometimes if I recall what
happened, sometimes it is hard.
Sometimes tears come out.*

JM *You said that tears come out?*

Robert

*Yeah, sometimes it is tough- like if
you talk to me, I can listen to what
you are talking but here [touches
his head] there is nothing...
Because everything has been blown
out... So, I don't go to touch that
much because I am afraid. It will
disturb our research.*

Some of the men interviewed for this study did not agree to participate until we had known each other for more than 18 months. By establishing their responses to trauma and what has been helpful to them in wake of traumatic experiences, these men were able to express their stories about sustenance, hope and survival. Time was something that needed to be embraced and nurtured. Hasty interviews would have likely lead to front stage responses.

JM *Would you say are there any ongoing effects in your life today from these experiences?*

Desmond

*Yeah, there are some effects.
Because yes, there are some really
difficult things and it is really hard
to forget it. So, it is still in my
mind and it is still in my emotion,
so it is still really hard to forget.
So I have just to go slowly through*

it yeah.

Recognising the injustices of these people's past, there is a danger that a person's story can easily become a one dimensional trauma-focussed history whereby other stories of healing, identity or resistance to the trauma itself can be hidden. Thus, the story of a person's experience(s) of trauma and how it has negatively influenced his/her life can easily overpower another story which might emphasise something very different about what this person values. The preferred story that an individual might have about their life can become subordinate to the one about trauma, which often focuses upon deficit, pathology and loss (White, 2006; White & Epston, 1990). From this limited understanding of a person's experience, a thin description of the individual situated within the purviews of trauma is further ensconced where other important considerations of identity can easily be obscured.

Through collaboration and the recognition that there are powerful understandings of people's lives beyond the consequences of trauma, a richer sense of a person's life can become privileged. Such a mutual exploration for alternative understandings can even possibly lead to what Rappaport (2000, p.1) refers to as 'tales of joy'. An interesting aspect of this research and community engagement has been that by establishing these men's responses to trauma, they then often felt more comfortable to talk about their experiences of forced migration without being prompted. By asking them to speak further about their parent teachings, culture, spirituality and other forms of identity, these men noticeably became more animated and enthusiastic as the interview continued. Indeed, finding ways to move slowly, safely and appropriately into such powerful stories can help access the deeper and more authentic meanings that these people ascribe. Rather than asking for a detailed account of torture, forced marches and other stories of despair; privileging the

person's response to such forms of adversity provided scaffolding towards understanding what has provided sustenance and strength in this person's past and present. As these participants spoke of their values, hopes, skills and actions that acknowledged forms of healing and resistance to the trauma story itself, this discussion then often provided an entry point to discuss experiences of adversity. There is value in both the response and trauma stories, and embracing cautious and non-pathologising processes allows the teller to decide when and if it is appropriate to share such experiences.

The construction of 'authentic' knowledge:

Being and doing

"I think there are times people don't want to talk about their background in full detail simply because I think we are sometimes compared between the primitive and the civilised world. And sometimes people make unfair comparisons. It knocks some people back. But, I think to be civilised is to be true to yourself. And I strongly believe that if I was born into the Dinka family, then that is my heritage. And I have to be proud of it. That is a good thing and that is who I am." (Interview Participant)

A Sudanese elder who has supported this research as a cultural consultant stated, *"The only way to get the community to talk to you is to get to know them. They must see you as a person and one who is committed not only to helping yourself but to helping them."* This elder's valuable insight introduces a helpful distinction between *being* and *doing* that can assist both researchers and practitioners towards accessing deeper levels of authenticity in respectful and collaborative ways. This distinction is partly taken from Gorman's (1995) discussion on the inherent tension between being and doing as a practitioner and researcher working with marginalised

communities.

Being

During the early stages of the research process, I always walked into community events with my satchel armed with information about the study, a notebook, diary and other various items that would help me collect and organise data. However, it quickly became apparent that I the guy who always attended Sudanese events with a satchel tossed over one shoulder. While aware that my role as researcher needed to be transparent; once I dropped the satchel and allowed myself to participate more fully with the participants, this *being* seemed to break down several barriers as others started to communicate and interact more freely. Indeed, the informal and everyday interactions proved crucial in being able to go beyond the rehearsed front-stage responses that Miller (2004) writes.

A particular challenge of working with the Sudanese community required a different way of conceptualising time. The idea that it was possible to conduct a two hour interview on a rigidly set schedule was unlikely to happen. More than half of the scheduled interviews and consultations were cancelled, rescheduled or started significantly later. After telling a Sudanese colleague about these experiences, he joked about what he called 'AST' or African Standard Time. This intended light-hearted acronym demonstrated the different social constructions placed between Sudanese and mainstream Australian understandings of time. However, these differing conceptions can present dilemmas for those working as researchers and practitioners where Western understandings of AST often do not exist in professional or personal contexts. Thus where possible, the concept of *being* is helpful here. Opening oneself to embrace AST may leave the listener receptive to new insights and ways of *being* that go beyond a snapshot of a particular issue (see Guerin & Guerin, 2007; Rodgers, 2004). *Being* with the community permits the listener to greater establish trust and rapport in a way that is more highly resonant for the

participants involved (without the satchel tossed over one's shoulder). There is an inherent value in being able to meet these people on their terms in both time and place rather than from territory of the often more powerful positions and perspectives that we command and enjoy.

Doing

There are many ways of conducting and disseminating research. It is argued here that the *doing* of refugee-related research in resettlement contexts should endeavour where possible to areas of reciprocity. As Mackenzie, McDowell & Pittaway (2007) argue, refugee-related research should aspire beyond harm minimisation as a standard for ethical research and try to achieve reciprocal benefits to both the researcher and the researched. Indeed, there were many times the 'official' research was put on hold to help someone with their taxes, driving them places, informing them about what house inspections entailed and connecting them to tutors for their respective academic courses. One man asked what it meant that he had just 'won' \$500,000 from Readers Digest. Another wanted to know if he was in trouble because he had been selected for jury duty. Because my previous role as a social worker included counselling refugees and also organising an annual activities summer program for refugee children (see Hallahan & Irizarry, 2008), a nascent reputation and rapport within this community had already been established. This reciprocity of *doing* over time showed a commitment beyond a complete self directed and singular interest in obtaining a PhD.

Collaborative research requires a commitment towards *doing* and a sincere engagement with process that may need to step outside the researcher's initially established timelines and scheduled milestones. Acknowledging the unanticipated twists and turns of collaborative processes, the research question becomes further grounded within an ecological perspective that considers a broader focus upon the person in environment and

context (see Rappaport, 1977). Such perspectives can help facilitate more sophisticated and reciprocal forms of research and action.

Bringing the two together

To further comprehend the profundity of resettling peoples' lived experience, there is a greater call for research methodologies that allow for these people to have collaborative roles in research and action. Inherent within this framework includes a level of community engagement that goes beyond what might initially be seen as the research agenda. This immersion though, will help shape and fashion the research question by rendering it in a way that will likely have higher resonance with those who inform it. Guerin & Guerin (2007) discuss their experience of working with the Somali community over several years in New Zealand stating, "Many times we felt like our research was going around in a circle, but more often, we found that the research was on a spiral, still going around in circles, but progressing for the better" (p.150). Visualising the research and consultation process beyond the perspective of a two dimensional circle to three dimensions shows the complex layering and necessary journey towards further understanding resettling populations (Ghorashi, 2008). While this spiralling process continues, it will become apparent that the reciprocity of *doing* and active engagement with the community provides a higher likelihood of gaining access to the more authentic backstage responses.

As deeper levels of access are granted, it is important to recognise the politics of memory and research. *Being* with these people can help overcome many potential obstacles in the spiralling journey as the foundations of rapport create greater spaces of trust and safety. However, research with such groups of people often marginalised and pushed to the peripheries of society is not a neutral exercise. And nor should it be. The person is political and as professionals involved in research, interpersonal practice, community engagement

or policy; we play an integral role in elevating people's voices in a collaborative manner that acknowledges who these people are and importantly, who they want to be.

Finding ways to capture research participant's lived experience and future aspirations in a sensitive and respectful way can make progress towards further realising the liberation and well being of those beginning to create a new life far from home. Embodying such values as inherent in the research process connects us to the 'why' of *being* and *doing*. If we want to illuminate the depths of resettling people's backgrounds and aspirations, embracing the concepts *being* and *doing* can help lift our eyes to such relevant concerns in appropriate ways. It is argued here that more highly authentic information is not surprisingly derived from authentic relationships. Accessing rich stories from refugees requires both *being* and *doing*. The *being* element connects people to our common bond of humanity and can help establish necessary relationships to gain entry and engage with the rich descriptions of these peoples' lives. The reciprocity of *doing* can help such communities address relevant resettlement concerns, speak for themselves and also drive a better informed research agenda.

Conclusion

"The world is big. Some people are unable to comprehend that simple fact. They want the world on their own terms, its peoples just like them and their friends, its places like the manicured little patch on which they live. But this is a foolish and blind wish. Diversity is not an abnormality but the very reality of our planet. The human world manifests the same reality and will not seek our permission to celebrate itself in the magnificence of its endless varieties. Civility is a sensible attribute in this kind of world we have; narrowness of heart and mind is not." Bates

College Commencement Address (Achebe, 1996)

There are many challenges and obstacles towards garnering people's stories of lived experience. However, we need to continue to look for ways of relating to these people by embracing respectful and sensitive approaches towards documenting such stories. Through *being* and *doing*, we allow ourselves the opportunity to traverse beyond 'front stage' responses and hopefully develop a stronger sense of trust and rapport that will aid us in incorporating reciprocity within our work. Sadly, the refugee journey is often one that has commanding elements of hardship and exposure to traumatic experiences. Engaging with these histories highlights the importance of proceeding at the story-tellers chosen pace to reduce the likelihood of re-traumatisation.

Is there one authentic story? Arguably not, the story of lived experience is inherently imperfect as it must elevate and amplify certain events, moments and memories at the expense of others. However, it is possible to elicit the deeper and more profound levels of 'authentic' experience or the 'backstage' responses that Miller (2004) writes. Resettlement from Africa to Australia is often a journey between two worlds where one must forge a workable synthesis of the past with the present. The *being* with these people and the reciprocity of *doing* allow for a stronger degree of mutuality and collaboration when it is appropriate to share such powerful stories. We would do well to participate and listen; otherwise, refugee voices and their associated stories can be further marginalised or worse- silenced all together.

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Differences in Resilience and University Adjustment Between School Leaver and Mature Entry University Students

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Research shows that mature entry and school leaver students have vastly different experiences when transitioning to the university environment. It is suggested that the transition to university is a major life transition and thus is a period of great stress. For mature entry students and school leaver students, the impacts upon adjustment to university are varied during the transition to university study. It has been proposed that for successful university adjustment, high levels of resilience are needed. Three hypotheses were tested with a sample of undergraduate students (n = 63). Hypothesis one, that there is a relationship between resilience and adjustment was supported. This indicates that 31.9 percent of the variance in adjustment can be accounted for by resilience. Hypothesis two, that there is a difference in university adjustment between school leaver and mature entry students, and hypothesis three, that mature entry students would exhibit higher levels of resilience than school leavers, were both not supported. These findings imply that individual differences are more important in adjustment to university than group differences, and have the implication that universities may be better off considering these individual differences when accommodating new students.

It is thought that mature entry and school leaver students both have very different experiences when embarking upon their academic careers at the university level. Figures suggest that the composition of the university student body is changing in terms of mature entry and school leaver student numbers. Statistics indicate that in 1980, 24 percent of full time students were over the age of 21 and this figure rose to 33 percent by 1996 (Merril, 1999). However, within specific university contexts (i.e., 'Sandstone' universities or New Generation Universities) these figures vary. For example, in a new generation Western Australian university, only 13 percent of students enrolled were within the mature entry students category (Edith Cowan University, 2007).

Mature entry and school leaver students both have their own distinctive experiences and backgrounds, including work experience and previous academic pursuits, from which to draw upon when entering the university environment. Therefore, it is argued that the experiences of school leaver university

students are different to that of mature entry university students. This was recently shown in a qualitative inquiry that aimed to understand the adjustments of students to university. The study found that the adjustments for students was first dependent upon the type of student they were, namely, being a school leaver or a mature entry student (Urquhart & Pooley, 2007). In particular it was determined that mature entry students entered university with different experiences which set them apart from their school leaver counterparts, these include: giving up full-time employment, supporting a family, and reintegrating into an academic context (Urquhart & Pooley, 2007). School leavers were not as clear in communicating why they wanted a degree as the mature entry students were, and they also showed less enthusiasm in these communications. School leaver students did not see commencing study at university as presenting many difficulties, however, any problems they did mention revolved around social pressures or other people's expectations. What was clear from Urquhart and Pooley's (2007) research was that

the issues and challenges expressed by both groups were primarily arising from the process of change as a function of transitioning into tertiary study.

The findings from Urquhart and Pooley (2007) concur with a study conducted by Cantwell, Archer and Bourke (2001) comparing the academic achievement and experiences of students entering university via traditional and non-traditional means. They found that age, gender and prior qualifications were predictive of academic achievement. The results indicate that there is a marginal disadvantage in academic performance as indicated by Grade Point Average (GPA) for students entering via non-traditional modes such as open foundation courses. However, there is a positive effect on adjustment and academic performance as measured by GPA for mature entry students, specifically, female mature entry students. The students most affected by the adversities faced on entry to university were those younger students entering via non-traditional modes. The authors argue that the significant variable is not mode of entry itself, rather it is the nature of non-traditional students' differing abilities, such as individual motivational goals, self-regulatory behaviours, self efficacy and verbal abilities (Cantwell et al., 2001). However, mature entry students who discontinued their undergraduate studies had slightly higher scores on academic achievement indices than those mature entry students who remained. This suggests that it is not only academic factors that influence mature entry students' attrition from university courses. Mature entry students may be discontinuing their studies due to external factors, more than school leaver students.

Further to this, for mature entry students, adjustment to university has also been linked to degree completion and attrition rates at university (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994). In their study Taniguchi and Kaufman (2005) looked at degree completion among non-traditional college students and found that

there are several factors that facilitate or deter mature entry students from completing their undergraduate degrees. In contrast to Justice and Dornan's (2001) findings that strategies for learning increase with age, Taniguchi and Kaufman found that being relatively young facilitated college completion. Other factors they found that facilitated completion included the number of prior enrolments a student had, having high cognitive ability, and a high-status occupational background, though these factors were observed for men more than for women. The authors suggest that the gender difference occurs as a function of factors commonly associated with women's socio-economic status, such as being divorced and having young children. Marital status does not affect adjustment; however, the major life event of a divorce has been shown to be obstructive to adjustment. The need and desire to spend time with her children may be the pivotal factor in a mother's decision to discontinue her undergraduate degrees. Indeed, these effects were found for both genders indicating that they are just as important in influencing males' course completion and that there is less of a difference between genders as previously thought.

Mature entry students also bring with them many variations in their abilities and previous experiences. Each student has their own background and will thus have variations in the resources available to them, which of course can highly influence their university experience socially and academically. In terms of academic strengths, students with high-status vocational experience and increased cognitive ability are significantly more likely than those with low ability and low-status vocational experience to complete their academic pursuits (Taniguchi & Kaufman, 2005). Differences in cognitive functioning significantly differentiate between mature entry and school leaver students (Justice & Dornan, 2001) and on average mature entry students scored lower on standardised tests (Taniguchi & Kaufman, 2005). The differences and hardships faced by school leaver and mature

entry students are many and varied. Martin (2002) suggests that resilience plays an important role in scholastic achievement. Resilience could be a factor that helps to mediate the adversities experienced in higher education contexts and may lead to greater academic success and adjustment for both mature entry and school leaver students.

Resilience has been a widely researched topic in developmental psychology and this research is increasingly shifting toward adolescent and adult populations (Beasley, Thompson, & Davidson, 2003; Campbell-Sills, Cohan, & Stein, 2006; Raphael, 1993). Resilience can be broadly defined as, “the capacity to respond and endure, or develop and master in spite of life stressors and adversity” (Mandleco & Peery, 2000, p. 99). It has been noted that resilience is indicative of resources that guard against the development of psychiatric disturbances, and is an important influence in the healthy adjustment to life stresses (Friborg, Hjemdal, Rosenvinge, & Martinussen, 2003). Werner (1990) also notes that resilient individuals easily adapt and adjust quickly to major life events.

Resilience is shown to be evident in times of transition where there is a great deal of stress (Beasley et al., 2003). In terms of different developmental and life stages where resilience is evident, some examples of high stress transitions are parental avoidance during adolescence, divorce, and university commencement (Campbell-Sills et al., 2006; Tusaie & Dyer, 2004; Urquhart & Pooley, 2007). Unexpected transitions also can contribute a great deal of stress such as disaster, unemployment or family disruption. The individuals who experience these stressors and manage to overcome them reportedly achieve above average levels of psychosocial functioning, academic success, career development and physical well-being are considered resilient (Tusaie & Dyer, 2004). These four factors are inherently important, in varying levels, for studying at university.

Beasley, Thompson, and Davidson

(2003) examined direct effects and buffering models in relation to cognitive hardiness and coping for health and psychological functioning. In their study, mature entry university students completed measures assessing life event stress and traumatic life experiences, cognitive hardiness and coping style, and general health, anxiety, and depression. Their results generally suggest that a direct effects model of the relationship between life stress and psychological health exists. Specifically, the authors suggest that cognitive hardiness, aspects of coping style and negative life events directly impacted measures of psychological and somatic distress. There was also support for a buffering model in which cognitive hardiness moderated the effects of emotional coping of adverse life events on psychological distress. This research conducted specifically using mature entry students suggests that resilience has a large impact on this population.

Further to this, Walker, Gleaves, and Grey (2006) argue for the importance of resilience in higher educational contexts when considering the enduring demands placed upon students entering university, namely, increases in cognitive complexity, comprehension of uncomfortable and unfamiliar ideas, and the questioning of accepted attitudes and behaviours. The importance of resilience in higher education contexts is debated (Gardynik & McDonald, 2005; Gonzalez & Padilla, 1997; Raphael, 1993; Tusaie & Dyer, 2004).

Walker et al. (2006) provide several conceptual differences in resilience in terms of university students in their academic pursuits. They argue that resilience is often associated with the capacity to persevere and continue in the face of seemingly overwhelming adversity. It is assumed that older adults will inherently have the resources needed to maintain their course of action as they have had longer to develop those resources (Feinstein & Hammond, 2004). Thus, adults have been through multiple counts of adversity before and have built up ‘identity capital’ to draw upon (Cote, 2002), thereby supporting the proposal that resilience is

an individual quality stemming from the individuals reaction to external circumstances.

Another view expressed by Walker et al. (2006) is the 'adaptability' stance that suggests that resilience is a result of strategy building and cognitive behavioural processes that can be created and used to adjust to change in a constructive way. An example of how this view applies to the university context is that tertiary study is simply part of life and therefore choosing to leave is not a major lifelong disaster, but is rather a learning curve along which skills and understanding are attained. The final conceptual difference comes from Rutter (1990, cited in Walker et al., 2006) who suggests that resilience is the positive end of a continuum of developmental outcomes among individuals at high risk of psychological disturbance. Rutter suggests that risk is inherent in the context of university study and that resilience can be predicted if a satisfactory risk algorithm can be developed. It is these apparent ambiguities amongst the definitions of resilience that can lead to the perception that adults have certain qualities associated with resilience as a function of their chronological age due to their life experiences.

Martin (2002) defines academic resilience as a student's ability to successfully cope with scholastic setbacks, stress and study pressures. This construct has received little attention in the research literature, and a lot of the research that has been conducted uses minority groups as the main focus (e.g., Gonzalez & Padilla, 1997; Sennett, Finchilescu, Gibson, & Strauss, 2003). Studies tend to look at resilience in terms of mental health and well-being, and it is suggested that an increase in the protective factors associated with general resilience will enhance academic resilience. This research is specifically designed to enhance primary and high school resilience, however many of the aspects mentioned by Martin, such as improvements in the students approach to academic work, personal beliefs, attitudes towards learning and outcomes, personal study skills, and reasons

for learning, are often alluded to in higher education literature as being important for successful adjustment to the university environment (e.g., Gardynik & McDonald, 2005; Parker, Summerfeldt, Hogan, & Majeski, 2004; Perry, Hladkyj, Pekrun, & Pelletier, 2004; Walker et al., 2006). Therefore, one could argue it is throughout the time of transitioning into the university environment that successful adjustment is critical for individuals to attain academic success, and, as suggested by Martin (2002), successful adjustment is somewhat mediated by resilience.

On entering university greater self-discipline is required in managing academic progress, taking initiative, and making decisions about the future (Lapsley & Edgerton, 2002; Larose, Bernier, & Tarabulsky, 2005). These tasks contribute to the instability of the university environment. Research shows a decline in social and emotional adjustment during the transition to university (Hays & Oxley, 1986) where students must deal with the first major separation from parents, changes in their network of friends, and perhaps painful separation from their significant others (Larose et al., 2005). Urquhart and Pooley (2007) posit that there are a number of equally important factors that contribute to successful adjustment to university for any student, including (a) social support, (b) personal/emotional support, (c) expectations, and (d) academic adjustment. These four factors have been consistently shown in the research literature to play a part in adjustment (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994; Schwitzer, Griffin, Ancis, & Thomas, 1999). Urquhart and Pooley suggest that there may be a difference in the experiences between mature entry and school leaver students in their adjustment to university.

Pike, Cohen, and Pooley (2008) argue that in promoting the development of resilience in secondary school students it is important to recognise that a prerequisite for successful academic achievement is an individual's capacity to rebound from or adjust to adversity and in doing so cultivate social and emotional

competence (NIFTeY Vision for Children in Western Australia, 2003). In line with this is the notion that the transition to university represents a time of difficulty for individuals. The unfamiliarity in university settings heightens the vulnerability students are exposed to as they try to regain some stability in the new environment by means of negotiation (Compas, Wagner, Slavin, & Vannatta, 1986). Longitudinal research has shown that acute stress is particularly prominent in this period for mature entry females (Gall, Evans, & Bellerose, 2000). In accordance with the definition of resilience used above, to achieve some stability or to adjust to university life, an individual must have a high level of resilience in order to overcome the obstacles present in this transition period.

In a study examining stressful life events, perceived social support and psychological symptoms in a sample of seniors at high school and then the same students during their first year at university, it was found that the time of most vulnerability was two weeks after commencing university study (Compas et al., 1986). It is suggested that adjustment is a dynamic process (Gall et al., 2000). It is also suggested that the quantity and kind of life transformations experienced and the size and helpfulness of student's social support systems have been found to have an influence on the adjustment process (Gall et al., 2000). Life events and social support were predictive of psychological symptoms in the Compas et al. (1986) study. Compas et al. (1986) suggest that these findings are important because 64 percent of the variance in psychological symptoms at the time of entrance to university could be accounted for by measures taken three months earlier during university orientation programmes. These disturbances include anxiety, depression, and somatic problems. It is shown that social support mediates these disturbances; however, the presence of these symptoms may interfere with the skills necessary to generate a new

satisfying sense of support in the university environment. Differences between school leaver and mature entry students may be partially explained by the quantity and kind of life transformations experienced and the size and helpfulness of student's social support systems.

The factors mentioned thus far that strongly influence adjustment to university have been at the individual level. However, environmental factors may also have a role in adjustment. Brooks and DuBois (1995) conducted research into the individual and environmental predictors of adjustment during the first year of college. They found that although individual variables were related most strongly to adjustment, environmental variables made significant incremental contributions to the prediction of several adjustment indices. The significant individual predictors included: emotional stability, intellect, and problem solving. The ability to engage in problem-focused coping, personality tendencies toward extroversion and intellect, and academic skills were found to be influential in facilitating the adaptation to university for first year students. It is also noted that for most adolescents the commencement of tertiary education is their first major life transition. Knowledge of the abilities and traits that lead to better adaptation has implications for counselling this group of students and ensuring adequate adaptation to the university setting.

The purpose of the present study was to examine the role of resilience in mature entry and school leaver students in terms of their adjustment to university. Specifically it was hypothesised that there would be a relationship between resilience and university adjustment. Second, it was hypothesised that there would be a difference in university adjustment between school leaver and mature entry students, and third, that mature entry students would exhibit higher levels of resilience than school leavers.

Method

Participants

Participants (n = 63) were sought from a Western Australian university, and self-

identified as a school leaver or mature entry student. In this study mature entry students were defined as those who have used alternate pathways to gain entry into university (e.g., the Special Tertiary Admissions Test (STAT; Australian Council for Educational Research, n.d.) test or TAFE qualifications) and were over 20 years of age on entry to university. School leaver students were defined as those who gained entry into university by means of the Tertiary Entrance Examinations (TEE). This condition included participants who gained entry to university through the TEE system and deferred no more than one year before undertaking their studies, thus on admission into university, were no more than 20 years old.

Materials

The questionnaire administered for this study contained two scales. These scales were the Resilience Scale for Adults (RSA; Friberg et al., 2003) and the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ; Baker & Siryk, 1984). In validation studies Friberg et al. (2003) noted that the RSA comprises 33 items covering five dimensions: personal competence, social competence, family coherence, social support and personal structure. The respective dimensions had Cronbach's alphas of 0.90, 0.83, 0.87, 0.83 and 0.67, and four-month test-retest correlations of 0.79, 0.84, 0.77, 0.69 and 0.74 (Friberg et al., 2003). Construct validity was confirmed with positive correlations with the Sense of Coherence scale (SOC) (Antonovsky, 1993) and negative correlations with the Hopkins Symptom Checklist (HSCL; Derogatis, Lipman, Rickels, Uhlenhuth, & Covi, 1974). Discriminant validity was indicated by differential positive correlations between RSA subscales and the SOC (Friberg et al., 2003). The end score is obtained by summing the total score of the numeric answers given on a Likert scale. Some questions are reversed scored. The higher the total score, the higher the individual's resilience.

The instrument used to measure

adjustment to university was the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) developed by Baker and Siryk (1984). This is a Likert type self-rating instrument with 67 items that measure the different facets of the experience of adjusting to college, and the participant is instructed to assess how well they are coping with the facet in question out of a score of 9 (i.e. -4 to +4). There are four subscales of the SACQ. These are academic, social, personal-emotional, and goal commitment - institutional attachment. An example question from the academic adjustment subscale is, "*Recently I have been having trouble concentrating when I study*" (reverse scored). "*I am very involved with social activities at college*", is an example from the social adjustment subscale. From the personal-emotional adjustment scale, "*I have been feeling tense and nervous lately*" is an example, and finally from the goal commitment - institutional attachment subscale an example is, "*I feel I fit in well as part of the...environment*", (Baker & Siryk, 1984). The coefficient alpha for the full scale is between .93 and .95. For the subscales the coefficient alphas range between .84 and .88 for the academic adjustment subscale, between .90 and .91 for the social adjustment subscale, between .81 and .85 for the personal/emotional adjustment subscale, and between .90 and .91 for the attachment subscale. This data comes from three different samples in two colleges as investigated by Baker, McNeil and Siryk (1985). Scoring for the SACQ is the same as for the RSA. That is, scores are calculated by summing each item's score, including those that are reversed. This leads to higher scores equalling higher adaptation to college.

Procedure

Participants were obtained from a participant register, and from the wider university environment on a Western Australian university campus. Both questionnaires were administered to participants consenting to take part in the study together, and participants were instructed to complete the demographic questions on the SACQ, including their self-

reported student type (i.e., mature entry or school leaver). The definitions of mature entry and school leaver students were explained to participants to ensure they assigned themselves to the correct group. Participants were then instructed to record a participant number on both the RSA and SACQ so as these could be matched in analysis.

Results

In order to address the research questions data analysis proceeded in two stages. Statistics were computed to determine if there was a difference between student types on both adjustment and resilience scores. This procedure was a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). To determine if there was a relationship between resilience and adjustment, irrespective of student type, the correlation between scores on the RSA and SACQ was computed.

The first hypothesis was that there is a relationship between adjustment and resilience; this is irrespective of student type (mature entry or school leaver). This relationship was tested using Pearson's correlation coefficient to determine if scores on the SACQ ($M = 463.59$, $SD = 58.86$) and RSA ($M = 183.41$, $SD = 26.03$) were correlated, $r(63) = 0.565$, $p < 0.001$. This was significant, indicating a moderate positive relationship between the SACQ and RSA scores. The coefficient of determination, $R^2 = 0.319$, indicates that 31.9 percent of the variance in SACQ scores can be accounted for by scores on the RSA. Post hoc power analysis indicated that this test had very high power ($r = 0.565$, $power (1-\beta) = 0.9987$), suggesting this correlation reflects a true relationship.

Both the second hypothesis, that there would be a difference in university adjustment between school leaver and mature entry students, and the third hypothesis, that mature entry students would exhibit higher levels of resilience than school leavers, were analysed using Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA), so as to limit the effects of familywise error. Data was screened to test the

assumptions of MANOVA, and all assumptions were met.

MANOVA was conducted to determine if there was a difference between mature entry and school leaver students on the RSA and SACQ. The MANOVA was non significant, Pillai's Trace = 0.009, $F(2, 60) = 0.99$, $p = 0.774$, indicating no difference between school leaver students and mature entry students on both RSA and SACQ scores. However, post hoc power analysis suggests that power for this MANOVA was quite low ($h^2 = 0.009$, $power = 0.09$).

Discussion

This study supported the hypothesis that there would be a relationship between resilience and university adjustment, shown by the moderate positive correlation between scores on the SACQ and RSA. This positive correlation indicates that 31.9 percent of the variance in each of the scales is accounted for by the other. Considering the research examining the RSA (Friborg et al., 2003), it is not surprising that this effect was shown in the current study when in their definition of resilience Friborg et al. (2003) note that resilience is an important influence in the healthy adjustment to life stresses. Tusaie and Dyer (2004) further noted that individuals who manage to overcome adversity, such as that experienced in the transition to university, and become academically successful and well adjusted are considered resilient. This is well documented elsewhere in the literature (e.g., Compas et al., 1986; Gall et al., 2000; Pike et al., 2008). This relationship fits with the theory informing the development of both scales. Upon examination of the subscales of the two measures this becomes clearer. SACQ subscales include: academic, social, personal-emotional, and goal commitment/institutional attachment. RSA subscales include personal competence, social competence, family coherence, social support and personal structure. That is, both scales measure factors regarding social support, personal adjustment and structure, and have measures of competence ingratiated throughout. Though very different, the two scales are shown by the current study to be somewhat related.

An explanation of the moderate correlation between the SACQ and the RSA may be explained by the findings of Compas et al. (1986), that the time of most vulnerability when transitioning to university is two weeks after commencing study. In the present study participants were drawn from a sample of students at varying stages of their undergraduate studies. It may be that resilience has a greater impact on adjustment to university throughout these initial two weeks than the current findings suggest. However, Compas et al. (1986) also show that 64 percent of the variance in psychological problems on entry to university could be predicted three months prior, suggesting that adjustment, although fluid, is relatively constant. Follow up research may compare the correlation between SACQ and RSA scores from students throughout this two week period with the results from the current study. This would allow conclusions to be drawn about the impact that resilience has on adjustment for new students, and whether applications of the findings from the current study may be applied to the cohort of subsequent students.

The second hypothesis, that there is a difference between school leaver and mature entry students adjustment to university, was not supported. This indicates that there may not be as much of a difference between these two student groups as research previously suggested (Cantwell et al., 2001; Justice & Dornan, 2001; Taniguchi & Kaufman, 2005), particularly in terms of adjusting to the university environment. These findings may also suggest that the adversities experienced by both groups do not affect the specific construct of adjustment, or that their varying adversities lead to similar levels of adjustment. It is likely that school leaver students are increasingly finding it necessary to find employment to support themselves whilst studying. This cohort of students may be experiencing time constraints similar to those of mature entry students.

However, some other possible

explanations for the finding that there is no difference between school leaver and mature entry students' adjustments to university come from existing research. Urquhart and Pooley (2007) argue that there are differences between mature entry and school leavers experiences in terms of adjustment to university, however, they also highlight that there are many individual differences. In this sample the individual differences outweigh the group differences. Cantwell et al. (2001) say that there is a marginal disadvantage for non-traditional students (i.e., mature entry students) studying at university in terms of achievement and adjustment, though there is a positive effect on adjustment for older non-traditional students, particularly females. This may help explain the current findings as chronological age was not the focus in this study. Those mature entry students that are chronologically older may have positively skewed the results, and the younger aged mature entry students may in fact be less adjusted than the general university population.

Brooks and DuBois (1995) suggest in their research that in comparison to environmental variables, individual variables were related most strongly to adjustment. Therefore the individual variables may seem to explain why there is little difference shown between school leavers and mature entry students in the current sample. This lack of differences between groups is further supported by Taniguchi and Kaufman's (2005) research, suggesting that being young facilitates academic adjustment and success, which contradicts the findings from Cantwell et al. (2001) who suggest there is a positive effect on adjustment for older non-traditional students. Taniguchi and Kaufman (2005) suggest that more important variables than mode of entry facilitate adjustment, such as the number of prior enrolments and high status vocational background. It is these types of individual differences that seem to influence one's adjustment to university.

The non support for hypothesis three, that mature entry students would exhibit higher levels of resilience than school leavers, suggests

that the particular experiences that set mature entry students apart from their school leaver counterparts, including: giving up full-time employment, supporting a family, and reintegrating into an academic context (Challis, 1976), do not impact resilience. That is, mature entry students who are currently attending university are not exhibiting greater levels of resilience than school leaver students in adapting to the university environment. Feinstein and Hammond (2004) suggested that higher levels of resilience occur as a function of age, because older adults have the necessary resources needed to maintain their course of action as they have had longer to develop those resources. Although age was not specifically analysed in the current study, it must be highlighted that mature entry students are, by definition, 20 years old or over upon entry, and school leavers are under 20 years old on entry. Therefore although the current study contradicts Feinstein and Hammond's (2004) findings, it is likely that the results from Feinstein and Hammond (2004) support the idea that the university environment in which the sample was obtained is particularly well equipped for non-traditional students of diverse backgrounds (Pooley, Young, Haunold, Pike, & O'Donnell, 2000) and thus diverse levels of resilience.

Further to this, Beasley et al. (2003) suggest that resilience predominantly has a large impact on mature entry students. The current study supports the notion that resilience does have a large impact on mature entry students' adjustment to university; however, it does not suggest that resilience predominantly affects mature entry students over school leaver students. The current research is not suggesting that mature entry students and school leaver students have the same experiences in transitioning to university, but rather, the two groups face different adversities that may culminate in a similar need for resilience to adjust to the university environment.

The SACQ is Americanised in that two

items in particular ask about on-campus living (which are to be omitted if the participant does not reside on campus). Living on campus is quite common within American university populations and is less common within the Australian universities, particularly at the new age university where participants were sought for the current study. Future research may focus on adjusting the instrument for an Australian context. Finally, research using larger samples would also increase the statistical power of these types of studies.

Future research may look at being conducted within the first two weeks of study to examine whether resilience and adjustment are important earlier in the transition process. An important variable to include in follow up studies is academic success. Academic success has been tied in with adjustment (Baker & Siryk, 1986), and it may be of interest to determine to what extent this is so. It would also be interesting to find whether resilience has any impact on academic success as well. Academic success or at least course completion is, naturally, most students end goal of studying at university.

Conclusion

The most pertinent point arising from the findings suggesting a lack of differences between school leaver and mature entry students in terms of adjustment and resilience is that students need to be considered on an individual rather than a group basis. It is surprising that mature entry students and school leaver students do not differ in their levels of resilience and adaptation, however, it is not unlikely that this is truly the case. These two cohorts are increasingly put under various and probably equal pressures when embarking on, and throughout, their university studies. Given the disparity in previous research indicating differences between these two groups (e.g., Compas et al., 1986; Feinstein & Hammond, 2004; Justice & Dornan, 2001; Taniguchi & Kaufman, 2005) it seems it is even more likely that there is no difference between the two groups. This ties in with findings from Urquhart

and Pooley (2007) suggesting that university adjustment is dependent on a number of individual factors, and is supported by Gall et al. (2000) who express that the quantity and kind of life transformations experienced and the size and helpfulness of students' social support systems influence the adjustment process. Different people experience many different life transformations and these factors are highly individual, thus necessitating the need for an individual approach to helping students of any type adjust to the university environment.

However, the finding that adjustment and resilience are related is encouraging, especially in terms of the practical implication of detecting those at risk of not adjusting successfully to university when embarking upon an undergraduate course of study.

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Understanding and Assisting Excessive Players of Video Games: A Community Psychology Perspective

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Research has shown that a small but significant minority of video game players play excessively. Excessive play has been linked to fatigue, diminished productivity in work and school, and poor social relationships. The present study investigated the psychological and social context of video game playing in order to understand the phenomenon of excessive video game play. A group interview method was employed using a sample of 38 participants, including 23 adolescents and 15 adults. The analysis of results revealed several salient themes, including those related to player empowerment, recognition (feeling recognised for skilful playing), control (mastery of the game mechanics), and completion (obtaining all in-game rewards). The implications for community psychologists attempting to help excessive video game players are discussed.

The question of why some people play video games excessively is a current subject of debate among mental health professionals. Over the last decade, studies have investigated the role of players' personality and other individual factors in explaining why some players play to excess (Douse & McManus, 1993; Griffiths & Dancaster, 1995; Black, Belsare & Schlosser, 1999; Yang, 2001). These studies have tended to approach the study of excessive video game play from a person-focussed, clinically-oriented perspective, referring to addiction and social learning models, rather than examining the psychological context of video game playing. This study takes an alternate approach by adopting a community psychology perspective, and considers the psychosocial context and the role of structural elements of video games which may lead a person to play video games to excess.

Before attempting to explain why some individuals play video excessively, it is necessary to qualify what it meant by the term 'excessive' and how this definition fits within the current discourse on technological addictions. The notion that video game playing may be considered a form of behavioural addiction, like problem gambling, has been an ongoing subject of debate for over twenty-five

years (Fisher, 1994; Griffiths, 2008; Griffiths & Davies, 2005). Some theorists argue that the construct validity of technological addictions, including dependency on video games and the Internet, has yet to emerge and thus the term 'addiction' should not be used (Jaffe, 1990; Shaffer, Hall & Vander Bilt, 2000). On the other hand, it has been argued that any activity may be considered as potentially addictive if an individual presents with all six criteria of the components addiction model: salience, mood modification, withdrawal, tolerance, relapse, and conflict (Griffiths & Davies, 2005). Charlton and Danforth (2007) have argued that salience and euphoria associated with video game playing should not be considered as inherently problematic because these symptoms may simply characterise 'high engagement' in video games (i.e., a healthy enthusiasm for playing video games).

Given these conflicting views on 'problem' video game playing or video game 'addiction', there exists some degree of conceptual confusion regarding excessive video game playing as a problematic activity in its own right. For the purpose of parsimony, this paper employs a simple definition that considers video game playing to be 'excessive' when it creates adverse personal and social consequences in a person's life. This definition

allows for some flexibility in its interpretation, as well as the capacity to identify persons whose playing may be more excessive than others. It is not intended as a tool for the diagnosis of 'excessive' players, but as a general guide for considering issues that may relate to excessive video game play in significant ways.

Community psychology is concerned with the study of people within the context of their own settings and social systems. Orford (1992) has argued that individuals are in a state of continuing transaction with the various settings in which they spend time as part of their everyday lives. This transaction is characterised by reciprocity: the individual's participation within their social system affects the system at large, and the various characteristics of the system also affect the individual. This interplay between person and context, it is argued, cannot be broken down into smaller units of analysis, but must be considered as a 'gestalt' entity. Video games are often considered as complex social contexts or social spaces (Fisher, 1995; Jansz & Martens, 2005; Valentine & Holloway, 2002), therefore a community psychology approach may offer a new perspective on why some individuals become excessive players, and may offer some practical solutions for helping these individuals.

A reanalysis of Allen and Britt's (1983) feedback model of social class and psychological disorders may be useful in understanding excessive video game playing. In their model, there is a relationship between stressful life events and psychological problems which is mediated by social class. Social class acts in two main ways: it affects the likelihood of stress, and the speed with which the feedback between the psychological problem and stressful life events occurs. For excessive video game players, it may be useful to consider the role of social class in this model in an additional way. There is a great deal of literature that shows how a player can take on a 'new' social class (i.e., status as

defined by the video game context, most notably within online games but this is also applicable to offline, 'stand alone' games) and can become an integral part of the social network associated with the video game (Engelberg & Sjoberg, 2004; Jansz & Tanis, 2007; Valentine & Holloway, 2002). A social role in the video game may grant a person a temporary release from stressful life events. As a player's video game status increases (i.e., becomes more powerful and recognised by others), it may be perceived as more important than the player's social class in the real world (which may be less upwardly mobile). It is important to note that the resources – personal, social, economic - available to the player in the video game may far outnumber those available in the real world. In this way, the model predicts that a large divide between a player's video game status and real life social class, in conjunction with stressful life events, will increase vulnerability to playing video games to excess.

Research into excessive video game playing is limited in the Australian context. However, there have been a number of studies overseas which have examined the importance of structural characteristics in video games in explaining the appeal of video games (Chumbley & Griffiths, 2006; Johansson & Gotestam, 2004; Wood, Griffiths, Chappell, & Davies, 2004). Other studies have emphasised the importance of the social nature of video games in explaining why some individuals become highly involved (Griffiths, Davies, & Chappell, 2004; Ng & Wiemer-Hastings, 2005). Charlton and Danforth (2007) stated that many video games may be attractive because *players take-on the role of a character in a virtual environment in which a story line evolves over time and the time frame in which an event will occur is unpredictable... [and] they are particularly good at inducing operant conditioning via variable-ratio reinforcement schedules* (p. 1534).

Despite this literature that highlights the importance of the social and structural features in video game playing, there have been few published studies which examine the role of these factors in excessive video game playing.

This qualitative study set out to examine in greater detail how individuals become excessively involved in video games, by exploring the relationship between player, video game machine and the social context of player-machine interaction. It was hoped that this approach would enable a broad and coherent explanation for the phenomena of excessive video game playing, particularly in relation to the structural characteristics of video games, the video game player and the wider social network of players.

Method

Participants

Seven semi-structured group interviews were conducted (three groups of four participants and four groups ranging from three to eight participants in size). The total sample was 38 participants, including 23 adolescents (15 males, 8 females) and 15 adults (11 males, 4 females). The mean age of the adolescent group was 16.2 years ($SD=0.7$) and the mean age of the adult group was 30.4 years ($SD=6.7$). In terms of video game play, the adolescent group reported playing between 3 and 40 hours per week ($M=14.5$, $SD=12.3$) and the adult group reported playing between 2 to 35 hours per week ($M=18.1$, $SD=11.2$). By conducting the interviews in small groups, participants felt comfortable discussing their experiences playing video games. Previous work has noted that group interviews may minimise any perceived power imbalance between researcher and participants (Wood & Griffiths, 2002).

Materials

A pilot interview study was carried out using four adult video game players. These players' input assisted in the construction of a group interview protocol, including the development of a set of interview questions (see Appendix). These questions were

designed to enquire about players' motivations for playing video games, including what features of games were attractive or rewarding, and what characteristics of video games would keep them playing in a typical playing session. These general questions led into a discussion of excessive video game playing behaviour. Given the participants' broad range of experiences with video games, participants were encouraged to discuss related areas that they considered to be of relevance to the question. The interview protocol was flexible enough to accommodate responses that deviated from interview questions. Prior to taking part in the study, all participants were asked to fill out a short questionnaire concerning the frequency of their video game playing. The audio of all group interviews was recorded.

Procedure

Adolescent participants were obtained by contacting the principal and secondary psychology teacher of a high school in a regional city. Three classes of students were selected for participation in the study. An adult sample was obtained by word of mouth requests at a local non-business internet gaming group. Interviews were conducted in a separate room at the gaming venue. Given that this study was concerned with video game-related experiences, potential participants were checked for eligibility to participate by employing the screening question: "Do you consider yourself a gamer?". A 'gamer' is a commonly used term for a person who plays video games. The mean reported amount of experience playing video games was 11.7 years ($SD=7.7$), so this screening method appeared to be successful. Food and drink refreshments were provided for all participants following the interview.

Establishing rapport was a critical part of the data collection process, especially when interviewing the adolescent participants. To ensure that all participants felt comfortable, there was a brief period of friendly conversation (approximately five minutes) prior to the interviews. The first researcher being a 'gamer' helped to make participants feel more

comfortable referring to specific video games when discussing their playing experiences. Participants consented to having their responses recorded and were informed that these responses would be kept anonymous.

Data analysis

Interview data were analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This process involved three steps. First, the recordings were transcribed and then the transcripts were checked against the tapes for accuracy. Second, the most salient themes were identified. Each data item was given equal attention in the coding process to ensure an inclusive and comprehensive process. A separate document was created to store a list of all identified themes, as well as record a series of relevant extracts which illustrated each theme. The third step involved using this initial set of themes as a framework to reanalyse the transcripts. All transcripts were reread multiple times to ensure a good fit of the data, as well as to ensure that themes were internally coherent, consistent, and distinctive.

Results

The results are presented in five sections. The first section discusses the notion of 'empowerment' in relation to the video game playing experience; the second section discusses the role of social networks and social responsibility in video games; the third section examines video game rewards and reward delivery in relation to player motivation; the fourth section discusses the player's belief that no amount of time spent playing is 'long enough'; and the final section explores the adverse consequences of excessive play. Direct quotes from the participants are used to highlight the various themes that arose during the group interviews, but these quotes do not represent all of the quotes related to that theme. To ensure participant confidentiality, each quotation has been assigned a coding reference relating to (a) which group the participant was in, and (b) the age and gender

of the participant. Therefore, a coding of 'G1, F, 32' indicates a 32-year-old female participant who participated in the first group interview.

Player empowerment in relation to player recognition and control

This section explores two main ways in which video games can be argued to empower the player. Empowerment refers to a heightened sense of power or authority (Rappaport, 1987). This notion will be explored in relation to participants' experience of feeling a sense of mastery over the virtual properties of the video game environment as well as a sense of contextual status or rank, either from feedback within the video game or in relation to other video game users. These two ideas are represented by the themes of 'control' and 'recognition'.

'Control' was a dominant theme throughout the interviews. This theme refers to the notion that video games grant a player a strong sense of personal agency within the game context. The majority of participants expressed enjoyment at being able to manipulate and interact with features of the video game environment, or exert some influence over the outcome of in-game events. As one participant stated,

You can test what these things do when you input them. You'd hit a combination of keys and activate a booster for health or speed or all these tools that would come in really handy" [G4, M, 21].

Participants also reported a sense of personal freedom in being able to choose how a video game's story would be resolved or controlling the outcome of in-game events using personal strategy ("*In the game you can follow whatever path you want to, and you control it" [G3, F, 18]).*

Some participants felt that video games were more immersive than film or literature because they were able to participate actively, rather than be only passively involved. One structural feature of video games related to player control was the ability to 'save' one's

progress in the game. This feature enables the player to 'reload' an earlier part of the game if they wish to correct an error or otherwise repeat a previous game section (*"I like being able to replay it over and over, getting a part done just right"* [G2, M, 22]).

'Recognition' was another important theme related to empowerment. Many participants reported a sense of fulfilment associated with being rewarded or 'recognised' for having invested tens to hundreds of hours playing some video games. Examples included being given a special title or rank within the game, earning unique items for in-game characters, like weapons or armour, or even an in-game timer that recorded time spent playing the game. Part of the value of these items related to the difficulty in acquiring them,

The best sword in the game is hard to come by. But that's good and bad, bad because I don't get a sword really quickly but that's good because everyone else doesn't [G2, M, 17].

'Meta-game' features also recognised players' effort and time commitment. A common example was online player 'leader boards', where players could compare their progress in a video game with their friends or other players. The 'achievement point' system for a popular video game console system (Xbox360) was also mentioned. Achievement points are similar to loyalty rewards programs; they reward players for not only completing the game but also for performing rather esoteric or unusual actions, such as playing a game non-stop for eight hours, or playing a game with 16 other players at once. Another example was *"playing 1000 games so you can get the Elite achievement points"* [G2, M, 23]. Recognition features were very appealing to male participants, but were less interesting for female participants.

Social networks have associated social responsibilities

It is undeniable that modern video games feature numerous advanced social

utility functions, which coalesce to connect the individual to many others within a large social network. In this study, all participants reported to enjoy playing video games with 'multiplayer' support. The social nature of video game playing was the primary appeal of the activity for some players. Common experiences included helping friends to earn in-game rewards or other achievements, cooperating together to finish a video game, or competing in a team against other players. These experiences were sometimes framed as a type of 'social responsibility' within the network (one participant even referred to the video game as his *"second job"*). Some participants reported that video games enabled a type of online community which shares a common space for the anonymous exchange of personal information as well as information about the video game.

Players reported to adopt an identity within this online 'space' that is associated with the names, titles, language and/or motifs within the video game (*"I have this friend who'll ask me what I'm doing and I'll say "I'm the Hero of Cyrodiil". He's a super, fantastical hero"* [G6, M, 17]), which reinforces a sense of 'togetherness' when working together to achieve various goals within the game. A video game community is composed of a number of social institutions and groupings which exist in the online world, which have the functional purpose of linking certain kinds of players together. Often these social groups hold organised events in the video game that can run for unpredictable periods of time. These events require the participation of a network of players and thus create a 'social responsibility' for each player within that network (*"You are part of the playing group and they rely on you"* [G6, F, 27]).

This responsibility makes it very difficult for participants to stop playing a video game prematurely (i.e., before other players have 'finished') and also encourages the player not to spend too long away from a video game. As one participant stated, *"We're in a team of eight,*

and you can't really stop if only one person wants to stop so you're locked in" [G4, M, 16].

Players also noted the reciprocal nature of social responsibility in the video game world (*"If they've helped you out before, then you just have to keep playing" [G2, M, 15]*).

Rewards and reward delivery in relation to player motivation

Video games may be conceptualised as a system that delivers many different rewards based on players' actions. For participants, it was important how a video game presented a reward to the player in response to 'correct' or skilful behaviour. Some common notions of what constituted a 'good' reward were evident through analysis. 'Good' rewards tended to challenge the player's skill level i.e., not too easy or hard to obtain, were novel in nature and commensurate to a player's effort (*"If you can beat it without any challenge, then that's no fun" [G2, M, 16]*; *"It's great so long as it's not always the same reward over and over" [G2, M, 16]*).

Rewards in video games were particularly salient to the male participants aged between 16 and 25 years, and were reported to motivate repeated plays of the video game (*"I think your achievements or rewards are what keep you coming back to games" [G1, M, 24]*). The rewards in video games were often reported to be the primary motivation for playing (*"I think more about the achievements and rewards over anything else" [G1, M, 23]*).

Participants stated that many video games have complex reward structures that demand multi-tasking management skills and a great deal of player concentration. Many participants felt that concurrent in-game goals (i.e., playing to earn more than one reward at a time) constantly renewed their motivation to play the video game. This was described as a kind of 'reward cycle', in which one goal would be close to completion just as another was completed, so the player would be motivated to obtain or finish off the partially completed goal,

I always want to get to the next level, or you want to just finish that bit off. But you find that you've got five other bars that are really close to the next level" [G4, M, 15].

Participants also discussed video games with variable ratio reinforcement schedules, wherein players are rewarded frequently in the early stages of the game, and then less often in later stages. Participants reported spending long periods of time in the later stages of these reward schedules (i.e., when rewards were delivered highly infrequently), not wanting to leave the video game until a major reward was obtained. If a playing session were interrupted before a major reward was obtained or human error caused a game to end prematurely, then participants reported feeling anxious to return quickly to the video game to obtain the associated reward

Sometimes when I have to exit the game to go to work, I keep thinking about how I haven't finished the bit of the game I was working on. It can make you feel impatient for work to finish so you get back on it [G1, M, 23].

This experience of needing to return to game quickly was referred to by a number of players as satisfying the 'need for completion'.

The variable-ratio reinforcement schedules in video games and participants' need to complete goals often produced what was termed 'grinding' behaviour. Grinding refers to the repetition of an action or series of actions in a video game in order to obtain a reward. In this way, grinding is a mathematically optimal method of acquiring in-game rewards, but the player is sacrificing variety of game play (*"Building up skills means doing the same stuff over and over, like working a really repetitive second job" [G5, M, 33]*). Grinding may involve hours of playing, sometimes uninterrupted, in

order to yield the desired rewards (“*Like you get 10 points and you need 3000 so you’ve just got to keep farming them for a long, long time before you can get what you’re after*” [G4, M, 16]).

None of the male participants reported enjoying the process of grinding, but many felt that there was no other way to satisfy their personal sense of completion concerning a video game (“*Trying to finish something or unlock something and not necessarily enjoying the game, but just wanting to get it done. Satisfying the need for completion*” [G1, M, 24]; “*I played the same level 10 times to get the full set of armour. So that gets frustrating but you have to do it if you want the items*” [G6, M, 27]). There were no data in the study to suggest that female participants had experience or interest in using grinding strategies.

Belief that no amount of time spent playing is ‘long enough’

Many participants reported to continue playing a video game even when the experience ceased to be fun or pleasurable. This led to a discussion of when players felt they had played for ‘long enough’ and whether any features of video games prompted the player to end a playing session. The majority of female participants indicated that they usually quit a video game when they had finished a level in the game, or felt bored by the game. In contrast, many of the male participants reported that they never felt they had played ‘long enough’ in a typical playing session. The desire to continue playing when the game was no longer fun was attributed to the variable reward structure of the game (i.e., the notion that the next reward might be ‘right around the next corner’), and also to the fact that many of the games they played had no definitive ‘end point’. As one participant stated, “*I never really feel like I’ve played a game for long enough. There’s always something more because I don’t really get games that have an end*” [G3, M, 16]).

Online role-playing games, such as

Blizzard Entertainment’s *World of Warcraft*, are known for their lack of a conclusion and can be played indefinitely. The virtually unlimited quantity of rewards in some video games can lead some players on an interminable effort to obtain as many rewards as they can. Concurrent reward structures like two in-game tasks running simultaneously, multiple ‘experience bars’ or other onscreen meters of player progress, and completing one goal and being close to the next kept many participants from taking breaks. For this reason, some participants reported that they only stopped playing a video game when they felt too physically sore or fatigued to continue (“*When my arms and hands are getting sore*” [G6, M, 32]; “*When my fingers aren’t moving fast enough or my hand is asleep*” [G4, M, 16]), or when an external event like meal times or a partner’s request to stop forced them to exit the game (“*Some other external factor, like tea time, that drives you away*” [G7, M, 30]). The key point is that, for some players, the video game playing session does not terminate itself naturally through play.

Excessive playing has negative psychosocial consequences

It is clear that video games can offer a distinct and rewarding experience to the end user. Therefore, it is not surprising that many of the respondents reported that it was difficult to regulate video game playing and sometimes played video games for excessive periods. The fact that the video game machine is located in the home environment appears to make it difficult for players to take time away from the game,

The only thing I don’t like is that you can get so involved that you just want to keep going and you can’t get away from it because it’s always there [G2, M, 16].

Some participants referred to some video games as being “*addictive*”, but this term was employed to emphasise both the positive and negative aspects of the game. A common

consequence of long playing sessions was conflict with important life responsibilities. Participants identified a range of life commitments which had been sacrificed or compromised in some way in order to prioritise a video game playing experience,

Another aspect that I don't like about video games is that it can impact on your family life if you're not careful. It starts to conflict with other important things, like money, jobs, and normal relationships [G5, M, 49].

These experiences included neglecting real life social relationships, diminished school and work productivity (“*I have played all night, had a shower and then went to work*” [G5, M, 49]), ignoring household duties and irregular sleep patterns,

None of us had slept for about 24 hours. I don't think anyone of us wanted to stop but certainly the game kept us engaged and playing for longer than any of us bloody well wanted to” [G7, M, 30].

Discussion

The present study employed qualitative interviews to explore the psychosocial context of excessive video game play. The results showed that a video game can be an empowering agent that gives a player a sense of mastery as well as a sense of status within the context of the game. Video games are also highly rewarding because of the social networks that the player can connect to, enabling them to take on various social responsibilities which provide a sense of identity and belonging within a large community of other players. There are also reward systems within video games which play an important role in sustaining player motivation. The nature of these systems is similar in many ways to gambling machines insofar as delivering rewards on variable-ratio and fixed-interval schedules. The relevance of these factors for community psychologists who seek to help excessive video game players will

be discussed.

This study suggests that people play video games excessively because of the strong feelings of empowerment associated with video games. It is possible that one reason why people play video games to excess may be the lack of empowerment that they have in the real world. Durkin (1995) has stated that video games are designed to facilitate and reward player control and eventual mastery over the video game environment. By comparison, the real world can be an uncertain place that may not treat the individual fairly. For some players, the ‘real’ world may in fact be the video game’s setting, as it is within this interactive space that the player has developed a sense of mastery and feels recognised by others. Castronova (2005) has stated that some people view video game worlds as the best place available to them. In this sense, there may appear to be little incentive for some players to leave the world of the video game. For community psychologists, addressing this notion of empowerment is crucial for helping an excessive player bring their video game playing habits into balance with other life responsibilities. One approach is to help the player to develop strategies and/or life skills to regain control and feel socially rewarded in other areas of their life, such as school, work and relationships. This approach may be complimented by rallying social support for the player as he or she spends more time in non-video game activities.

McMillan and Chavis (1986) have stated that membership to a group is defined by boundaries, emotional safety, a sense of belonging, personal investment and a common language. This study has explored some of the ways in which group membership operates in the social context of video game play. The interview data suggested that: (a) there are boundaries in games indicated by the status of the player’s in-game character, among many other factors, (b) there is a sense of emotional safety in terms of the video game world offering an anonymous space for the exchange of personal information, (c) there is a sense of

belonging through teamwork and competitive pursuits, (d) there is personal investment in terms of players spending long periods of time to acquire in-game rewards, and (e) there is a rich language and symbol system within video games that players develop and use (this paper could not formally address these in detail but there were many examples of video game-related 'jargon' in the transcripts). These are normal and healthy features of group membership; however, these characteristics also provide useful units of analysis for community psychologists in dealing with excessive players of video games. For example, excessive video game play may be characterised by an intense personal investment in the video game. The difficulty for the player in reducing time spent playing is reconciling the personal dilemma that spending less time in the game enables more free time in the real world, but time spent away from the game means fewer video game-related rewards (i.e., abandoning a large personal investment).

Some players appear to form a strong relationship or bond with the video game machine. Selnow (1984) referred to this attachment as "electronic friendship" (p. 155). At its extreme, excessive players may prefer to play the game over spending time with real life friends because it is easier than managing interpersonal relationships and helps to forget feelings of social loneliness. The implication of 'electronic friendship' is players who reduce time spent playing video games are, for all intents and purposes, reducing time spent with a 'friend'. This perspective offers a sensitive insight into the player's negative mood state (that may be termed 'withdrawal' in clinical psychology) that may accompany a decrease or cessation of time spent playing a video game. Sarason (1974) conceptualised social belonging as an acknowledged interdependence with others, and a willingness to maintain this interdependence by giving or doing to others what one expects from them. The problem of electronic friendship is that a machine has no shared values, no emotions,

places no expectations on the player as a friend, and offers no social rewards. The implication is that community psychologists may need to assist the excessive player in understanding the quality of the attachment that has been formed with his or her video game machine. A possible strategy to reduce the player's dependence on the machine is to integrate the person into new social networks that can gratify needs for social belonging.

Player motivation appears to be heavily influenced by the variable-ratio or fixed-interval reward delivery systems in video games. In terms of the nature of rewards, participants reported to prefer video game goals that are not too easy or difficult to obtain.

Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) theory of optimal experience, termed 'flow', states that people reach a motivational peak when engaged in a challenging task that is optimally difficult. This study identified male players who do not seek out optimally challenging video game situations, and instead use 'grinding' tactics, which involves performing an easy and repetitive series of actions in a game in order to maximise reward payout. These participants did not always enjoy the process of grinding but felt it was necessary to satisfy a personal sense of achievement or completion. Video games with concurrent reward schedules that do not have definitive endpoints may also condition the player to think that no amount of time spent playing is 'long enough'. These findings are in line with research that has shown that gamblers will continue to gamble even when they are bored by or no longer enjoy the activity, and report irritation on winning because it sustains a session of play (Blaszczynski, McConaghy, & Frankova, 1990). Helping an excessive player may involve education about the never-ending nature of some video games and how this can influence motivation to play for periods longer than intended.

Rather than adopting a traditional, person-focussed therapeutic approach aimed at addressing various intra-psychic deficits of the individual, such as depression or anxiety, it may

be worthwhile to attend to the environment which maintains a problem video game playing habit. In community psychology, this intervention is called 'second-order change' and involves addressing aspects of the environment which support problem behaviour (Rappaport, 1977). A community psychologist may work together with the player to identify specific environmental factors which promote, develop and maintain unhealthy playing patterns. For example, a community psychologist may recommend that: (a) the player does not have a video game machine in the same room as the person sleeps, to avoid poor sleep hygiene practices, (b) the player has a clock in the same room as the video game machine to monitor playing times (and the player could also set an alarm when playing video games to prompt the end of a playing session), (c) the player plays in a well-lit room to minimise the subjective experience of time loss, (d) the player eats meals in a different room of the house as the playing machine, and (e) the player unplugs and stores away the video game machine when it is not in use, and/or arranges furniture so that it is not facing the video game machine.

The interview data suggested that some video games may be more 'addictive' than others due to the structural features of the game. For example, a person is less likely to spend as long playing a 'casual' puzzle game than an online role-playing game. The latter game type contains potentially 'risky' structural characteristics which make playing more difficult to self-regulate. Broadly, risky features include the requirement of the player to spend increasingly longer amounts of time in order to make progress, and the lack of a definitive endpoint to the game. It is important that parents of younger players are knowledgeable about the kinds of video games which are often associated with excessive playing. The classification labels on video games refer only to explicit content, like violence and language, but they do not contain information on elements like how long the

game takes to complete, and other features which may influence the 'addictiveness' of the video game. Parents should take an active role in their children's media choices and playing patterns, and open a dialogue to discuss what gratification needs the video game fulfils in their life. For adult players, friends and partners who suspect that a person is playing video games excessively should also follow this strategy. Given that some adults play video games to escape or dissociate from the real world, it is possible that these players may not be aware of the extent of their playing habit. It may be beneficial for the player's real life social support network to point out to the player (in a non-threatening and non-judgemental manner) his or her high level of involvement and how it negatively affects their psychosocial wellbeing. Making the consequences of excessive playing more salient may serve to initiate that player's desire for positive self-change.

Players may benefit from discussing their experiences on online message boards related to excessive video game play. They can receive factual information, including guides to healthy playing styles and ways of managing stressors that trigger the desire to play video games. In addition, players can provide and receive support and feedback from others, including those individuals who formerly played excessively. Support services can also help people who are close to an excessive player, such as a parent or spouse, because they can provide support and practical advice, such as suggesting alternative activities during times when the player would usually play video games. In tandem with these support services, community psychologists should consider the role of introducing excessive players of all ages to other social, non-sedentary (and, importantly, time-limited) activities, such as sport and recreation groups, which can offer a sense of achievement and belongingness within a team-based environment.

This research offers additional support

for the notion that excessive video game playing is largely influenced by the ways in which video games deliver rewards to players for skilful behaviour, and the nature of social networking within video game environments. This paper was intended to provide specialist information about the general appeal of video games to mental health professionals who may be unfamiliar with video game technologies and, more importantly, explain how these technologies relate the phenomenon of excessive video game play. Community psychology can assist excessive video game players by helping them to develop a sense of belonging outside of the world of video games, and educating them about the features of video games which keep them playing excessively. As video games become increasingly complex and appealing, it is also important that players are aware of the psychosocial context of video game play and how it can affect their video game playing motivations, for better or worse.

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Appendix

Interview questions

1. What are your favourite aspects of video games?
2. What are your least favourite aspects of video games?
3. When not playing video games, what thoughts about video games most often enter your mind? What do you daydream about specifically?
4. When playing a video game, what features of the game keep you playing longer than you expected? What makes it hard to get off the game?
5. What features of games make you turn them off or no longer want to continue playing?
6. Do you ever find it hard to stop playing a video game once you've started?
7. Have you ever had the experience of playing a video game and not really enjoyed playing, but continued playing anyway? What made you keep playing?
8. When do you feel like you have played a video game for "long enough"?
9. When does a video game make you feel content that you've played for "long enough"?
10. Have you ever wanted to stop playing a video game, but couldn't because you were playing with friends, either with online friends or with friends in the same room?
11. Do you ever think about specific video game characters when not playing? What do you like or dislike about them?

12. Do you ever think about the storylines in video games? What do you like or dislike about them?

13. Do you ever think about specific items, achievements or rewards in games? What do you like or dislike about them?

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Giving Psychology Away for the Common Good: Reflections of a Novice Community Psychologist

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This article presents a brief history and description of community psychology through the eyes of a novice community psychologist. From this fresh perspective, four foundational thoughts of the field are explored, drawing on an overview of the literature and personal reflection. The author suggests that community psychology encourages psychologists to Think Upside-Down, Think Long-Term, Think Plural, and Think Eco. In conclusion, two predictions for the future of community psychology are offered. The aim of this article is to provide a humble, hopeful perspective on the field of community psychology and challenge community psychologists, veteran and novice alike, to move towards a more sustainable, globally interconnected future.

I'm rather embarrassed to admit that the phrase "Community Psychology" did not exist in my vocabulary a mere 12 months ago. My training and practice in the helping professions had been almost exclusively focused on the understanding and treating of individuals. While I found my work fulfilling, I often wondered about the larger picture of social justice and the impact of the broader social context. All of that changed one cold, winter evening as I happened across a website describing the field which would change my life. I soon fell in love, became the newest convert, and began pursuing a career as a community psychologist.

One of the first articles I encountered from the early days of community psychology was by George Miller (1969). Forty years ago, he eloquently exhorted his peers to "give psychology away," (p. 1071) opening a new way for the helping professions. It is Miller's vision that I build on here, casting a glance backwards and a glimpse forward. With humility, I approach the subject of defining community psychology from my perspective and posing a prediction or two about the future direction of my newly beloved field. This perspective is admittedly novice and certainly incomplete compared to the vast works of the giants of the field, those who have walked this journey for decades. Yet, perhaps a set of novice eyes can provide a fresh perspective on

the field as it presently stands and point towards a bright future.

A Brief History

A curious search on Google Earth had me staring down at Swampscott, Massachusetts (Google, 2008). I must admit that there was nothing particularly mythical or attractive about this place from above. Yet it was here, in the fertile ground of 1965, that a most amazing event took place. The Conference for the Education of Psychologists for Community Mental Health was a seemingly innocuous gathering of inconspicuous psychologists seeking to establish the role of psychology in the expanding United States Community Mental Health System. Instead, these visionary participants experienced a "deep stirring and metamorphosis," (p. 4) and emerged with a new expression for the profession of psychology (Bennett, Cooper, Hassol, Klein, & Rosenblum, 1966).

However, the birth of community psychology cannot be narrowed down to a singular time and place, but evolved globally in a plurality of forms. Fryer (2008a) has proposed a European origin for community psychology, dating back to the work of Marie Jahoda in the early 1930s. As early as the 1950s, Brazilian community psychology had emerged with the involvement of psychologists in social action and poverty

alleviation in the midst of often oppressive governments (Freitas, 2000). The practice of Latin American community psychology continued to grow in many countries (Mexico, Columbia, El Salvador, Peru, etc.) largely independent of foreign influence (Montero, 2008). On the other side of the globe, community psychology developed in Australia and New Zealand (Aotearoa) as early as the 1970s and now has a more widespread application than in the United States with a major focus on the social issues surrounding Indigenous peoples (Fisher, Gridley, Thomas, & Bishop, 2008). Community psychology continues to emerge and thrive in places from South Africa to Italy (Orford, 2008), and this trend promises to continue as we move further into the 21st century.

A Definition

Despite the global presence and widespread impact of community psychology, it is still a relatively young field, and thus continues to work through growing pains as it comes into its own. Many have proposed solid definitions of community psychology (Dalton, Elias & Wandersman, 2007; Golann, 1975; Orford, 2008), Drawing from these, I would define the field as the following:

Community psychology is the collaboration of professionals and citizens in the practice of rigorous research and intensive action focused on helping individuals and communities flourish in the perpetuation of the common good.

In essence, community psychology requires a shift in thinking from the individualism espoused by Western culture and the traditional practice of psychology to the embrace of a multifaceted, complex understanding of individuals within contexts. Shinn and Toohy (2003) described a “context minimalization error” (p. 428) which overlooks the affects of environment and leads to bankrupt theories and interventions. Kelly (2006) challenged us to avoid psychological reductionism which seeks simple solutions, but rather to embrace a degree of complexity in

understanding human behavior. An emphasis on individual explanations limits the ability to create social change (Maton, Perkins, & Saegert, 2006). These revolutionary ideas require more than an academic acknowledgement, but rather a seismic shift in the foundation of our thinking. It is to four of these foundational thoughts that we shall now turn. I propose that community psychology requires us to: Think Upside Down, Think Long-term, Think Plural, and Think Eco.

Think Upside Down

Community psychologists speak a language different from most of the mainstream power brokers and the familiar top-down approach. This approach has its roots in the Enlightenment and assumes an expertise on the part of trained professionals to the exclusion of citizen involvement (Smith, 2008). For example, authority and power are assigned to the few who make decisions which then are implemented down the food chain. Consider the hierarchical flow charts of Fortune 500 companies or the neo-liberal agenda of Washington D.C.. These approaches have unintended consequences and fail to effectively address the breadth of social needs. One example of this comes from government aid programs in rural Botswana. Lekoko and Van Der Merwe (2006) found that the top-down, hand-out approach fails to adequately address community needs and has byproducts of dependency and a lack of ownership in the process.

Community psychology presents a vision in which power is exposed and turned on its head. Rappaport (1981) has long argued for an approach which embraces all people as human beings and considers ordinary citizens to be the best experts on life in their context. This idea has most often been characterised as empowerment, a concept which refers to the process by which people achieve increased access to, and control of, needed resources (Wiley & Rappaport, 2000). Unfortunately, many efforts of psychologists have modeled top-down approaches in which the professional

experts use their power to bring change to less-powerful and supposedly less-knowledgeable clientele, often with catastrophic results (Prilleltensky, 2008). Further, the Western conception of empowerment tends to be individualistic and has different implications in collectivist societies (Jewell, 2007). Maton (2008) has explored the role that community psychologists can play in helping to create empowering settings, which in turn increase empowerment in individual members of the community and bring about lasting social change.

While empowerment has been discussed extensively, community psychology is still search for better definitions of power itself (Fisher & Sonn, 2007). Prilleltensky (2008) defined power as the ability and opportunity one has to influence their life, including the power to pursue a good life, the power to oppress others, and the power to resist oppression. Yet some have criticised this view as too focused on the needs and abilities of the individual, preferring to describe power as a function of large social systems within which individuals reside (Fryer, 2008b; Smail, 2001). Despite its definition, community psychologists are innately interested in exposing the complex nature of power and the effects that inequitable power distributions have on communities and individuals (Fisher, Sonn, & Evans, 2007).

Another way of conceptualising the imperative to “Think Upside Down” is the dichotomy of oppression and liberation. Oppression concerns an asymmetric power relationship between dominant and subordinate groups. Liberation psychology is a concept most developed in Latin America which seeks social change for marginalised groups, challenging the political system in the process. Watkins and Schulman (2008) write of liberation psychology as a shift in thinking from the individual to the community. They suggest that the work of liberation is a mending of the “torn fabric of interdependence” (p. 77). One group applied

the liberation model to their work in both the United States and Nigeria, discovering the positive change that can rise from small empowering communities (Trout, Docecki, Newbrough, & O’Gorman, 2003).

The “upside-down” approach has worked its way into the applied practice of community psychology. Many applied community psychologists work with communities and organisations around the world to produce grassroots, bottom-up change. Social action is one tool used to challenge powerful interests by the involvement of citizens. Further, this emphasis on participatory efforts has opened up whole new arenas for the work of psychologists and for help-seeking individuals. Nowhere is this more clearly seen than in the proliferation of mutual help groups. Based on Frank Riessman’s (1990) helper therapy principle, these groups are places where people who need help “function as producers of help” (p. 221). Community psychologists have been intimately involved in the research and implementation of these groups, a trend which may continue to increase (Brown, Shepherd, Wituk, & Meissen, 2008).

Think Long-Term

The requirement to Think Upside Down turns power on its head through several means including empowerment and social action. This emphasis requires a second shift in thinking that is prominent in community psychology: Think Long-Term. While we often face urgent challenges, community psychology holds a strong value in the way these problems are resolved. The “upside down” approach requires the involvement of more people and inevitably takes more time (Putnam, Feldstein & Cohen, 2003). Yet, for sustainable change to occur one must think about how the community will fare long after the project at hand has come to an end. Thinking long-term humbly acknowledges that what seems like the right solution today may very well be responsible for future problems (Levine & Perkins, 1997).

Collaboration and citizen participation are two often used practices. Collaborative

coalitions are especially powerful because they bring all the stakeholders to the table to create a localised direction for the future. For professionals, it is often easy to forget how difficult change can be for communities and organisations. To truly achieve second-order change in a setting requires a complete reevaluation of the relationships, rules, and structures which comprise those systems (Linney, 1990). Resistance to change can be high, and long-standing patterns of behavior are difficult to reverse (Levine & Perkins, 1997). This requires time, patience, and consensus-seeking on the part of all the members.

With this in mind, it is sometimes difficult to employ the long-term view when seeking community change, especially when program funding and personal prestige are on the line. For change to endure, we must think about how the community will be affected 5, 10, or 20 years down the road. No writing is more influential or encouraging in thinking about this process of change than Karl Weick's (1984) "Small Wins." Weick describes small wins as limited approaches to problems which reduce arousal and make progress possible. These minute steps often create momentum which opens the door for more comprehensive changes (Weick, 1984). In *Better Together*, Putnam et al. (2003) elaborate on this concept, emphasising how important it is to set reasonable goals and take small steps in order to turn these "bite-sized" changes into lasting change over the long term. As we sit at the table with all the stakeholders, we are often reminded that there is no singular solution (Rappaport, 1981), which brings us to our next foundational shift in thinking: Think Plural.

Think Plural

Life is colourful and diverse. Thus, community psychology must practice plural thinking to be effective. The top-down, short-term approach discussed above leaves no room for multiplicity of thought. Too often, psychological practice and efforts for community betterment have been about

discovering a unified theory and applying it to all individuals everywhere regardless of their culture, neighbourhood, or family structure. Psychology as a whole has begun to emphasise cultural competence and the appreciation of diversity (American Psychological Association, 2003). Community psychologists have been important leaders in acknowledging this need.

"Cultural competence" is a buzz word which refers to the ability to work with people from various cultures in providing effective services (Diller, 2004). Harrell and Bond (2006) have discussed the importance of considering all cultures as multilayered entities, which function according to different values and are affected by different forces. The embrace of diversity is always more complex than an either-or proposition, and the bridging of different cultures is often a trying process (Brodsky & Faryal, 2006). For community psychologists, the pursuit of cultural competence is a journey which requires humility, patience, and commitment. Kim, Kim, and Kelly (2006) described this process from their work with Korean immigrants. They remind us of the importance of long-term thinking, giving attention to the sometimes subtle contextualities of a particular culture or subculture. This commitment requires the ability to think upside down, think long-term, and turning to our final foundational thought, to think eco.

Think Eco

Nearly 40 years ago, James Kelly wrote beautifully about the foundational shift of ecological thinking which would define community psychology:

The spirit of the community psychologist is the spirit of a naturalist, who dotes on his environment, of the journalist who bird-dogs his story, of the conservationist, who glows when he finds a new way to describe man's interdependence with his environment. (Kelly, 1970)

Ecological thought amends the person-centered approach to psychology, and acknowledges that individuals exist within a variety of powerful systems which have dramatic effects on individual wellness. Several theories have been explored from Barker's (1968) explanation of behavior as a function of powerful settings to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) conceptualisation of persons as nested within a collection of ecological systems. Each of these metaphors provides a helpful explanation of the foundational understanding of interdependence, which forms the basis for all ecological thought (Kelly, 2006).

Unfortunately, ecological thinking has not been embraced widely throughout psychology, leading to an incomplete understanding of individuals extricated from their contexts (Kelly, 2006). Espino and Trickett (2008) have recently provided an updated framework for applying ecological principles to interventions. However, in their review of the *American Journal of Community Psychology*, they found that most intervention articles focused on the individual level of analysis, rather than attending to larger ecological levels. Despite a long history of ecological theory, it appears that, within the Western world, ecological thinking is something that merits further research and implementation into psychological intervention.

One related area which may require further research is the concept of sense of community. Sarason (1974) initially defined sense of community as "the perception of similarity to others, an acknowledged interdependence with others, a willingness to maintain this interdependence by giving to or doing for others what one expects from them, the feeling that one is part of a larger dependable and stable structure" (p. 157). McMillan and Chavis (1986; McMillan, 1996) later developed a theoretical framework for the construct. Since then, sense of community has been studied in a variety of cultures around the

world with mixed reviews. Recent work has begun a discussion on a new model which reflects a multidimensional expression of sense of community (Tartaglia, 2006). Whatever construct is chosen, community psychology has a mission to pursue greater understanding of ecological contexts and to help communities give voice to their ideas and shape to a communal identity that promotes well-being (Montero, 2009).

Predictions for the Future

With such a storied past and a thriving present, community psychology's future is bright. But which direction will this field travel in the future and which emerging concepts will be discussed in papers such as these 25 years from now? Certainly, it is humbling as a novice in the field to garner predictions of future events. Yet, one could argue that it is on the backs of emerging community psychologists like me that this future will be brought into existence. With this responsible humility in mind, I offer two predictions about the future direction of community psychology.

The Sustainability Revolution

In the next 25 years, our global community will face some of the greatest challenges in the history of our planet: the threat of global terrorism and overzealous responses by nation-states, the escalation of the threat of nuclear proliferation, the impending consequences of climate change, and the pressures of a planet that is growing increasingly overcrowded. Each of these challenges provide opportunities for a new way of thinking, the way that community psychologists have been thinking for quite some time. I choose to call this "The Sustainability Revolution."

Sustainability is the natural evolution of the ecological metaphor described above as a key foundation for community psychology (Kelly, 1970). According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (2008), sustainability refers to the provision of resources in the present without "compromising the ability of future generations to meet their

own needs” (p. 2). I would expand this definition to consider how the needs for dominant groups, cultures, or nations can be met without compromising the needs of subordinated, minority, marginalised, or developing groups in the present day. Sustainability is an environmental term, but in the future this term should embrace a more holistic understanding of our world, considering both biological and interpersonal relationships. However, in order to move into an era of sustainability, we must realise the tremendous struggle that lies ahead.

The doctrines of neo-liberalism and free-market capitalism have spread around the world with an emphasis on unrestrained individualism at the expense of ecological and human capital. This spread has even had an impact in places like Norway with a long history of focus on social concerns. A recently completed discursive analysis of a Norwegian newspaper found that talk of material consumption rose dramatically through the past 20 years in that country, suggesting the widespread impact of the consumerist ideology (Nafstad, Blakar, Carlquist, Phelps, & Rand-Hendriksen, 2009). Despite this, the tide of sustainability may be rising in the form of Triple Bottom Line (TBL) decision making which is being considered by several world governments. TBL considers not only the economics of any situation, but also the environmental and social side effects involved in any decision (Bishop, Vicary, Browne, & Guard, 2009). This type of thinking is crucial for any revolution of sustainability to occur against the massive onslaught of neo-liberal capitalism. Myers (2003) suggested that psychologists can play a key role in introducing sustainability into our global culture. He suggested that we can enter into a “post-materialist” age by helping our communities recognise the consequences of over-consumption and the lack of psychological benefit from hyper-materialism. Rather, Myers promoted the creation of a culture where the “enduringly sustainable”

resources (p. 209) of relationships are assigned higher value.

Naturally, community psychologists should be the ideal leaders for this evolution. This will require rigorous research using new methods to generate theories of sustainability in community settings, building on the current theories of sense of community and empowerment. Community psychologists will find themselves even more engaged at the grassroots level, working with communities to create lasting social change, and in the arenas of public policy to shape more responsible governments.

Get Bilingual

As the sustainability revolution sweeps through the Western world, it will create new links between cultures, and opportunities for learning and conflict. With consistent acceleration in the means of transportation and communication, the world will continue to get smaller, increasing everyday interaction between members of diverse cultures. With a respect for human diversity and plural thinking, community psychology will find itself thriving at these intersections of culture.

Many of the key challenges we face can be explained in terms of a clash of cultures. Global terrorism can be seen as a clash between Muslim-Christian, Arab and non-Arab, or the colonised and the colonisers. In the United States, the continuing discussion and pressure of immigration reform presses into the public consciousness an awareness of diversity and the challenge to respond humanely. From history, we can assume that these clashes of culture and ideology will continue to arise. However, for us to evolve beyond the status quo to a more sustainable way of inhabiting the planet, we must discover ways to navigate these conflicts effectively. This acceleration opens up a wealth of opportunities for community psychologists.

New theories and methods will need to be created in order to facilitate improved intercultural interaction as an expansion of domestic cultural competence. Community psychologists can play a key role in helping meet these needs

creating broad coalitions that are vital in the new world order. In considering the conflicts between Israelis and Palestinians, the colonised and the colonisers, Chief Executive Officers and minimum wage employees, could community psychologists play an increased role in facilitating interaction for resolution of these conflicts? I would suggest that we maintain our optimism and apply the principles of community psychology to our biggest, most intractable problems. Wandersman (2009) has suggested that we develop a realistic ambition for tackling social issues. He explored several projects which began with great optimism and failed to meet expectations, discovering four keys to successful participatory enterprises. This framework is helpful as we confront the systems of oppression, inequity, and intolerance which threaten us. No doubt these challenges will require a long series of small steps, but perhaps we could work towards an environment where our problems are not solved by the diplomacy of powerful world leaders, but rather by the gathering every day, ordinary citizens.

Conclusion

Writing these words fills me with hope, excitement, and a sense of responsibility. The hard, ground-breaking work of our predecessors has presented us with a field brimming with possibilities and ready to help shape the world of the future. This period, like the one before it, will be an opportunity for community psychologists to play an increased role in shaping sustainable policies, increasing civic involvement, and fighting alongside the marginalised. A great opportunity lies before us. I would suggest that it is time to follow the sage advice of Miller (1969) and “give psychology away” for the common good. I look forward to the opportunity to do so.

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Reflections on Implementing an Education Support Programme for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Secondary School Students in a Non-government Education Sector: What did we Learn and What do we Know?

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This is a reflective paper grounded in the domain of practice. It presents some of the strategies used to design, implement and establish an education support programme across sixteen (16) non-government residential (or boarding) schools. The aim of the programme was to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary school boarding students from rural, regional and remote areas of Western Australia (WA) with the experience of studying away from home and family. This paper is divided into three main sections: 1. A brief background of education policy and surrounding context. 2. Approaches and strategies undertaken to establish the programme. 3. Reflections on the lessons learned during this process. We identified that no single strategy could avert students from disengaging with education at residential schools. Instead we contend the provision of effective support requires the implementation of multiple strategies targeting the multiple social systems or levels which contribute to a student's overall experience at a residential school (e.g., the student, peer, parent, school, and community levels). We emphasise that it is vital to involve students in the implementation and development of programmes so as to make support relevant to their needs.

Acknowledgement of Country

We wish to acknowledge the 'Wadjuk People' who are the traditional custodians of this land that we write these words on. The Wadjuk people are one of fourteen clan groups that make up the collective Nyungar nation of the South West of WA. We also thank and pay our respect to the many families, parents and students from the numerous lands and language groups across WA that we have worked with.

Education and the surrounding context in Australia

In Australia, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy (AEP) was launched in 1989 (Commonwealth of Australia) and provides the original framework around which all government funded education support programmes specifically targeting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are structured. The overarching emphasis of the AEP is to bring about equity in education and training outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through the articulation of 21 national goals endorsed by all state and territory governments. The AEP is legislated in the Indigenous Education (Targeted Assistance) Act 2000

(Commonwealth of Australia) and is also the foundation upon which the body responsible for coordinating strategic educational policy at a national level, the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), developed the Australian Directions in Indigenous Education (ADIE) 2005-2008 policy (MCEETYA) initiated in July 2006.

Unfortunately for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, particularly students located outside of city or regional centres, education in WA is further situated within a broader social context of 'overall-life-disadvantage'. This disadvantage embodies social issues such as poverty, unemployment and welfare dependency, poor health and

housing conditions, a situation which has been perpetuated by many decades of inconsistent public policy by all political persuasions at local, state and federal levels (Beresford & Grey, 2006; Nakata, 2002). Worryingly, reliable information regarding these circumstances has been available for some time. For example, the Gordon Inquiry (GI) published in 2002 indicated that issues of family violence and child abuse in its various forms was prevalent and in some instances reached the proportion of being an epidemic in some Aboriginal communities (Gordon, Hallahan & Henry, 2002). The inquiry linked the endemic nature of these issues to marginalisation, dispossession, loss of land and traditional culture and a history of forced removal of children that has left ongoing and generational trauma within a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Similarly, the Western Australian Child Health Survey (WACHS) identifies the current lack of equitable access to educational opportunities available to many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, as a foremost factor that preserves the continuation of a disturbing cycle of intra-generational disadvantage that embodies negative social issues such as alcoholism, domestic violence, gambling, substance use and abuse (Zubrick et al., 2005).

Despite the clear outcomes of the GI (2002) and WACHS (2005), a cycle of disadvantage is still experienced by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and is acknowledged to have manifested into a life expectancy difference of 17 years between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and the rest of the Australian population (Rudd, 2008). Education is just one factor in a group of many (e.g., health, housing and employment) that is deeply unsatisfactory in terms of overall national outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (De Bortoli & Cresswell, 2004; Thomson, McKelvie, & Murnane, 2006).

Many education support programmes

intended to offer additional assistance to students (and parents) have been launched over recent decades specifically to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to engage effectively with education (Appleyard, 2002; Beresford, 2001; Beresford & Gray, 2006; Doyle & Hill, 2008; Storry, 2007). However, and for all sincere efforts, many key decisions about the specific intervention or prevention strategies to be used have been made in a 'top-down' direction, rather than in a 'bottom-up' consultative approach involving people at a local level. Historically, and still today, this decision making process has severely disenfranchised many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, as numerous interventions have been endorsed with limited dialogue, consultation and permission sort from representatives of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. In addition, persistence with this model of decision making inadvertently increases the risk of a support programme being endorsed that misses the mark or is seen as another government directed (enforced) intervention, rather than being seen as a support programme that shares the same aspirations and goals of parents, families and communities (Beresford, 2001; Reynolds, 2005, Vicary & Bishop, 2005).

Similarly, a number of education support programmes have tended to be based upon the assumption that one size fits all, rather than acknowledging that localised and contextually relevant support programmes tend to better fit and be embraced more quickly (Chaney, 2008). It has been noted that many support programmes have also tended to be controlled from capital cities or regional centres, with key governance decisions being made by an appointed expert or group of experts rather than being locally developed and coordinated (Appleyard, 2002; Beresford & Gray, 2006; Collins, 1999; Sarra, 2007).

When consultation has taken place, both federal and state governments and their respective departments, have tended to do so with a small, highly selective group of

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patrons who are assumed to be familiar with, fluent in and fully comprehensive of the context, needs and perspectives, and are expected to speak on behalf of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and their respective clan groups. There are an estimated 500 clan groups and 250 languages across Australia, with approximately 35 clans in the Pilbara region of WA alone. In taking this role these patrons have to contend with the significant pressure of trying to guide policymakers and programme designers so that they are inclusive of diversity, while contending with the knowledge that both government and education frameworks still tend to categorise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as one homogenous group 'Indigenous' (Beresford & Grey, 2006; Merlan, 2007).

It is well documented that both government and education frameworks in Australia and WA remain largely modelled on knowledge constructs and institutional structures imported from European and North American tradition (Bourke & Bourke, 2002; Groome, 1998; Johns, 2006; Nakata, 2002; Trudgen, 2000). For example, the educational experience in WA still remains largely founded around a text based knowledge exchange process, which is primarily based upon the learning of a symbol system, in this case a set of 26 letters. Assessment of learning is then largely centred on the reproduction of knowledge using this symbol system via paper and pencil techniques, delivered in a classroom setting by a person (e.g., teacher) who is external to the learner's family unit.

History clearly shows us that past WA education frameworks have purposefully ignored, devalued and excluded traditional knowledge exchange practices such as customary language, dance, painting (Broome, 1994; Collard, 1999), relationship with country (Vicary & Westerman, 2004) song, storytelling, totemic ancestors (Bourke & Bourke, 2002) and cultural protocols such as

ceremony, rites of passage and lore (Mellor, 1998). It is crucial that both educators and designers of education support programmes are conscious of the significant difference between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples knowledge exchange practices and Western based perspectives of education.

For decades many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents, leaders, academics and educational practitioners have repeatedly voiced the challenges created for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students when education frameworks are heavily based upon Western taken-for-granted ideals that are considered as absolutes in service delivery methods (Bin-Sallick, 2003; Nakata, 1997a & 1997b; Pearson, 2004; Sarra, 2005 & 2007; Valadian, 1980). To presume the superiority of Western concepts of education when working within an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander context, lends itself to the provision of an education support programme that is of little relevance to many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (Nakata, 2002).

Some positive progress has been made as in 2008 there were 151, 669 school students across Australia that identified as of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, representing a 42% increase from the 1999 total of 106, 628 (ABS, 2008). A national 117% increase in Year 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolments also occurred between 1999 and 2008 from 2,206 to 4779 students. However, although retention rates for both male and female Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from Years 7/8 to Year 12 increased between the 1999 to 2008 period, frustratingly a significant difference in retention rate figures persisted when contrasted with their non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait peers. For male and female students of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent the retention rate between 1999 and 2008 was 67% and 82% respectively, whereas for male and female Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, retention rates during the same time period were 43% and 50% respectively.

With a deeply unsatisfactory and persist gap remaining in retention rates between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their peers, it is not the time for education sectors and governments to start patting themselves on the back for a job well done. Instead what is clear is that the task at hand has just began and the challenge for the future is to find ways of creating both a more relevant and positive experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students so as to better support more young people to remain at and be successful at school for longer.

From the above brief overview, it is clear the subject of how best to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from rural, regional and remote regions while at school remains firmly located within a social, economic and political context that is fraught with many competing antecedents (Beresford & Grey, 2006; Dockett et al., 2007; Johns, 2006; Reynolds, 2005). In the following section our personal reflections on some of the salient processes we undertook during the establishment of an education support programme in a non-government education sector are shared and how we attempted to build inclusive practices into an already predetermined and rigid programme funding structure. These reflections are our own as the two principle people who were employed to deliver this programme daily and should not be taken to represent other stakeholder views.

Contextualising the education support programme: Background

The aim of the programme was to offer additional support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from rural, regional and remote regions of WA who were studying away from home at sixteen (16) non-government residential schools across the Perth metropolitan area. At this point it is important to note two significant differences between government and non-government education sectors. *1. Constitutionally government schools remain the responsibility of state and territory governments, while*

funding distributed to non-government education sectors is the domain of the federal government. 2. Government education sectors are systems, which rely on system policy during the implementation of new support programmes in schools, whereas in the non-government education sector participation with new programmes by schools, students and parents is voluntary.

In other words, education support programmes provided in the government education sector are implemented under departmental policy or regulation and schools are required to comply with this. In the non-government education sector, education support programmes tend to be provided and regulated by the individual schools and their own governance boards. In some instances, multiple non-government schools will jointly identify a common gap in an education support services they are offering and will collaborate to address this issue. Nonetheless, although a school may advocate for, support and jointly contribute to the establishment of a certain education support programme in collaboration with other schools, the decision to engage and the level of engagement with a programme remains at the discretion of each individual school.

The programme being discussed here originated from the latter pathway and was a collaborative effort involving 16 residential schools. The concept of the programme derived from one residential school wanting to minimise the dissonance that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students experienced with the transition from rural, regional and remote remotes areas of WA into the residential (or boarding) school lifestyle. The prevalence of this issue was assessed across other similar residential schools and the non-government education sector identified that 16 schools equally expressed a similar desire to offer better support. Subsequently, an application was submitted on their behalf as a group to the relevant federal government department to establish a shared programme to help assist with this issue. The submission was successful in

acquiring funding to initially pilot the programme in 2004 and was refunded from 2005 to 2008.

The programme involved two fulltime positions being funded, one male and one female employee, who were responsible for every aspect of day to day operations. Each of the 16 schools were allocated and matched according to the gender of the two employees and schools. Hence, the male employee was responsible for providing support to the seven participating male residential schools and the female employee was responsible for supporting the nine participating female residential schools. It was a contractual agreement imposed by the federal department funding the programme that an advisory committee was established to monitor the programme's progress. Committee members constituted representatives from participating schools, two parent representatives who had a child currently enrolled at any of the 16 residential schools, the federal department funding the programme, representatives from tertiary and industry sectors, and a representative of the non-government education sector. A senior education consultant was allocated as a nominal, part-time line manager for the two fulltime employees however, the development of key initiatives was left to be generated and implemented by the two fulltime employees.

At the beginning of 2008 over 120 students across the 16 schools were accessing some aspect of the support offered by this programme. An important adjunct to note at this point is that we also provided support to Year 12 students that had graduated with the transition into post-school destinations. For instance, we would help former students with the preparation and collation of applications for tertiary institutions, as well as with gaining employment (e.g., resume and interview preparation) and also with locating suitable accommodation (e.g., understanding lease agreements).

When funding was reapproved after the initial piloting period in 2004, only a rudimentary programme framework and support service was in place and being offered to students, parents, and schools. It is from this point from which we return to and begin our reflections.

Mapping the landscape: Implementing a support programme across multiple residential schools

At the beginning we conducted a basic scoping and profiling exercise to gain a better understanding of student numbers, demographics and geographic location from which students were drawn across the 16 schools. This involved creating a database that identified each student's status as a residential or day student and collating information such as gender, year group, scholarship/bursary or fee paying status, starting year and graduation year, as well as parent/guardian names, siblings in other residential schools, home address details and email accounts.

This process significantly assisted us to become more familiar with the diversity of students and of contexts from which students originated (e.g., location, family, clan and country). This amalgamated information was also useful in other ways as previously unseen trends across the 16 schools became visible. For example, the database anecdotally suggested that those students who started in Year 8 at residential schools had a greater tendency to graduate in Year 12, in comparison to students that entered into the residential school experience in later years (e.g., Years 10 & 11).

An important discovery from this process was we found that a significant number of day students were actually from rural, regional and remote regions of WA but had relocated to stay with relatives, friends or in hostel accommodation in Perth during the academic year. In a number of instances the whole family had relocated and moved to Perth to support their child's educational needs. The decision making process of whether to relocate children during the academic year represented a

significant challenge being confronted by many parents residing in rural, regional and remotes areas of WA and involved considerable disruption to the family unit. It equally illustrated to us the strong commitment and lengths that many parents went to, to exercise their right to be able to choose the educational pathway they wanted for their child.

It was quickly realised the services offered by the programme needed to be inclusive of all students (e.g., both day and residential students) across the 16 residential schools rather than only focusing on supporting the residential students from rural, regional and remote regions. This was a challenge as the programme was initially funded only to support residential students, not day students. To address this we successfully highlighted with the federal department funding the programme that like residential students, many of the day students although not in enrolled as boarding students were also adjusting to a new environment and experience where a temporary new home, city and school are merged together during a school term and they were similarly spending an extended period of time away from their original home, traditional country and family (i.e., both immediate and extended family).

Supporting individual students across multiple residential schools

Previous research has highlighted that new residential students face a number of significant challenges while studying and living away from home (Fisher, 1990; Morgan, 1993). Adjustments for many of the residential students included moving away from a context where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children compose the majority of students at a school, into a situation where they were now the minority. There was also a significant reduction of physical contact with family members from daily contact, to a situation where for extended periods of time physical contact was not possible and communication was limited to telephone,

email and other means rather than through face-to-face interactions.

Although previous research has shown that some students adjust quickly and gain a greater appreciation for routine and discipline while living away from home, for other students the residential setting with reduced freedom, specific rules, including new and different value systems, is a difficult adjustment to make (Downs, 2003). To address this issue, we established and undertook regular one-on-one or small-group, face-to-face meetings at each school with students. This involved developing a roster of school visits where regular weekly group meetings across the 16 residential schools were held to listen, to talk and to discuss issues students were contending with while studying away from home. For example, meetings would involve talking about day-to-day factors including completing homework and developing study skills (e.g., goal setting, prioritising tasks and time management) and school activities, while also providing support with living and family issues, peer relationships and during times of homesickness, loneliness and longing for country. During these meetings we positioned ourselves with students as more of an educational mentor looking holistically at the overall educational experience for each student rather than just focusing on sequential educational milestones.

As colleagues we shared a common philosophy towards working with young people which was to first and foremost (before 'all' else) invest time and establish a trusting relationship with students. How the relationship with each student evolved was different depending on individual needs, wants, interests and expectations. To achieve the best relationship possible with each student we worked hard at steadily fostering a positive micro-environment around our meetings by being genuine, non-threatening and non-judgmental. It was essential from our perspective to ensure that each student was recognised and felt valued as an individual. Importantly, we encouraged students to take an

active role in their own education (e.g., particularly in decision making processes) and to identify and develop their own solutions to both perceived and real issues.

Making a positive first connection with students was imperative. On too many occasions we had observed staff members at schools asking students what was wrong with them when they were feeling down but before the student had the opportunity to talk, the teacher would answer the question for them or would quickly lose attention during the response and minimise the significance of the response with a dismissive statement such as 'don't worry mate it will be alright by tomorrow'. So our approach regularly involved reversing roles and encouraging students to be the teacher and ourselves the learner. This meant positioning ourselves at the student level and learning about the deeper meanings attached to situations, feelings, thoughts and issues shared with us by students when they occurred. Good listening skills were imperative to achieve this. Anecdotally we noted this strategy served as a powerful nexus through which to connect with students, as they knew that while away from home there was someone they could share their experiences with on their own terms.

This strategy also facilitated for students to build a feeling of ownership and control over problem solving, decision making process and their own educational pathway. Prior research has demonstrated that collaborative practices encourage a greater connectedness with pro-social activities such as engaging with school and have been found to act as a protective-factor against the development of risk taking behaviour in young people such as substance abuse and drug use (Benson et al., 1999; Jessor, 1993; Pittman et al., 2001; Resnick et al., 1997). By establishing a strong relationship based approach at the onset of supporting students, we found it much easier to maintain students' connectedness with education and to more effectively target and tailor support for individual students over the

long-term.

As the programme and its staff were not attached to one specific school but rather operated across 16 schools with many students, it was particularly critical to establish limits and boundaries early in the relationship building process and to explain clearly the type of support that could be offered. Previous research has illustrated that adults who provide, as a part of constructing relationships with children, clear standards, guidelines, encouragement, nurturing and high expectations, are better able to support young people to develop optimally (Catalano et al., 2002; McNeeley, Nonnemaker & Blum, 2002; Resnick et al., 1997). In conjunction with these strategies and to further facilitate this process, we also found it was essential to be consistent, reliable and to have the ability to effectively communicate. By taking these steps it minimised the potentiality of putting our relationship with students at risk ourselves by not following up on information shared and decisions made by a student, due to over-stretching our own individual capacity.

As relationships were established with students, pressure was occasionally applied on us to act in a disciplinarian role when schools experienced a difficult issue (e.g., a weekend curfew was broken by a residential student). However, we did not see our role to include the duplication of pre-existing systems but rather directed towards the enhancement of understanding. Hence, being a disciplinarian was a particular role that we would not undertake as schools already had existing pastoral care structures in place. Instead we supported students to develop solutions for themselves and also supported schools to enhance existing pastoral care structures. For example, on many occasions school staff reported instances where students were apparently 'not following instructions and were not doing what they should be doing'. In a number of these cases students had actually constructed different interpretations of the instructions given to them or did not know when and where the application of these

instructions started or stopped while at school. We found that miscommunication was created by multiple factors such as the type of language used or the speed and tone used during the delivery of the instruction or the body language of the person delivering the instruction just to name a few. To check that both student and school staff understandings were congruent, we would work slowly and explicitly through each step that gave rise to the circumstance. The reason and meaning behind a particular instruction would be discussed and both the student(s) and staff members perspective would be shared, such as why an instruction might be considered very embarrassing or 'shame' for a student. This assisted both students and school staff to identify points of communication that generated misunderstandings in pastoral care structures. Importantly for staff members it also helped to highlight how and why certain previously invisible meanings and understandings were constructed by students and how staff could use this deeper insight into understanding certain types of behaviour or the style of support students preferred.

Both role modelling and two-way sharing were essential strategies we used as they demonstrated in action to students that we were reliable and could be trusted as we put into practice with ourselves what we asked students to do. Where appropriate, we regularly shared, discussed and role modelled how we solved everyday problems both at work, in our own everyday lives and within our own family structure. To achieve this we often involved our own families in weekend events such as barbeques, excursions and sporting carnivals. Research has established that role modelling helps a developing child to learn new skills by watching others perform them (Ben-Arieh, 2005; De Winter, Baerveldt, & Kooistra, 1999; Doyle & Hill, 2008; Ungar, 2005). It became apparent early on that engaging in two-way sharing in both actions as well as in words across all areas of life, helped to consolidate ourselves as a dependable and

valued support option by students. Importantly, it provided a safe and supportive environment that allowed students to talk about, identify and practice coping skills that suited them, which assisted with adjusting to a residential lifestyle and living away from home and family.

Supporting peers across multiple residential schools

From a psychological and developmental perspective, research has demonstrated that children's participation in decision-making processes can also act as a protective factor against participation in risk taking behaviour by young people (De Winter, Baerveldt, & Kooistra, 1999). Unfortunately it is the norm in many education support programmes for the voices of children and adolescents to be absent from the initial design and development process. Ben-Arieh (2005, p.575) explains that

if society accepts children as equal human beings, then the study of their quality of life should accept that other human beings cannot simply by virtue of their age decide what children's well-being consists of...

To ensure support programs are relevant they must be based on children and adolescent's experiences (Ben-Arieh, 2005; Stumpers, Breen, Pooley, Cohen & Pike, 2005) and not solely on what adults perceive as risks for them (Boyden & Mann, 2005; Ungar, 2005). Ben-Arieh (2005) maintains that it should be of great concern that policy makers and program developers ask one group (adults) to report on the behaviour of another group (children) and assume it will be more valid than speaking to the second group directly.

We noted from the scoping and profiling exercise that it was common for brothers and sisters, as well as cousins and relatives, to be concurrently enrolled at different residential schools across metropolitan Perth. By facilitating opportunities for siblings to catch up and support each other (e.g., barbeques during weekends) this significantly helped to address difficult feelings such as homesickness and

cultural isolation experienced by some students while studying away from home. This strategy was initially instigated in response to students wanting to spend some down time during weekends away from the boarding house environment and in a more relaxed family or home orientated context away from some of the daily peer social pressures of living in a boarding house. (e.g., such as feeling like they had to act or behave in a certain manner).

An initiative that became a core aspect of the programme's overall structure was the establishment of an Indigenous Boarding Student Council across the 16 residential schools. The student council involved the Indigenous students at each school nominating a representative to attend four council meetings each year (e.g., one meeting per term) and required students to attend meetings in their own time, during an evening after school. To encourage as many students as possible to participate and contribute to the council process, the representative role was rotated between students within each individual school. If a nominated representative initially felt intimidated, self-conscious or shame about participating in the student council on their own, they were encouraged to bring a peer from their school to share this experience with. The council meetings were hosted on a rotational basis between the residential schools and also alternated between male and female schools, with all students at the host school invited to the meeting.

The council encouraged students from across the 16 residential schools to meet, network and share experiences with other students at other schools undertaking the same experience of studying away from home. Importantly, the council was charged with the responsibility of raising awareness and developing ideas to address issues such as homesickness and cultural isolation experienced by their peers. From our perspective, the council was also an opportunity for students to have contact with a diverse range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander role models. Accordingly, each council meeting involved a role model being organised and integrated into the council's agenda as a guest speaker. Guest speakers were selected from a diversity of backgrounds, such as university, private business, sporting icons, industry and government. Interestingly, during a survey on the topic of role models the student council made it very clear that they also viewed each other as role models, as they were sharing the same experience of living away from home and family while completing their secondary education.

As a representative body the council naturally became the initial consultation point on all aspects of the programme including overall direction as well as annual activities and events. The nominated council members always took ideas from the other students at their school to each meeting and on their return would share back with their peers what happened at each meeting. The council's participation in decision making processes and its contribution to the overall programme direction was an important step towards students developing a sense of identity and connection with the programme. Equally, the council's establishment validated the programme with new students and also helped us to swiftly identify issues or areas that required better targeted support. As the council members rapidly grew in confidence, students would urge their council representative to organise for their school to host the next meeting as students were proud of their schools and wanted to share this experience with their peers.

To date, council has developed ideas for regular social, cultural, educational and sporting activities, promoted reconciliation events, and assisted in the hosting of planned programme events. It has also acted in a consultancy capacity within the programme's own steering committee on topics such as role models and also with external programmes at a national level. It is worth restating here, that student participation in the council was voluntary.

Supporting parents, family or guardians of students across multiple residential schools

Previous literature has clearly highlighted that a lack of familiarity with the expectations of both government programmes and education systems among a large proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families continues to shape the educational futures of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children today (Beresford, 2001; Zubrick et al., 2005). In this instance, we offered to parents an independent, supportive and alternative link between school and family, to discuss aspects such as subject selection, post-school destinations and pastoral care issues. The main challenge confronting us in effectively supporting parents was geography. The ability to commute to parents residing in rural, regional and remote regions of WA for regular face-to-face contact was heavily influenced by traveling costs, distance, diversity of locations and time.

To address this, multiple home visits were planned each year usually during the last weeks of school holidays or in the school holidays. Visits were organised in consultation with families and/or community representatives to build relationships and to promote the type of support the programme offered to parents (e.g., trips to the East and West Kimberley, Pilbara and Southwest regions of WA). In addition, newsletters, CDs with photos of recent events and activities, posters and mass-mail-outs via both email and the post were undertaken. For example, information about tertiary institutions, scholarships, apprenticeships and traineeships options were regularly disseminated to continually expose parents to the diversity of post-school opportunities available for their children.

One of the most important strategies was to make telephone calls home to parents and to also make ourselves available via the telephone to parents. Many parents have explained to us how reassuring it was to be able to contact someone regarding their child's wellbeing and

safety, as well as receiving telephone calls updating them on their child's progress. To best facilitate this we needed to be available both during and outside of normal school hours, as it gave parents a more flexible time period to phone and talk (e.g., ask questions and address issues). An outcome of this strategy was that it contributed to breaking down the traditional stereotype that a school or education body only contacts parents when a problem or something bad had occurred. Importantly, it helped in building a rapport with parents and also gave us the opportunity to talk with them about how they were coping with having their child studying away from home. Many parents communicated to us they found it very comforting to receive a phone call from another person who had seen and valued their child do well at something (e.g., in a sports carnival) at times when they were unable to attend.

All these strategies contributed to increase awareness with parents of children engaged in the programme and notably these strategies also encouraged two-way communication between parents and the programme staff to increase. For example, an issue of great concern identified by a number of parents was the need to organise alternative accommodation arrangements during mid-term breaks in which the accommodation facilities at each residential school closed for a long weekend break during the middle of each term. Some parents explained that it was not always feasible (e.g., money, time, work commitments) particularly when living in regional and remote parts of WA for their child to travel home during this short four day break (e.g., for some students it took over 12 hours and three plane flights to travel home). However, it was also equally difficult for some of these parents to locate suitable alternative metropolitan accommodation as they had no extended family or friend networks based in Perth.

In close consultation with the student council, this issue was addressed by developing camps which ran during these mid-term breaks to offer a safe and supervised alternative. The

overall aim was for the camps to be relaxing and fun with activities that encouraged positive interpersonal development such as building confidence and self-esteem. In addition, an itinerary of structured activities that encouraged the development of other skills such as teamwork, communication (both talking and listening skills), leadership and problem solving, were built into the camps.

The camps were voluntary and open to all students in the programme, however Year 8 and new students to Perth were especially encouraged to participate in the first camp of each year. This created the opportunity for new students to become more familiar with programme staff and to meet other residential students making the same transition. Older or returning students participating in the camps were expected to help with encouraging younger students and by taking on role modelling opportunities such as leadership roles in teamwork activities and positively support younger students, this expectation allowed older students to practice and master leadership and role modelling skills in a safe but applied context.

Supporting staff across multiple residential schools

Working collaboratively with key staff members within residential schools was vital and a number of strategies were initiated to allow and encourage staff from across the 16 residential schools to effectively network with each other.

As with students and parents, we positioned itself as an alternative link for school staff to utilise if assistance was required. One-on-one support was provided to teaching, residential, administration and medical staff. A majority of staff greatly valued using us as sounding boards so that they could explain and talk about issues with students and parents that arose. Our position in this instance slightly changed into more of a mentoring role through which we provided constructive feedback (e.g., information about cultural awareness and protocols, models of

best practice) and encouraged skill development. To compliment this, access to relevant professional development and training opportunities in the areas of cultural awareness, literacy, numeracy, and vocational education were also facilitated, as well as a quarterly newsletter, health folder outlining alternative and in some instances more culturally appropriate health services, as well as the development of a specific webpage were supplied.

An email-network was also formalised that encouraged multiple links to be forged between staff at participating schools, to network and communicate with colleagues in similar roles about various aspects of supporting students. This assisted with issues from sharing transportation so that students could attend organised events (e.g., university open days), to schools exchanging information about more complicated matters such as student selection procedures, policies, scholarships and pastoral care structures. An important step was the facilitation of bi-annual networking sessions for staff across the schools, which allowed them to come together and share, network and discuss the challenges and success they have experienced in supporting students with the transition into residential schools.

Successful intervention programmes which produce optimal outcomes for young people are those which prior to commencement identify context appropriate strategies for use during the initial implementation phase (Hall & Hord, 2001; Weissberg, Kumpfer, & Seligman, 2003). The development of an annual calendar of planned events and scheduled activities developed with the support of participating schools was a significant strategy that helped us to implement this programme. The calendar created a positive synergy between planned programme activities and important school based activities each year, with important academic dates such as examination weeks or school carnivals being avoided.

The calendar also allowed the programme to implement essential transitional activities

such as having all students from across the schools attend a traditional 'Welcome to Nyungar Country' delivered by a local community representative and/or Elder at the beginning of each year. The majority of residential students in the programme were conscious that they were traditionally considered as visitors to Nyungar Country in the Southwest. By following and respecting correct cultural protocol early in the first term of each year, students could acknowledge the heritage of the Country in which they studied on and also learn about the relationship, connection and cultural practices that the traditional owners have with the region. The calendar similarly facilitated the planning of activities for other significant dates each year such as Sorry Day and NAIDOC Week.

By collaboratively planning the programme's annual calendar with schools this strategy served the dual role of providing a direct avenue through which schools could voice what they considered as successful over the previous year and in turn helped guide us to better target areas where more support was required. It allowed for excursions to post-school career forums, as well as to university and TAFE open days to be effectively planned across the schools. Notably, the annual calendar allowed organised events to be well attended by students, as schools had plenty of time to prepare and plan for them (e.g., to arrange supervising staff and make transportation arrangements).

An important issue identified by school staff was the establishment of an annual careers evening specifically for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled across the sixteen schools. A firm ambition of the programme and all the schools was the deconstruction of prevalent stereotypes about post-school destinations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through exposing students to diverse career pathways and promoting the message that anything was possible. The career evening format and content was developed through close

consultation with the student council, as well as from feedback received from parents and school staff. The consensus was for the careers evening to be a dynamic and high impact evening that reinforced the benefits of education and encouraged students to actively engage and take responsibility for exploring potential career pathways they were interested in pursuing.

The careers evening consisted of two separate parts. The first part was a sharing format that was initiated by a warm 'Welcome to Nyungar Country' delivered in both language and song. This was followed by a well-known Aboriginal comic performer from the Kimberley region of WA who discussed on stage with young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander role models, their secondary education story as well as inviting them to share their experiences of taking the next step into post-school destinations. This sharing process involved much humour however, during each discussion the ability of each young role model to successfully overcome the various challenges they confronted in their lives was reinforced and celebrated. This process created an atmosphere of positive affirmation around the benefits of completing secondary education. To extrapolate this positive atmosphere to its fullest potential, the programme involved young role models from a diverse range of backgrounds, with a wide range of interest areas and who took different pathways to reach their goals. We found this strategy increased the careers evening appeal to students and significantly contributed to breaking down perceived stereotypes and barriers to potential post-school destinations.

The second part of the careers evening involved information stalls manned with personnel from a range of government departments, non-government agencies, tertiary institutions and industry sectors displaying specific information about how to access existing transition pathways into post-school destinations. Anecdotally, we noted the positive momentum created during the first part of the careers evening created an uplifting atmosphere

that flowed into the second part, which contributed to students feeling more motivated and comfortable to explore, listen and talk with prospective organisations about the various career options they offered.

Developing supportive links with the wider community

We activity initiated and developed networks with the wider community such as tertiary institutions, as well as with relevant government, non-government and industry organisations in WA. Relationships were established with national initiatives such as the Indigenous Youth Mobility Programme (IYMP), Indigenous Youth Leadership Programme (IYLP) and the National Indigenous Cadetship Project (NICP). These programmes were particularly targeted because they offered direct support to students with the transition from completing secondary schooling into entering post-school destinations. Similarly, networks were also established with key people responsible for delivering other vital educational support programmes such as the Remote Indigenous Students Tuition (RIS), Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS) and Abstudy through Centrelink, as well as with local health professionals.

To assist with the promotion of the programme and to make information available more broadly, a webpage providing relevant information and links for all stakeholders about the programme was developed. It listed upcoming events and activities, career development opportunities, as well as provided additional information on culturally sensitive community based support services in areas such as health, accommodation, other youth support services and legal advice. We also published an information brochure for students, parents, school staff and community members explaining areas where support was offered, and most importantly how to contact us.

Connecting with the wider community was central for the success of the programme

as it equally provided a voice and representation for the students, families and schools, while also allowing the wider community to identify a point to initiate contact and consult with.

Final reflections

From our experience, no single component of an educational support programme can avert students from disengaging with education at residential schools. Instead, multiple strategies operating in a coordinated and collaborative manner but which are also tailored to meet individual needs rather than just using a blanket approach is required. It was clear to us that residential students benefited most from when families, schools, peers and programme staff work together to strengthen each other's efforts rather than working independently to address perceived needs, expectations and deficits. To achieve this goal, the non-government education sector, policymakers (e.g., government) and the actual staff of education support programmes are required to have a strong commitment to ensuring that all stakeholders, particularly the residential students undertaking the lived experience, feel that they are able to contribute to and share in the direction and decisions that guides education support programmes.

It is vital for education systems in the future to be better at being inclusive of student perspectives (voices) during the initial consultation process of education support programmes. The current approach of including minimal student perspectives in programme design and development was initially the circumstance in our experience. The instigation of an Indigenous Boarding Student Council, conducting weekly student meetings at each participating school and facilitating regular opportunities for students to network and support each other, provided a valid and valued avenue for students to contribute through.

From our experience, an effective support programme should actively encourage and celebrate the student role (participation) in identifying and implementing solutions to deliver better targeted support to their fellow

peers. We found that students represent a highly valuable and accurate source of information and knowledge that can be utilised to develop innovative and effective solutions for difficult issues (e.g., homesickness, loneliness and peer conflict). Moreover, students have a strong sense of what is likely to work or fail in practice, subsequently effective education support programmes are those that have the flexibility to incorporate these ideas into their overall operations.

By firmly establishing from the onset a student focussed and relationship-first environment around the programme, we were more effectively able to target support and support student's adjustment into residential life while they lived and studied away from home. We found that students greatly valued and appreciated this relationship as it presented as an independent alternative which students could access on their own terms and in a manner that they were comfortable with. Over the long-term, we found this relationship fostered the development of responsible and respectful attitudes, as well as creating the opportunity to encourage students to explore and appreciate the perspectives of others.

Previous research has identified that effective programme implementation is significantly mediated by factors such as a programme provider's personal efficacy, ability to communicate programme content, warmth, empathy, humour, relationship skills and decision making processes (Kumpfer & Alvarado, 2003; Weissberg, Kumpfer & Seligman, 2003). We strongly concur with this and feel that senior education administrators need to recognise the recruitment of highly trained, qualified and committed staff is essential to the overall success of any education support programme. A distinction that we would like to add is that working in an education support programme such as this required a strong proficiency in specific interpersonal skills such as attending skills, reflective listening skills, assertion skills, body language and conflict management skills.

As qualified professionals from disciplines other than teaching (e.g., youth work and psychology) at times we found some aspects of working within education disempowering. On a number of occasions we found that issues and models of practice that we identified as important, were at times minimised and overlooked (e.g., sexual health, mental health, risk taking behaviour and identity). Similarly, at times we have been taken aback by staff members undertaking roles they are not qualified to dispense. For example, a four year trained school psychologist trying to counsel a student with serious mental health issues rather than referring on to a more appropriately trained mental health practitioner (e.g., clinical psychologist). We feel, similar to the steady shift being made in the health sector to help manage the mounting pressure placed on primary healthcare infrastructure in hospitals, education sectors will also need to better develop the ability to be inclusive of and value the skills that allied professionals bring to education support programmes.

Effectively supporting the development of young people is a dynamic and continuous process with education support programmes being most beneficial when they are customised through the inclusive practice of involving all stakeholders in programme operations. By taking this step we found it allowed us to better identify and prioritise student support needs, as well as allowing us to more cohesively support the key elements contributing to creating a positive educational experience which are the student, peers, parents (or family), the school and the wider community.

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Corresponding with the protocol outlines by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC, 2003) the present article where possible will not use the term Indigenous. As a peak body on research protocols NHMRC emphasises that for the most part people prefer being referred to by names such as Bardi or Yindjibarndi as it more closely reflects the diversity of identity, as well as respecting the distinct cultural differences between clans and language groups. The use of the term Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in this article is proposed (and hoped) to be inclusive of this diversity.

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Using the SPECS Model to Explore New Paradigms in Health Psychology

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The SPECS framework recognises that psychological and political influences interact to promote health and wellbeing, perpetuate oppression or generate resistance and liberation. This interpretation of health and power dynamics has corrected much of psychology's irrelevant scholasticism, facilitating the development of a new critical praxis that has the capacity to transform people and society. The comprehensive and reflexive nature of the SPECS model offers a solid foundation to which new health theories may be incorporated, maintaining a high standard of professional dexterity

Disenchantment with biomedical health perspectives and the medical model has led to a search for alternative orientations that attempt to improve services in light of an understanding of the psychosocial aspects of health care. Many consider that health psychology to the present day should more aptly be termed 'illness psychology' as its central focus is illness behavior and illness management. The growing awareness of the importance of psychological and social influences on health and illness has forced health professionals to propose new ways of conceptualising health (Marks, Murray, Evans, Willig, Woodall & Sykes, 2005). Engel's (1997) biopsychosocial model challenged the medical model with the idea that health and illness are contingent upon physical, psychological and social variables. However there are significant problems with this model as it remains essentially biomedical and its theoretical basis has yet to be properly figured out. Thus despite the fast growth of health psychology and its various interdisciplinary influences, there has been no significant paradigm shift in clinical medicine and due to its shortcomings, the biopsychosocial model has not replaced the medical model in hospitals and clinics (Marks et al., 2005).

Engel's model has never been adequately defined and therefore it cannot be practically operationalised. Prilleltensky's (2005) SPECS (strengths, prevention, empowerment, and community conditions) model completes Engel's (1997) in many ways, offering a definitive conception of health that provides

coherent accounts of how it is exactly that psychosocial processes influence health. The superior construction of the SPECS model addresses the collective, relational and individual processes that impact upon health, and also offers significant solutions that can be implemented. Prilleltensky and Nelson (2002) place parochial conceptions of health and illness under the broader concept of wellbeing; a positive state of affairs in which the personal, relational, and collective needs and aspirations of individuals and communities are fulfilled.

So far most health programs have focussed on improving the wellbeing of the individual but have overlooked the community conditions that lead to suffering in the first place. By always directing attention towards the individual level of analysis in explaining health related behaviours, Murray and Campbell (2003) believe health psychology has contributed to concealing the tremendous influence of economic, political and symbolic social inequalities in patterns of ill health both globally and within specific nations. Intrapsychic strategies that focus exclusively on personal wellbeing undermine wellbeing because they do not support the wider structure that enhances wellbeing as a whole. It is very difficult for individuals to alter their state of wellbeing in the absence of concordant environmental changes (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2002). Reactive, alienating and deficit based approaches that engender patienthood instead of health,

citizenship and democracy have been the dominant paradigm in health and human services for decades. The SPECS framework provides strength based, preventative, empowering and community orientated approaches a chance to promote personal, relational and collective wellbeing. It strives to alter disadvantageous social conditions through community based participatory strategies and action research projects that foster leadership and individual skills (Prilleltensky, 2005).

According to the SPECS model, at the individual level persons are considered sites where cognitions, feelings and tangible experiences of wellbeing occur. Wellbeing here is reflected in personal control, which is contingent upon opportunities to exercise voice and choice, which in turn are promoted by empowerment. Signs of personal wellbeing include self-determination, optimism, sense of control, self-efficacy, physical and mental health, meaning and spirituality and degrees of self-actualisation. Major causes of psychological distress and oppression include neurosis, anxiety and personal inadequacy, so one's ability to cope effectively is paramount to attaining or maintaining wellbeing. Wellbeing on the individual level is thus about self-empowerment, personal insight and changing one's own behaviour, knowledge, attitudes and beliefs. It is about avoiding victim blaming, and the internalisation of disempowering ideologies (Prilleltensky, 2005).

Relationships are sites where material and psychological resources are negotiated between individuals or groups. On the relational level, signs of wellbeing include democratic participation in decision-making processes, respect for diversity, nurturance and affection, support and cooperation. Relational wellbeing encompasses lifestyle environmental factors such as occupational health, and the avoidance of stressors in family, educational and social settings. Maintaining wellbeing on this level is about creating awareness of social power dynamics, and re-examining the

personal appraisal processes of triggers that create stress and anxiety (Prilleltensky, 2005).

Communities as sites of wellbeing display features including a fair and equitable allocation of bargaining powers, resources and obligations in society, as well as gender and race equality, universal access to high quality healthcare and education facilities, affordable housing, clean air, and accessible transportation and employment opportunities. Wellbeing at this level strongly parallels with Baro's Liberation Psychology (cited in Burton & Kagan, 2004) and essentially derives from policies of social justice, advocated by social movements that endeavour to create and improve institutions that deliver services to all citizens (Prilleltensky, 2005).

In order to advance wellbeing at the three levels, the SPECS model has a number of strategies that cover the range of domains of wellbeing and attend to the various signs and sources of the three sites. Comprehensive promotion of wellbeing must address four corresponding domains; the temporal, ecological, participation and capabilities. Only a small amount of resources are allocated to prevention in many health systems and this corresponds to the temporal and ecological domains. The vast majority of resources are assigned to rehabilitative costs such as therapeutic interventions, and hospital maintenance. This is the reactive approach, a remnant of the still dominant medical model. Instead of waiting for citizens to develop illness that medicine and psychology can only treat at very high financial and human costs, SPECS recognises that the best way to lessen the incidence and prevalence of suffering is through prevention. This model proposes cost effective high quality preventative interventions (Prilleltensky, 2005).

In order to experience wellbeing human beings have to experience affirmation first and this corresponds to the

participation and capabilities domains. Affirmation comes from among other things, an acknowledgement of a person's strengths, voice and choice. The fields of health and human services continue to be renowned for concentrating on deficits, for fostering clienthood and patienthood instead of citizenship. When empowerment and strengths are promoted the experience of affirmation grows (Prilleltensky, 2005). The SPECS framework can thus be considered the most effective new paradigm for health psychology as it adopts a broad definition of health and takes Engel's model much further by actually identifying the diverse domains and processes that impact on healthcare and wellbeing, and offers detailed solutions on how to combat healthcare structural problems.

However, proper appreciation of the SPECS framework requires an understanding of how notions of oppression and power dynamics relate to wellbeing. This permeates the whole framework. According to Prilleltensky and Gonick (1996) the ontological nature of oppression may be understood from various levels of analysis, from the micro personal to the macro international level, from both psychological and political orientations. Political factors refer to the collective experience of individuals and groups, informed by power relations and conflicts of interest at the interpersonal, family, group, community and societal levels (Prilleltensky, 2003). One of the political mechanisms accounting for oppression in emerging countries is the oppressive structure of international financial systems that lock emerging societies in a state of increased economic dependency (Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996). Such forms of oppression usually devolve from the largest units, such as international governing bodies to the smallest unit, the individual.

Psychological factors refer to the subjective experience of the individual, informed by power dynamics operating at the personal, interpersonal, family, group and state

levels, the vehicles of which include learned helplessness, internalisation of hegemonic self-rejecting views and obedience to authority (Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996). The critical consciousness of a person, group or nation may be at varying stages in regard to different oppressing agents as an individual may be aware of oppressive forces at the interpersonal level, but may be unaware of subjugating influences controlling at the class or state level (Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996). Cultivating a strong sense of self-awareness creates resistance to both internal psychological and external political structures, beginning the process of liberation that is fundamental to attaining wellbeing (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2002).

The SPECS model offers practical transformative interventions that utilise these insights about the relationship between power and oppression and wellbeing. It is the conditioning processes that occur in the major educative institutions that dictate the values and norms that create the fabric of society. Prilleltensky and Gonick (1996) have proposed the formation of critical consciousness programs at all levels of education that empower individuals and give them greater insight into themselves, their environment and their capacity to create change and transformation. Statistics have consistently demonstrated the high correlation between education, as impacting upon socio-economic standing, and socio-economic standing impacting upon health (Watts & Abdul-Adil, 1994). Thus the task of overcoming oppression and bettering individual and collective wellbeing starts with the process of psychopolitical education and ends in a greater personal awareness and action (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2002). Furthermore, to move from values to action in critical health psychology, Prilleltensky (2003) proposes we assess all our activities against epistemic and transformational psycho political

validity. This type of transformation is based on a consideration of power dynamics in psychological and political domains of health, and refers to system change whereas amelioration refers to individual or reformist change that leaves the sources of the problem unaffected.

With an understanding of psychological and politically oppressive processes and their relationship to wellbeing in mind, the SPECS model can be used as a foundation for the incorporation of new health concepts and alternative health modalities. The late twentieth century has witnessed increasing criticism of medicine and it has been argued that a process of de-medicalisation is taking place (Marks et al., 2005). The apparent failure of biomedicine to solve the big medical problems such as cancer and AIDS has led to a heightened cynicism and a turn to alternative health systems. Not surprisingly established health professions are very concerned with the growth of complementary medicine and are attempting to undermine it by insisting it meets positivist scientific standards of safety and practice.

Medicine sees the body as strictly a mechanical apparatus composed of physical bio-chemicals and genes. If the functioning of the body is diseased, medicine uses physical drugs and chemistry to restore the body. In the quantum universe, it is recognised that invisible energy fields and physical molecules collaborate in creating life. Quantum mechanics recognises that the invisible moving forces of the field are the primary factors that shape matter (Woese, 2004). At the very leading edge of contemporary biophysics, scientists are recognising that the body's molecules are actually controlled by vibrational energy frequencies, so that light, sound and other electromagnetic energies profoundly influence all the functions of life (Lipton, 2005). This fascinating insight about the power of energy forces provides an understanding of how Asian energy medicine, homeopathy, chiropractic and other

complementary healing modalities influence health.

Among the energy forces that control biology are the electromagnetic fields that are generated by the mind. In conventional biology, the action of the mind is not really incorporated into the understanding of life, despite medicine acknowledging that the placebo effect is responsible for at least one third of all medical healing, including surgery (Lipton, 2005). The placebo effect occurs when someone is healed due to personal belief that a drug or medical procedure is going to be effective. This incredible healing ability is usually disregarded by conventional allopathic medicine and drug companies that sanction only limited remedies for disease and illness. Based on the tenets of epigenetics, 'new biology' emphasises the role of the mind as the primary factor influencing health (Lipton, 2005). This perspective of health undermines the idea of biological determinism, regarding interaction between environmental stimuli and the mind as responsible for health. Traditional Indigenous belief systems the world over resonate strongly with this concept of human health (Maher, 2002), and it seems unavoidable that as we look outside the confined space of empirical science we will come to embrace more alternative causal ontologies and methods of healing.

The concepts of new biology complement the SPECS model in a number of ways as overcoming oppression and ensuring wellbeing is not just a matter of persons acting on the environment, but of individuals coming into contact with external forces they have already mentally internalised. By placing emphasis on environmental factors in determining health, such as socio-economic standing and educational opportunities, interpersonal and inter-group power dynamics and discriminatory practices, new biology inadvertently acknowledges the way

political and psychological factors interact to impact upon health. Once aware of inhibiting environmental influences, new biology posits that the human mind has the capacity to renegotiate and overcome these by changing the way it perceives, constructs and interacts with the environment. Thus these scientific insights could be incorporated into critical consciousness programs or at the very least add a new dimension to health comprehension in community wellness programs (Prilleltensky, 2003). If incorporated into the SPECS model, the empowering nature of these discoveries has serious ramifications for the temporal and ecological domains by furthering the likelihood of illness prevention. The participation and capabilities domains would also be significantly affected by the idea that through educated cognitive mediation of environmental influences, the individual can become the ultimate constructor of their health and their reality, dramatically increasing levels of personal affirmation, strengths and voice. While it may seem new biology and other consciousness raising information is of little practical value to third world countries and offers no visible betterment to concrete situations, the access to the empowering knowledge itself is actually an extremely important change in the environment, creating positive repercussions of its own.

However it is important to keep in mind that the path towards liberation is far from linear, it is a process and not a state. As Prilleltensky (2003) observes, the professional helper is geared toward amelioration, and the smooth running of institutions, while the critical change agent is focused on transformation, liberation and the confrontation of unjust practices. If wellbeing and liberation are to emerge these roles need to be collaborative, and this requires people working inside the system as much as questioning it, specialised knowledge as much as political knowledge and ameliorative therapies as much as social change. Perhaps under this definition of professional critical

praxis, alterative health modalities and even broader conceptions of health and wellbeing, such as those implicit in new biology may come to be accepted and eventually wield some positive influence in the agenda for social justice.

A great example of the potential of such reflexive and synergistic practice is the idea of establishing in mainstream institutions, community wellness groups where citizens afflicted by similar medical ailments can discuss the social origins of their problems and have an opportunity to instigate meaningful social change. The focus of these groups is on how to empower community members to combat oppressive societal conditions, so citizens experience not only traditional ameliorative treatment, but also the positive effects of being part of a transformational process (Prilleltensky, 2003). There is a gradual decoding of the individual's world as the mechanisms of oppression and dehumanisation are grasped. Such programs, corresponding to the SPECS participation and capabilities domains, would institutionalise critical consciousness programs, undermining the dominance of the medical model and thus helping to deprofessionalise health and wellness. The socially critical nature of such questioning would also contribute to the accountability of mainstream institutions towards oppressed and marginalised groups.

Ultimately this type of transformational approach requires an effort to understand local struggle and self-liberation within a wider societal and global perspective. Murray and Campbell (2003) believe all health professionals need to consider themselves as participants in a broader movement for social change and the eradication of poverty, to move from the position of the detached observer to that of the socially committed. Human rights and an active participatory citizenship are foundational to community development and wellbeing, and in order to combat war,

violence, poverty, crime and ignorance on a global scale, drastic measures such as the elimination of third world debt, the undermining of numerous corporate interests and increased government accountability need to be implemented (Prilleltensky, 2005). The problem, according to Murray and Campbell (2003) is figuring out how to connect local and community efforts to mobilise resistance to social oppression to broader national and international movements.

It is only when we achieve an integrated political and psychological understanding of power, wellness and oppression that we can effectively change the world around us (Prilleltensky, 2003). To promote liberation, critical psychology needs to engage with the political and the psychological concurrently, it needs to operate at the level of the individual and political. This means identifying processes and practices which can transform the psychological processes associated with oppression and facilitate taking action to bring about change in social conditions at the level of widespread discursive practices and the subjugating forces on the individual. The SPECS framework recognises that these dynamic terrains need to be negotiated in order to promote wellbeing at the individual, relational and collective levels. The broad reflexive nature of the SPECS model not only takes these psychological and political forces into account but also provides a solid base to which new theories of health and wellbeing can be incorporated.

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A Case for More Culture in Community Psychology: The Federated States of Micronesia

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Despite the notable achievements of community psychology in promoting the wellness of diverse populations and recent "calls to action" to incorporate more culture in the discipline, there has still been insufficient integration of cultural theories and the valuable contributions of cultural psychology. This paper presents issues of substance abuse and mental health in the Federated States of Micronesia and demonstrates why cultural understanding is necessary for improving the lives of Micronesians and preventing further problems. A more culturally-informed community psychology could contribute to the enhancement of this population and others through advancing cultural theory and research, developing more culturally-appropriate interventions, and preventing problems caused by inattention to culture.

Community psychology has undoubtedly enriched our understanding of diversity and the corollaries that emerge at the junctions of different cultures and social systems.

Contemporary advances that have shaped our field include the illumination of the limits of Western psychological knowledge (Gergen, Gulerce, Lock, & Misra, 1996) and the importance of assuming a global perspective (Marsella, 1998) while valuing local and indigenous practices (Kim & Berry, 1993). Such contributions make our discipline well-situated for tackling issues in the international realm, and recent developments at this level are encouraging.

Several special journal editions have revealed community psychology's international diversity (Journal of Community Psychology, 1998, 3; 2002, 6; The Community Psychologist, 1990, 1; 1995, 3). These and other works have greatly expanded our conceptualization of our discipline, and include perspectives from areas such as Australia (Bishop & D'Rosario, 2002), New Zealand (Gregory, 2001), Cuba (Calvino, 1998), and South Africa (Ngonyama ka Sigogo, et al., 2004), to name a few. The title of the 2005 Society for Community Research and Action Biennial Conference "Community Psychology

in Global Perspective" also reflects this trend. In addition, the population of members in community psychology organizations outside of the U.S. is growing and constitutes more than half of the total membership (Toro, 2005). Clearly, community psychology is establishing a much needed place among the diverse peoples of the world.

However, much less prevalent are efforts in the discipline to incorporate cultural theories and research in community work. In light of the numerous cultures that community psychologists are engaged with, it is surprising that the abundance of cultural literature available (for e.g., Cooper & Denner, 1998; Herskovits, 1955; Hofstede, 1980; Kagitcibasi, 1996; Kluckhohn, 1954; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Shweder, 1990; Triandis & Bhawuk, 1997) has not been more integrated. Bhawuk and Mrazek (2005) also raised an important question of whether the field is sufficiently considering culture. Fortunately, the last few years have seen more recognition of this need, as O'Donnell's (2006) presidential address proclaimed the significance of culture for our discipline, stressing the need to go beyond diversity as a fundamental aspect of our work. The significance of the connection between

community psychology and culture was also reflected in the theme of the recent 2007 SCRA Biennial Conference, "Community and Culture: Implications for Policy, Social Justice, and Practice."

Although cultural psychology and related fields have made vast contributions, it is an enormous task to develop an understanding of the numerous evolving cultures that exist along with all of the problems, solutions, and opportunities related to culture. Community psychology, which often tackles social issues at the most local level, must fill this need when working with communities in which little research or theoretical knowledge exists. For example, Pacific Island cultures have not been incorporated in major theoretical perspectives such as those from Hall (Hall & Hall, 1990), Hofstede (1980), Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck (1961), and Schwartz (1992), although many community psychologists are involved with Pacific Island people and their related issues. Cultural knowledge is necessary for us to engage in our work, and thus it becomes our responsibility to build and share cultural understanding to effectively assist those communities.

Reinforcing the case for a greater incorporation of cultural theories and research in community psychology, this paper reviews substance abuse and mental health in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). The case of FSM, with its increasing social problems, reveals that our contributions to global issues are valuable, but they are still insufficient. With greater attention to culture, community psychology's impact can be more fully realized.

The first section of this paper provides an overview of FSM as many readers may not be familiar with the region or its people. Of course, many differences exist within the FSM population, but they also share many characteristics that are useful for examining their situation as a whole (Saleh, 1996). These socio-cultural elements provide a context for better understanding the subsequent topics of

substance abuse and mental illness. References to the cultural factors and social conditions that may underlie these problems are infused throughout most of the paper. While minimal, the current efforts to address these issues in FSM are also reviewed, which underscores the critical need for an expansion of community psychology.

FSM and its culture

The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) provides a compelling case of a region at the threshold of cultural changes where our existing frameworks may be relevant and where our knowledge and skills can be usefully developed and applied. However, little attention has been paid to this population among community psychologists. No articles were found in community psychology journals that mention Micronesia or its people.

The Federated States of Micronesia are a group of islands in the West Pacific Ocean divided into the four states of Chuuk (Truk), Kosrae (Kosaie), Pohnpei (Ponape), and Yap. Its land area totals approximately 700 square kilometres; about four times the size of Washington D.C. Its estimated population in 2008 was 107,665 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008).

Although limited, some population characteristics are available from the U.S. Census Bureau and occasional census studies within FSM. In 2008, the population was estimated to be 50.0% male and extremely youthful, with 56.6% of the total population being between the ages of 0 and 24 years old (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). The 2000 FSM Census of Population and Housing has estimated that 48.8% identify their ethnic origin and race to be Chuukese (or its outer islands), 25.5% identify as Pohnpeian (or its outer islands), 9.3% identify as Yapese (or its outer islands), 6.7% identify as Kosraean, 0.6% identify as Filipino, and less than 0.5% each identify as other Asian, other Pacific Islander, U.S. American, or other. Likewise, FSM includes a diverse array of languages,

with 57.6% speaking Chuukese, 47.4% speaking English, 34.3% speaking Pohnpeian/Mwoakilloan/Pingelapese, 7.7% speaking Kosraean, 6.0% speaking Yapese, 5.3% speaking other island Yapese, and less than 5% each speaking Asian or other languages. Among the population age 25 years and over, 49.2% have less than a 9th grade education, 19.1% have an education between 9th and 12th grades, but no diploma, and 31.7% are a high school graduate or higher (FSM National Government, Department of Economic Affairs, Division of Statistics, 2002).

Saleh (1996) provided a useful description of Micronesian culture. One of the central features of the Micronesian identity is the extended family, from which, traditionally, all behaviour stems. This characteristic is similar to many Pacific Island nations (O'Donnell, 1995). Helping one's family members is a fundamental value and one occupies a clearly defined role within the family unit. Self-esteem and security are anchored in identifying oneself within the family. Traditionally, land was also part of the family and was not divided and bartered among individuals. Harmony with nature was, and remains, an important value as well (Saleh, 1996).

Saleh (1996) also illustrated the relational styles among Micronesians. They are friendly people and do not like to offend others; interpersonal harmony is fundamental. Thus, they may take some time getting to know others to ensure that they do not upset them. Micronesians dislike conflict, and the traditional social organization was constructed to circumvent contention. Micronesians value sharing and assisting those in need rather than material wealth.

The changes that have occurred and are still occurring in Micronesia are leading to a social system almost directly opposed to the traditional one. The effect of repeated colonization has led to 1) displacement from land through appropriation, 2) family dissolution, 3) a breakdown of traditional

culture, 4) ambiguous identification, 5) a lack of educational attainment, and 6) a culture at risk (Saleh, 1996). It can be argued that the increasing problems, such as substance abuse and mental health reviewed in this paper, may only be a couple of telling symptoms of a larger trend jeopardizing Micronesian society.

Untalan and Camacho (1997) also discussed the effect of rapid social changes in Micronesia. They reiterated the importance of the extended family and how typically matrilineal lines determine patterns of land ownership, residence, social position, kinship, and inheritance. However, modernization and changing family structures toward independent nuclear families with fewer support systems, along with individualistic practices, have undermined the power of the extended family to ensure the welfare of each other. These authors also discuss the corresponding increases in problems such as alcohol and drug use, teen pregnancy, suicide, and child maltreatment which have emerged.

Major social issues in FSM

Although the hundreds of volcanic islands and coral atolls which make up FSM exemplify tropical paradise, the region is far from being trouble-free. There has been growing concern about substance abuse and mental health issues in the region (Gonzaga-Optaia, 2006; Hezel, 1987a, 1987b, 1989, 1993; Marshall, 1990, 1993, 1997). Historically, problems of mental illness were minimal and alcohol and drug use (besides native plants such as kava) may have been non-existent. For example, cases of mental illness even in the 1960s were perceived as "relatively few" (Hezel, 1993). Also, researchers have found that intoxicating drugs, including alcohol, did not exist on islands such as in Chuuk until foreign contact (Larson, 1987; Marshall, 1990), and Saleh (1994) stated that "alcohol is not indigenous to any of the islands of Micronesia" (p. 268). Recently however, these problems have

intensified, with the foremost mental health issues being schizophrenia (Hezel, 1993) and suicide (Rubenstein, 2002). In addition, excessive alcohol and growing drug use, especially marijuana and 'ice', are being documented in the region (Saleh, 1994; Storr, Arria, Workman, & Anthony, 2004).

Much of the research presented in this paper is based on the limited studies available, some of which are becoming dated. However, more recent presentations (e.g., Gonzaga-Optaia, 2006) and the authors' communications with local authorities suggest that these issues continue to worsen. It is also noteworthy that almost all of the studies reviewed here discuss cultural change to some extent and relate it to the problems experienced in Micronesia. This presents a much needed direction for research on mitigating these negative effects.

In addition, there is still a need for research to confirm the prevalence of substance abuse and mental illnesses on a more comprehensive scale. The knowledge base regarding the correlates of substance abuse and mental health among Micronesians is also still in its infancy. While many argue that Westernization is contributing substantially to these problems, almost no theoretical models or studies were found examining the relationships among substance use, mental illness, and their precursors within Micronesian society. Research on culturally compatible treatment and prevention programs is also lacking for this population, and previous efforts to adequately assess and address these problems have been minimal and ineffective (Robillard, 1987).

Substance abuse

Besides *kava*, a root-based drink often consumed together with the community during significant events, alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs have been unknown in much of the region until foreign contact. Tobacco may have been one of the first to be introduced to the islands through Spanish trading networks around the mid-19th century (Marshall, 1990).

Likewise, alcohol was unknown until foreign contact (Marshall, 1993), although Nason (1975) argued that *sakau* (general term for drinks containing alcohol) and *achi* (fermented coconut toddy) were present before Western contact. Marshall and Marshall (1975) discovered that some islands of Micronesia learned about the coconut variety from Filipinos. Estimates of when whisky, wine, and beer made their appearance range from the early to late 1800's (Marshall & Marshall, 1975; Nason, 1975). It is argued that marijuana was introduced in the late 1960s by Peace Corps volunteers (Marshall, 1990), although locals did not begin using until the mid 1970s (Larson, 1987). Today, all of these substances are used frequently in FSM. Although tobacco use is undoubtedly a concern (Marshall, 1997), more research is available on the use of alcohol and other drugs. Therefore it is the latter two that will be focused on.

Marshall conducted an ethnographic study of alcohol and drunken behaviour in Moen in 1976 and followed up this research on the same island in 1985 with a more comprehensive study of alcohol, tobacco and marijuana using multiple methods (Marshall, 1990). Marshall's study found that a majority of men drink (85% were current or former drinkers), especially those between their mid-teens and mid-30s, while a majority of women did not drink (2.3% were current or former drinkers). Gender was the greatest predictor of alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana use. Of current drinkers, consumption was found to be heavy, with 77.6% having more than four drinks per session and 50.6% having more than 10 drinks per session. No association was found between alcohol use and the biographical characteristics of religious affiliation, marital status, educational level, employment status, or community of origin. Also, alcohol use was significantly correlated with tobacco and marijuana use. Despite the high use of

alcohol, Marshall found that few Moen islanders reported drinking for “pathological” reasons, and most drank for social reasons.

Later, Saleh (1994) examined patterns of alcohol use and related factors among Micronesian college students at a Guam university. The author found that Micronesian students, compared with non-Micronesians, were significantly more likely to have parents who were alcoholic and friends who drink, and to consume more alcohol in one sitting. Further analyses showed that, in comparison to Palau and Guam (outside of FSM), a greater percentage of students from Chuuk reported being heavy drinkers, getting drunk more frequently, and drinking every day. Chuuk students also reported a higher frequency of arguing after drinking and experiencing work or academic interference from drinking.

Nason (1975) found that drinking parties on Etal Island have come to serve an important social function, preserving traditional values and easing the strain from socio-political changes. Drinking parties often coincide with public occasions, or the arrival of visitors or fieldtrip ships. They are male dominated and provide a context for young men to display masculinity through risky activities such as gambling with blackjack, “chugging” liquor, and singing love songs (because of their adulterous connotations). As traditional male roles have faded, drinking parties allow men to demonstrate their masculinity and at the same time provided an outlet for their frustrations regarding interpersonal problems.

Marijuana use appears to be serving similar social functions, as discovered by Larson (1987) in his study of Chuukese users. Occasionally, young women smoke marijuana, although typical smokers are young men between the ages of 15 to 20. Usually consumed among a group of close relatives or friends, it is understood by group members that they are allowed to share their personal thoughts and that it will be kept secret by other members. There is a high degree of trust among those smoking together and often,

smoking is a means of developing friendships. However, these bonds develop in the context of disapproval by authority figures and marijuana use is believed by many to cause problems in the youths’ behaviour (such as disobedience) and discord within the family. Larson illustrates how marijuana smoking may fit in with the Chuukese cultural values of sharing and peacefulness, but also risk-taking at the same time. However, at a societal level, in addition to it being illegal, it is not an accepted behaviour and is still perceived as a foreign custom.

Little data on frequency of marijuana or other drug use in FSM is available. FSM’s Department of Health, Education, and Social Affairs, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Program has reported a perceived increase in the introduction of drugs (Gonzaga-Optaia, 2006). However, almost no information comprehensively details the extent of current substance abuse within FSM.

Mental health

While the connection between substance abuse and mental health is well-documented with Western samples, the association is less clear for Micronesians. Some literature reviewed earlier suggests strong social reasons for using alcohol and drugs rather than pathological reasons, although Hezel’s (1993) research suggests the possibility that substance abuse may act more as a precursor to mental illness. With such limited data, more research must be conducted on the possible correlation between drug use and mental health in light of cultural changes in FSM.

Only relatively recently has psychological deviance in Micronesia been examined, although primarily under the Western conceptualization of mental health. Beginning in 1974 from a psychiatrist and a psychologist on the Trust Territory Headquarters staff, a Division of Mental Health was established to assess mental health in the region (Hezel, 1987a). Despite the lack of evidence for the need for or suitability of Western services, the American model of health care was institutionalized and practiced among the

people of Micronesia. By the early 1980's, about one dozen programs were initiated with the purpose of training mental health service providers (Robillard, 1987). Also, a handful of reports detailing the incidence of schizophrenia, as well as the status of other mental health issues and the health care system were developed during this early period (Hezel, 1987a).

However, early attempts at establishing mental health services were largely unsuccessful (Robillard, 1987). Services were not only incompatible with cultural norms; there was a lack of fit between services and community needs. For example, standard Western methods of diagnosing and treating patients were implemented based on an individual-centred framework, with little knowledge of the importance of the Micronesian's interrelations with family and community. In addition, although suicide and drug abuse were the most salient issues, mental health programs paid little attention to them. Robillard's (1987) evaluation of mental health services in Micronesia was quite incisive:

"The history of U.S. 'development' of Micronesia, of which mental health services is but a phase, wears a very thick pair of institutional blinders, a mask so totally composed of the structural dynamics of the centre that there is virtually no space and time to conceive of or implement anything but the most conventional American mental health service systems." (p.235)

It was evident that for interventions to succeed, knowledge of the causes and treatment of mental illness among Micronesians had to be broadened. Several authors have embarked on this undertaking and their analyses have generally pointed to the effect of increasing Western influence (Dale, 1981; Hezel 1987a, 1987b, 1989, 1993; Lowe, 2003; Rubenstein, 1983, 1987, 1995, 2002). These authors have linked such social changes

to suicide and psychosis, especially schizophrenia.

Hezel (1987a) may have been one of the first to suggest that the increase in the rate of mental illness was linked to social changes in Micronesia. More specifically, Hezel (1987a, 1987b, 1989) provided insightful explanations of the relationship of changes in social and family dynamics and suicide in Truk. Examining the types of suicide committed, it was found that most related to family problems. It is the changes in values and relationships among parents and children that lead to conflicts. For example, youth may increasingly demand acknowledgement of their 'rights', which was never an issue in traditional society; on the other hand, parents may be pressured to demand that children prove themselves with substantial cash incomes rather than traditional food production and tending to the home. Changes in the distribution of wealth and authority, as fathers are encouraged to earn more money and become independent from their wives' lineages, subsequently impact the interdependence and security within the extended family.

These changes often clash with pre-existing ways. Under stress, historical cultural norms such as bravado (in males), enduring suffering as proof of love, and need for recognition, also influence one's decision to commit suicide (Hezel, 1987b). The cultural norm of avoiding conflict may also be a factor in suicide, as it provides a means of removing oneself from the situation (Saleh, 1996). In addition, the suicides appear to be highly culturally patterned and influenced by previous acts, appearing to be to some extent romanticized (Rubenstein, 1987).

Lowe's (2003) more recent analysis of adolescent and youth well-being in Chuuk provides a complementary and expanded account of precursors to psychosocial stress. He discussed the importance of identity formation for young people and their challenges in negotiating their identities across multiple settings. When constructing an identity in one

activity setting is opposed to the identity encouraged in another setting, elevated psychosocial stress is likely. In the context of Micronesia, social change that creates new settings which reward the construction of a particular identity and are incongruent with the reward system of other 'traditional' settings is a significant cause of problems. For example, the demands to support and be supported by the family may conflict with the demands to engage in wage jobs or deviant behaviour with peers. In support of this idea is the finding that peri-urban areas, with a higher proportion of conflicting settings, had higher suicide rates than urban or rural areas, which are more likely to have consistency between settings.

Studies have also suggested that psychosis is not a likely factor in suicide (Rubenstein, 1995). Of the total number of suicide victims, only 5 to 10% had psychotic histories. However, evidence shows that psychotics are much more likely to commit suicide than the general Micronesian population (Hezel, 1993).

Rubenstein's (1983, 1987) analysis of suicides in Truk also complements these explanations and reviews the findings that in the period from the mid 1960's to the early 1980's suicides have reached epidemic proportions. Although initially appearing to be a cohort effect, as post World War II children experienced substantial societal changes, Rubenstein had to reject this hypothesis. Even in the early 1990's, he reported that suicides had become the primary cause of death among young Micronesian men, and their rates had been among the highest in the world (Rubenstein, 1995) with rates in some areas, such as Truk, exceeding 200 per 100,000 annually during the period 1978 to 1987 (Rubenstein, 2002). In his most recent article, he stated that the youth suicide epidemic is currently in its third decade with no signs of diminishing (Rubenstein, 2002).

Another area of concern is the possible increasing rate of psychosis. Compared to a rate of 34 per 10,000 for the entire Micronesia

in the period 1978-1980, Hezel (1993) found that the rate was 54 per 10,000 in 1990. Most of Micronesia at the time had a rate lower than other industrialized nations, although the nearby state of Palau's rate was considerably higher at 167. Seventy-three percent of treated cases were diagnosed as schizophrenia. Over three quarters (77%) of these severe cases were male.

Dale's (1981) analysis revealed substantial differences in the prevalence of schizophrenia among the populations of Micronesia between the years 1978 and 1979. While Yap had a rate of 9.7 cases per thousand (over the age of 15), the Kapingamarangi and Nukuoro people of similar Polynesian descent have yet to identify a single case of schizophrenia. Dale noted that the Kapingamarangi mostly keep to themselves and preserve their traditional ways, while the Nukuoro have been more likely to mix with other populations. Also, the rates of schizophrenia show a general increase from more eastern islands (near Kapingamarangi and Nukuoro) to western islands – a noteworthy phenomenon worth exploring further.

Examining 2004 rates of various diagnosed cases of mental illness and substance abuse, Gonzaga-Optaia (2006) reported that schizophrenia (297 cases) and depressive episodes (100 cases) were the most frequent. The most recent data in 2005 found a similar pattern, but with continued increases, with 325 cases of schizophrenia and 114 cases of depressive episodes. Because of the geographic challenges inherent in a diffuse island nation and lack of resources for identifying all cases of mental illness, investigators have cautioned that findings are not conclusive. However, because all psychotic cases that were included in their prevalence rates were highly indisputable, any errors would most likely be underestimates.

Upon inquiries with villagers, many perceived increases in mental illness and attributed it to travelling abroad, higher education, and drug use (Hezel, 1993). Hezel's study found that 47% of the psychotic population had lived more than 6 months

abroad and had more years of education on average than the general adult population. Psychosis was also found to be largely linked to gender, with a disproportionate amount of males being affected. He also found a possible relationship between drug use and psychosis, although the data was limited. Possible explanations of these findings include being exposed to greater stress, common to industrialized nations, and which may be experienced more by men who are more often in public roles, are experiencing greater role changes, and are more often socially dislocated than women. The cultural customs of dealing with stress by drinking alcohol may also be becoming more hazardous as stronger drugs are introduced.

Limited recent efforts

In 1989, FSM established the National Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health as well as offices in the four states for the prevention and treatment of substance abuse and mental illness. Almost all (98%) of their funding consists of U.S. Federal grants (Gonzaga-Optaia, 2006). Based on a 2005 report of the World Health Organization, there are few laws addressing mental health, except for a 1970 legislation for treating involuntary patients. However, there is a mental health policy formulated in 1986 that guides advocacy, promotion, prevention, and treatment; in addition, there exists a national mental health program and a substance abuse policy, which were both established in 1989 (WHO, 2005).

The WHO report, developed in conjunction with the University of Auckland, involved a situational analysis of mental health needs and resources in Pacific Island countries, which outlined mental health efforts in 2005 (WHO, 2005). At that time, they reported that there are no in-patient or long-term care facilities in FSM; a jail is used for safe care. Doctors and staff in the state hospital have little experience in mental health, and programs and services are community based, involving a community action agency, the

public defender, police, schools, hospitals, and courts.

Programs and services primarily include outreach, education and counselling, day programs, and outpatient services, although there is only a relatively small group of staff in each state. In Pohnpei, there is an active community mental health centre, which provides education, a day program, weekly clinic services, phone counselling and crisis intervention, and outreach. In Chuuk, there is a hospital on the main island, which has an outpatient clinic and conducts outreach. They had 20 mental health workers as of the report. Yap conducts outpatient services island-wide, and a substance abuse and mental health unit made up of four staff offers patient care and family counselling. In Kosrae, a team of counsellors, nurses, and police are involved in locating and screening individuals, and making referrals to the hospital. Throughout the country, non-governmental organizations are also involved with advocacy, promotion, prevention, and rehabilitation. However, it is yet to be determined whether such services are adequately addressing the increasing substance abuse and mental health issues in the region.

Need for culturally-informed efforts

We have many reminders of the unfortunate consequences that can result from neglecting culture and context (Gergen, et al., 1996; O'Donnell, 1995; Sinha & Holtzman, 1984). Real-world examples of atrocities that have followed from cultural dominance abound. For instance, numerous authors have contended that U.S. cultural dominance and annexation of Hawaii have led to Native Hawaiians ranking among the highest in rates in the U.S. of numerous physical, psychological, and social pathologies (Hishinuma, et al., 2005; Makini, et al., 2001; Marsella, Oliveira, Plummer, & Crabbe, 1995; Nishimura, Hishinuma, Else, Goebert & Andrade, 2005; Stannard, 1992; Wong, Klinge, and Price, 2004).

Our field has the advantage of being action-oriented and having an abundant literature on the crucial factors for building

healthy communities such as cultural sensitivity (Dumas, Rollock, Prinz, Hops, & Blechman, 1999; Guarnaccia & Rodriguez, 1996; Kagitcibasi, 1996), an ecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), a focus on prevention (Felner, Felner, Silverman, 2000), participation (Wandersman & Florin, 2000), and empowerment (Zimmerman, 2000), along with the use of qualitative (Banyard & Miller, 1998; Stewart, 2000) and multi-method research (Janesick, 2003; Weisner, 1996), as well as other important considerations for community research (Glenwick, Heller, Linney, Pargament, 1990; Shadish, 1990). One disadvantage, however, is in the lack of theories to help us understand the critical components of culture that operate when different cultures converge.

Thus, we can utilize our advantages and respond to situations such as that within FSM in a number of ways. Particularly appropriate would be research and intervention based on a 'ground up' approach. To illustrate, instruments often required to measure substance abuse outcomes at the state level are standardized for the U.S. population. One question required of service providers, as part of government funding requirements, asks about whether a client has been homeless in the past 30 days. The definition of homelessness provided by government agencies is not having a "fixed address" (for e.g., see Office of Applied Studies, SAMHSA, 2008, p. B-50). However, the meaning of homelessness is different in many Pacific Island cultures. Pacific people may be more transient and live with various extended family members, while not considering themselves homeless. Some populations do not even have street addresses. Obviously, the interpretation of results based on such data would provide a very different picture than what would be perceived by native people.

The same definitional issues will also apply to concepts of drugs and mental health. Dumas and colleagues (1999) discuss the need to use culturally-acceptable definitions of

healthy functioning because many cultural differences exist. Overall, any research examining Pacific Island populations must be grounded in the meanings used by that particular culture.

If culturally-grounded instruments are not possible, any instruments currently being used must be thoroughly examined with regard to their reliability and validity for these Pacific populations. For example Kim and Jackson (in press) reported on an evaluation of a Hawaiian culture-based substance abuse treatment program which required (by the funding agency) the use of standardized instruments. As part of the larger study, these authors included a preliminary assessment of the reliability and validity of the instrument for their sample of predominantly Asian and Pacific Islanders.

Accordingly, Banyard and Miller (1998) make a strong case for greater use of qualitative methods. They first argue that valuing diversity requires understanding different ways of attributing meaning to the world, not just the meanings of Western scientific cultures. This also entails being immersed in local, historical contexts, rather than being a detached observer; in other words, incorporating a different philosophy of science. Second, in order to understand the complex relationships surrounding the individual, qualitative methods must be employed. Third, empowerment involves giving voice to marginalized communities, and the most appropriate methods for accomplishing this are qualitative.

Qualitative methods are also indispensable because they provide the groundwork for research on populations that have not yet been studied quantitatively. Moreover, qualitative research can enhance more traditional research and can reveal inconsistencies in or make sense of findings from quantitative methods. Thus, use of multi-method approaches are particularly effective, especially when examining complex ecological systems (Banyard and Miller, 1998; Riger, 1990; Weisner, 1996).

Along with multi-method and qualitative

strategies, local participation (Wandersman & Florin, 2000) must be an integral aspect of research for developing successful interventions for non-Western populations. Often, program funding requires use of evidence-based programs, although no evidence-based programs exist specifically targeted to Pacific Islanders. Such research should also be used to guide more broad-based, long-term and multidimensional (having multiple components and addressing multiple levels) strategies such as policy-making (Knitzer, 2000) and other population-based interventions, especially those focused on prevention (Felner, et al., 2000; Levine, 1998). Evidence also confirms the effectiveness of programs that consist of various intervention levels targeted at critical periods of development in various key settings and their linkages (for e.g., Reid, Eddy, Fetrow, & Stoolmiller, 1999).

Some guidelines for incorporating culture into mental health program practices are offered by Guarnaccia and Rodriguez (1996). They explain that programs with minimal cultural sensitivity only incorporate one or a few of the following aspects, while highly culturally sensitive programs incorporate all:

1. Assessing cultural identities: determining cultures that program participants identify with, with more specific cultural identities being more useful.
2. Using the language: requiring staff to speak the same language, with specific dialects being more helpful.
3. Physical symbols: incorporating physical cultural symbols into the programs environment.
4. Events and celebrations: holding significant cultural events, which provide opportunities for sharing cultural values.
5. Views of mental illness: understanding the different views of mental illness held by different

cultures.

6. Acculturation: considering the extent that individuals have adapted to their new cultural environment.
7. Social factors: considering the effects of the many other groups that individuals, including service providers, are a part of.

Along with those within Micronesia, better support may also be offered to disadvantaged Micronesians within the U.S. Although the population of Micronesians in the U.S. is relatively small, many are emigrating from their lands in search of greater opportunities (Untalan & Camacho, 1997). It is likely that some of them will require services, for which an understanding of their unique backgrounds and current issues among their people is necessary. Literature on culturally appropriate services for immigrant Micronesians is virtually nonexistent (Saleh, 1996) and is another area needing development. Also, while Saleh's article is a useful resource for non-Micronesian practitioners, employing indigenous practitioners who can more fully relate to their clients is one strategy of ensuring cultural sensitivity that should be used (Tharp, 1994).

Thus, within FSM, community psychology has much to offer. Research should be an initial priority, for obtaining incidence and prevalence rates for substance abuse and mental illness, for discovering culturally sensitive approaches for intervention, and for further examining the correlates of cultural change for this population. Especially relevant could be the utilization of a transactional-ecological model (Felner, et al., 2000), as Lowe (2003) underscored the particular relevance of the differences between settings that Micronesian youth encounter.

On the other hand, part of our disadvantage is that we have not yet developed an adequate understanding of exactly what processes are involved when cultures collide. We can ask questions such as: What specific cultural attributes are more at risk of

succumbing to a dominant culture? Can a culture be strengthened to avoid the influence of a dominant culture? Is cultural disintegration inevitable? A greater knowledge of how cultural imposition (even unintended) can lead to breakdown can be extremely valuable and necessary to prevent future occurrences.

An abundance of literature exists on culture theory (for e.g., Cooper & Denner, 1998; Kagitcibasi, 1996; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Shweder, 1990; Triandis & Bhawuk, 1997), and perspectives can be drawn from a number of disciplines including cross-cultural psychology (e.g., Segall, Lonner, & Berry, 1998), cultural psychology (e.g., Shweder, 1995), social psychology (e.g., Kluckhohn, 1954), cultural anthropology (e.g., Herskovits, 1955), organizational studies (e.g., Hofstede, 1980), and many others. Various models taken from this literature could be used as a foundation for the development of research and intervention. For example, Micronesian culture appears to be highly collectivist, and a more detailed understanding of its contact with an individualistic Western culture can be further pursued. Models including those from Schwartz (1992), who explicated the opposition between various cultural values such as conservatism and autonomy, may contribute to a better understanding of the particular conflicts occurring within settings such as in FSM. Another relevant theory that might apply to FSM is Fiske's (1990, 1992) forms of social behaviour that includes communal sharing and market pricing. With a common framework for understanding cultural issues, intervention efforts may be greatly enhanced. Findings may also be extended to other Pacific Island or other societies experiencing difficulties as a result of cultural change.

The events unfolding in FSM appear to bear out what community psychology would predict from a clash of divergent cultures. Likewise, if our frameworks offer an equally effective understanding of how to improve

conditions in communities like FSM, it is necessary to apply them forthwith. However, it is argued that cultural-theory based efforts in community psychology can be critical in addressing needs not only in FSM, but in other nations experiencing similar challenges. Far too many societies have experienced cultural disintegration and the disturbing consequences that accompany it. The people of FSM and other parts of the world have been likewise sending a message of the distress occurring in their region. It is one that community psychology is uniquely qualified to respond to and, as Toro (2005) urged, "we could 'reach out' much more."

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