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General Information

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How ‘mutual’ is acculturation?: Majority Australians’ acculturation attitudes toward refugees

Kirra Rauchelle
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Acculturation is defined as a mutual and dynamic process of cultural change that occurs when two or more cultures come into contact. However, research interest in the attitudes of the majority or ‘host’ community is relatively recent and remains scarce. In this study we explored majority Australians’ views on acculturation in respect to refugees, including own-group acculturation: the extent to which they desire cultural maintenance and/or change in response to the growing ethnic diversity of Australian society. These views were explored through in-depth interviews with a sample of 14 participants who identified as Anglo-Australian. Thematic analysis of the data revealed eight themes relating to two research questions: how participants view their own acculturation, and how they view refugee acculturation. In general, participants viewed their preferred acculturative change as minimal, but expected refugees to change in significant ways. The findings are discussed in the context of contemporary models of ‘mutual’ acculturation.

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees [UNHCR] reported that in 2013 there were 51.7 million forcibly displaced people in the world (UNHCR, 2013). Australia grants permanent settlement to approximately 13,000 refugees annually as part of the Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program (Department of Immigration and Citizenship [DIAC], 2012). Since 1901 at least 750,000 refugees have settled in Australia (Refugee Council of Australia, [RCOA], 2012).

Refugees are particularly vulnerable when arriving in a host country for various reasons including; the trauma of fleeing war or other conflict, the stress of not knowing if their family is safe in their home country, and not having support networks in the receiving country (Berry, 2001). Little is known about refugees’ acculturation strategies and attitudes toward majority groups, and while there are some studies of the majority’s perspective toward migrants, there is a paucity of Australian research examining majority members’ attitudes toward refugees. Moreover, there is no Australian research focussed on the part that majority members feel they play – or should play - in the acculturation of migrant and refugee groups. It is important to address this gap in the research because how minority groups adjust is influenced by the attitudes and expectations of the majority

(Lopez-Rodriguez, Zagefka, Navas, & Cuadrado 2014). In the present study we sought to investigate this by exploring majority Australians’ acculturation expectations of refugees and for themselves: *own-group acculturation*.

Mutual Acculturation

Using Berry’s (2001) model, acculturation is defined as a mutual process of change in which different cultural groups, including majority, and minority groups, are altered when they come into enduring contact with each other. Acculturation requires the mutual accommodation of aspects of each culture (or cultures), although it is acknowledged that non-dominant or minority groups experience a greater change than dominant groups e.g., the majority (Berry, 2005). According to this model, acculturation is facilitated by a process involving a number of strategies, comprised of attitudes (how the individual wishes to engage in acculturation), and behaviours: the things that people actually do (Berry, 2001). Underlying acculturation strategies are two main issues: the desire to maintain one’s heritage and culture, and the degree to which one wishes to interact with other cultural groups. Eight acculturation strategies then emerge, for minority groups they are; *integration* (interested in maintaining both cultures, and in daily interactions with other groups), *assimilation* (not wishing to maintain their own cultural identity and seeking daily

interaction with other cultures), *separation* (holding onto their original culture, and avoiding interaction with others), and *marginalisation* (not interested in cultural maintenance nor in interacting with others). When employed by the host (majority) society they are called; *multiculturalism*, *melting pot*, *segregation*, and *exclusion* (Berry, 2001).

Acculturation research often focuses on a minority group's acculturation strategy preferences, experiences and how these impact on the group's wellbeing (Rohmann, Piontkowski, & van Randenborgh, 2008). Some argue that to focus only on minority group acculturation strategies takes the onus off majority groups, placing responsibility for acculturation outcomes with the people who are relatively powerless when it comes to deciding how they will acculturate (Bowskill, Lyons, & Coyle, 2007). Dandy (2009) argued that host community acculturation preferences and attitudes have been neglected in research to the detriment of intergroup relations, which could result in further marginalisation of refugees and migrants. Although Berry's acculturation model has been criticised as being too narrow in its vision and therefore possibly overlooking the complexities of acculturation (e.g., Rudmin, 2003), it is widely accepted and often used as a framework for research (e.g., Bowskill, et al., 2007; Dandy & Pe-Pua, 2013; Kunst & Sam, 2013; Pfafferott & Brown, 2006).

Majority Acculturation Attitudes

Majority attitudes toward minority groups are influenced by factors including the acculturation strategies employed by minority groups (Matera, Stephanile, & Brown, 2011) and perceived characteristics of certain groups. For example, Murray and Marx (2013) examined majority attitudes towards refugees and authorised and unauthorised immigrants in California, focussing on the legal standing of immigrants and the perceived value of immigrant members. Overall, participants reported favourable attitudes toward refugees. However, participants consistently reported less favourable attitudes toward unauthorised immigrants compared with authorised immigrants, with older participants holding

less favourable attitudes. Australian attitudes toward unauthorised immigrants ('boat people') are similarly negative (Markus, 2014).

Better settlement outcomes and positive intercultural relations are more likely when there is compatibility between the acculturation strategies of minorities and the preferences of majority members (Rohmann et al., 2008). For example, if majority members favour integration, minority members are more inclined to seek out contact with the host community which results in more positive outcomes for them (Pfafferott & Brown, 2006). Majority perspectives are particularly important in the context of refugee settlement because, unlike voluntary migrants, many refugees do not have a choice of which acculturation strategy to employ due to many factors including lack of family support and economic security (Montreuil & Bourhis, 2001). Others have commented that the acculturation strategy that refugees choose depends largely on the political environment of the more dominant host community (Ward, Fox, Wilson, Stuart, & Kus, 2010). Moreover, several authors have criticised the emphasis of past research on minority group acculturation strategies, arguing that it takes the onus off majority groups and places responsibility for acculturation outcomes with the people who are relatively powerless when it comes to choice of acculturation strategy (Bowskill, et al., 2007). Thus, there is a clear need to examine majority perspectives on acculturation.

Geschke, Mummendey, Kessler and Funke (2010) conducted one of the few studies of majority members' perspectives on their own acculturative change. They examined majority Germans' own acculturation goals as predictors of attitudes and behaviours toward asylum seeking refugees. They found that majority members had more positive attitudes toward refugees if they were supportive of refugees maintaining their own culture within the majority community. Conversely, majority members who were more in favour of segregation strategies (wanting to keep the cultures separate) had much more negative views of refugees. Geschke et al. recommended further

research from majority acculturation perspectives to inform acculturation theory.

Australian Acculturation Research

There is limited Australian research focussed on majority acculturation attitudes and even fewer studies of acculturation attitudes toward refugees (Dandy & Pe-Pua, 2013). Studies in which more general attitudes toward immigration and diversity are surveyed point to positive views among Australians (e.g., Dandy & Pe-Pua, 2010; Markus, 2014), although this is often tempered by concerns about ethnic segregation and other perceived threats to social cohesion. In addition, many Australians hold negative attitudes toward specific minority groups, such as people from Muslim, Middle Eastern, and/or African backgrounds (Dandy & Pe-Pua, 2010; Markus, 2014). Moreover, research on majority attitudes toward asylum seekers and refugees has shown that a significant proportion of Australians hold negative views (e.g., Markus, 2014; Pedersen, Attwell, & Heveli, 2005; Schweitzer, Perkoulidis, Krome, Ludlow, & Ryan, 2005). Not all Australians share those views, however, and it is evident that the treatment of asylum seekers who arrive by boat has become a highly polarised topic in Australian discourse (Markus, 2014; Schweitzer, et al., 2005).

A Mutual Focus for Australian Acculturation Research

Researchers agree that minority and majority attitudes and behaviours should be taken into consideration when investigating the acculturation process (e.g., Ward et al., 2010). Although there is research on majority attitudes toward immigrants in general, and asylum seekers specifically, there is a paucity of research on Australian majority attitudes toward refugees, despite media and political focus on refugees and asylum seekers (Pedersen et al., 2005). Moreover, to our knowledge there is no Australian research addressing majority members' views on their own acculturation expectations regarding minority groups, particularly refugees. For these reasons, the focus of this study was solely on refugees, rather than including immigrants and asylum seekers. It is

important to note that, in the Australian context, refugees and asylum seekers are often confused, and the terms 'refugee' and 'asylum seeker' are used interchangeably, often to refer to 'boat people' (asylum seekers trying to enter Australia by boat; Rowe & O'Brien, 2014). There is, however, an official distinction; a refugee is a person who, for fear of persecution for a number of reasons, lives outside their home country. Asylum seekers are seeking the same protection but have not yet been granted refugee status by the receiving country or the UNHCR (Rowe & O'Brien, 2014)

The aim of the proposed study was to explore majority Australian acculturation attitudes toward refugees. Employing a qualitative framework, the study sought to answer two questions; "How do majority Australians view their own acculturation in the context of refugees?" and "What are majority Australian attitudes toward refugee acculturation?"

Method

Participants

Participants ($N = 14$) were recruited from Perth's metropolitan area via convenience and snowball sampling. Participants were male ($N = 6$) and female ($N = 8$) adult Australians from white, British cultural backgrounds, aged between 22 and 64 years (mean age of 34 years) from a range of educational backgrounds and occupations (see Table 1). Importantly, every attempt was made to ensure the sample was comprised of participants from a range of educational backgrounds in order to enhance the likelihood of capturing a range of views, because education has been shown to be related to attitudes toward migrants and refugees (Bilodeau & Fadol, 2011; Pedersen, et al., 2005).

Procedure

Data collection. Following receipt of university ethical approval for the study, a flyer was posted on the first author's personal Facebook page. This provided an overview of the research aims and first author's contact details. Six participants were recruited via this method and an additional eight participants were recruited via purposive (personal contacts) and snowball sampling. Most participants were not known to the first author, rather they were

Table 1
Participant Demographics

Age	Gender	Highest Education Level Achieved	Occupation
56	Female	Year 10	Housekeeper
33	Male	TAFE ¹	Scaffolder
56	Male	Bachelor's Degree	Student
57	Female	Bachelor's Degree	School Registrar
57	Female	Year 10	Retired
40	Female	TAFE	CEO (not for profit)
57	Female	Bachelor's Degree	Teacher
22	Male	Bachelor's Degree	Student
30	Female	TAFE	Office Manager
26	Female	Bachelor's Degree	Sales
42	Male	TAFE	Sign Technician
41	Male	Year 12	Store person
25	Male	Year 10	Store person
64	Female	Year 10	Semi-Retired Counsellor

Note¹: TAFE is a provider of vocational education and training in Australia

family and friends of her Facebook contacts which include professional, university and personal contacts. There was no difficulty recruiting participants, none refused to be in the study, and no participants withdrew from the research. Interviews lasted an average of 45 minutes (18 minutes - 86 minutes). The interviews were conducted at the first author's home or the participant's home, with the exception of one interview which was conducted in a meeting room at the university. Two interviews were conducted over the telephone. The first author conducted and transcribed all of the interviews.

The interview questions were guided by the two dimensions of Berry's (2001) acculturation model, that is; the degree to which people want to maintain (or shed) their own culture and identity, and the degree to which people want to mix/have contact with (or avoid) people outside of their cultural group. Each of these dimensions was framed reciprocally, resulting in four main topics for questions. For example, participants were asked for their views on the importance of refugees learning about majority Australian

culture and the importance of majority Australians learning about refugees' cultures. The interviews were audio-recorded.

Data analysis.

Data analysis was conducted by the first author using theoretical (or deductive) thematic analysis as set out by Braun and Clarke (2006). The interviews were listened to several times and transcribed verbatim. Transcripts were then read and re-read and examined for themes relating to cultural learning/mixing and cultural maintenance. The second author analysed several transcripts alongside the first author to enhance interpretative rigour and confirm the analytical approach. With the assistance of the QSR NVIVO 10 (QSR International, 2012) program, and following Braun and Clarke's approach, we undertook a six phase process of thematic analysis. This began with familiarisation with the data by reading, re-reading and taking note of any patterns that emerged or initial ideas. Secondly, initial codes were generated by systematically identifying interesting features in the data set and grouping data under each code. Step three involved identifying potential themes and collating

codes into these themes, followed by a review of these themes and construction of a thematic map during step four. During the fifth phase themes were defined and named, requiring continual analysis and refinement of the specific elements of each theme. The sixth phase involved writing up the findings and report

Concept of Refugees

Because the term 'refugee' overlaps with that of asylum seeker, particularly in popular discourse in Australia, the first researcher ensured that a common understanding was being used in the interviews by providing a definition of the term, or distinction between it and 'asylum seeker' or 'migrant', as appropriate to each conversational flow. Generally, participants knew what was meant by the term 'refugee' and conveyed this in the interviews. Participants who asked for clarification or appeared to not clearly distinguish between refugee, asylum seeker and/or migrant were given a definition by the researcher, for example: "refugees are people that have been given refugee status and they can live in the community".

Findings and Interpretations

The two research questions were; "How do majority Australians view their own acculturation in the context of refugees?" and "What are majority Australian attitudes toward refugee acculturation?" For the first question, three themes emerged. The second question also resulted in three themes. Underlining in quotes (e.g., *them*) denotes verbal emphasis (stress) made by the participant.

Majority Own Acculturation Expectations

In this section data are presented that represent how participants viewed their own acculturation process relative to refugees. Themes that emerged were; 'cultural learning and diversity', 'responsibility for interaction' and "Australianness" and its boundaries'.

Cultural learning and diversity

There were mixed views about the value of learning about refugees' cultures when participants were asked about their own acculturation, and learning about others. Most participants expressed a willingness to learn, which was believed to facilitate more

understanding toward refugees, which would ultimately assist their acculturation. One of the participants, a well-travelled teacher, said:

"yeah I think that's where the whole problem lies is people don't understand other people's cultures. Australians don't understand other people's cultures if they haven't travelled... yeah that's important for us to be educated...why they're actually leaving that country, coming here" (Female, aged 57)

This participant views understanding other cultures as being important and sees travel as helpful in facilitating this process. This reflects a commonly-held belief that prejudice stems from lack of knowledge; if there was greater knowledge then there would be greater understanding and people would be less likely to rely on stereotypes and false beliefs about refugees. There is some evidence to support this view, in terms of the effects of positive intercultural contact, which has been shown to reduce prejudice under the right conditions and this is assumed to be at least in part due to enhanced knowledge. However, mere information is insufficient to change attitudes; cross-cultural awareness programs and advertising campaigns have been found to have weak and short-lived effects (if any; Pedersen, Walker, & Wise, 2005).

Conversely, other participants expressed that they did not have an interest in learning about refugees' cultures:

"On the fence like.. if you're interested in that.. yeah, but if you're not, if I'm not interested in computer games, I'm not gonna play computer games.. if I'm not interested in sport, why am I gonna watch sport? If I'm not interested in learning their culture, why would I wanna learn their culture?" (Male, aged 25)

This participant does not view learning about refugees' cultures as important but instead he views it as an optional activity and compares learning about other cultures to hobbies like sports and computer games. It is a strongly individualist view, with little declared responsibility or belief in the value of cultural

learning.

Responsibility for Interaction

Participants had mixed feelings about interaction with refugees and expressed apathy or lack of motivation when it came to interaction. For example when asked if he could see himself seeking out interaction with refugees, one participant said *“I haven’t yet, not for any other reason...laziness or indifference I suppose”* Another participant responded:

“yes and no...I don’t feel like I have to interact with refugees at all because I don’t know where they are ya know”? (Male, aged 22).

This participant’s response implies that the choice to interact is somewhat ‘out of his hands’ or externalised because if he was told where refugees were, he could perhaps interact.

Willingness or interest in interacting with refugees was also qualified with the view that refugees should be willing to take steps to help facilitate majority Australian interaction with them. When asked if interaction was valuable, one participant agreed, but added:

“yeah I’d qualify that I’m all for [interaction with] people that are willing to assimilate and make effort to get out within and contribute to the community” (Female, aged 57)

When asked if they would interact with refugees, some agreed, but with conditions:

“Yeah... I wouldn’t care less...as long as they follow our rules, that’s all I care about” (Male, aged 22)

“Yeah I do... and I think it’s also important that they don’t just fill up certain areas with certain cultures” (Female, aged 26)

Although participants had different reasons for inability to interact or conditions or qualifications on interaction, the common thread in responses was that participants felt the onus was essentially on refugees. Whether it be that refugees are not easily identifiable, thus hampering interaction, or that they be required to put in effort or meet Australians’ half way; participants clearly see themselves as playing a

smaller role in interaction. Indeed, Dandy and Pe-Pau (2013) found that majority members felt excluded from diversity programs in which they might want to participate, again placing the onus for lack of interaction on others. According to Wise and Velayutham (2009) majority Australians’ largely see themselves as free from obligation to interact with people from minority groups and from acculturation in general. This complacent majority, with a self-perceived lack of agency, combined with minority members who perhaps lack the confidence to initiate contact, results in precious little productive inter-cultural connections being made.

“Australianness” and its Boundaries

In discussing majority Australians’ own acculturation, most of the discussion from participants referred to aspects of Australian culture that should *not* change (rather than the ways in which it should) and thus this theme centred around definitions of Australian identity and its boundaries. For example, some participants felt strongly about maintaining the Christian nature of society in Australia:

“I get really annoyed when I hear people saying, “oh well.. umm, it’s not Merry Christmas anymore you know because it’s against their religion, well I’m sorry you’re coming to a country that believes in Christmas... We accept your culture... we accept your churches you need to accept ours.” (Female, aged 26)

This statement reflects the passionate tone of the participants in general when speaking about maintaining a Christian society. Many of the arguments for maintaining a Christian way of life included reference to tolerating and allowing the cultural or religious practices of others, but that this tolerance should be reciprocated (*“we accept your culture, you need to accept ours”*). This implied that Christianity was under threat in Australia. Specifically, most participants expressed concern about perceived threats to school Christmas celebrations. As a teacher, one participant was concerned about rumours she had heard that Muslim groups were trying

to stop end of year celebrations in schools:

“...someone said we shouldn't have Christmas, we shouldn't celebrate Christmas in the school because of other religions....well, I don't believe that because they're coming to our country, it [Christianity] is entrenched in our society and is our religion.” (Female, aged 57)

The language is interesting here as this participant uses “we” and “our” versus “they're” and “other” to refer to refugees or minority Australians. Hage (2000) argues that the assigning labels of ‘other’ or ‘them’ to an out-group gives majority members feelings of empowerment and supervisorship over the Australian ‘space’, while rendering members of the out-group as objects to be managed. This participant’s feeling that practices in ‘our society, our country’ should not be changed to accommodate the ‘other’ is an example of majority members supervising the Australian space and setting the terms by which the space operates. Other participants overwhelmingly agreed with this sentiment, that omitting Christmas celebrations from schools was something they would not allow. One participant said that schools *“should be able to have Christian themed assemblies and so on, because I feel like that [is] the culture of this country, based on Christian values.”* (Female, aged 57)

A boundary of “Australianness” which participants were happy to extend, related to the diversity of cuisine and the arts that different cultures bring:

“I know the food I used to eat was very Anglicised compared to the food I eat these days um and there's so much more variety available now. The interesting influence of immigrants... that's a fantastic thing.” (Female, aged 57)

“witnessing and experiencing other people's cultures, um their food, their arts, their music.. I think it creates a very rich environment to have.... different backgrounds coming together.” (Male, aged 42)

Participants valued the influence of immigration on the cuisine that is available in Australia. This diversity of cuisine could perhaps be viewed as a less threatening aspect of living in a multicultural country. This has sometimes been referred to as the *pasta and polka* view of multiculturalism, in which less threatening aspects of other cultures such as food, music, and dress are celebrated and encouraged, while other cultural norms and values are discouraged or not invited (Collins, 2013).

Refugee Acculturation

This section focuses on majority Australian attitudes toward refugee acculturation. Three themes emerged: ‘rejected aspects and stereotypes’, ‘assimilation’, and ‘embrace Australian culture’.

Rejected aspects and stereotypes: Violence and the burqa

Participants spoke of undesirable features of refugees’ cultures that they did not wish to see integrated into Australia. The main sub-themes were ‘violence’ and ‘the burqa’.

Participants expressed concern about levels of violence in refugee communities in Australia. One participant worried that refugees were bringing the violence of their homeland with them to Australia:

“...we don't know what they bring out like there's all this violence that's breaking out... that's all they know... all they know is violence.” (Male, aged 25)

Another participant attributed violence in refugee communities to particular cultural groups congregating in certain suburbs, resulting in inter-group conflict because of religious differences between these groups:

“[Perth Suburb] is known as the Nigerian... pretty much little clique, you've got a lot of Nigerians living there and you've got a lot of... um bashings because of it, you've got the African cultures in one set mixed with a lot of Muslims, and they're just clashing with each other.” (Female, aged 26)

The view that African groups are associated with violence is common in Australia (Hanson-Easey & Augoustinos, 2010) and was shared by others participants, including one who said *“African youths are causing trouble”*. No participant reported they had experienced this directly but often cited the media as being one of the sources of this information (*“what I hear in the news”* and *“the gangs are getting worse...I try not to be biased by the news but with all the evidence it seems to be true”*). Representations in the media of certain refugee groups such as those who are Muslim and/or from African backgrounds serve to reinforce negative stereotypes and are associated with psychological essentialism (Hanson-Easey, Augoustinos, & Moloney, 2014). For example, Hanson-Easey et al. identified that speakers on talkback radio associated people from Sudan (either living in Sudan, or Australia) with tribal properties and that this tribal ‘essence’ accounted for violent behaviour apparently seen in these groups.

Along with violence, wearing the burqa was a contentious issue among participants. Reasons for this included that it was; a risk to security and/or safety, a barrier to communication, and that it oppresses women. For example, one participant made comparisons to the general rule that helmets were not allowed to be worn into banks and service stations:

“I couldn’t care if they wanna wear it they can but if they go into the banks or in places where it has to be taken off.. y’know service stations, we can’t wear a helmet in there like the motor bike helmet or anything, they shouldn’t be able to wear that in there either... why one rule for one and not the other?” (Male, aged 25)

Participants were also concerned when they thought about communicating with a woman who is wearing the burqa:

“... umm you read someone by their body language and if you can’t see their body because they’re completely covered in black and you can’t see their face...” (Female, aged 26)

Participants felt strongly that the burqa was oppressive to women and that there is no place for this oppression in Australia:

“I think it’s a shame though that their culture is at the point where they have -women have to be covered because the men obviously, well, the men can’t control themselves and women have to cover themselves so that nobody looks at them, I think that’s sad.” (Male, aged 42)

In recent years, the burqa has been a contentious issue debated in public and political arenas in Australia and more broadly. Some researchers have argued that these debates are fuelled by negative portrayal of the burqa by the Australian media, in which women in the burqa are portrayed as a risk to security and oppressed by ‘fundamentalist’ Islam, a view evident in participants’ responses (e.g. Hebbani & Wills, 2012).

Assimilation

A second theme of refugee acculturation was the view that refugees should assimilate. Participants spoke about assimilation in terms of ‘blending in’ and refugees segregating themselves;

“really you’ve gotta kind of blend in ya know” (Female, aged 56)

“...if they’re going to live in our culture they’ve got to learn about it, they’ve gotta mesh in... they’ve gotta become virtually invisible with the people so they’re not outstanding, for their own protection too.” (Female, aged 64)

Although this second participant does not use the term “assimilate”, according to Berry’s (2001) model she is nonetheless seeking *assimilation* from refugees because there is clear instruction for refugees to “*mesh in*” and “*become virtually invisible*” by not appearing different to other (or majority) Australians. Moreover, it is suggested that refugees blend in for “*their own protection*”; presumably this is to avoid being negatively targeted for standing out. It is evident from these

responses that majority members require refugees to alter themselves in some way so that they may be accepted by the majority community; however there was no suggestion as to how majority members may help facilitate this process. Other participants stated explicitly that they wished for refugees to assimilate:

“... I understand why they’re coming here, I understand that it’s harder for them, but having arrived here and been accepted, then they need to assimilate into our society.” (Female, aged 57)

Participants also spoke of concerns about residential segregation; refugees living in isolated pockets in the community:

“...I think if they’re segregating themselves...they don’t [want] to participate in the actual culture that they’re now within, and I think if you’re going to move into somebody else’s culture...you have to be ready to integrate rather than segregate yourself.” (Male, aged 42)

Again, this participant has an assimilationist standpoint, asking that refugees immerse themselves in mainstream culture and not stand out. This response is comparable with other research on majority attitudes which has found that majority members dislike immigrants and minority groups being segregated, or separate from majority communities (e.g. Dandy & Pe-Pua, 2010). The participant explains that refugee segregation is a barrier to assimilation and integration and that segregation is something that refugees freely choose. Most participants in this study viewed residential segregation as choice made by refugees. Comparisons were made with travelling to another country, like a tourist:

“they group together, in like their own little society and have their own rules, instead of...if I go to another country I wanna, mingle with the locals and learn their way.” (Male, aged 25)

Segregation was also viewed with suspicion:

“creating their own, idealised separate community that’s then separated ... they put walls up against

the other community... I think that’s where fear comes from” (Male, aged 42)

However, some participants felt that segregation was desirable and that refugee practices should be kept away from the view of majority Australians:

“yeah it wouldn’t matter if there was a little secret room somewhere where the toilets are hidden in the alley way, they can have their prayer room in there as well.” (Female, aged 57)

Or indeed, that whole communities should be hidden:

“You know what I reckon they should do? They should get a- the middle of Australia so all the people [refugees] can go live in their own city in the middle of Australia.” (Female, aged 64)

This participant expressed a desire for refugees from various cultures to have their own small nations in the outback, while framing this idea as giving refugees their own oasis, as a gift of sorts. Here the participants would like to allocate a space especially for refugees out of view from mainstream Australia. Hage (2000) argues that White (majority) Australians’ assign themselves the job of ‘supervisor’ or ‘manager’ of the Australian ‘space’. That is, majority members decide who and what will be included, excluded, the degree to which majority members and refugees will interact and how this interaction will play out. Assigning refugee groups their own ‘spaces’ away from majority Australians may also be explained by a perceived threat to majority cultural dominance and homogeneity of that dominant cultural space (Dandy, 2009).

Australian Culture Adoption

The final theme regarding refugee acculturation related to participant desire for refugees’ to adopt majority Australian culture.

All participants stated that learning English was a necessity for refugees. Participants reported that although they understood that refugees may not speak English initially, they should start learning

English as soon as possible. A school teacher explains:

"Yeah I think, I think they should... learn to speak English... I don't mind them keeping their home language and teaching their children their home language, but I don't think their children should be learning the home language to the detriment of learning English" (Female, aged 57)

This participant's comment demonstrates that she supports acculturation strategies of *integration* and *multiculturalism*. This respondent also expresses concern that learning the home language may interfere with learning English; as if the two languages are in competition. Others felt that not learning English was disrespectful to majority members and Australia in general but the majority of participants expressed that learning English was important for refugees' simply because it would make their experience easier.

Most participants expressed that they expect refugees to actively learn about Australian culture and embrace the Australian way of life, although participants did not explicitly define what the Australian way of life was, apart from that it was of a Christian nature, as described earlier:

"embrace values that we hold in common here, and in their personal lives try and embrace the same values, I know it's very hard for them to ah you to give up, their home culture and all that but I mean they've made the decision to come and live in a new country they're obviously open to.. umm new experiences and a new way of life and umm I think they need to sort of... adapt themselves to the new way of life." (Female, aged 57)

This participant acknowledges that refugees have experienced troubled times but asks that they "give up" their own culture and adapt to the Australian culture and way of life. Therefore, according to Berry's (2001) model, this participant expressed a desire for refugees to adopt a *melting pot* strategy because she prescribes maximal cultural shedding and

interaction from refugees. This participant and others spoke about refugees and majority Australians in terms of "their" culture and "our" culture as clearly defined and rigid entities (essentialism). Moreover, there was a sense that there could not be a mix of cultures, but they are in competition for limited space or capacity within the individual, but they are in competition for limited space or capacity within the individual, or they are seen as contradictory. Thus one has to shed his/her own culture to make space for Australian culture to reside.

Another concern was the need for Australian laws to be understood and respected. Moreover, participants stated clearly that they felt that changing existing laws to accommodate refugees' values and norms was unacceptable.

"...as long as they follow our rules and our laws... That's the main thing that annoys me is that they want to bring in their own rules and we have our own rules already..." (Male, aged 25)

"They gotta assimilate like everyone else does, so yeah. We obey our laws, I don't obey their law... only if I go to their country I would, so yeah, apart from that, they should obey our laws. With some, you give some leniency but yeah, it's just...you know, you're here, you gotta understand our laws, ya know?" (Male, aged 56)

Emphasis was placed on 'their laws' and 'our laws', again demarcating clear boundaries between 'us' and 'them'. They expressed frustration at what they perceived to be attempts by refugees to change existing laws in Australia; "*the main thing that annoys me is that they want to bring in their own rules and we have our own rules already*".

Discussion and Conclusions

In this study we sought to answer the questions; "How do majority Australians view their own acculturation in the context of refugees?" and "What are majority Australian attitudes toward refugee acculturation?" The

findings reveal that participants are resistant to changing in meaningful ways but they desire considerable change from refugees. In particular, the participants preferred that refugees adopt Australian culture and shed many aspects of their heritage culture in order to integrate with and be accepted by Australian society. Furthermore, although participants' expressed the desire to learn about refugees' cultures and mix with refugees, they viewed their own role in the process of acculturation as being minimal, a finding consistent with previous international research (e.g. Berry, 2001). These attitudes are also consistent with Hage's (2000) claim that majority Australian members' maintain their cultural dominance by being managers of the Australian space. Similarly, Vasta (2003) argued that majority members, feeling threatened by incoming cultures, prefer to view the dominant Anglo culture as an unmoveable, static entity that cannot change, a concept that was reflected in participant responses in the present study.

Most of the participants expected refugees to choose strategies of integration or assimilation in which they would interact with majority members, change cultural practices such as what they wear, learn English and embrace the Australian way of life; all of which are significant changes. Moreover, participants expected refugees to make a concerted effort to bring about these changes, i.e., the responsibility for integration or assimilation was seen to rest with refugees. These attitudes reflect those found in other studies of majority acculturation attitudes in the context of minority groups (e.g. Matera et al., 2011). These findings are consistent with Berry's (2001) model of acculturation, in that participants chose strategies for refugees of assimilation (or melting pot) and integration (or multiculturalism), as outlined in his model. However, there is less evidence for the mutuality of acculturation that Berry's model entails, because how much participants wanted to change compared with how much they thought *refugees* should change was significantly

disproportionate. Moreover, participants were ambivalent about interaction with refugees; on the one hand, they expressed a desire for refugees to make significant effort to interact and blend in, but on the other hand they were not motivated to seek out or help facilitate this interaction themselves.

It was evident throughout the interviews that participants consistently thought of refugees as people with Islamic religious beliefs and/or from Middle Eastern or African backgrounds despite the reality that people from refugee backgrounds in Australia come from a much broader range of national origins. (Department of Immigration and Border Protection [DIBP], 2013). This may be because these groups are more readily identifiable: 'visible' minorities. Nonetheless, these groups are also those most often associated with negative stereotypes such as violence and terrorism (e.g. Dandy & Pe-Pua, 2010; Hanson-Easey, et al., 2014). Negative attitudes toward minority groups in Australia, particularly Muslim groups, are often fuelled by the media (Hebbani & Wills, 2012). It is possible that media representations of refugees were the primary basis for participants' attitudes because most reported they had not had direct contact with refugees.

Participants' lack of experience and interaction with refugees is a potential limitation of this study because their attitudes were largely based on stereotypes and associated false beliefs (which may have led to a further avoidance of interaction; Pedersen et al., 2005). Future research could investigate the attitudes or experiences of majority members who have had interactions with refugees, although previous research suggests that this interaction is uncommon (e.g. Dandy & Pe-Pua, 2013). There is also a need to explore refugee acculturation strategies in order to compare them with majority Australians expectations. Concordance or conflict between acculturation strategies of minority and majority groups has been shown to play significant part in outcomes for both groups (e.g. Kunst & Sam, 2013; Pfafferot & Brown, 2006).

This qualitative study has provided insight into the acculturation attitudes of majority Australians in relation to refugees. Our findings reveal that majority members view their role in acculturation as minimal, while requiring refugees to change significantly. Moreover, our findings highlight the complex and ambivalent nature of acculturation, particularly from a majority perspective, and the significant role of the media in forming and perpetuating stereotypes of refugees. These findings are important because the attitudes of majority members in refugee-receiving countries have been found to directly impact on refugee acculturation and subsequent outcomes. Future studies should further explore these themes with larger samples, to inform our understanding of 'mutual' acculturation in Australia.

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Notes

- ¹ Those with British cultural heritage
- ² Australians who were born in Australia with one or both parents born in Australia or Britain
- ³ The Burqa is the full face/body veil with eyes hidden under mesh, however, in Australia the most commonly seen full-cover veil is the niqab; the full face/body veil with the eyes visible through a rectangular slit. The niqab is largely referred to by majority Australians as the burqa (Hebbani & Wills, 2012). As such, for the purpose of this study and ease of reading, either of the two full face/body coverings will be referred to as the burqa

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What's in a name? Lateral violence within the Aboriginal community in Adelaide, South Australia

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This article presents a thematic analysis of the naming and framing of lateral violence within the Aboriginal community in Adelaide, South Australia. Lateral violence is a relatively under researched area within the Aboriginal community, yet this term has been applied with little consultation. Interviews with 30 Aboriginal participants examining their understandings of lateral violence identified five themes relevant to the labelling and acceptance of the term 'lateral violence'. By drawing on theories of oppression, social representations, stigma and racism many of the themes indicate the importance and relevance of an overarching label of lateral violence to describe the "infighting" behaviours that have been normalised within the Aboriginal community. Assurance of a label makes the concept of lateral violence tangible and therefore able to be addressed. Despite this labelling, awareness of the concept of lateral violence in Adelaide appears relatively low. Resistance and opposition from the Aboriginal community to lateral violence appear to be associated with the stigma and prejudice attached to 'violence'. Such a word can potentially render all Aboriginal people as intrinsically violent and therefore blameworthy, which can alleviate any responsibility for dealing with this chronic problem in broader society.

Recent understandings of lateral violence in Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have been influenced largely by Canadian Indigenous interpretations and experiences of lateral violence (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2011b). In a Canadian context lateral violence is believed to exist within many Indigenous communities worldwide with the common causal explanation as oppression, colonisation, racism and intergenerational trauma (Bombay, 2014; Derrick, 2006; Native Women's Association Canada [NWAC] 2015). According to the Native Counselling Services of Alberta (NCSA) (2008) lateral violence is described as the way powerless people covertly and overtly direct their dissatisfaction inward, toward each other, toward themselves and toward those less powerful than themselves.

Some of the behavioural manifestations of lateral violence include gossip, jealousy, shaming others, verbal and physical attacks, sabotage and bullying (BearPaw Media, 2006; Derrick, 2006; Equay-Wuk, 2012; NWAC, 2015). Accordingly such behaviours can be

triggered by differing levels of money, social status and education within communities, one's 'blood quantum' and links to culture and physical characteristics such as skin, eye and hair colour. The effects include feelings of shame, blaming mentality, lack of trust in others, and judgments within communities (Derrick, 2006) as well as physiological signs such as sleep disorders, weight loss or gain, and depression (NWAC, 2015).

In the Australian context this inward dissatisfaction and "infighting" within Aboriginal communities in South Australia (SA) is now also referred to as lateral violence. The literature on lateral violence also signifies colonisation and oppression as contributory factors for lateral violence in the Aboriginal community (AHRC, 2011b; Gorrige, Ross, & Fforde, 2009; Langton, 2008; Wingard, 2010). Colonisation in mainland Australia has been and arguably still is a process whereby Aboriginal peoples and their cultures are fragmented and disenfranchised. Australia's history of colonisation was founded upon draconian and racist laws and policies which acted to

control Aboriginal people and render them powerless. These laws and policies have had detrimental, cumulative and intergenerational effects on Aboriginal people which continue to this day (Coffin, Larson, & Cross, 2010; Glover, Dudgeon & Huygens, 2005; Watson, 2009).

The concept of lateral violence originated from early theorists in Africa (i.e. Fanon, 1963; 1967) and from Latin America (i.e., Freire, 1972). These two theorists argue that colonial practices were oppressive and used as a power base to control the original or Indigenous people of that country. They suggest that colonised groups attempt to mimic the oppressor and take on the behaviours as well as the values of the oppressors and in turn adopt violent behaviours that can be used amongst members of their own group. Discussions on decolonisation processes often correspond with discussions on colonialism. For example, Fanon (1967) attempted to orient his writing as an instrument for liberation with the possibility of making changes for the better for black people in Africa. In Australia the decolonisation process assists Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to identify as members of a racial group and understand systematic oppression by a dominant culture; it enables Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to take action towards social transformation. Thus, facilitating an understanding of oppressive processes and affirming the legitimacy of a people's ancestral culture, encourages cultural renewal (Glover, et al. 2005).

It is uncertain when the term lateral violence was actually applied to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia. However, its introduction appears to have coincided with the attendance of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from Australia at the Healing Our Spirit Worldwide (HOSW) conference in Alberta in 2006 where lateral violence within Canadian Indigenous communities was discussed. Many Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people engaged in the dialogue and learning. Post conference the word about lateral violence appears to have spread

amongst some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities in Australia via various forums such as articles, websites, Facebook and emails. Furthermore the current Aboriginal Social Justice Commissioner Mick Gooda has formally named lateral violence as a significant issue within Aboriginal communities (AHRC 2011a; AHRC, 2011b; AHRC 2012; Gooda, 2011). In addition there is information and awareness sessions on lateral violence in SA¹ and in other education forums presented nationally (i.e., Koorreen Enterprises, 2015).

The phrase *lateral violence* has also been used in the nursing industry over the past three decades. Other labels such as "horizontal violence" (Roberts, Marco, & Griffin, 2009; Stokes, 2010) and "eating their young" (Stanley, Dulaney, & Martin, 2007; Stokes, 2010) also apply to the nursing industry. Lateral violence is believed to be rife amongst nurses and is the name given to disruptive practices that members of an oppressed group, such as nurses within the medical and health sector, engage in towards members of their own group (Roberts, et al. 2009). Moreover nurses deal with their feelings of powerlessness and frustration by directing their dissatisfaction towards each other. Such behaviour has had implications for patient safety and health care. Consequently there has been much activity around education and strategies for prevention of lateral violence in the nursing sector, particularly in the United States of America, such as training and workshops on lateral violence and conflict resolution (Ceravolo, Schwarz, Foltz-Ramos, Castner, 2012; Delaney, Jacobs, & Zager, 2010). Training is also in some undergraduate nursing programs in America to prevent lateral violence in the sector (Blair, 2013).

Whether or not lateral violence is the most suitable or even meaningful label to be applied to infighting behaviours of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia has been uncertain. Even though there are conceptual and behavioural parallels of lateral violence between those in the nursing industry to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, there appear to be

vast differences, most notably in the type of oppression. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people racism is the most common form of oppression, whereas in the nursing industry it appears to relate to professionalism and sexism. Furthermore the oppression faced by Aboriginal people has its roots in colonialism, is intergenerational and applied to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in all contexts and not just in the workplace. This means that lateral violence is inescapable, intense and chronic within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The labelling of any concept, such as lateral violence, is a fundamental human cognitive process and is comprised within a social representations framework. Moscovici (1988) indicates that social representations involve the content of everyday thinking and ideas that give religious beliefs, political ideas and the connections that people create some rationality. Social representations then make it possible for people to classify, compare and explain persons, objects and behaviours and to objectify them as parts of one's social background (Moscovici, 1988). He posits a number of matters to his theory such as 'anchoring' which enables people to cope, accept a novel, 'strange' or unfamiliar idea or perception that is anchored within existing ideas or social representations (Moscovici, 1988). In other words people strive to make the unfamiliar familiar by searching for meaning in what is already known. People also classify and name the unfamiliar by comparing it with existing information/ experiences that are familiar and culturally accessible. When made familiar an abstract notion, idea and/or information is transformed into concrete and common sense realities (Augoustinos, Walker, & Donoghue, 2014).

Another point is that once the 'strange' is objectified it becomes less visible and people reach a point where there is no longer a differentiation between the objects with which the concepts aligned and they become indifferent (Moscovici, 1988). In other words people normalise objects, perceptions, events and behaviours once they have become

socially represented and accepted (Augoustinos et al., 2014). Even though there is a need to turn the strange into something familiar (to objectify) there can be tensions within the unfamiliar and it is these tensions that prevent mental conditioning from taking over completely with the existing information, allowing readjustments to the information or model to occur. Tensions or discrepancies assist in reinvigorating and bring new and different ideas to the surface (Moscovici, 1988).

Two further essential components to Moscovici's theory are that firstly, he proposes two types of realities: the reified, the world of science which is the logical and rational form; and the consensual which is the realm of common sense. These realities are about understanding the different ways of viewing the world and how it is socially represented to construct reality (Moscovici, 1988). Despite this, scientific and expert knowledge is often seen as valid and often given precedence even though the consensual reality is more accessible to people. Secondly, Moscovici's theory includes the idea of a slow germination of ideas, particularly if they are ideas or labels that have broad implications. He suggests that a longer period of gestation may be required before right or wrong inferences can be drawn (Moscovici, 1988).

Thus if we apply this process to the labelling of lateral violence; if the label is unfamiliar we may compare it to existing information about infighting, and if it fits we conventionalise it and it becomes accepted and common sense. If the label doesn't fit with existing information we may search for other labels or try and rectify the information or its meaning until it fits. Once a common sense or real label is applied to a concept it can open doors to greater awareness and learning which in turn can lead to changes, improvements and progress. On the other hand if the concept of infighting is normalised in the community without the expression of a new label it can remain oblivious with little change. Thus the importance of labelling to make changes is vital.

Even though the naming and framing of concepts is inherent and perhaps consensual, it can be an issue, particularly if a label is associated with a word that has negative connotations such as “violence”. It has been well established that as a victim, perpetrator or witness, violence is an issue within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Australia and occurs at an alarmingly high rate (ABS, 2008; Snowball & Weatherburn, 2008). The term violence can be confusing as it is often seen as physical violence rather than in its covert forms. According to the Australian Human Rights Commission, violence as it is referred to in lateral violence, also includes covert practices such as emotional, social, economic and spiritual violence (AHRC, 2011b). Furthermore labels with violence can attract the attention of the media. How information is framed and “problematized” by the media is of concern and can compromise inequitable health and living and enable a process of victim blaming. This can excuse societal responsibility and assistance, and may limit the linking of other risk and co-morbid factors influencing an issue. Therefore masking issues as Aboriginal problems will simply maintain the status quo (McMurray, 2011). For example, violence against women and children in Aboriginal culture attracts disproportionate media attention, situating the problem as one of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, which is not only racist but compromises future planning (McMurray, 2011).

The problematising of Aboriginal practices and people has occurred since colonisation and continues to occur through stigmatisation in various sectors of society. According to Phelan, Link, and Dovidio (2008) stigma and prejudice are shown to be the same concept and are linked to the labelling of concepts and phenomenon. Link and Phelan (2001) indicate five components of stigma: labelling, stereotyping, separation, status loss and discrimination within the context of power differentials. Once labelling has occurred differences are established and the social salience to those differences becomes evident (Green, Davis, Karshmer,

Marsh, & Straight, 2005). Establishing differences can also mean there are power distinctions. Link and Phelan (2014) discuss ‘stigma power’ and suggest that such power is often hidden – misrecognised processes that serve the interests of stigmatisers and part of a social system that gets them what they want.

Another related issue to labelling, stigma, prejudice and media influences is the silencing of community when sensitive issues are discussed or should be discussed. Gorringer et al. (2009) posits that silencing of particular issues occurs to avoid scrutiny and criticism from the broader community. It seems that silencing methods may be a way of self-preservation and protection because once information is made public then an individual or groups can become vulnerable to outside influences. Violence is a stigmatised topic and therefore a code of silence has also been found with family violence (HREOC, 2006). Some women’s voices, in particular, that speak out against violence have been silenced or not supported (Smallacombe, 2004) or ostracised from the Aboriginal community (Price, 2009). According to Freire (1972) maintaining a ‘culture of silence’ is common to oppressed groups and indicates that silencing is destructive as it inhibits its members to critically look at their world or to collaborate with others. Despite this, even when the silence is broken and people speak out against violence these issues may not be listened to particularly when being addressed at official and political levels (Sutton, 2001) and as such speaking out may be a deterrent.

In summary, the labelling of lateral violence is important and essential in order to understand it and challenge the infighting behaviours within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. However potential stigmatisation and prejudice when using words such as “violence” could mean that the violence (i.e. physical violence) could be seen as intrinsic and exclusive to Aboriginal people and therefore different to violence in other sectors of society, sanctioning further stigmatisation, oppression and depowering by the general

population.

Thus a label, such as lateral violence, could potentially provide unwelcomed social attention, which would be in addition to the everyday racism faced by many Aboriginal people in Australia (Mellor 2003; Stolper & Hammond, 2010). To avoid such scrutiny some of the important issues which need to be discussed and addressed within Aboriginal culture could be silenced. Thus the Aboriginal community may not speak out against lateral violence as it will bring more disempowerment and oppression. Furthermore lateral violence could be reported as another 'Aboriginal problem' and therefore mask a broader societal problem and alleviate any responsibility. The focus and blame on one sector in society can take the attention away from other sectors of society.

There is a paucity of research specific to information on lateral violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the Australian context. Much of the information is via grey literature, handouts and websites. Thus the broad aims of the study is to draw on understandings of Aboriginal participants' knowledge and experience of lateral violence within Aboriginal communities in Adelaide and to add to a larger body of information on lateral violence. A specific focus in this article is to discuss the labelling process of lateral violence and whether the term has resonated with Aboriginal people.

Research Approach

Indigenous Framework

Engaging in an Indigenous framework is important and needs to embrace cultural safety and respect, have relevance and incorporate Indigenous world views (Rigney, 1999). It is also about acknowledging and embracing Indigenous people's ontology (i.e. assumptions about the nature of reality), epistemologies (i.e., ways of knowing reality), axiology (i.e., the nature of values) and diversity (i.e., of language groups and of differences in the way they see the world, organize themselves in it, the questions they ask and the solutions they seek as Indigenous people) (Smith, 2003).

It has been well recognised that there has been a tension between Western and Aboriginal approaches to knowledge (Martin & Mirraboopa, 2003). However, this congruence has primarily been with Western positivist approaches rather than other approaches/ viewpoints/ paradigms which may be deemed more open, flexible and contextual to research (Roy, 2014). It seems that the suitability of an approach is dependent on the types of questions asked (Roy, 2014) or whether the paradigm is flexible enough to accommodate Aboriginal perspectives and purposes (Weber-Pillwax, 2001).

By understanding an Indigenous framework and accommodating a flexible approach, the participants in the study are the subjects of their experience and not the objects of this research. The research will convey the importance of an Aboriginal researcher to acknowledge Indigeneity and how this might influence the research. This is more than reflexivity, which is an essential approach that makes explicit deep-seated views and judgments that can affect the research process (Carpenter, 2010). In this process an Aboriginal researcher is not simply a 'native informant'² (Baker, 2012), but reflects their positioning and status, and how the information is understood, given Aboriginal cultural, community and family connections in Adelaide. Thus this is not a process of an objective researcher grounded in positivism but one whereby an Aboriginal researcher has an "insider" approach and lived the life of many of those who are participants, and will use this knowledge and experience to inform interpretations and therefore determine meaning with participants. At the same time "outsider" input via supervisory and collegial input of the material is vital and will assist in further rigor.

Method

Procedure. Prior to commencing the research ethical approval was by both the Aboriginal Health Research Ethics Committee (AHREC) in December 2012 and from the University of Adelaide Human Research Ethics Committee in May 2013.

Once approved an invitation flyer was circulated through word of mouth, post and email with a request to pass on the information creating a snowball effect via Aboriginal work and personal networks. An information sheet was distributed to those who enquired and/or volunteered to be interviewed. The information sheet provided background information on the researchers, the supervisors, the research, rights and responsibilities of involvement, risks, incentives, etc.

Prior to interviews participants were given information about counselling services and reassured they would be assisted or encouraged to seek help, if they became distressed during or after interview. Participants were interviewed about their experiences, understanding and knowledge of lateral violence. Some typical and broad questions for interviews were: "What do you know about lateral violence?" or "What's your understanding of lateral violence?"; "Can you tell me about some of your experiences (individual, family or community) of lateral violence?"; "How has it affected you (family and community)?"; "What have you done to stop or curb lateral violence in the past?"; and "What would you like to see happen to make changes in the community?". The interview duration ranged from 15 minutes to an hour, and were tape-recorded and transcribed. On request transcripts were sent back to participants to check and/or endorse. Brief demographic information, such as gender, broad educational and age categories, were also collated on participants and utilised as part of the study.

Analysis. The transcripts were de-identified and participants given pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality and anonymity. The material was then coded using NVivo10 qualitative software and analyzed using a thematic process, which aims to report participant's patterns and themes in the interview data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2013). This involves a rich description of the recurring (and unique) patterns in the data set across all interviews in this study. Thematic analysis is regarded as a useful

method for investigating an under-researched topic (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2013) such as lateral violence. The underlying manner to elicit the themes was via six phases including familiarization of the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and data analysis.

Findings

Demographic Information

There were approximately 50 enquiries and expressions of interest for the project, with 28 interviews and 30 Aboriginal participants, who resided in Adelaide, consenting to take part in the study (there were two interviews where two participants wanted to be interviewed together). The majority of participants were female (63%), and overall 47% of the participants had gained a university level education with seventy-three percent of females amongst those with the university level education. The ages of participants ranged from those in their early 20s to 60 and can be seen in Table 1 below. The most frequent age bracket was the 41-45 age category (40%) and predominately female (75%). About 13% of participants were in the younger age bracket of 30 years and under. The majority were over the age of 41 years (approximately 67%). There were three participants (10%) in an older age bracket (late 50s to middle 60s). Whilst this is not the formal age of an elder within the Aboriginal community it is substantial given that there is an early and high mortality within this community (ABS, 2009).

How the Term Lateral Violence' is Spreading

Most of the participants had heard and were aware of the term lateral violence. However, just over a third (36%) of participants were unfamiliar with or had become aware of the term only recently. For example, two participants indicated they first heard of lateral violence when they saw the project flyer and then made enquiries.

Many who were aware of lateral violence prior to interviews gained this understanding from local or national workshops, educational forums and social

Table 1
Age distribution of participants

Age bracket	Male	Female	Total	%
18-25	2	0	2	6.7%
26-30	1	1	2	6.7%
31-35	1	3	4	13%
36-40	2	0	2	6.7%
41-45	3	9	12	40%
46-50	0	2	2	6.7%
51-55	1	2	3	10%
56-60	0	2	2	6.7%
61-65	1	0	1	3.3%
Total	11	19	30	

media outlets such as websites, emails, blogs and Facebook. For example, many participants had received regular information on 'lateral love' (which is described as the flip side of lateral violence) through social media posted by Brian Butler³ and associates.

The workplace was the most common place at which participants had heard about lateral violence (approximately 47% of participants). This was done via collegial communication and with access to resources. Unfortunately the workplace was also described as a place where many participants experienced lateral violence, particularly if they worked with other Aboriginal people.

Themes from the Interviews

Overview. Although many themes emerged from the rich data gathered in interviews, this article focuses specifically on the themes and patterns of information about the labelling of lateral violence and whether the term resonated with participants' experiences of infighting: whether lateral violence is a suitable term to use. Five interrelated themes are presented and

discussed, each capturing a distinct perspective regarding labelling and acceptance or reluctance of lateral violence as a legitimate social problem.

Understanding the concept before a label. Several participants described and identified a particular set of behaviours and attitudes associated with infighting within the Aboriginal community during interviews. They reported that once the label of lateral violence (or maybe even any label, as highlighted by Rachel) was attached to infighting it became real and made sense of their experiences. Some participants described a sense of relief to finally have a label to name these experiences. The examples below demonstrate this awareness and relief once the issue was actually categorised and labelled as lateral violence.

Rachel (age category 31-35):

Yeah the term [lateral violence] but then when I did learn about it I thought 'oh my gosh this makes so much sense' and puts a name to what we already know ...so it

doesn't matter how it's labelled really as long as it's labelled and to address it and maybe people will think twice about it, yep.

Eve (age category 31-35): *So having that name of it [lateral violence] I guess has been helpful because I don't know what we sort of called it [before].*

Judy (age category 41-45): *I was fascinated by it [lateral violence]. I thought, like many, that it put a name to things we had experienced or participated in and felt a sense of relief.*

These narratives suggest that without a label the concept of lateral violence was abstract and vague. Prior to the labelling participants may have been uncertain of what lateral violence actually was or what to call it or whether it really existed. In these narratives we can see, as Moscovici's (1988) theory of social representations would suggest, how providing a name or label to a set of identified behaviours facilitates its representation and understanding in everyday common sense. The relief of having a name to identify the social problem also provided participants with the prospect that lateral violence can finally be addressed. In evidence here is how a once new and unfamiliar label (lateral violence) is anchored to a familiar and existing repertoire of knowledge and experiences (infighting) that slowly comes to represent and make concrete a social problem that needs to be addressed.

The label of lateral violence fits our experiences. Several participants alluded to the label of lateral violence resonating with their experiences. Often they indicated this by launching into discussion of their experiences of lateral violence within the communities. It appeared that many participants were comfortable with using the label and could show that it was a 'good fit' for what is happening in the community, and they have integrated the term into their everyday descriptions and experiences of infighting within their communities.

Freda (age category 41-45): *...so that's when I first came across lateral violence – it started to get me thinking about [it]. We got the same issues here but it's just a normal sort of thing for Aboriginal people. We didn't have the term, didn't know anything about lateral violence... what is this and I thought 'that is so true' about our mob.*

Kelly (age category 41-45): *I think we all have experienced lateral violence, either at home, or in our communities or at work.*

Rita (age category 56-60): *...I found when I was considered as an equal, as a non-Indigenous Australian, that lateral violence showed it's ugly self through my own communities and my own industry, particularly in competition for positions ...and it's sad, it's really sad...first of all it was hard for me to acknowledge that that is what is happening because I'd like to, I like to think that our people were you know, loving.*

Participants in these narratives actually describe how the unfamiliar term of lateral violence has now become familiar and tangible to those who use it. With such familiarisation the label was used to describe many experiences of lateral violence, and entails conversations about such experiences plus a realisation that it is destructive within family, communities and in the workplace.

A concern expressed by Freda is that lateral violence has become so normalised in Aboriginal communities that people don't even know they have committed or been involved in lateral violence. Moreover the infighting behaviours are so ingrained that communities may be oblivious to these behaviours. As described by Moscovici (1988) the labelling or naming of a social

phenomenon enables people to talk about it, and to generate new knowledge and understanding.

Bring it out in the open to start dealing with it. Participants argued that unless a social problem is named or made tangible it can't be dealt with. This argument is demonstrated in the narratives below.

Judy (age category 41-45)...*I felt really excited and hopeful that it [lateral violence] was out and that it was a problem. Talking about the elephant in the room, so to speak.*

Eve (age category 31-35): *There was actually a name albeit wherever it [lateral violence] came from, but there was actually a name that we're able to sort of start sitting down and having conversations.*

Russell (age category 36-40): ...*But it [lateral violence] needs to be familiar, the wording, so if you had a campaign with that word[s] on it, and you know...*

Rachel (age category 31-35): *If I had a wish list I would make lateral violence more of a household name cos [we are] naming it. It's like domestic violence that gets a name; it gets a name and people understand well hang on yeah these things are happening, its domestic violence, it's not on.*

In terms of a social representation process by making the unfamiliar label of lateral violence familiar and tangible, it can now be addressed. There was a sense of excitement in the interviews that seemed to be about both the label and being open to being addressed within the Aboriginal community. As discussed in the previous narrative the infighting had become normalised and accepted as everyday life. Consequently, participants may have felt

trapped and labelling may have offered freedom to progress.

Silencing methods may have also ensured that infighting behaviours were hidden from broader society. For oppressed groups silencing methods are common, and thus naming something that has been chronic and detrimental to the community may also be liberating for many. A labelling and awareness process can draw out everyday champions who want to address lateral violence and make a difference for healing and intervention.

We had our own labels before 'lateral violence'. Prior to the labelling of lateral violence some Aboriginal participants had used their own words to describe the infighting and oppressive behaviours within their local communities.

Paul (age category 41-45): *It wasn't called lateral violence back then; it was just everyone turning on each other...um 'defiance'... everyone fought each other...just 'fucking up'.*

Ben (age category 18-25):
Psychological warfare.

Leanne (age category 51-55): *They have heard of [lateral violence] but they don't know it's here. So I have given the theme 'above the line, below the line'.*

Rachel (age category 31-35): *It's similar to the tall poppy syndrome that kind of, I guess the meanings associated with that term, somebody made it sound very similar and from what I've seen around just internalised depression, that sounds a bit similar as well [as] taking it out on each other as a first point cos we're like each other, we're like ourselves, we're each other.*

Belle (age category 31-35): *I always just referred to it as fighting crabs in a bucket type*

thing before I heard lateral violence.

In these narratives a number of labels were used to describe a similar concept of infighting such as “defiance”, “fucking up”, “jealousy”, “psychological warfare”, “above and below the line”, “tall poppy syndrome”, “internalised racism”, and “crabs in the bucket”. The participants represent diversity within the community in that they were from different age groups and generations, from different language groups, different locations within Adelaide and some were born in different states. Yet all were describing the same broad phenomenon with a local label. There is no doubt that many more labels would have been used. For example, in the 1980s the label of ‘black politics’ came to mind, particularly from a work environment in an Aboriginal context in Adelaide. Other labels noted are the ‘Black poppy syndrome’ (Ryan, 2015). It appears that as soon as a common label was socially represented participants could readily tie the concepts (their old label and the new label of lateral violence) together. The initiative of one overarching label, or a common name that many can relate to, may ensure a broad level of understanding, involvement and action to curb or minimise infighting and promote more agreeable relationships and interactions.

No it doesn't fit – we need a ‘proper’ name for it other than lateral violence. In contrast to participants who accepted and welcomed the label lateral violence, there was also some opposition displayed by some participants in some contexts. They indicated that the concept of lateral violence does not adequately fit community ideas and experiences of infighting. More specifically, participants who objected to the word violence held that position because of potential negative connotations for the community. This disapproval can be seen in the narratives below.

Lila (age category 56-60): *People didn't like the word violence within [government department participant worked for deleted]. I*

remember having the conversation and you [indicating me on a previous occasion] said ‘call it what it is’ and to me it's ‘violence’.

Lila: *For me it didn't matter what we called it. If the majority wanted to call it this or that or lateral violence I would go along with it cos for me it's about, I am not the only one whose gonna get abuse[d]. Hey it's not just me: the whole committee decided to call it [name of alternative to lateral violence deleted] so as not to identify the participant or department]... a consensus was made.*

Rita (age category 56-60): *But for us to stop doing that [lateral violence] I think we have to reintroduce it... introduce a very elementary ... word so that people can identify with it... see what I believe is there's a lot of people that still don't know what it [lateral violence] is... Well what would I suggest as another name? Well I haven't really thought about it but more a name that I guess suggests that we need to identify it with something closer to home, you know, and even though it extends into some violent behaviour, that's not how it starts out.*

Rita: *... it's a feeling right now, we need to put a name, a proper name to it, and they [the Aboriginal community] need to put a proper solution to it that we own, and that's really all I wanted to say so.*

Daisy (age category 46-50): *I think it's good in that it gives people words to understand what's going on, and you know*

how divide and conquer can then become lateral violence... the marginalised people will attack each other but I think sometimes it's a bad thing cos it's negative wording... It therefore oppresses a marginalised people more; it's like a badge they wear... so it's not keeping it in the positive.

Although the labelling process of infighting was considered extremely important, precisely what the label signifies and represents and how it is used was considered equally important. In the narratives above participants are oriented towards a concern that the label could potentially be used to further stereotype Aboriginal people as all violent by mainstream society. As Daisy explains there is always the risk that lateral violence becomes a 'badge' that Aboriginal people wear, perhaps indicating 'violent person'. Clearly, Aboriginal people do not need to be further stigmatised for behaviours related to colonisation, oppression, trauma and disadvantage. A label such as lateral violence may then be seen as intrinsic to Aboriginal culture, enabling a victim blaming approach which in turn excuses mainstream society from any responsibility and culpability.

A label for infighting could be framed in a constructive way that captures some of the positive behaviours of Aboriginal people. From the first author's experience labels such as 'intra-cultural respect' and 'lateral respect' have been in circulation to describe positive approaches to prevent lateral violence within the Aboriginal community in Adelaide and South Australia. Both Daisy and Rita also wanted a label framed positively to capture the positive or 'loving' side of Aboriginal people but they didn't offer any suggestions.

The narratives infer that a two-pronged approach to naming infighting might be preferable. Reference was readily made to lateral violence when participants talked about negative experiences of infighting (see for example Rita in theme 2) but they also used or wanted to use alternative labels that were more positive when they were in

oriented towards solutions. For example, within the "lateral love" website and campaign infighting is still referred to as lateral violence and lateral love is used in a context for solution focused responses to lateral violence. Similarly in Victoria the term "lateral healing" is used to counteract lateral violence (Koorreen Enterprises, 2015).

Summary and Discussion

This article has fulfilled its aims by drawing on participants' understandings, concept formations and experiences of lateral violence in order to consolidate information and to add to a body of knowledge on lateral violence in the Australian context.

Many participants in this study welcomed the concept of lateral violence and described how the label was useful in making sense of their experiences. On the other hand there were also participants who opposed the label and believed it didn't resonate with what was happening in their communities. This appeared to be related to the negative connotations associated with the word violence being attached to a label. Such a label could mean that Aboriginal people are further stereotyped.

Even though naming and categorising a social issue is an intrinsic human process; there are potential ramifications from the media and the general population when a label has the potential to stigmatise and fuel any existing prejudice and racism. The awareness campaigns for domestic and family violence have been widespread, but these may have undergone the same process of uncertainty and scrutiny, particularly as society stereotypes the primary form of violence as physical. As with the definition of lateral violence, family violence includes a definition of psychological and emotional violence – not only physical violence⁴. The potential for stigma and prejudice toward Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is a real concern despite the fact that violence and its many forms – whether it be intra-group or inter-group violence – exist throughout the world. This potential for stigma and prejudice is likely to cause fear and uncertainty within Aboriginal

communities. It is also a possible factor as to why awareness of lateral violence has been slow in proliferating in Aboriginal communities and action towards prevention, minimising or stopping lateral violence, in communities has been rare.

To return to a previous question asked about whether lateral violence was the most appropriate label to describe the infighting within the Aboriginal community, the response would be 'yes'. This is despite the limitations and stigma discussed, as highlighting lateral violence experiences and making the label tangible was nonetheless deemed very important by participants. This also meant that lateral violence is no longer a secret and/ or normalised to individuals and Aboriginal culture. Before the label many participants gave lateral violence a convenient or local name to help make the infighting process concrete; but an overarching label, such as lateral violence, can ensure that Aboriginal people are consistent and work together to find effective solutions. Such a label is consistent with other labels such as domestic and family violence which are readily used within the Aboriginal community.

If lateral violence remains an overarching term there is nothing to stop local labels being used or to introduce other labels, particularly those associated with prevention and healing initiatives. The examples of "lateral love" and "lateral healing" have provided positive ideals to move towards preventing lateral violence. Thus perhaps two alternative labels can be used – lateral violence as the destructive force and lateral love or lateral healing (or an alternative positive label) – as the mending force.

Lastly, it is important to note that Aboriginal voices and literature were prominent and privileged in the study. The number of participant responses was both surprising and pleasing. This says something about the willingness for voices to be heard, despite lateral violence being a sensitive and perhaps hidden/reluctant topic within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The introduction of the term 'lateral violence' into these communities was

relatively slow, from 2006 with its spread and uptake over approximately nine years. Moscovici (1988) indicated that some ideas take longer when there are associated implications. In this study approximately a third of participants were vague or unfamiliar with the term 'lateral violence' and its meaning. Thus this study may have empowered and been a voice for some people to find out and speak out about lateral violence in Adelaide and to not remain silent. Moreover a process of comfort, confidentiality and anonymity may have also been a factor in participants' motivations to be part of the study as they could speak out without being identified and therefore in relative safety. Furthermore strength of the study was the "insider" approach by the primary researcher which enabled connection and deeper understanding due to contextual knowledge and exchange. This approach is essential to an Indigenous methodology.

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Notes

¹ Preventing lateral violence, one day workshops, have been delivered predominately in Adelaide since 2007. The facilitators (Yvonne Clark, Karen Glover, and Stan Butler) have formed a consortium and deliver the workshops on an ad-hoc basis and on request.

² Baker discusses the notion of the native informant at length in her book and it has many contexts. A broad understanding is an Indigenous person who passes on information about Indigenous matters to the wider community as a 'go between' (Baker, 2012).

³ William Brian Butler & his niece Nicola Butler are the individuals behind the Lateral Love® & Spirit of Care for all Humankind 2012–2022 Campaign.

⁴ A definition of family violence accommodates the complex interlinking and intergenerational nature both within family and community. The violence includes physical, sexual, emotional, social, financial abuse (Lumby/Carlson & Farrelly, 2009) and cultural and spiritual abuse (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2006).

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Introduction: Critical theory and critical pedagogy: The student Experience

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In the previous issue of ACP, I wrote a paper calling for a different approach to psychology education arguing that the lens we construct curriculum and theory through can determine the outcomes that ensue. The Bachelor of Behavioural Science at the University of Notre Dame (Fremantle Campus) offers students alternate perspectives on understanding human functioning in a complex social milieu. As part of the degree, students undertake a unit in the second semester of their second year examining the construction of contemporary Australian society. This includes a critical exploration of the dual legacies of colonisation and asks students to confront their own position within the settler context as a function of that colonial past. Such an analysis requires a deeper level of critical reflexivity and personal and social analysis than students might have experienced previously and as such it is a challenging and demanding unit.

In examining the construction of Australian identity at both the individual and national level, students are asked to explore Friere's concept of critical consciousness as a vehicle to understand their positionality relative to that of others in the same context. This means that instead of accepting the narrative of disadvantage constructed around Indigenous identity, students are encouraged to see the strength, courage and resilience as well as the political resistance that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have exhibited since settlement occurred. Issues around moral exclusion and how this serves a neoliberal agenda of social control through fear and exclusion are also applied to the current discourses related to asylum seekers, marriage equality, and employment discrimination.

Every year I am surprised and humbled by the willingness of students to challenge themselves and their worldviews and to explore alternate perspectives. In 2014, I

offered the class the opportunity to turn their reflexive analyses into scholarly articles suitable for publication. To support the process, I facilitated a number of writing and development workshops to help them conceptualise and clarify their ideas and form them into a manuscript. It is my pleasure to introduce two of these papers in this special section. In doing so I emphasise that the ideas, commentary, and learning outcomes shared in these papers are solely the work of the authors as they reveal the process and outcomes of their experiences during this learning journey. Each of the authors focusses on different aspects of their experience in the unit but across both papers is a theme of critical reflexivity and the role this played in facilitating their learning journey. They make reference to the role of Whiteness and moral exclusion in shaping their worldviews and how disrupting this lens enabled each of them to understand their role in maintaining a status quo from which each benefited in unconscious and unspoken ways. Deconstructing identities built of privilege and power became the building blocks that enabled them to construct different possibilities not only in terms of the individual construction of 'self' but also in the construction of 'other'. Doing so opens possibilities and opportunities to work in partnership to build a different and more inclusive future.

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Engendering civic responsibility in Australia through education and shifting discourse(s)

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In this paper I explain my journey toward understanding the concept of whiteness and its role in perpetuating racism. This learning journey was facilitated through the unit Culture and Society in the Bachelor of Behavioural Science, which focuses on what Freire called conscientisation; a heightened socio political awareness. I strive to give an insight from a position of a white Non-Australian person and how this informs my personal epistemological perspective and experience of racism and oppression in Australia. Hence, I provide an 'in-but-not-of-a-culture' perspective of a white person operating in a colonised space. In line with this I expand on moral exclusion and critical whiteness theory to highlight Australia's journey towards social justice where civic responsibility is practised and genuine reconciliation is realised.

My motivation to write this paper was to offer an insight into my individual educational progress from understanding racism and oppression toward a commitment to social change and how this emerged within and from my German background. To enhance the reader's understanding of my perspective, I position myself within the context of this issue throughout the discussion. I am a sojourner from Germany, a country with a history of racism and genocide, living in Australia, a country dealing with its colonial history that resulted in racism toward and oppression of Indigenous people. Additionally, I am a foreigner in a country where language and culture are different from the one in which I grew up. Consequently, I am out of my comfort zone within the majority of my social interactions. This position gives me the advantage of being partly a 'bystander' as I live within Australian culture but I am not of its culture (Breen, 2007; Heyer, 2012). Technically, I am an outsider due to visa status, country of origin and mother tongue. However, after four years of residence in Fremantle I feel part of this community and Australian society. It is the combination of these factors that have enabled me to be less resistant to questioning myself and my beliefs and made me more attentive to not reinforce racism within society and myself.

As both a learning device and an assessment I was required to write a series of Critical Reflexive Analyses (CRA) throughout the unit *Culture & Society* in the

Bachelor of Behavioural Science that encouraged me to link the theoretical content of the unit to my own beliefs and worldview. Such a process made me realise that to strive for changing negative social behavioural patterns on a collective level, prior critical analyses on an individual level is essential. This requires the examination of a person's prejudice, stereotyping and beliefs and the reasons she or he holds them. Deutsch (2006) argues that a precondition to overcome social injustice is to be aware of it. Therefore, it is essential to know your position within the context of an issue you are analysing in order to be aware of your own bias; and in line with this, to examine your individual limitations in working within the issue you are promoting. Awareness gained through education and experience can then be followed by mindfulness, which may then ultimately lead to "conscientisation" (Freire, 1974, pp. 24-25).

In order to position myself within the context of discrimination I begin with reflecting on my national and social identity. Having been raised in Germany several generations after the Second World War, I view civic responsibility as my duty. I remember watching documentaries about Nazi-Germany with my parents from an early age, which was followed by social-political and historical education in high school. Jewish survivors of the *Holocaust* visited our high school to inform about their lived experiences and memories of that time. Additionally, we visited the concentration

camp *Buchenwald*, which enhanced our knowledge and notion of past events. *Buchenwald* is now a museum and understood as a place of learning through sympathetic imagination (Rodden, 2005). The *Buchenwald* visit had a major impact upon me; I will never forget the horror and profound sadness I felt when we stood on the ground which used to be a concentration camp, knowing what happened there. Neither I nor my parents committed any of these crimes, however, I still felt a sense of guilt. Naturally, not all students responded to the *Buchenwald* visit in the same way, in that reactions varied from feelings of shame and guilt to withdrawal from this confrontational situation. I remember the majority of conversations after the visit being highly emotional and there seemed to be a collective consent to never let something like this ever happen again in our country. What was demonstrated through my education at school and at home is “Germany’s commitment to remember its history and to understand the events of World War Two” (Opotow, 2011, p. 209). We have been raised with a “forbiddance to forget” (Proske, 2012, p. 43), which I have internalised from a young age and this to me is part of my civic responsibility.

However, as an adolescent, I found myself incapable of comprehending how a horrific event such as genocide could have taken place in my own country, performed by my own people. I always thought “This is not me. This is not how my parents are. This is not German”. Such thoughts demonstrate that it is one thing to be informed about historical events and their aftermath, but it is another thing to comprehend its social and psychological complexity and how it affects one’s identity formation (Kaiser, 2010; Opotow, 2011). The unit *Social Psychology*, which is a prerequisite to *Culture & Society* in which I studied Opotow’s (1990a, 1990b) concept of the scope of justice helped me to engage in such a process. Opotow (1995) describes the scope of justice as a ‘boundary of fairness’ in which rules and morals apply, but only to people within that scope. This was one of the learning devices which

enabled me to understand the mechanisms that took place in Nazi–Germany, and to finally begin making some kind of sense of my country’s history. I learned that every human being has their own scope of justice in which they morally include or exclude people who appear to be similar or different to themselves. Opotow (1990a) asserts that moral exclusion comprises the following five elements: conflict of interest, group categorisation, moral justification, unjust procedures, and harmful outcomes. After having read some of Opotow’s work, I was able to link these elements to the treatment of Jewish people and other minority groups within Nazi–Germany. People who are morally excluded are outside the scope of justice and therefore increasingly endangered (Opotow, 1990b). Moral exclusion is arguably the most dangerous form of oppression, as it starts with seemingly minor changes, for instance in political and social discourse, but can end in genocide (Deutsch, 2006). A catastrophe that took place in my own country and influenced my national identity starkly in terms of feeling guilty and ashamed of being German. It was a challenging process to overcome these feelings and shift them into a mentality of civic responsibility. Therefore, the material offered in *Social Psychology* and *Culture & Society* provided additional knowledge to comprehend my country’s history in regards to its national identity from past to present times.

Levi (2007) argues that the memory of Nazi-Germany holds the potential to enable other nations to find a “self-critical approach” (p. 127) to analyse and learn from their own history of crimes against humanity. This will therefore, raise questions of responsibility for current generations in terms of current moral exclusion and enhance learning from past events in order to prevent a repetition of history (Proske, 2012). However, simply recollecting facts and imagery of historical violence is not enough to address an individual and collective conscientisation; instead, conscientisation essentially involves empathetic learning and the provision of

alternative histories to achieve genuine reconciliation (Rodden, 2005). This is not to compare the genocide of Jewish people to crimes committed to Indigenous Australians and I am certainly not comparing Germany's history with Australian history as they differ starkly on many levels. Furthermore, I am aware that simply discrediting the actions of others maintains the status quo as it is likely to result in defensive responses (Schick, 2000). What I am arguing is that sympathetic imagination teaching styles as previously described, make history more accessible for young adults as it involves a spatial connection to past events and empathy for its victims (Rodden, 2005). Although each country's history and national identity is different, it can be argued that human beings from different cultures and nations are connected through a "shared humanity" (Dudgeon, 2008, p. 23) and within this a "togetherness in difference" can be realised (Salter, 2013, p. 151).

One of the most important aspects of my learning journey, that I identified and connected to my German and Australian experience was the notion of contemporary responsibility, which establishes that past injustice is intergenerational and therefore so too are their associated apologies (Murphy, 2011). Present generations in Australia inherited benefits from white settlement and it can be argued that benefitting from the riches of the past brings about inheriting the debts, too (Tatz, 2001). Germany embarked on a mission to address these debts and to conscientise her people so that such a crime as the Jewish genocide could never happen again. This objective was demonstrated in the Nuremberg processes, through financial compensation to survivors and acknowledgement of crimes committed against humanity (Levi, 2007). Furthermore, the critical study of the Holocaust and National Socialism became embedded in the German school curricula through textbooks, concept papers and visits to memory sites (Proske, 2012). Historical knowledge about past injustices instead of historical ignorance is ensured through engaging with history in this manner (Medina, 2011).

Additionally, sharing lived experiences with following generations contributes to this process. A personal example is a conversation I had with an elderly member of my family where she shared her experience within the *League of German Girls* and explained how it gave her a feeling of community in the uncertain times of war. The *League of German Girls* was part of the *Hitler Youth*. It was the only permitted girls organisation in Nazi-Germany and membership was compulsory. It sought to prepare the children for their duties in war times (Pentlin, 2007). Furthermore, basic needs such as food could on many occasions not be provided by parents, but could be obtained from the *Hitler Youth*. Although I cannot identify myself with my family member's experience, the conversation enabled me to theoretically understand the person's involvement within the social and economic context of this time. This example demonstrates that personal shared experiences combined with historical education fosters open dialogues and maintains reflexivity about the past through ongoing conversations. Furthermore, the material provided in *Social Psychology and Culture & Society* allowed me to engage with the theoretical frameworks and enhanced my ability to link theories to real events.

The *Culture & Society* unit was not only 'eye-opening' when examining past and present, but also inspiring and motivating when thinking of the future. To demonstrate the steps of my learning journey further, I mention the following articles, which were assigned readings in the unit, and what I learned from them. I felt connected to Radermacher's (2006) reflection on whiteness and reinforcing racism as I am a white, international student like her. Whiteness theory is the study of white superiority ideology and its unearned privileges through institutionalised racism (Endres & Gould, 2009; Suchet, 2007). The Radermacher article encouraged me to reflect on my whiteness and where I may unintentionally reinforce racism. Radermacher (2006) stressed that silence about oppression is damaging and will never

bring about social change. Consequently, I seek dialogue about prejudice and racism within my social environment to find out why people hold certain beliefs.

Furthermore, Desmond and Emirbayer's (2012) analysis of social responsibility made a major impression upon me and contributed starkly to my learning progress. The authors stress that we are not born racist; rather, we are raised to be racist. This notion and the complementary advice to scrutinise ourselves and our inner circle, initiated the examination of my own discriminative thoughts and statements. Through a conversation with my mother I was able to identify one of the sources of such thinking; one of my close family members taught me that all people are the same and that we should treat others as we ourselves expect to be treated. In a white Western society, this seems to be a great thing to say and ideal to live by. However, after a critical reflection of its implication in terms of whiteness, this ideal quickly lost its innocence and positivity. The statement that all people are the same fundamentally disrespects the diversity of all human beings. Furthermore, it implies that there is no such thing as 'whiteness', which is the denunciation of the issue itself. Consequently, the statement supports the denial of racism which is a popular mechanism of modern racism (Nelson, 2013). Hence, I understand now what is meant by a "discourse of colour-blindness" (Endres & Gould, 2009; Radermacher, 2006, p. 4) that reinforces racist attitudes and behaviour.

Endres and Gould (2009) enhanced my understanding of my position within the issue as they stress that recognising covert benefits from whiteness is an important step toward understanding its concept and white privilege. I learned that race is a social construct, a definition of status, not genetics (Endres & Gould, 2009). Consequently, I critically evaluated the ways in which I am advantaged by my 'white' status in everyday life and how it might have influenced my development. Darlaston-Jones (2013) improved my comprehension of the fundamental difference between equality and

equity and how much the latter is needed in context of contemporary Indigenous Australian issues. It helped me to dismantle discourses of equality and disadvantage in regards to Indigenous issues highlighted in Darlaston-Jones et al. (in press). Therefore, I now understand that within this context equity is needed instead of equality, because of the disadvantage Indigenous peoples experience within the colonised space of contemporary Australia (Gilbert & Hoepper, 2014).

It is not enough to promote equality when there is an imbalance in the distribution of resources and access to them. In this context people have to be provided with an access to resources according to their needs, which can mean that Indigenous persons might have access to different, yet equitable, opportunities to Non-Indigenous persons. Highlighting the difference between equality and equity needs to be stressed when responding to equality discourses such as that Indigenous people are given privileges over Non-Indigenous Australians when some housing, jobs and scholarships are specifically allocated to them (Darlaston-Jones, 2013). Such practices demonstrate equitable access to resources and needs to be understood within its context and aftermath of colonisation.

Furthermore, I learned that personal change is often linked to feelings of discomfort (Desmond & Emirbayer, 2012). Critical reflexivity and the knowledge gained through *Social Psychology* and *Culture & Society* often dissociates me from my social environment. Critical self-evaluation may lead to individual sacrifice, which can be demonstrated in stepping away from a position of power and privilege in order to make a political statement. For instance, I find myself confronted by racist 'jokes' and when people realise that I do not laugh, I get comments such as, "you do not have a sense of humour, because you are German". Although these discriminating statements offend and hurt me, I do not passively accept them, which is sometimes challenging as it excludes me from the dominant group in these situations. I know that my behaviour

makes people feel uncomfortable, which influences their response to me. In turn, that makes me feel uncomfortable, too, but I understand that it is an inevitable part of the process. When others make racist ‘jokes’, on the surface it appears to take away their responsibility for the harm they just inflicted, because it is ‘only’ a joke. This diffusion of responsibility and mitigation of racist discourse is one of the ways in which people are morally excluded and I view it as part of my civic responsibility to not ignore this harm (Opatow, 1990b; Van Dijk, 1992). Furthermore, Desmond and Emirbayer (2012) argue that ignorance may lead to indifference, which can be viewed as “loyalty to the status-quo” (p. 261). Therefore, I will continue to not participate in the mitigation of discrimination when it comes to ‘jokes’ on the expense of oppressed and marginalised groups in order to decrease denial and the reproduction of racism (Nelson, 2013). As a consequence, my membership to the dominant group will be weakened at these times (Van Dijk, 1992). Thus, I am using my privileged position as a member of the dominant group to purposely decrease my power by stepping away from their attitude.

After a critical reflection upon oppression on a collective level in regards to white Australia’s treatment of the First People of this country, I was encouraged to examine situations where I potentially discriminate the ‘Other’. Desmond and Emirbayer (2012) state that “honest reflexivity confronts the self in its full complexity, and it does not shy away from the nasty bits but seeks them out in order to set them straight” (p. 274). Writing the CRA on oppression and prejudice made me aware of involuntary discriminative thinking in particular situations and therefore enabled me to change in attitude and behaviour. Desmond and Emirbayer (2012) describe the process of ‘critical self-engagement’ as a commitment to reflexivity rather than the likely impossible task of removing all thoughts of discriminative content.

Personal reflexive processes require that I consciously stop the mechanisms of maintaining a positive self-image when I

realise I am creating a negative presentation of the ‘Other’ in my thoughts (Deutsch, 2006; O’Doherty & Lecouteur, 2007; Van Dijk, 1992). The realisation of discriminative thoughts within oneself is a negative feeling and so I understand if people dislike to expose themselves to such emotions. However, leaving the personal comfort zone is essential if education within these issues is to have a positive effect (Radermacher, 2006). Therefore, critical reflexivity needs to be promoted in education, so that civic responsibility can be practised in order to achieve genuine reconciliation. Although apologies on a collective level have been expressed, it can be argued that white Australia has yet not taken responsibility on an individual level for the consequences of oppression and past violence (Levi, 2007).

Whilst writing a CRA about whiteness, I came to understand that to know where and when I am part of the problem will help me to be part of the solution. Although, people are not free from racist and oppressive thinking in general, they have a choice in the way in which they deal with it; accepting the challenges of change is the foundation to the solution (Sims, 2014). Social change can be achieved, but it requires commitment, time and effort (Freire, 1974). To initiate these factors, people need to realise that they are not only changing in favour of ‘Others’, they are also changing for themselves and future generations (Deutsch, 2006). This is due to the aspect that disallowing ‘Otherness’ limits tolerating and accepting one’s own Otherness (Schick, 2000). Consequently, this it is not only damaging to the identity formation of the oppressed, but also to the oppressor (Freire, 1974; Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996).

A “shared humanity” (Dudgeon, 2008, p. 23) enables people to understand people who are different to them and within this shared humanity, cultural diversity is to be understood and respected and will be reflected in being “together in difference” (Salter, 2013, p. 151). This respect needs to be performed in people’s rhetoric and everyday social interactions. Therefore, to achieve social change we need to be more critical when considering the

words we chose to shape our reality (Hall, 2001). Furthermore, tolerance toward diversity and human rights need to be taught to our children in order to engender civic responsibility (Gilbert & Hoepper, 2014; Opatow, Gerson & Woodside, 2005). Providing information and education influences the discursive recipients' knowledge and belief systems and therefore eventually their actions (Van Dijk, 2006). Thus, discourse(s) need to shift if social change regarding racism and oppression is to be achieved in Australia (Collins, 2013).

Destabilising the discourse of being guilty of crimes committed in the past and calling civic responsibility into question for current and future generations may hold the potential to change attitudes and behaviours. The feeling of guilt which is also expressed when unpacking whiteness can cause people to avoid situations of confrontation and inner conflict (Schick, 2000). Thus, guilt can deter from critical reflection which is so very essential in the process of change of discriminative thoughts and behavioural patterns. Furthermore, responsibility brings about acknowledgment, which encourages moral inclusion and shows epistemic respect to experiences and memories of the 'Other' (Dudgeon, 2008; Medina, 2011; Proske 2012). Therefore, shifting the prevailing discourse of guilt versus innocence to a discourse of responsibility is a positive approach to achieve societal change (Proske, 2012; Schick, 2000).

This article is not suggesting how prevailing issues need to be solved as this would reinforce the production of whiteness as I am a non-Indigenous person. The intention is to rather offer an additional epistemic perspective and to emphasise the shift of focus to bring awareness to alternative discourse(s). Therefore, the construction of society through the language which is used to create meaning demands consistent re-evaluation (Medina, 2011). The examination of discourse(s) within a historical and social context, demonstrates that historical events hold distinct meanings to different generations (Dudgeon, 2008; Hall, 2001). In context within Australian

colonial history this may mean that a question of guilt for past generations transforms into a question of civic responsibility for current generations. To conclude, through the reflection and critical analysis upon my personal and social identity, I came to understand that being white and German contributes to these identities in more ways than I was previously aware. During *Culture & Society* I came to position myself in terms of these identities in my Australian social context, described as being in, but not of a culture. The CRAs on prejudice, oppression, racism and whiteness theory enabled me to detect attitudes of 'white superiority' and partiality within myself and Australian society. The knowledge I gained through *Behavioural Science*, and *Culture & Society* in particular, enabled me to shift my language and behaviour and promoted dialogues about the issue within my social environment. Through unpacking my private learning journey, I demonstrated that personal and social change is to be achieved through education, understanding history in a contextual fashion and open conversation about serious issues such as racism towards and oppression of minority groups. Sympathetic education and shifting discourse(s) will increase moral inclusion and engender civic responsibility; as a result it will decrease racism and harm committed to minority groups.

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unknown reviewers for their constructive feedback.

Biography

Sarah Koelsch was born in 1981 in Germany. She studied Law in Bonn and Cologne and as part of her studies she specified in Criminology. In 2012 Sarah moved to Australia and started a Bachelor of Behavioural Science at The University of Notre Dame Australia, in Fremantle in 2013.

Transforming my white identity from an agent of oppression to an agent of change through education in contemporary Australian society

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The construct of identity has been explored by numerous disciplines over time and has engaged scholars such as Piaget, Erikson, Tajfel and Descartes with their perspectives on cognition, learning and development. Extending upon these, the Bachelor of Behavioural Science at The University of Notre Dame Australia's Fremantle campus examines the array of factors contributing to identity formation, including the historical, political, social, economic and cultural contexts in which an individual develops. In this paper, I articulate the process of discovering my white ethnicity and its consequences through the unit Culture and Society. While highlighting the discursive mechanisms which have influenced my social understandings, the links between identity, prejudice and oppression are examined. Education, becoming conscious of whiteness and looking critically at myself was paramount to understanding my role in perpetuating discrimination and eliminating racist behaviours. As such, I argue that education, conscientisation (Freire, 1974) and critical reflexivity are the crucial elements for promoting a just, pluralistic society. As I expand on this journey I acknowledge that I am a white woman, and pay respect and show gratitude to the traditional owners of the land where I live, the Wadjuk Noongar Aboriginal people, especially as I identify as part of the group that has colonised Australia.

“Awareness of injustice is a precondition for overcoming it.” (Deutsch, 2006, p 23).

Psychological theorists and philosophers such as Piaget (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969), Erikson (1968), Tajfel (1974), Descartes and Sartre (Weimin, 2007) have contributed to understandings of identity construction with their perspectives on cognition, learning and development. Disciplines including Sociology and certain fields in the Behavioural Sciences extend upon the psychology of the individual by incorporating the multiplicity of social and institutional influences on identity construction. The Bachelor of Behavioural Science at The University of Notre Dame Australia's Fremantle campus dissects the multiplicity of identity contributors, encompassing the historical, political, economic and cultural contexts in which an individual develops. My education journey in Behavioural Science has made me conscious of my white ethnicity and of its unspoken reality, which is the impact of whiteness on non-white *and* white people (McIntosh, 1989). Consequently, I explain how I came to understand that by reproducing whiteness, I have been unconsciously racist. In this paper, I take the reader on my journey of learning

how the dominant white culture I am situated within benefits me whilst it perpetuates the social disadvantage and oppression of non-white people. I have learned that whiteness denies liberation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and for non-white people, which prohibits reconciliation and authentic cultural diversity in the contemporary Australian society (Green & Sonn, 2005, 2006). Furthermore, my education has unravelled the micro- and macro-level social forces that have shaped my life and views about other people. Throughout the discussion, the links between identity, moral exclusion and oppression are revealed by connecting common language practices and images in politics, media and social realms with Opatow's (1990a) Scope of Justice theory, and Deutsch's (2006) oppression framework. Education and being reflexive (reflecting on my words and actions, and their consequences) has made me critically conscious (Freire, 1974) of my white ethnicity and role in perpetuating white dominance. In addition, the method of transformative education (Darlaston-Jones, Owen, & Lee, 2009; Freire, 1973) in the Bachelor of Behavioural Science has demonstrated that education alone is

insufficient to combat racism, prejudice and discrimination towards marginalised peoples (Darlaston-Jones et al., in press; Darlaston-Jones & Owen, 2011; Green & Sonn, 2005; Saxton, 2004). As it was only when I was critical of my white identity and my actions that I could see their consequences and thus commit to promoting social change by shifting what I believe, say and do.

Through my education journey in Behavioural Science and specifically in the unit *Culture and Society* I have become acutely aware of my position in Australian society, and more broadly throughout the world. In addition to its academic challenges, the difficulty arose in the need to question and challenge my reality (ontology), ways of knowing (epistemology), being and doing (Crotty, 1998). Decolonisation involves “the overturning of colonial assumptions and the reversal of colonial processes” (Smith & Ward, 2000, p 3). As such, I needed to critically assess my position and roles in society and most difficult of all, my role in perpetuating the marginalisation of non-dominant groups of people. The process was very confronting and I posit that this type of ‘hard’ is the most difficult for any student, or person who is undertaking transformative learning (Stevens-Long, Schapiro, & McClintock, 2012). This method of learning and teaching pioneered by Freire (1973) involves having to self-assess how your language and behaviours affect others, both as individuals and as collectives (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2002). It requires critical reflexivity, which is to look at the role and position of self in context, and to challenge how you came to ‘know’ certain knowledge and make assumptions about groups of people (Darlaston-Jones et al., in press). Reflexivity was necessary for the in-depth class discussions and in the unit assessments, which were four Critical Reflexive Analyses (CRA’s).

CRA is a valuable learning tool for critical psychology methodology, promoting decolonisation and for anti-racism education (Darlaston-Jones et al., in press; Darlaston-Jones & Owen, 2011). This is because it requires social actors to analyse their role in

social matters to self-discover one’s position within the issues and how this position impacts others (Dutta & de Souza, 2008). The CRA’s enabled me to explore my social identity and life experiences and understand them in relation to psychological theories, in particular Critical Whiteness theory and theories of oppression and moral exclusion (Deutsch, 2006; Green & Sonn, 2005, 2006; Opatow, 1990a, 1990b; Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996; Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2002; van Dijk, 1992). In my own way and in my own time I wrote about what I thought, felt and had researched about these issues without restriction, which was an extremely valuable process. Additionally, the CRA’s allowed me to explore the contributions of global collective-level forces such as politics, economics and mass media in the construction of my ‘knowledge’ and assumptions about certain groups (Clyne, 2005; Gale, 2004; Herman & Chomsky, 2002; Love & Tilley, 2013; Rowe & O’Brien, 2013; van Dijk, 1992).

Social Constructionist theory outlines that the social world is formed by the language and images, or discourse, used to give meaning to a social construct and thus create a certain reality (Edley, 2001; Hall, 1997; Potter, Edwards & Wetherell, 1993). The discourses have meaning and produce knowledge, which influences what people say and do (Hall, 1997). Discourse analysis is therefore useful to detect the mechanisms of knowledge construction, revealing power relationships and how certain truths are manufactured (Hall, 1997). What I have discovered throughout this process is that identity is inextricably linked to moral exclusion via the language that is used to construct and position groups and their individual members (Clayton & Opatow, 2003).

Common discursive practices and images in the Australian media, politics and social settings construct certain non-white groups as less intelligent, unhealthy and more likely to engage in socially unacceptable behaviours (Hodgetts, Masters & Robertson, 2004; Love & Tilley, 2013). Being that most white people experience non

-white ethnic events through the media (van Dijk, 1992), political rhetoric and media reporting of issues affecting minority groups can be discursively negotiated in such a way that it influences mainstream public opinion (Clyne, 2005; Dunn, Klocker & Salabay, 2007; Gale, 2004; Gatt, 2011; Klocker, 2004; Klocker & Dunn, 2003; Lawrence, 2006; McKay, Thomas & Kneebone, 2011; Mullen, 2010; McCallum, 2011; McCallum & Waller, 2013; van Dijk, 1992). Furthermore, Van Dijk (1992) highlights that political discourse and public discourse are inextricably linked and mirror each other, which is due to the media's role in disseminating information and the language used to do so. Aboriginal people's health issues have been identified in news headlines, such as '*Aboriginal Hepatitis C rising, prompting calls for improved services*' (Davidson, 2015). Headlines like these position Aboriginal peoples as having particular ownership of certain diseases, and are thus in need of additional help, however the systemic power imbalances causing such disparities are overlooked by the media (Australian Human Rights Commission [AHRC], 2005, 2013; Hodgetts et al. 2004; Love & Tilley, 2013; McCallum, 2013; World Health Organisation, 2008).

Through analysing my common beliefs in my CRAs and by reading academic literature, I realised that the impression non-Indigenous people receive from news reports, political figures and social interactions is that Indigenous peoples are a social 'problem' and are in need of assistance or punitive measures (Green & Sonn, 2005, 2006). However, I have learnt that it is white culture, its ideology, systems and institutions which have created, and continue to perpetuate, these unjust conditions (Augoustinos, Rapley & Tuffin, 1999; Love & Tilley, 2013; McCallum, 2011, 2013). Therefore it is the discourses, systems, institutions and ideology embedded in whiteness which need to be challenged in order to create systemic change and promote equality (Green & Sonn, 2005, 2006; Potter et al., 1993; van Dijk, 1992).

I had learned white ideology implicitly

as a child, through listening to how adults, authority figures such as teachers and politicians and news reports spoke about, positioned and treated non-white peoples in a negative way. The teachings of early sociologist Mead (as cited in Crotty, 1998) highlight that the process of adopting the standpoint of others begins in childhood; the adoption of a standpoint is what shapes us as social objects. Connolly's (1998) research and book further outlines how the socialisation process occurs in young people, instilling dominant views and reinforcing cultural and social norms by adopting the language practices used to describe and discuss certain issues (Hall, 1997; Potter et al., 1993).

As a young person, my reality was that white people were 'better than' non-white people because of superior intelligence (Branch et al., 1995; Sternberg, 2012; Witty & Garfield, 1942); ability (Dafler & Callaghan, 2005; Eddy, 1969); merit (Lipsey, 2014); and biology (Darity, Royal & Whitfield, 2010), because these were the messages I received from the white culture around me. The discriminatory attitudes that I learnt as a child are evident in Pedersen, Griffiths, Contos, Bishop and Walker's (2000) research, which outlines the prevalence of prejudice and false beliefs in an Australian city and in my home town. Additionally, I was taught the history and ideology of the British 'settlement' in primary school, in terms of it being beneficial to Australia and First Nation's Peoples, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. However, since being educated about, and reflecting on, my cultural context and its biases, I now understand there are multiple realities and knowledges that are very different to what I was brought up with (Crotty, 1998; Dudgeon, Wright, Paradies, Garvey & Walker, 2014). As an example, I had believed and repeated the (white person's) assumption that the Stolen Generations (a government-endorsed forced child removal program) was a benefit to Indigenous people as it brought education and a better (white) future for Aboriginal peoples (Dafler &

Callaghan, 2005). However, with education, I now understand this to be an assimilation program that has decimated cultural and familial ties for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, with ramifications spanning generations (Australian Human Rights Commission [AHRC], 1997; Dafler & Callaghan, 2005).

I understand that I believed these assumptions because I was acculturated into white ideology and was grounded in the white education system and social structures, which are inherently biased towards white people, and white knowledge (Green & Sonn, 2005, 2006; McIntosh, 1989; Saxton, 2004). Realising this through class discussions and writing the CRA's helped me to comprehend that I am positioned within an ethnicity that dominates non-white people and gives unearned privileges to whites (McIntosh, 1989). I realised I have a white ethnic identity that I was unaware of because being white and living by white systems and institutions is positioned as the 'normal' and 'natural' way of being in mainstream Australia (Deutsch, 2006).

I came to understand through reading Deutsch's (2006) oppression framework that the process of cultural imperialism is how whiteness has become the dominant ideology in Australia. Cultural imperialism is the 'universalisation' of the dominant culture (Deutsch, 2006). It involves alienating the dominated 'other' by representing itself as the normal state of being, thus infuses itself as the undefined, natural state in a society (Deutsch, 2006). 'Others' who are 'different' from the dominant majority are defined by their differences and are therefore positioned as deviant or inferior (Deutsch, 2006; Young, 1990). 'Other' are forced to interact with the dominant culture which provides stereotypical views about them, causing pressure to conform to the dominant social norms, and the internalisation of the dominant viewpoint (Deutsch, 2006; Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996). Whiteness is the cultural imperialism that has diffused itself into Australia, which for around 60,000 years has been owned by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (Dudgeon,

Milroy & Walker, 2014; Roberts, Jones & Smith, 1993). Whiteness disseminates as the silent 'norm' of being; being a white person, knowing white histories and knowledge, understanding and negotiating 'white' processes, systems and social structures, using 'white' language, and conforming to white social norms is the standard by which all else is compared and judged (Deutsch, 2006; Green & Sonn, 2005, 2006; Saxton, 2004). Subsequently, anyone who is not white or afforded nominal white status is delineated as either deviant (thus detrimental to white) or exotic (thus beneficial to white) (Green & Sonn, 2005, 2006; Saxton, 2004).

I had unknowingly engaged in white cultural imperialism, as I defined people by their nationality and ethnicity, but had never defined myself as white, nor had I ever been required to. Hence, whiteness remains hidden as it identifies the 'other' whilst it does not classify itself (Suchet, 2007). Yet regardless of how whiteness attempts to hide itself, it is only invisible to (the majority of) white people (Suchet, 2007), which became apparent to me during a class discussion with my non-white student colleagues. The students were hesitant to speak of whiteness, but as they became more comfortable with voicing their experiences, they made it very clear to me that the only people who do not see whiteness (and its consequences) are white people. I realised after this discussion that my ethnic identity benefits me because I am white, but it negatively impacts upon people who are non-white, and in particular in the Australian context, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. My student colleagues helped me to understand that people who are oppressed by whiteness have a sophisticated knowledge and understanding of its mechanisms, because they experience its negative effects and hear its discourses on a daily basis (Hatchell, 2004; Green & Sonn, 2005, 2006; Nielsen, Stuart, & Gorman, 2014; Suchet, 2007).

My education has taught me that there exists an acute nexus between the way in which an identity is constructed and the experience of injustice (Clayton & Opatow, 2003). Regardless of how a person may

identify themselves, the identity a person has in the eyes of the dominant group can cause them harm and injustice by being morally excluded (Clayton & Opatow, 2003).

Traditional social psychology has produced theories of social identity and group interactions, which centre on social cognition (Tuffin, 2005). Put briefly, social cognition generalises that people simplify information such as social groups into categories, and make discriminations between these categories accordingly (Tuffin, 2005). Social categorisations may lead to assumptions that all people in the group are the same, resulting in stereotyping, prejudice and the construction of 'in-groups' and 'out-groups' (Billig, 2002; Tuffin, 2005). For example, asylum seekers who arrive by boat in Australian waters have been constructed as 'illegal queue jumpers' and assumptions have been made about their legitimacy (Every & Augoustinos, 2008a, 2008b; Klocker, 2004; Rowe & O'Brien, 2013). Consequently, the identity of 'asylum seeker' is portrayed negatively in Australia, due to the assumptions they are criminals who are breaking the law (Every & Augoustinos, 2008b; McDonald, 2011). This example highlights how group categorisations can be used to positively represent one social group over another, as the category the 'other' is placed enables the legitimisation of harm (Clayton & Opatow, 2003; van Dijk, 1992).

Positive self-representation is also a feature in group comparisons outlined in Social Identity Theory (Billig, 2002; Tajfel, 1974), which proposes that a person's self-esteem is linked with comparing their social group (the 'in-group') with other groups ('out-groups'). The positive self-representation of the 'in-group' whilst negatively positioning the 'out-group' creates feelings of superiority, thus the self-esteem of the individual increases (Billig, 2002; van Dijk, 1992). Social Identity Theory outlines a person's desire to increase self-esteem by using negative behaviours of discrimination towards, and stereotyping of, the 'other' and regards prejudice as an outcome of information processing, likening it to social cognition (Tajfel, 1974; Tuffin, 2005). These

traditional psychological theories propose that mental shortcuts create categories in which an individual uses to make sense of their social world (Billig, 2002; Tuffin, 2005). However, the theories actually support and legitimise prejudice, because they reduce group interactions down to neurological processes and assume they are automatic, instinctual and cannot be changed (Billig, 2002; Tuffin, 2005). Neither do the theories offer solutions to counter prejudicial behaviours (Tuffin, 2005).

The theories are further limited as they do not explain the mechanisms of how social categories are included or excluded from the moral boundaries of the 'ingroup' (Billig, 2002). These mechanisms are linguistic, highlighting the power of language in the practice of prejudice (Billig, 2002; Potter et al., 1993; Tuffin, 2005). To reiterate the effect on asylum seekers, it is not merely the social category of 'asylum seeker' that individuals reject; it is the use of language that positions asylum seekers in a negative way which creates the desire to accept or reject them (Every & Augoustinos, 2008a, 2008b; Gale, 2004; Klocker, 2004; Klocker & Dunn, 2003). Therefore, people *do* prejudice by discursive negotiations, as it is the language which individuals use to construct similarities or differences between groups, legitimising moral inclusion, or exclusion (Billig, 2002; Clayton & Opatow, 2003; Opatow, 1990a, 1990b; Potter et al., 1993). Van Dijk argues these language practices usually have two features: in-group reinforcement and out-group derogation.

Van Dijk (1992) further elucidates the discursive "double strategy" individuals use to positively self-represent whilst subtly positioning the 'other' in a negative way to legitimise prejudicial attitudes. This strategy is employed in denials of racism; by denying that one (or a group) is being racist, one positively represents 'self', whilst excusing their derogation of 'other'. Van Dijk (1992) argues that the most blatant racist discourse features forms of denial. The denial of racism defends the person (or in-group) and their views, which are portrayed as common sense, fair and reasonable whilst undermining other accounts, effectively

delegitimising and silencing them (Kirkwood, Liu & Weatherall, 2005; Potter et al. 1993; van Dijk, 1992). Denying racism defends one's position and allows for the social acceptance of racist views (van Dijk, 1992). This contradiction is discursively negotiated with the word 'but'; for example, "*I'm not being racist, but....*" is a common expression (van Dijk, 1992). Discursive forms of denial are identified by van Dijk (1992, p 92) and re-iterated by Nelson (2013, p 90) as 'act-denial': "*I didn't say that at all*"; 'control-denial': "*I didn't say that on purpose*"; 'intention-denial': "*I didn't mean that, it was taken out of context*"; and 'goal-denial': "*I was trying to explain that....*". Such forms of denial function as excuses for racist discourse and make accusations of racism problematic as it is difficult to prove intent (van Dijk, 1992). Additionally, denial discourses which position addressing the past (the British colonisation of Australia) as 'not constructive', excuse contemporary colonisers from acknowledging their role in addressing the legacies of colonisation, which are white dominance at the expense of Indigenous peoples rights (Green & Sonn, 2005, 2006; Saxton, 2004).

Another common rhetoric is "it's got nothing to do with me, I didn't take away their lands and steal their children", which is a deferral of responsibility (van Dijk, 1992). I am ashamed to admit that I used to engage in this rhetoric. I used to believe that because I was born in New Zealand and had no family history of colonisation in Australia that I had nothing to do with 'what happened to them'. I now understand that being a white person in Australia or New Zealand means that *I am* a coloniser, and therefore I have a role and responsibility in *de*-colonisation (Smith & Ward, 2000). Nelson (2013) further highlights that denials of racism are also employed by people who are oppressed by racism. This is disturbing because to survive white dominance and avoid further persecution, individuals deny they have experienced racism, or live in a racist space (Nelson, 2013). In these cases, denials of racism become a survival mechanism for those who are on the receiving end of it

(Deutsch, 2006; Nelson, 2013).

Denials of racism by elites (politicians, business and community leaders) have a macro-level social and political function (van Dijk, 1992). When elites and authority figures legitimise prejudicial views, it becomes unnecessary for citizens to justify, excuse or deny their racist views, and so they are exonerated for prejudiced speech (van Dijk, 1992). The attempted changes to Australia's Racial Discrimination Act, section 18C, in 2014 would have allowed this exoneration (Griffiths, 2014). The proposed changes attempted to remove the protection from harm done by racial vilification by narrowly redefining what vilification is (Rice, 2014, March 26). However, the Abbott Government abandoned the measures in order to "unite the nation" (Griffiths, 2014) as it was causing 'complications' with sections of the public after an outcry against the proposed changes. Former Prime Minister Abbott stated "I don't want to do anything that puts our national unity at risk at this time and so those proposals are now off the table" (as cited in Griffiths, 2014). Rather than being a genuine attempt at addressing racism and admitting the changes were granting impunity for bigotry (Rice, 2014), the Government's abandonment of the bill was discursively negotiated under nationalist rhetoric (Griffiths, 2014). Using these contemporary examples, it is evident that denying racism helps maintain dominance, but once resistance becomes out of the control of the dominant, nationalist rhetoric is adopted to suppress the concerns of marginalised peoples whilst maintaining white hegemony (Augoustinos et al., 1999; Every & Augoustinos, 2008a).

Nationalism discourages 'other' identities on the basis they will divide the nation and positions all citizens as the same, thus none should have privileged rights over others (Augoustinos et al., 1999; Kirkwood et al., 2005). Desmond and Emirbayer (2012) argue that unifying people under a national banner and denying differences is assimilation. Common negotiations of nationalism in the media and social settings

include phrases such as ‘we are all Australian’ (Cornwall, 2014), and the Abbott Government used the term ‘team Australia’ (Summers, 2014). This *similarities discourse* blames people for the disadvantage they experience, because its meritocratic assumptions position everyone as having the same opportunities (Lipsey, 2014). Meritocracy further permits victim-blaming as it assumes those who do not capitalise on the available opportunities must be inadequate, lacking or lazy (Lipsey, 2014). However, it is the inequitable social and systemic factors, such as inadequate education (Lawrence, 2012), that create inequality and people’s inability to capitalise on opportunities (Green & Sonn, 2005, 2006; Lipsey, 2014; Saxton, 2004). Additionally, if disadvantaged groups are unable to avoid oppressive conditions, the dominant characterise the oppressed as inferior and inadequate, thereby confirming the belief that they ‘deserve’ their circumstances (Deutsch, 2006).

I have learnt that the underlying factors of oppression are the use of language to negatively construct the identity of another, leading to moral exclusion which can occur on individual, relational and collective levels (Collins & Clement, 2012; Opatow, 1990a, 1990b, 1995, 2011; Deutsch, 2006). Power is central, as one group desires to maintain power, or gain it at the expense of another (Deutsch, 2006; Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996). Those who hold power also control the inequitable distribution of resources, the unjust procedures and biased social systems (Prilleltensky & Gonnick, 1996). Consistently reinforced social disadvantage and legitimised harm ultimately results in the oppression of ‘other’ and thus they are placed into a position of inferiority (Opatow, 2011). Unjust treatment can result in self-oppression when a person believes that they deserve what they get (Deutsch, 2006). This is the ‘just world ideology’, which as a self-fulfilling prophecy, is another mechanism of moral exclusion (Deutsch, 2006; Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996). As people experience oppression, they may begin to feel and behave in ways that are congruent with the oppressor’s constructions of them, thus

confirming the legitimacy of such treatment to both oppressor and oppressed (Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996). Oppressed individuals and groups can feel a heightened vulnerability and may be perpetually defensive (Deutsch, 2006; Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996). If they resist, lash out and possibly end up breaking the law or social norms, they may be punished for disobedience and/or jailed (Deutsch, 2006; Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996). Consequently, the disobedience and resulting punishment are what keep oppression in place (Deutsch, 2006), which is evident in the disproportionate percentage of Indigenous people in the Australian prison system (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2014; AHRC, 2013).

On the relational level, people are oppressed by family members, friends or colleagues due to a struggle for power and superiority (Deutsch, 2006). This is evident in bullying, teasing or joking behaviours which function to humiliate the other (van Dijk, 1992). It is evident in family relationships where verbal, emotional, psychological and physical abuse are used to maintain power and control over family members – generally women and children (Deutsch, 2006; Kingston, Regoli & Hewitt, 2002). Having the freedom to reflect on this in my CRA’s, I was able to pinpoint how this occurred in my own family as a child, which helped me to identify with the pain and suffering people face. I came to understand oppression on an intimate level, rather than seeing it as a macro-level phenomenon that is removed from my own experience. On a collective level, systemic oppression is evident in social policy that privileges wealthy people, while providing inadequate resources for underprivileged groups (Desmond & Emirbayer, 2012; Lawrence, 2012).

Institutional oppression manifests in under-resourced schools and inadequate health care facilities in poorer areas, creating large gaps between wealthy and disadvantaged populations (Desmond & Emirbayer, 2012; Deutsch, 2006; Lawrence, 2012; AHRC, 2005, 2013). On a macro-scale, oppression occurs as a result of a

collective removing another group from their moral boundary, such as the exclusion of Jewish people during World War II (Opotow, 1990a, 2011), which led to the ultimate and most dire form of oppression, genocide (Opotow, 2011). It is necessary to reiterate here the role of political rhetoric and the media's role in perpetuating certain discourses which influence individuals' opinions (Every & Augoustinos, 2008a; Gale, 2004; Klocker & Dunn, 2003; Mullen, 2010). As one collective ostracises the 'other', policy is formed by governments to reinforce and maintain the exclusion (van Dijk, 1992; Opotow, 2011). This is historically evident in Australia, as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were excluded from the moral boundaries of non-Indigenous Australians, which legitimised having their lands stolen from them, their children stolen and abused and their culture destroyed (AHRC, 1997; AHRC, 2005, 2013; Dudgeon, et al., 2014). All of this was legislated and therefore declared just by the Australian Federal Government and the law (Australian Government Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 2009; AHRC, 1997), which highlights how oppression occurs with impunity.

It has been confronting to learn the mechanisms that enable governments, dictators, leaders and groups to act with impunity while violating the human rights of others. I had discovered whilst researching for an assessment that the former Howard government had used political and psychological impunity (Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996) to justify punitive measures taken against asylum seekers from 2001 through to 2007 (Clyne, 2005; Flynn & LaForgia, 2002; Klocker & Dunn, 2003; Marr & Wilkinson, 2003; Williams, 2002). Securitisation (McDonald, 2011) and criminalisation (Kathrani, 2011) discourses were used to reinforce public fear in the wake of the 11 September 2001 attacks, by outlining potential threats to Australia's security, its people and territory by 'illegal' asylum seekers (Friedman, 2011; Gale, 2004; Klocker & Dunn, 2003; Lawrence, 2006;

McDonald, 2005). The former government's emphasis on the need for security due to terrorism successfully created fear amongst the (majority of) public, who subsequently supported government policy to detain asylum seekers who arrive by sea in offshore 'processing centres' (Clyne, 2005; Dunn, Klocker & Salabay, 2007; Flynn & LaForgia, 2002; Kathrani, 2011). Using the language of fear and securitisation the former government managed to gain impunity for the inhumane treatment of vulnerable people (Clyne, 2005; Marr & Wilkinson, 2003). These examples highlight how the use of language can influence what individuals do, say and believe, therefore perpetuating the status quo of certain groups having power and others being subject to control and oppression (Herman & Chomsky, 2002; Lawrence, 2006).

In summary, I understand that the language used to construct the identity and inferiority of other groups can promote moral exclusion, and lead to oppression. White cultural imperialism, its discourses, institutions and systems, racism and the denial of harm underpins and maintains white group dominance in Australian society. This has led to the oppression of First Nations Peoples, non-whites and those who do not adhere to white norms of behaviour. Although it has been confronting to learn that I have been an agent of oppression, becoming conscious of the mechanisms of power, moral exclusion and oppression is necessary to arouse the desire to change (Deutsch, 2006; Freire, 1974). As such, the Bachelor of Behavioural Science and Culture and Society has inspired a deep desire within me to promote social change and work for equity (what is fair) *and* equality for marginalised groups in my professional career, and personal endeavours.

The decolonising approach (Smith, 1999) to Culture and Society has achieved this through its transformative learning process (Freire, 1973), and fostering my critical consciousness (Freire, 1974). By teaching me to be critical of my actions and behaviours, the unit has also promoted my

respectful and sensitive interactions with others. Additionally, I recognise and accept the realities and knowledges that are different to my own, and respect these as equal. Although Culture and Society has deconstructed, and managed to decolonise my knowledge bases and my reality, it has given me the tools to challenge the dominant white culture of my upbringing in order to promote the interests of those it disadvantages. As highlighted by McIntosh (1989), I can use my unearned privileges to weaken dominant systems by recognising and speaking out against racist and oppressive acts; use my time and energy to advocate for change; increase people's awareness about the mechanisms and negative impacts of white dominance; and share my unearned assets with others to increase their power. However, I feel that larger-scale social change will require a greater public interrogation of whiteness, as not doing so will leave dominant discourses and white power unchallenged, which are the core of racism and the oppression of First Nations and non-white peoples (Green & Sonn, 2005).

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Biography

At the time of writing, Kimberly Smith is an undergraduate student at The University of Notre Dame Australia, studying a Bachelor of Science (Human Biology) and Bachelor of Behavioural Science at the Fremantle campus. Kimberly grew up in Wangkatha country, in the Goldfields of Western Australia after migrating to Australia as a young child from New Zealand with her family. As such, Kimberly acknowledges she is a Pakeha New Zealander and Wadjella Australian citizen, and pays respect to the traditional owners of both countries, the Maori and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health First Aid Manual 2nd ed. Melbourne: Mental Health First Aid Australia; 2010. Authors: Hart, L., Kitchener, B., Jorm, A., & Kanowski, L.

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It is clear that Indigenous knowledge, voices and understandings of social and emotional wellbeing have been privileged throughout the second edition of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health First Aid Manual*. This edition draws upon the guidelines developed by the Mental Health First Aid Training and Research Program from 2006 -2009 using the consensus of a panel of Indigenous mental health professionals with extensive experience in the field of Indigenous mental health. The guidelines and information about their development can be found at www.mhfa.com.au/Guidelines.shtml. Donna Stanley, a Gunggari woman from south east Queensland, and Rhonda Woodward, a Kamilaroi woman from Gunnedah, provided cultural consultation on the Manual.

As a non-Indigenous practitioner, I found the weaving of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, knowledge and experiences to be helpful for a number of reasons. I particularly appreciated the opportunity to explore what Indigenous people's understandings can add to the mental health knowledge base of us all. This can lead to the challenging of our own understandings and assumptions about mental health, reminding us that there is always more than one way to understand and respond to the world around us and our role in it. Finally, and most importantly, when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people I will be able to use the Manual as a reference point from which to springboard deeper, more meaningful conversations.

The Manual, like the adult and youth versions developed previously, promotes mental health first aid as the help offered to a

person who may be developing a mental health problem, or who is experiencing a mental health crisis. Like traditional first aid, people can be trained and become skilled so they are equipped and ready to offer and provide mental health first aid until appropriate professional help is received, or until the crisis resolves.

Section 1.3 Mental Health First Aid sets out clearly the role and responsibilities of the Mental Health First Aider, including to give help in a culturally appropriate way. This is important given that a person's culture plays a very important role in the way they will understand and talk about mental health problems, how and from whom they are likely to seek help.

The Manual utilises the successful format and lay out of the adult and youth versions while incorporating language and imagery which is consistent with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences. The artwork in the manual was provided by Johanna Parker from Lightning Ridge in New South Wales, a contemporary Indigenous artist and a descendant of the Murriwarri people. The artwork titled "Blu 'n' Bak" was provided by Charmaine Sansbury, a descendant of the Narunga people from South Australia. Her artist name is Jakana, meaning 'sister'.

Strength based approaches to indigenous mental health are evident throughout the Manual, particularly in the first section outlining social and emotional wellbeing from an Indigenous perspective. At the same time, the struggles and trauma experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are also written about in ways that make links to the way in which these may weaken social and emotional wellbeing as well as impact on physical health. The ongoing and "unfinished business" nature of the effects of colonisation is described as issues which make it "difficult for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to have good social and emotional wellbeing" (2010, p. 11). This is well balanced with a small section titled "Story of survival" which highlights the strength and resilience of Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander people. Readers are encouraged to notice, acknowledge and build upon these strengths when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities (2010, p.13).

The inclusion of Prime Minister Rudd's 2008 Apology to the Stolen Generations, acknowledging the past mistreatment of Indigenous Australians adds another dimension to the first section of the Manual, setting the scene for the reader to understand what comes later in the Manual can only ever be understood within that context. The section concludes with a list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific services and resources. These resources seem timely for readers who may feel the need to discover more or gain support in planning to work in culturally safe ways with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This approach continues throughout the Manual with reference to relevant workers, reports and literature for further reading. This sends a message that working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples requires the non-Indigenous practitioner to become aware and increase their knowledge and reach out for support as necessary.

A particularly helpful section in the Manual titled "Spirituality, culture and psychosis" helps the reader to consider the "spiritual experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people which may include seeing or hearing things that other people do not see or hear, for example, communicating with ancestors or spirits" (2010, p. 75). The Manual also states that what may look like spiritual experiences or cultural beliefs may in fact be symptoms of mental illness. It is suggested that the reader check what is considered to be normal within the person's community, by asking an Elder or traditional healer.

Each section of the Manual incorporates general information about mental health disorders, then includes additional information about how this may relate more specifically to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Prompts to consider the spiritual and cultural context of the person's behaviours is reiterated throughout the

Manual. Seeking to understand behaviours in light of culture is considered crucial, as is linking with community networks and gaining support as necessary from Community Elders.

As with the previous Manuals, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health First Aid Manual is comprehensive yet accessible. As an evidence-based and culturally adapted Manual, it provides a useful resource for people interested in enhancing their knowledge and understandings of undertaking Mental Health First Aid in ways that are respectful of, and culturally safe, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Preparation, Submission and Publication of Manuscripts

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The Australian Community Psychologist publishes work that is of relevance to community psychologists and others interested in the field. Research reports should be methodologically sound. Theoretical or area review papers are welcomed, as are letters, brief reports and papers by newer contributors to the discipline. Contributions towards the four sections of the journal are sought.

The Australian Community Psychologist is published twice per year and online and is available via the website of the Australian Psychological Society's College of Community Psychologists' page (<http://www.groups.psychology.org.au/GroupContent.aspx?ID=4395>).

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With the exception of book reviews, all contributions are blind-reviewed. Articles submitted for review must be original works and may not be under consideration elsewhere. It is a condition of publication that authors assign the copyright of their articles to the Australian Psychological Society.

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

Page Numbers

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

Footnotes

Avoid using footnotes. If used, please number them sequentially.

References

Use the reference style of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.). List references under the 1st level heading.

Example journal article:

Fryer, D., & Laing, A. (2008). Community psychologies: What are they? What could they be? Why does it matter? A critical community psychology approach. *The Australian Community Psychologist*, 20(2), 7-15.

Example book:

Montero, M., & Sonn, C. C. (2010). *Psychology of liberation: Theory and applications*. New York: Springer.

Example book chapter:

Fielder, J., Roberts, J., & Abdullah, J. (2000). Research with Indigenous communities. In P. Dudgeon, D. Garvey & H. Pickett (Eds.), *Working with Indigenous Australians: A handbook for psychologists* (pp. 349-356). Perth, Australia: Gunada Press.

Example electronic source:

Cummins, R. A., Hughes, J., Tomy, A., Gibson, A., Woerner, J., & Lai, L. (2007). *The wellbeing of Australians – Carer health and wellbeing*. Melbourne, Australia: Australian Centre on Quality of Life, Deakin University. Accessed 27th September 2011 from <http://www.deakin.edu.au/research/acqol/auwbi/survey-reports/survey-017-1-report.pdf>

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