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Whiteness Studies  
Association**



Indigenous  
Studies  
Research  
Network

**Directions and Intersections Conference**

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Australian Critical Race and Whiteness Studies  
Association and Indigenous Studies Research Network  
Joint Conference

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## **Editorial: Directions and Intersections**

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The publication of this edited conference proceedings marks a new foray into the publishing realm for the Australian Critical Race and Whiteness Studies Association (ACRAWSA). The Association has, of course, published its own journal (formerly *Australian Critical Race and Whiteness Studies ejournal*, now *Critical Race and Whiteness Studies*) since 2005. To date, however, the Association has not been involved in the publication of monographs or edited collections (though edited collections have come out of papers presented at ACRAWSA conferences, albeit not under the ACRAWSA banner). It is thus our pleasure to present here the first ACRAWSA published e-book.

The chapters collected in this book represent a relatively small but nonetheless diverse sample of the papers presented at the 2011 Australian Critical Race and Whiteness Studies Association and Indigenous Studies Research Network joint conference. The title of the conference (and thus the title of this edited collection) was 'Directions and Intersections', which aimed to encourage reflection upon both where the field of critical race and whiteness studies is heading, and to acknowledge the many intersecting interests that shape the field.

As researchers working within the field of critical race and whiteness studies, and in representing the conference organisers and attendees, we are particularly interested in being part of a field that takes as one of its founding premises the need to constantly interrogate the very need for the field itself, a concern expressed repeatedly by a diverse range of scholars. In other words, it would be all too easy for 'whiteness studies' to become just another field on par with any other 'speciality study'; an outcome that would fundamentally fail to recognise the fact that whiteness must be studied precisely because it is the typically unspoken norm within most fields. Ensuring that we do not fall into a pattern of simply stating whiteness without critically interrogating it is thus a cornerstone of the field.

As for intersections, and as the chapter summaries presented below indicate, there is an ever-growing presence of research in the field that moves beyond simply taking race as a site of interrogation, and which instead examines the simultaneities of multiple identity categories in the constitution of any person's experience. Furthermore, and with the specific remit of ACRAWSA to acknowledge and engage with the fact of Indigenous sovereignties, it is heartening to see a growing body of research by non-indigenous researchers that takes up this challenge to consider how issues of whiteness are always already in a relationship to Indigenous sovereignty.

In terms of the chapters included in this edited collection, the first chapter examines precisely this issue, through a consideration of how scholars and researchers who wish to engage in activism can best act as activists and allies to Indigenous Australians specifically. In this chapter, Carnes draws upon her own experience working in advocacy roles to examine what it means to work as an

“allied activist”. Through her examination, Carnes provides a background to several theories that she considers important to the work of activists, and illustrates how these theories intersect. Carnes’ chapter thus explores an important area for dominant group members wishing to work as activists for marginalized groups, and provides directions for ways in which we can fill that role thoughtfully, reflectively and usefully.

The next chapter in the collection turns to a discussion of ways in which Indigenous Australians are represented when the unspoken norm of whiteness goes unexamined. In this chapter, Casey examines an area of historical interest in Australia – namely the commonly named ‘Corroboree’ or Aboriginal performances. To facilitate this examination, Casey considers historical data to discuss how the Corroboree was popularly represented and what that means for common representations of Aboriginal performance specifically, and agency more broadly. Casey argues that many depictions of Corroborees from non-Aboriginal sources de-individualize Aboriginal people, locating them simultaneously as savages and as ‘not here’. Casey links such representations with modern-day claims to knowing the ‘authentic’ Aboriginal person (such as the now infamous column by Andrew Bolt about fair-skinned Indigenous Australians), arguing that these images and depictions represent a pervasive pattern in colonial Australia; namely claiming to know the ‘truth’ about Indigenous Australians.

The third chapter in the collection continues in a similar vein, examining the issue of ‘problem drinking’ as a specific instance of an area of law that frequently targets Indigenous Australians. In particular, Cefai argues that laws pertaining to drinking frequently target Indigenous Australians whilst simultaneously overlooking what she labels as the ‘feelings’ that may well lie behind many

instances of problem drinking for many Aboriginal people. Cefai discusses the ways in which frequently racialised representations of 'problems' work to dehumanize Indigenous Australians whilst simultaneously overlooking instances of feeling that may lie behind the behaviour labelled as a 'problem'. Cefai extends her discussion to include practical examples of programs that work to examine the role of emotions in the issues at stake, and the ways in which the law could work productively to understand the role of emotion in behaviours that could otherwise be simplistically labelled as 'problematic'.

The fourth chapter turns attention to constitutional change. In this chapter, Gunstone examines previous attempts at constitutional change relating to Indigenous Australians. In particular, he looks at the 1944, 1967 and 1999 Referendums, examining the events leading up to these Referendums and the situations in which they were ultimately held. Gunstone argues that if the incumbent Gillard Labor government seriously wishes to implement Constitutional changes that do more to recognise the place of Indigenous Australians, then there are a number of lessons to be learnt from history – particularly in relation to the involvement of Indigenous Australians in the consultation process. In a time in which Constitutional change is being increasingly discussed, Gunstone provides us with an important discussion of the situational factors necessary to pass a Referendum, as well as a timely examination of previous Governments' failures in this regard – not only in terms of failed Referendums but also, and crucially, in terms of failure to adequately consult Indigenous Australians and listen to their voices.

Continuing with a theme of legal issues, Hayes discusses the critically important area of housing for Indigenous communities. In particular, Hayes examines the

associated political implications for governments at both state and federal levels when implementing housing policies in relation to Indigenous Australians. Hayes draws upon Bachi's concept of tracing the genealogy of a "problem" in order to analyse the ideas and concepts behind policies for Indigenous housing in Western Australia. Beginning with the history of the "problem" itself, Hayes then examines issues with the dominant representations of this "problem" together with the practical implications that the changing housing policies may have. In conclusion, Hayes argues that these policies, built as they are upon colonial understandings of Indigenous Australians and their requirements from housing policy, are likely to be ineffective in providing better outcomes for Indigenous Australians.

The next chapter in the collection moves from an examination of whiteness and power in relation to Indigenous Australians to a discussion of immigration. Here, Horner examines the concept of borders through the parallels between border policies and the risk of contagion – in this case specifically tuberculosis (TB). Horner examines the dual concepts of 'the race for space' and a 'space for race', together with the relationships both race and space have with concepts of contagion. As such, the chapter provides an overall picture of Australia's relationship to immigration through the lens of the threat of disease. This chapter highlights the nature of contagion in both historical circumstances and current tensions in relation to space and immigration. Horner's chapter therefore provides a lens through which to examine how the discourses and rhetoric of disease build upon historical understandings of contagion and function in particular ways to draw upon fear and anxiety concerning space and race in modern-day Australia.

The next chapter continues the discussion of immigration, but turns to the experiences of immigrants at a personal level. In this chapter, Jayasinha discusses second generation immigrants, arguing that previous research concerning the children of immigrants has failed to consider this group of people as individuals in their own right, and has instead essentialised their identity into one in which their primary purpose is to negotiate the divide between the culture or identity of their parents and the country into which they were born. Jayasinha provides a critique of this research, and in her conclusion, offers suggestions for ways in which research concerning second-generation immigrants could examine the experiences of these people as individuals rather than primarily on the basis of race or ethnicity. As such, this chapter offers an important critique of the process of researching the experiences of immigrants and the families of immigrants, arguing that currently much of the research functions to reinforce existing power relations rather than challenge them, and fails to adequately capture the diverse experiences of people who immigrate to a new country.

Koerner and Haggis' paper extends this discussion to consider the perceptions people (often recent migrants themselves) have of Indigenous Australians in rural areas in Australia. This chapter focuses specifically on white discourses concerning Indigenous Australians, and the authors argue that the interviews they undertook indicate the possibility of counter-narratives which highlight the fluidity of whiteness and the potential for new relationships to emerge in rural areas between Indigenous and white Australians. In particular, these interviews suggest the potential for narratives that supersede traditional colonial narratives, particularly concerning land ownership and usage; narratives in which white Australians come to acknowledge and accept

Indigenous sovereignty over the land upon which they live and work.

The following chapter discusses a similar issue, but from the perspective of cultural diversity training. In this chapter, Kowal, Franklin and Paradies examine the pedagogy of Reflexive Antiracism, and its potential to provide a useful alternative to the commonly used antiracism and cross-cultural diversity trainings. Kowal, Franklin and Paradies examine the usefulness of Reflexive Antiracism in encouraging people to consider their own position in relation to racism and societal inequalities, without eliciting unproductive negative reactions, such as those of guilt or anger. The authors also outline the ways in which Reflexive Antiracism can avoid essentialising racial identities, and thus provides a useful theoretical basis from which to examine such identities both reflexively and flexibly. As such, this chapter continues with a theme seen throughout these proceedings in relation to the need for a continual, reflexive, examination of whiteness by white people.

The next chapter, written by Mapedzahama, Rudge, West and Perron, returns to the study of migrants, drawing on data obtained during a study into the experiences of nurses from Africa working in Australia. Their chapter examines the ways in which race affects African nurses in their workplace, most insidiously in terms of the attributes ascribed to them on the basis of their skin colour. Mapedzahama et al discuss the impact of the stereotypes attached to the nurses in relation to both their 'visibility' in terms of assumptions concerning their ability to do their work, and their paradoxical 'invisibility' in terms of the way in which other (white) nursing staff overlook and ignore them. Mapedzahama et al argue that an array of socially constructed stereotypes concerning black migrants from Africa lead to inequality in the

nursing workforce which has recently been represented as multicultural and inclusive.

Mayersen's chapter continues with an African theme, and provides readers with an insightful and important examination of historical tensions in the area that is today known as Rwanda. Mayersen analyses several historical documents to outline the ethnic tensions in existence in Rwanda in the 1950s, and the ways in which those tensions were understood and interpreted at the time. Mayersen argues that racial and ethnic tensions were critical to the changing political situation in Rwanda at the time, and that the misunderstandings of those tensions had severe consequences for the birth of the nation. Correspondingly, Mayersen argues that in hindsight the subsequent violence between ethnic groups in Rwanda could be traced to this time. As such, this chapter provides an important overview of the political environment in Rwanda in the 1950s, and the repercussions of both these tensions and the lack of understanding of the situation by the relevant European administrations.

The next chapter in the collection provides an examination of Maori practices of numeracy on the Marae, in order to challenge representations of Maori people as unskilled in areas requiring mathematics. Rae argues that numeracy must be understood culturally, and that many activities Maori undertake on the Marae require high levels of skills in numeracy that challenge dominant representations of Maori people as lacking skill in this regard.

The final chapter turns to an examination of neo-colonialism in relation to aid, considering a particular case-study in relation to child protection policies in the Solomon Islands. In this chapter, Thomspson, Koerner and

Olofia argue that much of the work of committees in relation to issues such as child-protection utilise neo-colonial practices that centre the opinions of white members and stakeholders, as well as calling for outcomes which are consistent with those values. As such, this chapter provides a fitting final chapter for a proceedings which has centred around ongoing instances of ways in which unexamined whiteness continues to shape relationships with Indigenous Australians and recent immigrants, together with examples which illustrate how such relationships shaped policy and events in the recent past.

To conclude, and as indicated earlier, the chapters included in this edited collection as a whole set an agenda for ongoing work in the field of critical race and whiteness studies by highlighting the complex ways in which issues of race play out across a diverse range of contexts, and through the intersections of a diverse range of experiences and identities. Whilst we could endorse the suggestion that the field of critical race and whiteness studies must always be suspicious of its own existence, we would simultaneously endorse its ongoing attempts to examine and challenge privilege in all forms, and to enact a praxis that is shaped through an engagement with Indigenous sovereignties. That the papers included in this collection contribute to such an agenda is, we believe, a suitable outcome for this, the first book to be published by the Association



## **Signposts that Helped a White Activist find her Way as a Critical Ally**

**Roslyn (Rose) Carnes**

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As a white researcher setting out on a research journey with Indigenous people, how could I deal with the paradox of being part of the problem I was seeking to address? Awareness of, and desire to minimise, the impact of my white privilege would not automatically cancel it out. Activist researchers who have challenged powerful systems have a history of being condemned and ostracised by colonial centres of power. Would it be my fate to be condemned by the colonial centre of power in which I found myself; the academy? Would I also be condemned by those not in positions of power? What signposts could show me how to act, what to do and how to undertake the research journey?

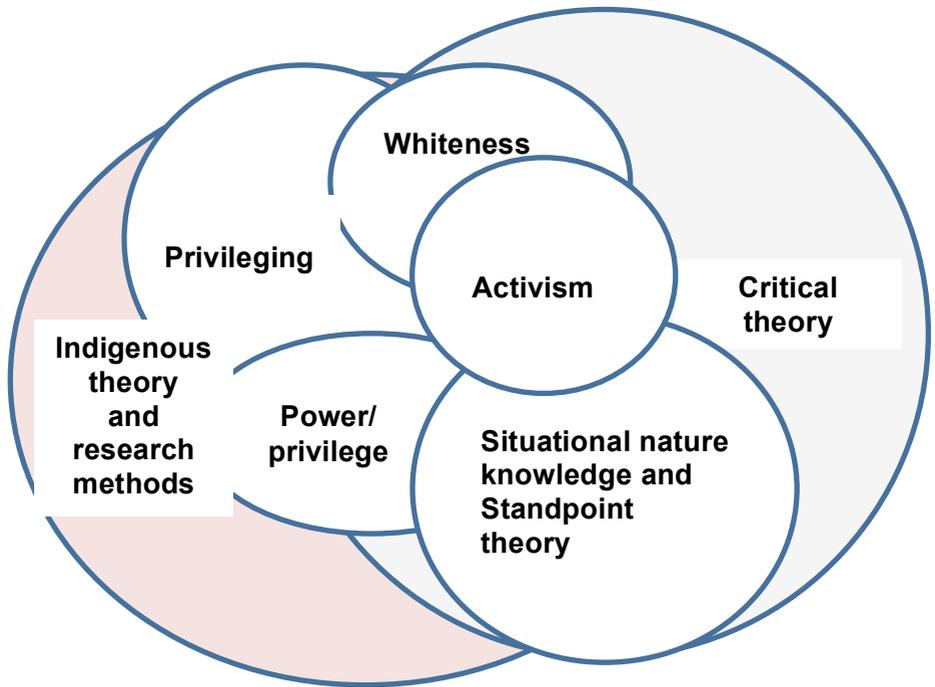
This paper outlines the intersecting theories I melded together to use as a map for a critical activist ally standpoint when conducting research in Indigenous Prisoner Education in Western Australia. Drawing on theories of whiteness, power, critical pedagogy, activism and standpoint theory, I attempt to navigate a direction that allows for the struggle, uncertainties and paradoxes that are what it means to work critically as an allied activist. I explore some of the challenges I face as a critical, activist ally who is exploring Indigenous education in Western Australian prisons. I invite audience discussion, feedback and reflection on these challenges.

## Introduction

During the course of my PhD study; "*Closing the Gap in Indigenous Prisoner Education: yarning<sup>1</sup> with ex-prisoners*" I have searched for an appropriate and ethical framework to guide the research journey as a white woman listening to, and learning from, Indigenous people. Purely Western epistemologies did not seem respectful and, as a white person, I could not morally adopt Indigenous Research Methods. The research has been occurring in the context of my active involvement with the Deaths in Custody Watch Committee (WA) and I have worked for several years in a range of advocacy roles with a community legal service in Western Australia. This paper outlines some of what I have learned as I moved from thinking based almost exclusively on Western academic teachings to including the thinking and writing of Indigenous academics. What has been happening is a shift in my world view from a typically Western stance to a place of thinking, acting and researching as a critical ally. Privileging the works of Indigenous research methodologies and theorists, I draw on standpoint theory, critical theory, and theories of whiteness, power, and activism to navigate a direction that allows for the struggle, uncertainties and paradoxes that are what it means to work critically as an allied activist. Figure 1 provides a visual map for a critical activist ally standpoint.

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<sup>1</sup> Yarning is a culturally appropriate alternative to interviewing. It is "an informal and relaxed discussion through which both the researcher and participant journey together visiting places and topics of interest relevant to the research study."(Bessarab & Ng'andu, 2010: 38).



*Figure 1: Conceptual map for a critical activist ally standpoint*

## **Why Standpoint Theory?**

Based on a paradigm of knowledge being acquired through interaction with the world, standpoint approaches are more than a description of a viewpoint or perspective. Standpoint approaches see knowledge as gained through interaction and relationship with the surrounding environment. "Human beings transform their environment that in turn transforms them"(Polhaus 2002: 284). Standpoint theory has been seen as a vehicle for valuing the voices of the marginalised, disadvantaged and oppressed whose experiences have not been given credence in the construction of dominant knowledge.

A standpoint is not necessarily constituted by an homogenous group of individuals and is more than a simple reflection of social positioning (Nakata 2007: 214). Nakata goes on to say that he sees standpoint theory as a "method of inquiry... a way of theorizing knowledge from a particular and interested position" (Nakata 2007: 215). Standpoint approaches use "experiences of the marginalised to generate critical questions about the lives of marginalised people and of those in the dominant groups, as well as about the systematic structural and symbolic relations between them" (Harding 1995:128).

Marx's discussions of the oppression of the working class and their unique understanding of capitalist society are credited with distinguishing a standpoint approach to knowledge (Ellis & Fopp 2009). Marx believed that the power of the dominant discourse led to the knowledge of the working class being disregarded. Similarly, feminists saw women's knowledge being marginalised in a culture where a masculine viewpoint had the most power (Harding 1991, 1995). The most prominent voices of feminists were traditionally white women. Moreton-Robinson's landmark book, *Talkin' up to the white woman* (2000), provides a thorough analysis of the ways in which the traditional white analyses of power imbalance based on gender alone did not take into account the impact of race. In fact, she claims that even considering multiple forms of disadvantage such as gender, sexuality, race and class do not consider the impact of invisible whiteness on the power imbalance between Indigenous and non-Indigenous women.

Harding (1991: 271-271) encouraged academics and teachers from the more advantaged groups in society to find ways to embrace standpoint theory and the voices of the disadvantaged. She did not however provide any

clues as to how this might happen, saying it was much too complex to address in the context of her publication.

Australian academic Nakata (2007) has written about an Indigenous standpoint providing a vehicle for previously unheard and unacknowledged Indigenous voices. Such a standpoint provides a place from which to challenge the hegemony of white privilege and entitlement. Nakata (2004: 5) also refers to the power of Indigenous academics engaging in dialogue with the non-Indigenous research community; that it is the circulation of ideas, thinking and intellectualism that can have the biggest impact on research as a whole. It is my hope to contribute to this circulation of ideas, thinking and intellectualism by learning from the voices of Indigenous Australians and critiquing the white institutions that perpetuate the privilege of whiteness.

As a wadjella<sup>2</sup> I needed to be very careful how I engaged in such a shared space. The guides for non-Indigenous academics on how to respectfully utilise learning from Indigenous people are far and few between (Cross-Townsend 2011: 74). As Cross-Townsend says, “the social reality of Indigenous oppression and inequity can be difficult to intellectually and emotionally relate to for dominant culture learners.” As I considered the writings of Polhaus (2002), Nakata (2004, 2007) and Harding (1991) five central characteristics of a standpoint theory emerged. These five characteristics, which have provided a guide in navigating this nebulous territory, were;

- knowledge is situational and based on interactions with the world;

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<sup>2</sup> Commonly used Noongar word for “white fella” and used by both Indigenous and white people in Western Australia as a way of identifying as non-Indigenous.

## Carnes: White Activist Ally

- such interactions shape who I am and how I think and act;
- as I interact from a position in the world a standpoint will evolve;
- no standpoint in and of itself is total and complete in how it represents the world.

Most importantly, “a standpoint is more than a socially positioned experience; it is an engagement with the kinds of questions found from that position and experience” (Polhaus 2002: 287). Therefore, core questions provided a reference point of stability amongst the ill-defined and tenuous space of a critical activist ally standpoint.

The essential, signpost questions that emerged to guide my critical activist ally standpoint are listed in Figure 2. These are the questions that I have utilised at a macro level in developing the research and at the micro level of daily decision making for the research project. They are the guiding star on the conceptual map of a critical, activist ally standpoint. The questions provide a clarity and transparency in why I am doing this research and the angle from which I am viewing the topic of prisoner education.

How has colonial history impacted on sovereign First Nations people?

How can the sovereignty of First Nations people be respected?

What can be learned from listening to First Nations people?

How can I be sure that I am not making things worse for First Nations people?

Am I following an agenda of importance to First Nations people?

Do I have permission from the right people?

*Figure 2: Signpost questions for an allied activist*

There is a challenge to those who question the epistemologies of traditional academia. We cannot simply add ways of thinking, being and doing of the marginalised to the pre-existing paradigms of the mainstream (Harding 1991: 20). Like oil and water, the two do not mix. On the other hand, if a more radical approach is taken by marginalised, usually silenced groups, they are often dismissed by the dominant voices. As Marcuse (1968: 143) said, "when truth cannot be realised within the established social order, it always appears to the latter as mere utopia". My standpoint as a critical, activist ally may be open, transparent and therefore have integrity but some of what I say, even some of the signpost questions, will not be accepted by the established, dominant social order as credible and may well be dismissed as "mere utopia"

## Critical Theory

Critical theory has offered a radical perspective of the world since the founding of the Frankfurt School in 1923 (Anderson and Herr 2007: 406). The term "critical theory" is somewhat misleading as there is no one "theory". Rather, there are a multitude of viewpoints that fall under the broad umbrella of "Critical Theory" (Gibson 1986: 3). All critical theorists, however, have a common focus on society, structures and systems in context rather than the search for positivist truth (Gibson 1986: 16).

Based on reading key critical and Indigenous critical theorists, I believed my conceptual map of a Critical Activist Ally Standpoint fell broadly under the umbrella of Critical Theory. My research project, and my way of working were also committed to:

- Privileging of Indigenous voices as the experts on their own lives (Kovach 2005, 2009; Martin 2003; Rigney 1997; Smith 1999, Smythe etal 2006: 6-7).
- A vision of justice and equality (Kincheloe 2008: 6; Moreton-Robinson 2000)
- Alleviation of disadvantage and suffering (Kincheloe 2008: 11)
- Acknowledging education as an inherently political act (Kincheloe 2008: 8; Beresford 2003; Gillborn 2009; Shor 1993)
- Ensuring that people are not hurt in the process of education or research (Kincheloe 2008: 13; Orr etal 2009)
- Being critical of itself, its approach and "of the social forces that make up its own basis." (Marcuse 1968: 156).

- Reading of the word alongside the world (Kincheloe 2008: 23, 31; Friere 1997: 75)
- Awareness and analysis of how power works, what it is and how it might be more equitably be distributed (Smythe etal 2006: 6-7).

While Grande (2007: 320) refers to the important place of critical theory in Indigenous research she cautions that it is limited as it was largely developed using “Western epistemological frames”. Because of this I place the map of a Critical Activist Ally Standpoint at the very edge of the critical theory concept and falling, in part, slightly outside of it, as Indigenous theory has created its own theoretical place from its own unique frames. As can be seen in figure 1, I have some elements outside of the Western frame that forged Critical Theory in order to honour the impact of Indigenous thinking on the development of this framework; to illustrate the intention to place this project at least partly “beyond colonialist practice” (Grande, 2007).

## **Whiteness**

Whiteness is *not* a description of a physical characteristic. It is a social construct and is defined by Moreton-Robinson (2004: vii) as “The invisible norm against which other races are judged in the construction of identity, representation, subjectivity, nationalism and law”. Traditionally whiteness was not seen to have an impact on life or research. It was Ruth Frankenburg’s landmark research in 1993 that lifted the lid on what whiteness meant to white women and the lack of their own race consciousness. She determined that “although whiteness is apparently difficult for white people to name...it nonetheless continuously shapes white women’s experiences, practices and views of self and other...Whiteness is visible most clearly to those it

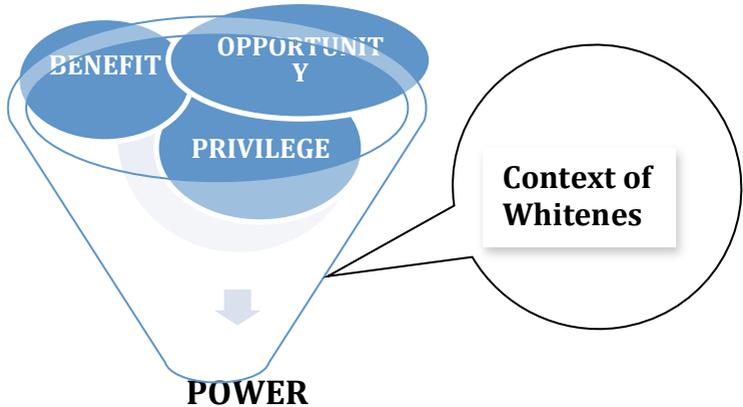
definitively excludes and those to whom it does violence. Those who are securely housed within its borders usually do not examine it" (Frankenburg 1993: 228-229).

In the same way that feminist research methods allowed the lens to be turned from the male oppressor to the female oppressed, so does critical whiteness studies allow the lens to move from focusing on the Indigenous colonised to an examination of the white coloniser. There is a view expressed by some that non-Indigenous people conducting research from a whiteness perspective could serve to re-centre whiteness and renew the privilege of being white (Haggis 2007; Martin 2008: 52; Riggs 2004, 2007). Riggs (2004: 6) addresses this by noting that, by starting with the "critiques of whiteness provided by those who are marginalised by it, then we may be more able to engage with analyses of race and whiteness that refuse to reify or fetishise". Privileging Indigenous voices in my research and conceptual map, along with an understanding of whiteness and its inherent privilege and power, is an essential signpost. It is essential if I am to ensure transparency of my own privilege and accountability to the Indigenous people I work with on the research project.

## **Power**

First published in 1974, Steven Lukes seminal text on power teases out its many facets and the range of influences upon it. He notes that the term is generally understood to mean "power over" and dominance (Lukes 2005: 73-74). Power is, however, a contested concept (Anderson and Herr 2007: 1157). Therefore, it is important to be clear that I define power as assumed privilege, benefit and opportunity being funnelled together through the context of whiteness. Whiteness creates a barrier that is difficult for Indigenous people to

penetrate at a societal and political level. While individual Indigenous people may have varying degrees of western opportunity, benefit and privilege, the degree of cultural capital (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977) available in a non-Indigenous cultural context will be limited due to the influence of privileged whiteness.



*Figure 3 –power and the context of whiteness*

The above authors speaking about power are non-Indigenous. Significant Australian Indigenous authors (Moreton-Robinson 2004; Martin 2008; Walter 2009) who speak about power do so in the context of colonisation and whiteness. Walter (2009: 10) acknowledges the value of Lukes' explanation of power in allowing "us to realise that the use of power is much more than direct coercion." Both Lukes and Walter believe that the dominant group can never decide truly what is in the best interest of those who are dominated. The only ones who can decide what is in their best interest are the disadvantaged themselves (Walter 2009: 10).

Unfortunately, however, Indigenous people are excluded from access to political decision making in any real sense while non-Indigenous people continue to make decisions about what is best for “them”. As Walter (2009: 12) notes; “such ‘othering’ justifies...actions such as the suspension of the Racial Discrimination Act to allow the NT intervention.” In addition, section 51, xxvi of the Australian Constitution provides for the government to:

Have power to make for the peace, order and good government of the Commonwealth with respect to:... the people of any race, for whom it is deemed necessary to make special laws (Saunders 2000: 49, 54).

The privilege and power of whiteness over Indigenous people is thus enshrined in the Australian constitution.

## **Privilege**

Black and Stone (2005: 251) believe that “privileged persons live in a distorted reality” not unlike that of someone with a chemical dependency who is in denial. While the denial serves to keep the status quo from being altered it also helps avoid the unpleasantness of the truth or the consequences of acceptance, including the need to act to bring about change.

Disadvantage is not one dimensional. There is an intersection of a multitude of variants that may privilege or disadvantage someone to a greater or lesser degree (Mcintosh 1988; Andersen and Collins 2007). No one inequality is likely to over-ride all others. Indigenous Australians are not an homogenous mass; they can be women, poor, unemployed, have a disability... or not. They can be marginalised from a number of perspectives. Different Indigenous nations may be more marginalised than others. It is important to keep this in mind to avoid

making broad, sweeping generalisations about "Aboriginal people". However, to not identify some commonalities risks watering down the potential strength of solidarity and identity, leaving whiteness once more the privileged norm.

Suffice to say here that, for the purposes of definition, privilege *as it relates to power* is entitlement or sanction that leads to advantage and dominance.

As a wadjella who experiences the entitlement of my whiteness, I was seeking ways in which I could be accountable in my research for that advantage. I could not speak for Indigenous people but I could learn from them and listen primarily to their voices in my research, both as participants and as the source of literature upon which my theoretical framework would be based.

The significance of privileging Indigenous voices in ethical research was raised by Rigney in 1997.

Aboriginal voices were not usually recorded as part of Australia's colonial history. At times, when researching and writing, I have made a somewhat arbitrary judgement call about inclusion of non-Indigenous authors whose words seem to resonate with the views of the Aboriginal authors I have read. On other occasions I used non-Indigenous authors to exemplify the thinking of their time. Also, I included the voices of present day Aboriginal people whose families have lived, and continue to live, under a regime of colonialism.

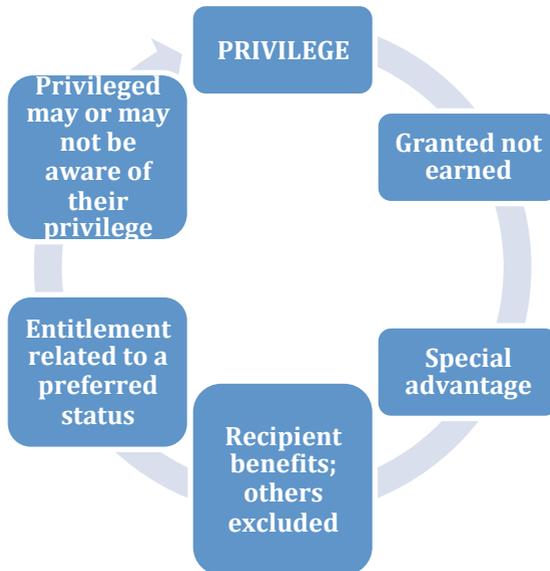


Figure 4 – understanding privilege (based on Black & Stone, 2005)

## Activism

As an activist I have not necessarily been involved in revolution. Rather I am more likely to have been making small incremental gains towards a longer term vision or goal. Activism is defined by Anderson and Herr (2007: 19-20) as “action on behalf of a cause, action that goes beyond what is conventional or routine.... Activists are typically challengers to policies and practices, trying to achieve a social goal, not to obtain power themselves.... Activism is not necessarily a good thing or a bad thing. It all depends on the cause and the actions, and a person’s judgement of what is worthwhile.”

One of the key characteristics of an activist is that they are not doing what they do to gain personal privilege and self-aggrandisement. When I am confronted by someone

suggesting that I just want to be in charge or take control, I take it as a cue to put the mirror on my own actions; not a cue to attack back and “defend myself”. I need to pause and interrogate my own actions in the light of the central questions being pursued by a Critical Activist Ally (Figure 2).

While the very important responsibility of actively involved challenging research is acknowledged (Goldberg and Essed 2002:7, Smythe et al, 2009: 4), this role comes with an element of inherent risk. Working in this way requires being “prepared to take risks, to form strategic alliances, to learn and unlearn ... power, and reach beyond a ‘fear of authority’ toward a concrete vision of the world in which oppression, violence, and brutality are transformed by a commitment to equality, liberty, and democratic struggle” (Weiner, 2003: 102). Those who have challenged or spoken out against the dominant discourse have often been ostracised in their own countries, imprisoned or exiled (Davis, 2003; van Djik, 2002; Said 1994). Friere (1997) too was out of favour for some time with the education establishment in his own country. Like them I have sought to find “imaginative routes to social change through the structures against which such change would compete” (Lakritz, 1995: 6). This paradox is a daily conundrum that weaves its way through my research processes and thinking.

## **Being An Ally**

Tatum (2009: 285) believes that allies are necessary for oppressed groups to move beyond despair, and suggests that there is a history of such people “who have resisted the role of oppressor and who have been allies to people of color”. At rallies and meetings in Perth I often hear Elders welcome those white brothers and sisters who are

there to “walk beside us”. That is how I see myself as an ally; as someone who is walking beside my Aboriginal brothers and sisters united in our humanness and a common goal of social justice for all people.

Sometimes the actions required of an ally appear divorced from the research project. I have found myself serving sausages at a barbeque, drafting submissions, picking up people at the airport, having Aboriginal people from the central desert stay with me, printing out name tags, making cups of tea and preparing draft press releases. It could be asked, “what has any of that got to do with your PhD on prisoner education?” The answer is, “well nothing; it has to do with building a strong basis of relationship and trust in the community.” The answer also is, “well everything: it has to do with building a strong basis of relationship and trust in the community.”

## **Conclusion**

As a conclusion I would like share a reflection I wrote one night after attending a Deaths in Custody Watch Committee rally in Kalgoorlie during the course of this research project. For me it encapsulates the learning I have encountered on this journey; illustrates the role of a critical, activist ally and how I continue learning what to do and how to act.

*Today I sat in the court house for the sentencing of the state government for negligence in the death of Miss Daisy's cousin in a prisoner transport van. ... Magistrate Benn was scathing of the government and imposed as harsh a penalty as he could, given their guilty plea. The highest fine under that piece of legislation to date has been \$100000. He imposed \$285,000 plus costs. So that seemed like a history making moment.*

*But it was also a very raw moment for the families... for them there had been no chance to be heard in the process.... I was struck by the way our law confines and restrains even very aware magistrates such as Benn. And how the families still suffer and had not yet been heard in a court room – over three years after the death; how they had not been able to properly let go and deal with the death and can't while all this still goes on. So the anger and grief that poured out outside the Kalgoorlie courthouse was so understandable in its rawness, strength and immediacy. It was the only opportunity to feel heard in the wadjella law processes.*

*And the biggest learning for me as I stood in that angry, hurting group of Australia's First Nations people? That all I can do is bear witness, show a bit of guts and hang in with the expression of all that rage and not try to "help". To "help" can hinder. And the journey I am taking and what I am learning is the pearl in the grime of my research journey. While the interviews and yarns I do are important, that is not the key learning ....the key learning is how to sit back and learn to feel another way of doing life... and to listen, listen, listen...*

## **Author Note**

Rose is a full time, wadjella PhD student in Education at Murdoch University. Her publication, Carnes, R. 2011. Changing Listening Frequency to Minimise White Noise and Hear Indigenous Voices. *Journal of Australian Indigenous Issues*, 14(2-3), 170-184, provides an introduction to the method she strives to use in her research with Indigenous peoples. Rose is a financial member of the Deaths in Custody Watch Committee. She can be contacted at [rosecarnes@bigpond.com](mailto:rosecarnes@bigpond.com)

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# Aboriginal Performance and the Economy of Authenticity

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*In accounts of Aboriginal Australian performances from 'blood curdling shrieks' at the beginning of the nineteenth century to terms such as 'sham' and 'whitey-black corroborees' by the end, notions of authenticity act as a weapon of whiteness to assist in the colonising process through the effective erasure of cultural practices and to deny not only the authority of Indigenous people but also their 'authentic' physical presence. The containment, control and assumption of possession of Indigenous performance by settlers in the nineteenth century and the performance of that possession are critical elements in the enterprise of colonization and have had and continue to have a major impact on Euro-Australian knowledge of the shared exchanges of performance over much of the last 220 years. This chapter examines the directions taken in the shifting notions of authenticity used to legitimize or dismiss Aboriginal performances and cultures across the nineteenth century.*

## **Introduction**

This chapter focuses on Aboriginal public performances, usually referred to as corroborees, and their reception in the cross-cultural context in the nineteenth century, in particular tracing and identifying the imposed notions of authenticity at different moments in time in order to

understand the source of these notions and to identify aspects that continue to have authority in the present. I argue that over time, in the nineteenth century, visual images and press reportage of these performances have functioned as a form of public pedagogy to create an economy of authenticity for the embodied presence of Aboriginal people, setting the conditions of recognition and its corollary and in the process erasing a vast range of performances and genres of performance as well as people.<sup>1</sup> This economy continues to influence notions of authenticity in the present. In the visual arts, where the focus is on the artefact, nineteenth century notions of authenticity have been successfully challenged and opened up, but in relation to the embodied presence the negotiations continue to be complicated and informed by past notions of authenticity as illustrated by Andrew Bolt's assumptions that he has the knowledge and authority to say who is and is not 'real' (2009).

In this discussion I am using corroboree as a general term. As most people know, Corroboree is a word with common usage for all types of events, and is generally understood to refer to Indigenous performances involving dance, song and music. When discussed in relation to these performances, corroboree is often now understood as referring to performances from ceremonies. However it is and has been used to denote a much wider group of

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<sup>1</sup> Boyd Cothran also discusses an economy of authenticity but his usage of the term though overlapping focuses on commercial engagement with the financial opportunities the performance of authenticity offers. See Boyd Cothran, 'Working the Indian Field Days: The Economy of Authenticity and the Question of Agency in Yosemite Valley' *American Indian Quarterly* Spring 2010, 14, 2: 194-223.

performance types. There are many different words used by specific language groupings across the country to denote different genres of performances whether public or private such as *yanda* or *jalarra* in the Pilbara, Western Australia. The use of the single word for hundreds of different types of performances has been part of the imposed economy of authenticity, but for convenience I continue to use it.

## **Historical Performance Practices**

As I have argued previously, historical or traditional Aboriginal performances can be divided into three main groupings: ceremony, often secret and sacred; public versions of dreaming stories intended primarily for educative purposes; and topical performances for entertainment (Casey 2009: 117-9). The latter, styled as 'ordinary corroborees' by Baldwin Spencer, and often only recognised as authentic under the heading of oral history, are the focus of this discussion (Spencer 1901: 6).

These practices for entertainment historically include the alternating of a number of elements within the framework of the performance; these elements include story telling through narrative, dialogue, poetry, dance, mime, song, music and visual art. Operating within a paradigm of practice in many ways like European theatre practices, there were performers, musicians, dancers and actors, writers, choreographers, people responsible for body design or costume, props and set; and a manager responsible for organizing the performance (Ellis 1985: 61). There was a shared aesthetic scale.

Performances occur in defined and carefully chosen areas. Corroboree grounds were usually marked out and landscaped, with a flattened performance space, off-stage areas that were hidden by trees or other physical

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features, and often built up areas for the audience. The physical environment, including the light and shadows created by the moon and the huge campfires, are used as part of and to enhance the performance. Trees and objects are used as props and sets. Performances are well choreographed and practised. Historically, the performers are either all male or all female. Most public dances are performed by men only. When a scene calls for women in dances performed by men, their part is taken by men, who decorate themselves accordingly.

Topical performances for entertainment were created and owned by individuals who taught and directed others in the required elements of the performance, song, dance and story. Historically these performances were toured and traded between Aboriginal communities. These practices continued long after European settlement. In 1902, John Walter Gregory on a scientific expedition around Lake Eyre recounted that:

The natives were then celebrating a corroboree of new songs and dances, which had been composed by a native genius up in Queensland, and was being passed through the country from one tribe to another. A party of Cowarie blacks had taught it to some of the Peake natives at a corroboree on the Maoumba. The deputation were now performing it to their own tribe, after which they were going to teach it to the people of Oodnadatta (6).

Corroborees for social occasions were created around topical themes, events and observations. These were performed for intra- and inter-community gatherings (Hardley 1975: 6). The stories often offer a keyhole view into social events, run away lovers, broken hearts, celebration of country, celebration of hunting prowess, anything that goes wrong that can be turned into a story for entertainment or as it is known in Yanyuwa,

*nguyulnguyul*, and in the Yanyuwa Aboriginal English - 'fun'.<sup>2</sup>

### **The Cross-Cultural Context**

Performances drawing on historical Aboriginal practices for entertainment were a common and constant form of commercial entertainment for white communities within the cross-cultural context in the nineteenth century (Casey 2009). These performances in the cross-cultural context are rarely examined except as examples of lack of cultural power and agency for Aboriginal people. The three main positions from which they have been examined are as 'inauthentic', as hybrid or as cultural tourism. Candice Bruce and Anita Calloway, in their study of images of corroborees representing the 'inauthentic' position, describe these types of performances as a "white spectator sport" (1991: 88). They argue that Indigenous historical and traditional performances were

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<sup>2</sup> *Nguyulnguyul*, which is glossed in the article as fun, also carries more complex meanings and resonances, especially in relation to composition and performance that speak to the achievements within the creative endeavour. The word denotes the achievement of ideals that the performer and the composer have created something that draws people to want to hear and participate in it. The term can be associated with ideals of excellence in creative endeavour at all levels. Thus a person who creates performances that are *nguyulnguyul* is also described as being *ngirriki*, which is glossed as "tricky", but a thicker description would carry the weight of a person who transcends normal accomplishments. "Aeroplane Dance" is described as *nguyulnguyul* and Frank Karrijiji is often described as *ngirriki*. The source for this information is John Bradley who is currently completing a dictionary of Yanyuwa languages.

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controlled through the appropriation of them as “a form of entertainment staged specifically for the benefit and entertainment of ‘whites’” (86). The positions of labelling the work as hybrid or cultural tourism overlap but rest on the premise that Aboriginal performances for entertainment were developed for white audiences and that these audiences are the critical point of reference (Parsons 2002; Haebich and Taylor 2007: 30-1). Though many performances can be examined from this position, as a generalization all three positions overstate the situation and risk erasing Aboriginal historical practices and agency and further in affect asserting what I label an economy of authenticity developed as part of the colonization of Aboriginal people and their cultures.

Rather than being nothing other than passive victims of white entrepreneurs and audiences, Aboriginal managers and performers used their own practices for entertainment and traditions to engage with the settler economy, claim sovereignty and educate the settlers. In the nineteenth century, Indigenous entrepreneurs publicly staged performances, advertised in advance in print, with spruikers walking through the towns with a bell prior to performances, booked venues and charged admission (Casey 2009 *passim*; Casey 2011 *passim*). These performances were organised as towns were built in traditional seasonal and ceremonial camping grounds and Indigenous people were dispossessed of their lands. For example there were Indigenous initiated and controlled corroboree performances for commercial return complete with press releases from within ten years of settlement in Adelaide and across the nineteenth century. These corroborees were so well organised that Aboriginal managers publicised upcoming events to the *Adelaide Observer* for inclusion in the “News” section as early as the 1840s (1844: 3).

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These public performances for a financial consideration, based on Aboriginal dance, song and mime practices, developed in part from the pre-contact traditions of welcoming visitors and trading, and from performances for entertainment. Barter and exchange of goods had been a part of traditional inter-community practices after performances as was the trading of these performances between communities. The European practice of giving money or goods to the performers was incorporated into this custom. As dispossession destroyed Indigenous economies and government regulations limited and restricted the ways in which Indigenous Australians could engage with the settler economy, their cultural capital became one of the few options available to Indigenous people as a resource to barter for money, political recognition and economic survival. As a result, spectacles and theatre companies initiated and controlled by Indigenous Australians operated across the country. At the same time as white entrepreneurs were touring troupes of 'wild' Aboriginal people, Aboriginal entrepreneurs were also creating commercial opportunities drawing on their own traditions of entertainment as they negotiated the challenges of dealing with white audiences. In 1896 at Coorparoo obtained permission to enclose a paddock with a wall of saplings and gum tree branches with a single entrance. They advertised their performances and sold tickets on the site, enforcing no ticket no entrance ('Jottings by the Way' *Queenslander* 15 February 1896: 299).

By the 1850s Indigenous entrepreneurs were attempting to gain access to mainstream European theatres for their performances with limited success ('Local Intelligence' *Colonial Times (Hobart)* 8 January 1856; 'Amusements' *Age* 2 January 1856). In the late nineteenth century, many of the largest spectator events were Aboriginal corroborees. From the first settlements the prevalence of

Aboriginal performance was so high that there were humorous accounts published such as one in 1924 about a British journalist who recounted "in all seriousness... that ... the thought had occurred to him what a great development had taken place {in Australian cities} since ... [it] had been the home of the corroborees who had lived undisturbed in their native freedom" ('Beware the Corroboree' *Brisbane Courier* 19 April 1924: 6).

## **Images of Corroboree**

The recorded descriptions and representations of these performances by white colonists and settlers in the nineteenth century do not reflect the content or form or the individuals involved, but rather repeat a locked pattern of reception. For example there are literally thousands of images of corroborees from this time in children's books, illustrated magazines, lithographs, post cards and paintings. Their composition and the representation of the subject are practically uniform.<sup>3</sup>

The images included here range from the 1830s to 1920. The similarity is not just the result of selection, but a dominant style of representation. What is represented in these images I am sure would not surprise anyone. The visual economy, literally and metaphorically, locates the performers in the shadows, and at a distance. There is no engagement with the viewer. There is no sense of individuals being represented. These elements present Aboriginal people as a general group both spatially and temporally removed from the viewer. The Aboriginal people are objects of the white gaze, unknowing and unaware. This is consistent with many ethnographic

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<sup>3</sup> The pictures included here are all out of copyright as far as I have been able to ascertain.

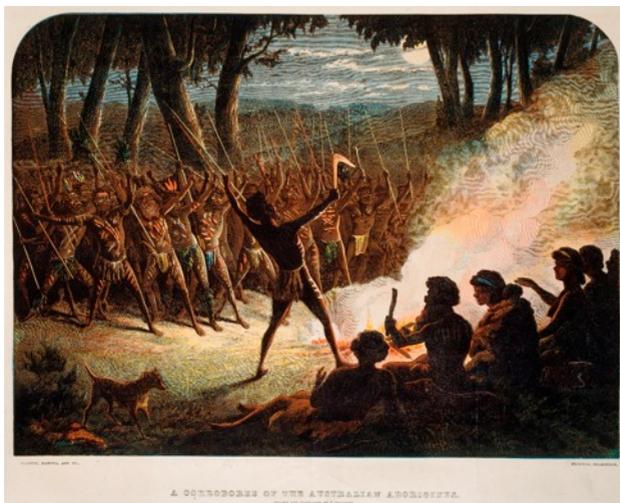
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images of 'the savage'. Like images of other so called primitive peoples, these act as "an 'essentialising distortion' that is part of a tradition of using [images] to mummify a so-called vanishing race" (Riley 1998: 63). These images effectively invent a version of Aboriginal culture for white consumption rather than create a record of actual Aboriginal cultures.

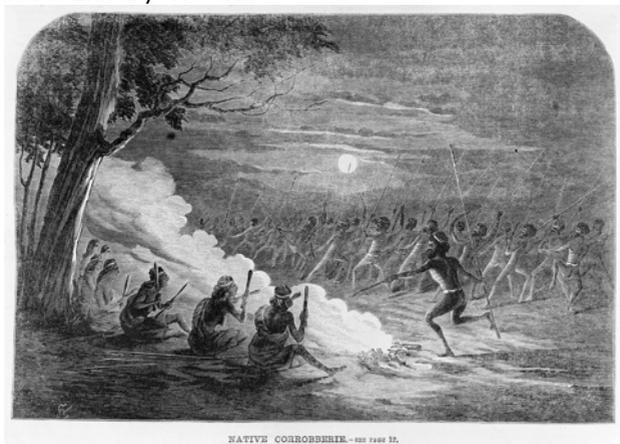


Ethel Pedley, *Dot and the Kangaroo* published by Angus and Robertson 1920. Illustration by Frank Mahony p.32 "corroboree".

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'A Corroboree of Aboriginal Australians'. Samuel Calvert 1867. State Library Victoria



'Native Corroboree' (sic) Samuel Calvert 1864. State Library of Victoria

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'Corroboree of Victorian natives' undated c 1896. Image pasted onto album page. In collection: Album of photographs of the Le Souef family. State Library of Victoria



'A Corroboree of Australian Aborigines' Shallard Gibbs & Co. Lithograph. Published as a supplement in the *Illustrated Sydney News*, January, 1873. Vol. 22. State Library of Victoria

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National Library of Australia nla.pic-an6431241-v  
'Corroboree or native dance at Durhambak on the banks of the upper Manning, New England', Henry Dangar, ca. 1830. National Library of Australia

Another painting, 'Corroboree Murray Island' painted by Tom Roberts in 1892 is an interesting example of this process. Robert Bruce, a resident on Murray Island recounts how he 'got a big dance up' for Roberts when he came to the island (Bruce 1892). In his diaries, Roberts goes into detail about the vivid performances he witnessed (1985: 121). Yet the scene in the painting is in daylight and shows no dancers. What is shown are the distant backs of people watching the performance in the shadow of large trees. Roberts in much of his work set out to document his world aiming to be specific to time and place (Topliss 1988). Helen Topliss suggests that the painting may have been misnamed (1985: 121). The painting, currently held in the Queensland Art Gallery, has been renamed as an 'Indigenous gathering, Far North Queensland'. However, in the context of the representations of corroborees as removed from the viewer, Roberts' choice to name the painting a corroboree

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and place the performance out of sight, making the event even further from the viewer than usual, reducing the Islanders to backs in the distance is almost an exaggerated representation of the denial of proximity.

One of the powerful aspects of this 'invention' of Aboriginal culture is the lack of engagement with what is being performed. No matter what sort of performance is depicted, the image has the same title; 'corroboree'. The representation gives no clue to time, meaning or context. This usage also gives even more power to the settlers' resistance to learning local words as they spread out across the country. The word corroboree is derived from the Dharuk language or dialect from the Sydney area that was then carried by the settlers all over Australia (Urry 1985: 63). Though the word, popularised by the European settlers, has been reclaimed by Aboriginal people, it continues to carry the initial erasure of different practices.

These visual aspects are articulated and reinforced in hundreds of newspaper accounts of 'corroborees' from 1800 to the 1930s. The coverage includes repetition of the same elements. Despite performances by Aboriginal people being part of every civic event as well as touring shows initiated by both white and Aboriginal people, articles continually claim that Aboriginal people are elsewhere, they do not perform corroborees anymore and they have not been seen for decades.

For example, in 1856 a discussion about a performance by some Aboriginal performers in one of dozens of 'Grand Corroborees' ends saying it was: "a novel spectacle. Nowadays when one can live in Melbourne without knowing more of the original inhabitants than if we were in an English town..." ('Local Intelligence' *Age* Jan 2, 1856: 2). Over the sixty years between 1850 and 1910,

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dozens of times in every year, in every urban centre, when a corroboree was advertised, it is accompanied by the same claim: "it is seldom that opportunity is offered ... to witness these ancient dances of the blacks" and "you have to travel many weary miles to see one" ('Our Brisbane Letter' *Sydney Morning Herald* 16 October 1877: 5; 'The Point Macleay Singers' *The Advertiser* 14 August 1900: 5). Words such as 'unique' and 'novel' recur in accounts on a constant basis (see 'The Corroboree' *Camperdown Chronicle* 14 May 1884: 3; 'The Eucalyptus Corroboree' *Morning Bulletin* (Rockhampton) 8 July 1892: 1; 'Native Corroboree' *The Advertiser* (Adelaide) 31 January 1898: 6).

This same information is repeated and repeated. The overt and overstated implication locates Aboriginal people elsewhere, like the images, spatially and temporally removed. Equally there is rarely any engagement with the content or form of the performances. This goes beyond representation to create an economy of authenticity. Authentic Aboriginal people are spatially distant, savage and strange. These elements constitute the basis of an economy of authenticity that acts in the sense of an orderly arrangement of parts that is repeated as truth and accepted as common sense by white people at the time. It results in performances and individuals being located within or excluded from this economy that developed over the nineteenth century.

The economy of authenticity sets the terms of recognition as savage and absent, something from the past. Logically, therefore, Aboriginal people who are physically present and engaging cannot be 'real' because they do not fit within the economy. I would argue that this economy of authenticity continues to influence thinking and not just for far-right commentators such as Andrew Bolt. Research around land rights cases in the mid 1990s

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revealed that within the courts, in order to be received as an authentic Aboriginal person and therefore a credible witness, claimants had to be very dark skinned, illiterate, with minimal, if any, English skills and inexperienced in negotiating in a legal context (Walsh 1995: 98).

There are many implications of the elements that are part of the economy of authenticity. I would like to look briefly at one. Colonisation necessarily results in embodied encounters and spatial negotiations between colonisers who seek to claim the space occupied by the colonised. Sara Ahmed argues that "Colonial encounters ... involve a transition from distance to proximity" (2000: 24). The distance in this case is from primarily the UK to Australia. Ahmed goes on to argue that these encounters involve, at one and the same time, social and spatial relations of distance and proximity:

Others become strangers (the ones who are distant), and 'other cultures' become 'strange cultures' (the ones who are distant), only through coming too close to home, that is, through the proximity of the encounter or "facing" itself' (2000:12).

Thus there is a dislocating intimacy in the colonial encounter. However, in the Australian context, what is marked is the active resistance to this encounter and any hint of proximity both socially and spatially. The economy developed over the nineteenth century in relation to the 'corroboree' is part of an ongoing process that presents and represents Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, not as meeting through physical proximity and co-existing, but rather as creating and maintaining distance between the embodied presences. The corroborees, and therefore the Aboriginal people performing them, are not seen as existing within the same spatial area, and are not engaged in any social

encounter. They are uncommon or novel and there is no communication. They are located elsewhere and undifferentiated. This effectively excludes Aboriginal people who live in proximity to white people from the economy of authenticity.

## **Conclusion**

As Paige Raibmon has argued, authenticity is not a stable state, but a powerful and shifting set of ideas that create and define expectations of the 'other', attributing characteristics and locking people into the authentic/inauthentic binary according to how well they fulfil historically specific notions of authenticity (2005: 3).

At the same time, authenticity is a useful frame of reference in cross-cultural negotiations. One of the tasks that labels of authenticity perform discursively is to provide the basis for terms of cultural respect and a language that enables discussion about performing arts from different cultures. Understandings of 'authenticity', as defined at any point in time, have been crucial as the basis for recognition of and respect for cultural specificity, either broadening the channels of communication or restricting them. As such, depending on how authenticity is defined, there is potential to perpetuate imperial and colonial practices or to provide a site where new cross-cultural engagements can lay the foundation for mutually respectful exchanges. The imperatives to shift away from imperial and colonial perspectives increase rather than decrease in the current context of cultural tourism driven economies, where for many minority peoples, notions of authenticity determine what is culturally real and unreal in their daily lives.

The issue in this context then becomes not the use of the term 'authenticity', but the frames of reference used to define the meanings of the term. Surely it is time to move beyond the nineteenth century and towards more open understandings of cultures that actually engage with people and practices.

### **Author Note**

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# **The Racialisation of Feeling in the Northern Territory's Aboriginal Australia: Anger and Aboriginal Contact with the Law**

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*This paper addresses the question: What is at stake in reframing 'social problems' as problems of feeling? In the Northern Territory, the political discourse on 'social problems', such as the prevalence of criminal offences involving alcohol, is commonplace in representations of Aboriginal Australia. This political discourse problematises Indigenous, alcohol-related crime, by measuring the success or failure of state sponsored intervention. This paper argues that this discourse fundamentally misrepresents the 'social problem' of the Aboriginal consumption of alcohol because it averts the existence of feelings. Further, I claim that the aversion of (and to) feeling is embedded in the politics of race in the Australian imaginary. In order to understand how the discourse on 'social problems' functions, I draw attention to what I call the 'institutionalisation of feeling' and the 'racialisation of feeling'. Drawing on examples from policy, political talk, and academic representation, I endeavour to show how the institutionalisation and racialisation of feeling are interconnected processes that colour multiple aspects of Aboriginal contact with the law. I therefore contend that what is at stake in reframing 'social problems' as problems of feeling is the capacity to critically analyse the social construction of racist thought.*

## **Redefining 'the problem'**

From July 1<sup>st</sup> this year three new laws comprising the 'Enough is Enough Alcohol Reforms' came into effect in the Northern Territory. The laws introduce 'The Banned Drinkers Register' on which the names of 'banned problem drinkers' appear, and against which all take-away purchases of alcohol are tested. This new legislation puts into place a series of measures designed to address the extraordinarily high rate of offences involving alcohol in the NT, where it is estimated that between 60% – 80% of offences involve alcohol. During a recent radio interview, Leader of the Opposition, Terry Mills, responded to the reforms and to The Banned Drinkers Register in particular:

Alcohol itself is not the problem but the irresponsible consumption of alcohol and those who have a problem with alcohol are... That's why we need to be very serious about those who have a problem with alcohol and bring proper measures to bear, to deal with that fundamental problem, and that's those that have an actual problem with alcohol (Mills 2011).

Tuning in to Mills' political talk, the agenda of the subtext is hardly hidden. The Reforms provide an opportunity to relay to 'the majority' the 'inconvenience' caused by the minority with the 'actual problem'. Clearly this is a rhetorical manoeuvre to single out Aboriginal Australians.

In the NT last year, just over 60% of recorded assaults involved alcohol. While demographic data on assaults is not currently available, we know that over 80% of the prison population is Aboriginal, that approximately 60% of recorded offences are accounted for by assault and sexual assault, and that 'under reporting by [Aboriginal]

women of violent spouse abuse' is prevalent (Memmott, Stacy, Chambers and Keys 2001: 38), all of which begins to describe the racial identity of the 'problem'.<sup>1</sup>

Policy makers and academics in policy research are caught up in the same problem of representation, as Judy Atkinson, a prominent Aboriginal scholar, observes:

Knowing and naming the statistics does not change painful situations. In fact, much research work has been centred on putting statistics together while Aboriginal pain has continued, often defined as an "alcohol problem", a "suicide problem", a "juvenile offending problem", a "violence problem", and so on (2003: 13).<sup>2</sup>

In other words, the problem identified by Atkinson is not the behaviour of those that inconvenience 'the majority', but the experience of Aboriginal pain that manifests in an interlinked set of social practices that are destructive to the person. With this in mind, how is it that feelings are largely absent from the justification and evaluation of legislative measures such as those constituting the alcohol reforms? Is feeling taboo in Australia? And if so, in whose interests do taboos on feeling function? Whose feelings are put at stake?

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics are available from the NT Department of Justice Research and Statistics Unit. It is difficult to know how to use these statistics when Atkinson (1990), for example, has stated that '88% of Indigenous rape and assault cases go unreported' (Memmott, Stacy, Chambers and Keys 2001: 41).

<sup>2</sup> A large body of research on the relationship between alcohol and assault in Aboriginal contexts is thorough and readily available. See Pilkington (2009) and The Allen Consulting Group (2010) for two major studies focusing on strategies of policing.

This paper uses feelings critically to challenge some of the underlying assumptions in public discourses on 'social problems'. The effects of the ways in which feelings are simultaneously caught up in the exercise of institutional power and in the construction of Aboriginal and white Australian identities are examined through a case study relating to the representation of (white) policing and (black) violence. Examining distinct processes of feeling's institutionalisation and racialisation in the sphere of Aboriginal governance shows that the interests of these distinct processes of feeling can both work together and against one another. This is where the political scope for feeling is identified.

### **Representing Feeling**

The consumption of alcohol is arguably precisely about feeling, driven by the affects of alcohol on embodied and emotional subjectivity. The apparent oversight of 'problem' drinkers' feelings renders public discourses circumspect and worthy of critical investigation. In this vein, Atkinson calls for a re-engagement with 'social' problems as problems of feeling. Note her term – 'Aboriginal pain' – to denote the conflation of a position of subjectivity (in a Western paradigm) with experiences of feeling that have been culturally and historically inscribed.

One of the primary characteristics of the discourse of 'problems' that saturates the representation of Aboriginal Australia is that it eclipses its subjects of feeling. The feelings of Aboriginal people (who might, indeed, be better understood as the *objects* of the discourse), as well as the subjects of politically 'white' emotions (who are not necessarily white) are implicit within the construction of what counts as a 'social problem'. Yet, the role of specific kinds of feeling in the production of

discursive positions of subjectivity is often precisely obscured by the terms in which the dominant discourse represents. As such, for example, politically 'white' emotions such as racialised fear, disgust and anxiety (see especially Ahmed 2004) align subjects covertly with the framework of intelligibility that objectifies and mystifies 'those who have a problem with alcohol'. This is how the discourse Terry Mills speaks from invokes racism to discern between those who do and do not constitute the 'problem with alcohol'. The logic of racism slips into the representation of a social problem that imagines nameless Aboriginal subjects, depersonalised and therefore objectified, whose feelings also go unspecified and unnamed, arguably unrecognisable because of the feelings of the majority.

As Atkinson identifies, talking about 'problems' as if it is not necessary to speak to their subjects, dehumanises Aboriginal people. Dehumanisation can be understood as an effect of the bureaucratic machinery that administers the Aboriginal policy space of the NT by translating subjects of feeling into 'social problems'. Averting the feelings of Aboriginal people involved in alcohol related offences enables subjects of identity to become represented as the objects of social problems. This practice of representation resonates with the "dog-whistle politics" of John Howard's Australia, in which feelings of fear and anxiety were routinely mobilised through sanitised political language to achieve policy objectives and win elections.

This investment in the reconstruction of feeling, usually to the normative end of bracketing a set of social effects away from their subjects and the context of relationships and lived histories in which they are embedded, is what I refer to as the 'institutionalisation of feeling'. The institutionalisation of feeling rests on the institutional

power to validate not so much of a set of feelings, but a set of subject positions that entitle people to feel a certain way *as*, for example, an Australian, an employed person, and so on. In political discourse, Aboriginal people count as incidences of statistically productive (manipulable and addressable) social phenomena, not as subjects of feeling whose feelings problematise politically motivated approaches to policy.

### **The Treatment of Anger**

The argument that Aboriginal subjects of feeling are averted by a public discourse on the problem of assault needs to be qualified by a close reading of the ways in which feelings *are* represented. One example occurs in the treatment of anger, for example through Correctional Services (for the NT Government Department of Justice), which the state endorses as a means to address the prevalence of violence related offending in Aboriginal communities. As Kevin Howell discusses in the anthology *Anger and Indigenous Men* (2008) there are currently a range of treatment programs in existence, many of which share following common features:

Improving client's understanding of anger and aggression; identifying and modifying the individual's triggers; identifying and reducing contextual stressors; changing dysfunctional cognitive inferences and schemata; improving control of physiological arousal; enhancing self-regulation skills; prevention of escalation; rehearsing new behaviours in anger-inducing situations (25).

In this account, the treatment of anger reflects another kind of 'institutionalisation of feeling'. The emphasis on the psychology of the individual dislocates the personal from the social and the cultural, particularly from the embedding of kinship and culture within geographical

landscapes, which is such a defining feature of Aboriginal cultures (e.g., see Povinelli 1998). Treating the control the offender has over *themselves* in their experience of feeling anger is a way of treating the causality of violence, as Howell explains:

The rationale for such programs... is that poor regulation of anger is a contributing causal factor for violence and that, therefore, violence can be reduced by enabling offenders to improve their anger regulation (23).

Taking a psychological approach, such programs<sup>3</sup> require the individual to reflect on themselves, beginning with the individual rather than with social relationships, which may be outside of the individual's control.

In academic evaluation, like that conducted by Howell, scant attention seems to be paid to the view that *anger needs to be expressed*. Some sociological and anthropological approaches, particularly those attuned to the dynamics of feeling integral to social and cultural life, place more emphasis on the social organisation of opportunities to express feeling, including anger. Accounts of the cultural configurations and subjective experiences of the need to express feeling will strengthen an examination of alcohol consumption in the NT.

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<sup>3</sup> A plethora of programs operates both within and outside the criminal justice system through the Department of Justice and the Department of Children and Families. Further research is needed to understand how Howell's synopsis relates to current programs in the NT.

## The Racialisation of Feeling

The treatment of anger does not address the subject of angry feelings in isolation from the hegemonic discourses that make sense of Aboriginal violence in the NT. For example, thinking about the relationship between anger and violence as one of control heightens the sensitivity of the police to behaviours perceived to be expressive or constitutive of angry feelings. In other words, representations of anger reiterate how feeling (and unfeeling) is embedded in Australian culture through the historical associations made by 'race'.

In contexts of policing, what I call the 'racialisation of feeling' takes place when the social and historical over-determination of Aboriginal anger as potentially violent inscribes the interface between Aboriginal subjects of angry feelings and police personnel as one of conflict and struggle. The difference in degree of impact between anger and violence is shaped by a history of racialised encounters – specifically, of murderous violence against 'blackfellas' by white people acting on behalf of the government (Cunneen 2009).

It is the police-Aboriginal interface which forms the object of Gillian Cowlshaw's examination of how, one hot December night in Bourke, '150 drinkers rioted' (2003: 114). Some years later, Cowlshaw's anthropological study argues 'that the *perception* that the noisy, fighting crowd of Aborigines represented a serious threat to law and order was what actually evoked the anger and destructiveness' (117). What might not be conclusively addressed in the pedagogy of self-control prevalent in the treatment of anger is 'the sense violence makes in reproducing a cultural domain wherein the relationship between white and black citizens gets played out as a realm of tension and conflict and as a source of racial

identities' (120). Cowlshaw's analysis shows how the (mis)perception of feeling held by a white police force can open up the translation of angry feelings into violence rather than communitarian forms of social transformation.<sup>4</sup>

Cowlshaw's representation of the riots in Bourke can also be thought of as reflecting how the status of the law as 'white' (or Western) racialises feelings by producing an association between racialised cultural and legal values and the expression of emotion. One articulation of the dichotomous logic the of law can be found in its construction of different orders of violence: '[t]he cool, cruel violence of correction, containment, or punishment is deemed rational, while violent actions performed in rage are deemed irrational, uncontrolled and frightening' (119). These orders of violence in turn relate to orders of policing.

Emphasising 'anger' as the feeling behind Aboriginal violence maintains the status of the subject of anger as a deviation from, and threat to, the norm of whiteness. The political value of this threat is that it can be used to justify the expansion policing, particularly, the punitive exercise of power over embodied subjects experiencing drunk and/or angry feelings.

The *impact* of violence renders angry feelings legible as a scene of politics and needs to be situated in relation to the governing imperative to minimise or redirect the potential impact of anger away from social acts that

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<sup>4</sup> I also draw on Cowlshaw here as her case study specifically addresses the role of the police which relates to a primary concern of the paper.

result in recorded indicators, such as criminal offences. The impact of anger can also register through the expression of speech and actions (including violent actions) that not only put the subject of anger risk, but challenge the status quo. According to Cowlshaw, the tactic of diversion is replicated in policy analysis:

Absent from virtually all of these calls for policy change is a commitment to understanding community sentiment and ideas, particularly the manifestations of rage. Apparently anger and violence are such inferior and despicable responses that they cannot be subjected to social analysis (110).

Here, the 'institutionalisation of feeling' is performed through the absence of 'manifestations of rage' or 'community sentiment', which can manifest as a barrier that ignites further frustration. The appearance of the absence of feeling is enshrined through the institutional refusal of empathy and understanding, not only toward Aboriginal subjects of anger, but toward the historical circumstances that continue to racialise anger. The 'failure to exercise a required duty of care' is what Chris Cunneen calls 'the violence of neglect' (2009: 209).

## **Conclusion**

In Aboriginal cultures, the expression of feeling is practiced through relationships with kinship and country to reflect who people are:

To not show 'proper feeling' in one's interactions with others is to question the relationship, and to violate not just an expectancy, but to threaten a severing of connectedness, which is critical to a sense of self and well being (Reser 1990: 31 in Atkinson 2003: 43).

Currently, the volume of social policy that addresses the specifically Aboriginal related 'social problems' of alcohol abuse, gendered violence and incarceration through concepts such as 'community safety' and 'well-being' does not acknowledge the relationship between 'connectedness' and 'well being' but rather translates well-being as equivalent to or a product of socio-economic status (Altman 2011). If government maintains a false separation between the cultural and the socio-economic sphere and does not take into consideration peoples' experiences of feeling within these spheres in its rationale for policy changes such as the Alcohol Reforms, ways of addressing 'social problems' will likely have limited and damaging effects (as critiques of The Intervention show).

It is in the space opened up by the perceptions held by the police that contact between Aboriginal anger and the law can be reconfigured. One example of a positive role intervening precisely in this space is that of the Aboriginal Community Police Officer (ACPO). Research being conducted at The Northern Institute where I work explores and explains how the empathetic relationship expressed by ACPOs undermines the historical separation of the police from members of the community (trackers notwithstanding).<sup>5</sup> Commonality in experiences of feeling, which articulates the 'racialisation of feeling' in a constructive way, can therefore work to undermine the barriers erected by the 'institutionalisation of feeling' that contributes to the conditions under which anger escalates to violence. Anger is more likely to escalate when its

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<sup>5</sup> For the project *Exploring Critical Factors that Impact on the Recruitment and Retention of Aboriginal Community Police Officers in the NT*, funded through the Northern Territory Police Association.

expression is prohibited and the affective properties of anger are redirected away from meaningful forms of recognition.

This paper contended that the 'institutionalisation of feeling' contributes to pathologising Aboriginal pain by rendering painful feeling that which is occluded or oppressed in the language of the 'social problem'. This led me to argue that the performance of the 'institutionalisation of feeling' is directly involved in the production of certain experiences of anger and violence. Public discourses compound the history of victimisation through the racialisation of feeling that withholds recognition of Aboriginal subjects (e.g., see Atkinson 2003). In short, denying 'the normalcy of violence' (Cowlshaw 2003: 120) produces more of the same. This does not mean that violence deserves less public attention; on the contrary, the victimisation of Aboriginal people, particularly women, is largely underreported by the local and national media. Rather, this paper calls for a difference in the kind of attention that needs to be given to the role of feelings on the part of all of us who are positioned as subjects of feeling by the dominant discourses this paper has discussed.

### **Author Note**

Sarah Cefai moved to Australia to pursue training in theories of feminist corporeality and feminist cultural studies. Sarah's doctoral thesis (under examination) examines how subjects of mainly feminist and queer knowledge can be understood as subjects of feeling, and further, how ideas about subjects of 'knowing feeling' can foster new understanding of the affective politics of sexuality in popular culture. Sarah is a Research Associate at The Northern Institute working on a number

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# Indigenous Peoples and the Australian Constitution

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*The Gillard government has recently stated they believe the Australian Constitution should be altered to recognise Indigenous peoples. The government has implemented a process to address this view, including creating a body to consult Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and to propose models for constitutional change. This chapter explores several previous attempts to develop constitutional change concerning Indigenous peoples. These attempts include arguments for constitutional change in the early twentieth century, the 1944 Referendum, the 1967 Referendum and the 1999 Referendum. Of these, only the 1967 Referendum was successful. The chapter will analyse these attempts, the issues they addressed and the reasons for their success or failure.*

## Introduction

In 1901, the Commonwealth of Australia was constituted by the *Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act (1900)* (hereafter Australian Constitution). At the time, the Australian Constitution only mentioned Indigenous peoples in two sections. These sections were:

Section 51: The Parliament shall, subject to this Constitution, have the power to make laws for the peace, order, and good Government of the Commonwealth with respect to ... (xxvi) The

people of any race, other than the aboriginal race in any State, for whom it is deemed necessary to make special laws ...  
Section 127: In reckoning the numbers of the people of the Commonwealth, or of a State or other part of the Commonwealth, aboriginal natives shall not be counted (CA 1900: 20, 42).

Over the past one hundred years, there have been a number of efforts to alter the Australian Constitution in regard to Indigenous peoples. These efforts include calls for constitutional change in the early twentieth century, the 1944 Referendum, the 1967 Referendum and the 1999 Referendum. The sole success of all these efforts was the 1967 Referendum.

In this paper, I analyse these attempts to implement constitutional change regarding Indigenous peoples. I look at the specific issues of each attempt and explore the reasons behind the success or failure of the attempts. I conclude by discussing some lessons from these previous attempts that could prove useful to the current attempt by the Gillard government to look at constitutional change regarding Indigenous peoples.

## **Early Twentieth Century**

In the early twentieth century, a number of organisations campaigned for constitutional change regarding Indigenous peoples. Specifically, these organisations advocated that the Australian Constitution be amended so that the Commonwealth government could make laws for Indigenous peoples. This position was based "on the assumption that more would be done to advance the interests of Aboriginal people if this occurred" (Attwood and Markus 2007: 6). The organisations argued this position at the *1927-9 Royal Commission on the Constitution*. In 1928, one of the first Indigenous

organisations, the Australian Aboriginal Progressive Association, led by Fred Maynard, made a submission to the Royal Commission that advocated the “federalizing” of Indigenous affairs and criticised the state-based system as “obsolete” (cited in Attwood and Markus 1999: 71-72). Also in 1928, the Association for the Protection of Native Races, a non-Indigenous organisation, argued that the Royal Commission should “recommend to the Federal Government that the Constitution be amended so as to give the Federal Government the supreme control of all aborigines” (cited in Attwood and Markus 2007: 7). A number of other non-Indigenous organisations, including the National Council of Women and the Victorian Woman Citizen’s Movement, also “urged the federalisation of Aboriginal policy and administration” (Paisley 1998: 255-257). However, the majority of the Royal Commissioners did not endorse these calls for constitutional change, stating “We do not recommend that section 51 (xxvi) be amended so as to empower the Commonwealth Parliament to make laws with respect to Aborigines ... the States are better equipped for controlling aborigines than the Commonwealth” (cited in Attwood and Markus 2007: 9).

These calls for constitutional change continued into the 1930s. Indigenous leader William Cooper wrote several letters in the 1930s to politicians advocating Commonwealth control over Indigenous affairs, including one to Prime Minister Joseph Lyons in 1936, stating “We do plead for one controlling authority, the Commonwealth and request that all aboriginal interests be absolutely federalised” (cited in Attwood and Markus 2004: 54). In 1938, a deputation of Indigenous leaders, led by Bill Ferguson, Pearl Gibbs and Jack Patten, presented a list of ten points to Prime Minister Lyons, of which the first point stated, “We respectfully request that there should be a National Policy for Aborigines. We advocate

Commonwealth Government control of all Aboriginal affairs" (cited in Attwood and Markus 1999: 90; also see Horner 2004: 11; Horner 1994: 68-70). However, these demands for constitutional change were not addressed by the Commonwealth governments of the 1930s. Instead, both Commonwealth and State governments generally preferred for Indigenous affairs to be legislated by the States (Attwood and Markus 2007: 9). This failure to address Indigenous demands for constitutional change seems likely to be a consequence of the very limited support from non-Indigenous people for these demands and the advent of World War II (Horner 2004: 11; Attwood and Markus 2007: 6, 10).

### **1944 Referendum**

In 1944, the Curtin government introduced, and passed through the Commonwealth parliament, (it had a majority in both houses), the *Constitution Alteration (Post War Reconstruction and Democratic Rights) Bill (1944)*, which implemented a referendum concerning the transfer of fourteen powers, including repatriation, employment, railways and national works, from the States to the Commonwealth (Fox 2008: 27, 30-31). One of the fourteen powers was the legislation of Indigenous affairs. The Attorney-General, HV Evatt, stated "Few will deny that the care and welfare of the Australian aborigines should, in principle, be a national responsibility" (cited in Attwood and Markus 2007: 11; see also Horner 2004: 14). The inclusion of Indigenous affairs in this Referendum was influenced by long-term lobbying from various organisations, particularly the Association for the Protection of Native Races, and its President, anthropologist AP Elkin, and concern by the Curtin government over international criticism regarding the treatment of Indigenous peoples in Australia (Attwood and Markus 2007: 11-12; Fox 2008: 28, 32-34). Despite

its inclusion though, the clause concerning Indigenous affairs was rarely mentioned during the Referendum campaign, either by proponents or critics of the Referendum, and there was an “almost complete absence of both humanitarian and Aboriginal organisations from the public campaigns”, possibly due to them being excluded or being focussed on other matters (Fox 2008: 39-43). The Curtin government argued that all fourteen powers were related and thus would be grouped together in the Referendum; voters would only be able to approve or reject all fourteen powers and would not be allowed to support some and not others (Fox 2008: 31).

However, the 1944 Constitutional Referendum was soundly defeated. “The referendum was supported by only 2 million votes of the 4.3 million votes cast, and a majority of votes was achieved in only two states (South Australia and Western Australia)” (Attwood and Markus 2007: 12). There were several reasons attributable to this defeat. Despite initially supporting the Curtin government’s approach regarding the transfer of powers, the Commonwealth opposition criticised the Referendum Bill and advocated that the voters should reject the Referendum (Fox 2008: 31). The failure of the Curtin government to allow voters to vote on each of the fourteen clauses separately was also a significant factor in the Referendum’s defeat (Attwood and Markus 2007: 12). The consequence of this failure to amend the Constitution to enable Commonwealth control of Indigenous affairs was significant. “The referendum failed and so did the Aboriginal clause. It was a casualty of the government's insistence that all fourteen powers be voted on as one and this meant that power over Aboriginal people remained with the states for a further 23 years” (Fox 2008: 27; see also Horner 2004: 14).

## **1967 Referendum**

During the 1950s and 1960s, the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines, later the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (FCAATSI), argued for a Referendum to be held to enable the Commonwealth government to legislate for Indigenous peoples and to allow Indigenous peoples to be counted in the Australian Census (Attwood and Markus 1999: 176, 184-186). After many years of political campaigns by FCAATSI and its supporters, involving petitions, conferences, public meetings and deputations to parliamentarians, the Holt government introduced a Bill to amend the Constitution by referendum, which was unanimously passed by the Australian parliament (Horner 2004: 114-120). The Bill amended section 51(xxvi) by removing the words "other than the aboriginal race in any State" and repealed section 127 (Tripcony 2001: 27). The Holt government also legislated for another constitutional change, which involved parliamentary numbers, the 'nexus' issue; importantly, the two issues would be voted on separately (Attwood and Markus 2007: 35, 43).

On the 27<sup>th</sup> May 1967, the Indigenous affairs Referendum was supported by all States and by 90.77% of voters and the 'nexus' Referendum was heavily defeated, which illustrated voters distinguished between the two issues (Attwood and Markus 2007: 54). There were though almost 10% of voters that did not support the Indigenous affairs issue and in some regional areas, the opposition was substantially higher (Bennett 1999: 22-24). Nevertheless, the 1967 Referendum on Indigenous affairs is the most supported Referendum in Australian history and is one of only eight out of 44 that have succeeded. This significant result can be explained by several factors. Many non-Indigenous Australians had become aware during the 1960s, through events such as the Wave Hill

walk-off and the Freedom Rides, of the substantial oppression faced by Indigenous people. These non-Indigenous Australians “were directed by their consciences and sense of social justice to take the view that something ought to have been done to better the lot of the Aboriginal people” (FCAATSI member Gordon Bryant, cited in Attwood and Markus 2007: 58-59). Many non-Indigenous Australians also could have felt ‘reassured’ that the 1967 Referendum result meant “Australia’s ‘racist past’ is purged once and for all ... [and the Referendum] can also stand as living proof of the correctness of their assumptions about their fellow Australians’ humanity” (Attwood and Markus 1998: 132). Non-Indigenous Australians also could have been influenced by international issues, such as the United States civil rights movement and the aftermath of World War II, with its lessons of the consequences of racism (Tripcony 2001: 32; Bennett 1999: 24). Further, the Referendum’s success could be attributed to the political campaigns conducted by FCAATSI and their supporters over a ten-year period (Horner 2004: 114-125).

## **1999 Referendum**

In 1999, the Howard government put two constitutional issues to the Australian people. The most prominent issue was the question of whether Australia should become a republic. The other issue, and the one relevant to this paper, was the question of whether to include a new preamble into the Constitution. There were a number of concerns regarding the proposed preamble in relation to Indigenous issues. The preamble was drafted with no negotiations or consultations with Indigenous leaders, with the sole exception of Senator Aden Ridgeway (Scott 1999: 16; Tickner 2001: 325). The preamble was also criticised by a number of Indigenous leaders, including Michael Mansell, for not addressing Indigenous rights

(Mansell 1999: 18; Agius et al. 1999: 15). The preamble also contained nationalist sentiments such as "our national unity", the "national spirit which binds us together in both adversity and success" and "serve the common good" (Commonwealth Parliament 1999: 14). The preamble also did not include the term 'custodianship', which was an expression that was supported by both Indigenous people and the 1998 Constitutional Convention (Winckel 2002: 3). As a consequence of these concerns, a meeting of thirteen prominent Indigenous leaders, Parry Agius, Richie Ah Mat, Gatjil Djerrkura, Pat Dodson, Mick Dodson, Norman Fry, Olga Havnen, Michael Mansell, Lowitja O'Donohue, Charlie Perkins, David Ross, Archie Tanner and Peter Yu, was conducted which unanimously recommended that the "question on the draft preamble to the Australian Constitution should be dropped from the forthcoming Republic referendum" (Agius et al. 1999: 15). Patrick Dodson later commented on the preamble, that "all Australians should reject any preamble to our national Constitution that denies the true status of indigenous Australians as the custodians and owners of the land, and suggests that we are nothing more than gardeners at the station homestead" (Dodson 2000: 270).

The Constitutional Referendum on November 6, 1999 saw both the republic issue and the preamble issue comprehensively rejected by the Australian voters. In regard to the preamble issue, there was "no majority in any jurisdiction; below 40 percent of the vote nationally and in four States and one Territory; [it was] the seventh worst result of the 44 questions put to referendum since federation" (Stone 2000: 291). There are a number of factors that contributed towards this abysmal failure. The preamble question was a very minor issue, and received little public attention, in comparison with the republic question and was likely swept up in the overwhelming

rejection of the republic issue. Further, it is likely that the substantial level of opposition from many Indigenous leaders towards the preamble question contributed towards the rejection of the preamble at the Referendum (Stone 2000: 291).

## **Conclusion**

As the Gillard government looks toward constitutional change regarding Indigenous affairs, it could learn several important lessons from a review of the previous attempts to implement constitutional change concerning Indigenous affairs. Any future Referendum would be most unlikely to succeed if a range of factors were not present. These factors include: the genuine involvement and leadership of Indigenous peoples in the development of a Referendum and the organisation of the political campaigns; bipartisan support for the Referendum from the major political parties; the focus of the Referendum being solely on Indigenous affairs, with no other issues involved in the Referendum; a long lead-in period before the Referendum to enable political and education campaigns; and a broad support base for the Referendum among the wider Australian community. A failure to address all these factors would likely result in any future Referendum on Indigenous affairs following in the footsteps of many of the past failed attempts at implementing constitutional change regarding Indigenous affairs.

## **Author Note**

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## **Land grab or Simply Disempowerment? A New Policy for Housing in Remote Indigenous Communities**

**Lesleigh Hayes**

*The policy for the provision of housing on remote/discrete Indigenous communities in Western Australia has been plagued by a range of limitations and restrictions that are a result of policy direction and/or the lack of policy development over the last four decades. Incorporated within housing are a range of issues including land ownership and community housing. During 2009-10 significant changes within Indigenous housing have been brought into play through the COAG Close the Cap initiatives. The changes in WA have manifested as the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing (NPA). The agreement between the Federal and State government focuses on the construction and refurbishment of properties within remote/discrete Indigenous communities. Within the agreement is a range of changes that will result in the loss of control of the land that the properties are established on for a 40 year period. Within W.A. the signing of the NPA has provided the impetus to change not only the policy governing the management and development of remote/discrete community housing but also the legislation. The policy direction has significantly altered the mandate of the Department of Housing, the interface with communities and the future of housing and land control for Indigenous communities.*

## **Introduction**

2009-10 brought significant changes to Indigenous housing in Western Australian (W.A.), and several other states with the signing of the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Homelessness (NPA). The NPA enacted mainstreaming of Indigenous housing services, which required, within W.A, not only legislative change regarding the Residential Tenancy Act, but also policy change. The changes brought public housing, supplied on remote communities for Indigenous people, under the State Residential Tenancy Act. For the first time in Australian history Indigenous people now were forced to abide by white concepts of rent on their homelands.

Fundamental to the NPA is the requirement for Indigenous communities to sign an agreement with the Department of Housing, giving the Federal Government an unspecified 40 year lease over the land the community housing stands on. The lease allows for the land to be used for both personal and commercial purposes. If the community fails to sign the agreement, all new constructions and refurbishments are withheld. Changes in legislation bring Indigenous community housing into mainstream services. This policy direction will flow through into all areas of rental services including rental payments, financial eligibility for housing, legal action for termination of tenancy and has successfully put Indigenous community housing firmly under the control of the W.A. state government.

## **Analytical Framework for Analysis**

For the analysis of the new Indigenous Housing Policy I have selected a methodological framework that allows for analysis at several levels. Bachi's (2009) framework

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allows for close scrutiny of the ideas and concepts that interplay with policy development. Of primary interest in this analysis is the interpretation of the “problem”, how that needs to be “fixed”, the assumptions incorporated within the representation and the genealogy of the “problem” (Bachi: 11). The framework provides a staged analysis, allowing spaces to develop and giving areas for reflection concerning how Indigenous people are perceived, how race interplays with policy development, and the competing concepts and realities that impact on policy development.

### **Representation of the Problem, Suppositions and Assumptions**

In 2006 the Australian government, Non Government Organisations, and a range of human rights groups committed themselves to “closing the gap” between Indigenous and white life expectancy in Australia. Housing is recognised as a key component to health and came under the broad banner of the Close the Gap Campaign.

In August 2008 the then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd gave his Sorry Speech. This apology was dedicated to Indigenous Australians, and called for “new solutions”, a new future based in “mutual respect, mutual resolve and mutual responsibility” (Rudd 2008). In 2008 the Rudd government also released the Close the Gap Statement of Intent. The Statement included a list of commitments, incorporating assurances of full partnerships with Indigenous people, to respect and promote the rights of Indigenous people and to develop long term comprehensive plan based in evidence and capable of addressing inequalities. Within this context housing had suddenly become a key factor in Closing the Gap, one that has been singled out for action.

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Bachi (2009) argues that policy is a concept - in this case a concept of power - with open signifiers. As such, structurally the new housing policy is based in a history/race/power/control paradigm. Open or travelling signifiers have no fixed meaning, but reflect the specific historical context, and culture of the dominate race.

Although the base of history and culture frequently make it difficult to identify the construction of the policy, in this case it has been easier than most. Inherent within new housing policy is the need to control, to have power over Indigenous people and our land, by a culture that perceives itself as superior, based on its skin colour.

Racism is an "elusive but pervasive" (O'Connell 2008: 8) mind set, something that is fundamental to white governments and institutions, and is barely recognised for what it is. The representation of this policy is intrinsically linked to the colonisation of Australian and the assumption that Indigenous people are incapable of managing their land, with no acknowledgment that this situation has developed due to continual underfunding, neglect and commitment by consecutive Australian governments. The policy assumes that Indigenous people are not capable of managing their home lands, and that white people are the only people capable of effectively "rescuing" Indigenous people from themselves.

### **Genealogy of the 'Problem'**

Policies relating to Indigenous people frequently oscillate between a "smooth the dying pillow" (Read 2000:4) approach to enforced assimilation and currently integration. Housing policies historically have reflected these changes through policy direction. Housing policies have played a significant role in controlling what has been

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seen as the “Aboriginal problem”, frequently used as a means of “whitening” Indigenous people (Read 2000: 5).

The push to normalise Indigenous housing began with the 1967 National Referendum and the changes enacted thereafter (Read 2000: 8). The changes focused on minimising Indigenous disadvantage across a range of areas including education, health and housing, and vocalised strategies to bring about empowerment for Australia’s Indigenous people. Reform of services, policies and funding continued under the Whitlam government. The speed of the reforms under Whitlam gave no time for consultation with Indigenous communities or strategic planning. The lack of consultation ensured that Indigenous communities had no control over the geographic location of the houses, how they were constructed the design of the houses and management structure (Read 2000:8). What did occur was that Indigenous housing remained a state controlled entity.

The mosaic of Indigenous policies and involved government departments, although thought to be reflecting the need for Indigenous empowerment, did little in reality. In 1990 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) was established. But this was seen as, and in reality was, a government designed and ministerial control entity that did little to advance the needs of Indigenous people. ATSIC was continually constrained through broad reaching and complex legislation, policy and lack of economic support and independence (Morrisey 2006:347).

The problematic nature and neglect of Indigenous housing has been long recognised. The Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FAHCSIA) in 2001 stated there

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was a need to ensure that Indigenous people had access to “affordable and appropriate housing. This still has not occurred. Within WA several public inquires of the state Department of Housing have called the Department to task over their policies and procedures relating to the supply of housing for Indigenous people” (Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs 2005: 6). These inquiries have also questioned the lack of outcomes and limited accountability by the Department (Department of Families, Communities and Indigenous Services 2007: 6).

In mid-2005 the then Prime Minister, John Howard, announced significant changes to the way housing for Indigenous communities was to be managed. Land reforms included the ability for private and/or individual land ownership (Bradfield 2005: 1). Howard’s first opportunity to introduce the land reform occurred with the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER). Incorporated within the NTER was the compulsory acquisition of 5-year leases over 64 communities that were established on Aboriginal Land. This new direction encompassed a leasing system that allowed the federal government to lease the land Indigenous housing stood on. In fact the lease was required before any new housing was constructed or existing housing refurbished (Bromley 2009: 31).

Within a year other states were notified that the same changes would be implemented within each state. At this stage Howard was demanding a lease for 99 years over community owned land. When Labor took power and Rudd gave the now famous “Sorry” speech there were no changes to the leasing system except to lower the time period to 40 years (Terril 2010: 5). It was during this period that the Closing the Gap campaign was gaining momentum and public support. Incorporated within the 7

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priorities was housing, with \$4 million funding committed to improve Indigenous housing. There was a catch to the funding; it was conditional that all states receiving the funding gained "secure land tenure" (Council of Australian Governments, 2008). The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) stated clearly that each state or territory must have "control" over the land for a period of no less than 40 years. The agreement set out the terms, stating that tenancy management and all issues associated with the management no longer required any consultation with the traditional land owners. There is no provision for rental payments for the leasing of the land to be paid to traditional owners, nor any limitations on the use of the land. The agreement does however mention using the land for commercial purposes (Council of Australian Governments 2008: 28).

In Western Australia legislation was pushed through, and land held by the Aboriginal Lands Trust was handed over for state control and the need to develop a housing policy aligned to the NPA was recognised.

I have used the genealogy to set the background, to give an insight of the power relationships within this construct (Stokes 1979: 11), and to provide a degree of clarity regarding the powerlessness of Indigenous people that continues into modern Australia. The policy construct is based on the historical and social history of Australia, and the perceptions of the white individuals and governments involved.

### **What is Problematic with this Representation?**

The issues with, and poor standards of, housing have been linked to the public's assumptions and perceptions of Indigenous people developed through historical and media portrayals. It has been based on assumptions that

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represent Indigenous people as having a life style that is different, and therefore wrong, one that is unhygienic and one where Indigenous people are unable to manage their land or housing.

The issue of housing was then aligned to a policy and agreement (The National Indigenous Reform Agreement) and campaign (Close the Gap) that developed a public perception of the government again saving Indigenous people from themselves. The policy and agreement set out the commitment from all jurisdictions to Indigenous people, defining the responsibilities and the goals of each area within the agreement. The link between housing and health became a platform within the campaign, with the NPA agreement underpinning the construction and refurbishments of existing programs. The construction and refurbishment of properties was announced as a means of reducing homelessness and over crowding on remote Indigenous communities. By linking Indigenous housing to health the representation limited the identification of the real underlying issues and causes of the overcrowding and poor standards of Indigenous housing. It has allowed the failures of successive governments to go undetected and has placed the cause of the problem back to Indigenous people.

There are significant concerns with this portrayal of the problem, one that precedes the 1960s referendum and incorporates concepts of inherent white superiority, one that perceives Indigenous people as inferior and primitive (Stokes 1997: 552). This portrayal breaches the fundamental premise of Rudd's Sorry Day speech, a speech that called for "equal partnerships" and an end to the "indignity and degradation" of Indigenous people (Rudd 2008: 1).

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But the silence surrounding this representation in WA has been deafening. The only voice to be heard in opposition to the policy change has been the Aboriginal Legal Service who presented a submission to the state government prior to the passing of the Aboriginal Housing Amendment Bill. This submission was brushed aside and given little if any consideration. Again the Australian government has decided what is best for Indigenous people.

When applying Bacchi's (2009) framework the effects of representing the problem are seen not only in the disempowerment of Indigenous people and the loss of their land, but also the public legitimization of the policy change. This representation of "helping" continues to support the concepts of white superiority and inherently legitimizes white control over Indigenous people.

This change in policy has placed Indigenous housing into an already over burdened system, one that has long waiting lists and provides little in the way of secure housing for Indigenous people. The change in policy to gain additional funding has been described by the Minister of Housing, Troy Buswell as something "that will not fix the problem" (Sonti 2010: 1). So why change?

### **Effects of the New Policy**

There is no framework that can be used to adequately assess the impact of this policy, however there are several indications for the long and short-term outcomes. Funds have been provided to build and refurbish properties, but there has been no documented increase in funds for property management, training for staff, tenant education/support and on-going maintenance. This alone indicates that although new housing will be constructed, there is no commitment to the ongoing care of the

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properties or support for the tenancies. The build and abandon mentality will continue.

There is also a lack of planning and policy developments; issues linked to a failed policy cycle and a lack of supporting documentation and implementation mechanisms. Currently the change to the Residential Tenancies Act (RTA), and ensuing change to Aboriginal Housing Services Policy stands alone. Within the Department and the delivery of housing to the wider community, the rental policy has been embedded with supporting structures, policies and procedures. These include policies and procedures targeting rental payments, household income limits, anti social behaviour, and how maintenance is to be reported and enacted. There is no accompanying rental payment policy, maintenance policy or tenancy support policy in place that has been developed and announced regarding Indigenous house. As of the end of October 2011 the state Minister for Housing, Troy Buswell, is still to sign off on any rental, maintenance or anti social policies aligned to the changes.

Such lack of clear and detailed supporting documentation is enough to raise significant concerns that the change to main stream will only further disadvantage Indigenous people, and will not increase their overall health outcomes as indicated by the Close the Gap campaign.

With the change in policy and the placement of Indigenous housing within the RTA, is it possible for Indigenous people to be evicted from their community? Will a household financial limited be placed on community houses? Will the limit recognise the cultural differences linked to extended family living arrangements? Could this situation put a household over the financial limit and cause their eviction? Will the policy place the burden for

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the rental payments on the shoulders of one person? Will there be an acknowledgement of the costs associated with living in remote areas, especially linked to food? Given the lease is for 40 years and the life expectancy for a house in the Kimberly's or Pilbara area is 20 years, what happens when the house is unliveable? There are few indications and even less answers to many of the questions that need to be asked.

## **Conclusions**

Race has contributed significantly to the development of law, regulations and policy in many former colonies, including Australia (Moreton-Robinson, 2004: 3). Moreton-Robinson has argued that "the possessive logic of patriarchal white sovereignty works ideologically, in that it works on beliefs, and discursively at the level of epistemology to naturalise the nation as a white possession" (Moreton-Robinson, 2004: 4). This "possessive logic of patriarchal white sovereignty" continues to paint a picture of Indigenous people as in need of rescuing from their primitive and inferior ways. It is a logic that supports the inherent superiority of white Australia, which allows Australians to see themselves as the "crusader and rescuer", with the inherent power to "ultimately undermine the right of people to self-determination" for their own good (Watson 2009: 3).

The policy change in W.A corresponded with the release of the Federal Government's 3-year report on the N.T Intervention, the intervention that among other areas has affected the supply and maintenance of Indigenous Housing in almost every other Australian state. The housing and land reforms from the intervention have been well documented, with reforms being noted as appearing to go from "bad to worse" (Altman 2010). The Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program,

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(SIHIP), the same program that has been brought into W.A., is the program under which the construction and refurbishment has been conducted.

There is a significant risk that the “normalisation and main streaming” of communities housing in the N.T. could result in increased overcrowding in the targeted communities. There have been accusations of “shoddy” workmanship (Watson 2009), of the Alliance model - the model of choice of the federal government for the construction, refurbishment and management of Indigenous housing, being forced on the Territory government (Robinson 2010) and being unworkable. Is this the future that faces Indigenous housing in W.A.?

Both the 2010 and 2011 COAG reports have failed to provide statistics that demonstrate the effectiveness of the NPA on Indigenous homelessness or overcrowding in remote regions. The 2011 COAG report is still quoting 2008 statistics, there is no data available that would provide any indication of what has happened in communities over the last 24 months. The only obvious gain at this stage appears to be to the State and Federal government, who again have control over Indigenous homelands.

### **Author Note**

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# **A Space for 'Race', or a 'Race for Space'? TB Contagion, Border Screening and Immigrant Bodies in the Age of the 'New Normal': An Australian Perspective**

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*Immigration, tuberculosis (TB) contagion and border screening have historically enjoyed a close relationship in Australia. Initially, TB and border screening measures were explicitly tied to 'race', with an emphasis on controlling who enters the country according to a narrow racial criterion. Borders, then, were envisaged as a means for demarcating space according to 'race' and the maintenance of white privilege. A more recent discursive shift has seen concerns articulated such that space assumes prominence in political discourse(s). Space, here, is imagined primarily in the form of the housing market and the specific locations of infectious disease transmission, most notably TB. This 'race for space' reveals the ongoing salience of 'race' and immigration in contemporary Australian political discourse(s) concerning TB, albeit in a different form. In this paper, I trace this shift in political discourse(s) concerning TB in Australia, elucidating how it has both heightened fears of 'contagion' and legitimated border screening measures aimed at pre-empting the 'threat' of 'immigrant TB.' I argue that this shift has been largely influenced by the pervasive discourse of the 'New Normal', characterised by the confluence of 'public health' and 'national security'*

*concerns and the marking out of 'foreign bodies' in the post-9/11 era.*

## **Introduction**

Tuberculosis (TB) occupies a unique place in the Australian public and political imagination. Not only is it a historically feared disease, but it has long provided the basis for exclusion from Australia in immigration law. Imagined largely as a disease of the immigrant 'Other', outbreaks of TB have consistently elicited calls to reduce immigration levels. Such is the fear that 'immigrant TB' evokes, that governments in many high-income countries, including Australia, have adopted border screening policies aimed at pre-empting this 'threat' prior to its materialisation. In this chapter, I chart the transformation in 'border screening' in Australia, arguing that there has been a shift from a register concerning the protection of national, and 'racial', borders, to a register concerned with internal borders, where everyday life, specifically imagined as inhabiting particular forms of (politically constructed) 'space', is the referent object(s).

## **A Space for 'Race': The Advent of Border Screening and the Immigration/Contagion Nexus in Australia**

Australia has long held concerns about two things: invasion and contagion (Bashford 2002; Papastergiadis 2006). Mapping their constitutive relation is no easy task, given the contemporaneous deployment of metaphors of invasion of 'host bodies' by 'foreign organisms' in biomedical discourse(s) of infectious disease (Craig 2007; Sontag 1977/1978) and notions of land invasion by foreign powers or 'alien' bodies (Ahmed 2004) evident in nationalistic discourses. As early as 1901, the Australian

Constitution conferred on the new Commonwealth government only one explicit power in respect of 'public health', that of quarantine (Bashford 2002). Shortly after that, the Immigration Restriction Act [1901] was passed. This, along with the appointment of J.H.L Cumpston, a noted eugenicist, as Director General of Health (Bashford 2002), set the stage for more than a hundred years of close political articulation between immigration and contagion, with 'race' and 'nation' becoming key referents. The Immigration Restriction Act [1901], for instance, went so far as to codify public health powers by designating a prohibited immigrant as 'any person suffering from an infectious or contagious disease of a loathsome or dangerous character', a section of the legislation referred to as the 'loathsome disease clause'. Border screening, a medico-legal and socio-technical apparatus, was envisaged as a means to police this 'threat' posed by infectious diseases, including TB, and to give effect to the legal provisions pertaining thereto in immigration and quarantine law. One of the earliest practices in this regard was quarantining ships that had docked in overseas ports with high-incidences of disease, upon their arrival in Australia. The focus here was on vessels, not individuals, although racial factors were certainly brought to bear in terms of the character requirements articulated in immigration legislation, including the ability to speak English.

The connections between immigration and contagion in Australia in early legislation, policy and practice were, from the outset, largely imagined in racial terms, with non-whiteness not only viewed as a foundation for undesirability, but also a basis for potential transmission of infectious disease(s). As Alison Bashford has already perspicaciously observed, the connections between non-whiteness and contagion, firmly inscribed with the passage of the Immigration Restriction Act [1901]

(Commonwealth), were strengthened with the passage of the Quarantine Act [1908] (Commonwealth). Operating in unison, these Acts served two purposes, according to Bashford (2002). The first was to 'let people in', while the second was to 'keep people out'. Interestingly, the determination as to who was permitted to enter Australia, in terms of the permit system which governed entry to the country at the time, was made with reference to perceived moral 'worthiness' and 'hygiene' of the applicant. This largely coincided with the diffusion of Koch's 'germ' theory of disease, which held that some, if not all, disease was caused by microorganisms, and particularly air-borne particles.

Germ theory had its origin, when applied at a social level or deployed through political discourse, in Darwinian thought. Thus, entry to Australia largely, albeit not exclusively, depended on two factors: ones personal characteristics, including the ability to speak English (captured through the much-publicised 'dictation test') and the mode and route of transport, which assumed a key role in determining whether a person was deemed 'clean' and, hence, not likely to carry a 'loathsome disease'. The formal establishment and maintenance of the 'White Australia' policy, which imagined Australia as a distinct geopolitical entity with clearly defined national borders, arguably centred on its supposed 'island nation status' (Welshman et al. 2006) and the characteristics of its 'white' settler population, found its genesis here. The 'White Australia Policy' was based on the stated needed to preserve the 'stock' and also critically, the land mass, of the Australian 'people', which, at the time, did not include aboriginal people, from 'certain races and aliens with unclean customs' (Elder 2003).

## **The Intensification of Connections Between Immigration and Contagion at the National 'Border'**

With intensified domestic efforts to eliminate TB within Australia in the mid-twentieth century, aided by the emergence of effective treatment chemotherapy, TB came to be imagined almost solely in terms of an external 'threat' posed by 'foreign bodies' (Bashford 2002), which lent impetus to efforts to contain its transmission, again through border screening. The passage of the Migration Act [1958] largely maintained the broad connections between contagion and immigration, at least in the public mind, through nominating a range of diseases which warranted exclusion from Australia, with TB foremost amongst them. But it also signalled a shift from a focus on 'non-white' to 'white' 'foreigners' in terms of the potential 'threat' of the 'importation of TB', through recognising that 'undesirable Britons' are capable too of 'importing' disease. Whilst maintained through earlier quarantine practice(s), the category of 'undesirable Britons' was lent impetus through the establishment of separate Australian citizenship in 1948, whereas before that 'Australians' had been considered 'British subjects.' The status of TB, as a 'loathsome disease' which posed a 'threat' to Australia was therefore not only re-affirmed, but elevated as a health-related basis for exclusion from Australia and the 'racial' imaginary extended to include Australia's 'island-nation status', as distinct from Britain (Bashford 2002). The litmus test for health checks here was the level of TB within a community at a point in time. However, this did not radically change the intent or even effect of border screening in Australia at that point in time, as it merely served to broaden the basis of exclusion, rather than widen the basis for inclusion, within the Australian 'nation', still imagined as a white 'body/nation' (Anderson

2009). It is clear that the early era of border screening in Australia, particularly that aimed at what was once considered the 'white plague', but came to be imagined as an imported 'foreign disease', TB (Bashford 2002), increasingly came to reflect a "constellation of processes...[through which]...space is written as race" (Perera 2007), albeit at times under the guise of notions of class, encapsulated in the moral notions of cleanliness of the era.

National borders, then, in this early imaginary, were envisaged as a means for demarcating space according to 'race' and the maintenance of white privilege, manifest in the supposed need to protect the Australian 'stock' from 'unclean aliens', who were assumed to pose a threat to 'public health', largely in terms of 'TB importation'. Within the confines of this largely colonialist imaginary, space, seen in terms of the borders of the white settler/colonial 'nation', functioned largely as the "raw material of colonial sovereignty" (Mbembe 2003), parcelled out those who belonged and were deemed to be of 'value' and denied to those who were not, evoking notions of class, as well as 'race', although the two were largely inseparable.

### **A Race for 'Space': The Implications of the 'Spatial Turn' for Population 'Risk' in an Era of 'Insecurity'**

In our current era the earlier, and characteristically geopolitical, focus on protecting the ('white') 'nations' borders from 'immigrant TB' (and 'colour contagion') has been superseded by a focus on policing internal borders between different population groups within specific 'public' spaces. This aligns with the increasing regulation of everyday life through population-level risk calculation, and categorisation, strategies (Morris 2008). As Paul

Virillio (2005) astutely foresaw, "the metropolitics of globalisation will take over the geopolitics of nations", with the 'nations borders no longer external, but running through its cities', spaces frequently imagined not only as global hubs of 'capital' and 'culture' (Mcneill et al. 2005; Sassen 2001), but contagion too (Adeyanju et al. 2007; Ali et al. 2008). What Virillio (2005) was alluding to is evident not only in recent Australian public and political discourse(s), concerning immigration and TB contagion, but also within Australia's current border screening regime, including the migration 'health criteria', which plays a crucial role in governing the entry of, and presence in, Australia of non-citizens (Department of Immigration and Citizenship 2010).

In 2006, in an apparent attempt to stage a political comeback, former Australian One-Nation politician Pauline Hanson launched an attack on 'black South Africans with TB and AIDS' entering Australia (Staff reporter 2006), which shifted the contours of public debate in an era of increased focus on 'national security' and ongoing concerns about immigration. Hanson was reported to have claimed, "[t]here's increasing numbers of TB (tuberculosis) and they have picked up ... it could be almost one third that actually carries TB" (Staff reporter 2006). Importantly, her comments on TB and the 'importation' of infectious disease(s) also included marked references to specific spaces, such as 'public' swimming pools, with an allegation that 'some people are being denied the right to swim in public pools' because others (Muslim people) have objected on religious grounds. This public political intervention, and articulation of different concerns, not only brought the spectre of the long-held 'immigrant TB threat' within the public purview once again, sparking a review of the implementation of the immigration 'health criteria' by then Health Minister, the Hon. Tony Abbott, but also re-ignited a fierce debate

as to who should be permitted to enter Australia and under what conditions. A particularly remarkable feature of this recent political discourse, of which Hanson's comments are a striking example, has been the attention paid to 'public' space(s), such as swimming pools and schools, with notions of encroachment and overcrowding of these spaces, long associated with the transmission of infectious diseases such as TB (Acevedo-Garcia 2000), coming to the fore.

Increasingly in political discourse(s), and indeed as a result of it, particular spaces, including the school playground, the 'public' swimming pool, the hospital and suburban areas are being imagined as under 'threat'. This 'threat' is said to come not only from population pressures, associated with inwards migration in the public mind, including issues of overcrowding and housing shortages, but also 'imported diseases', such as TB, whose threat is seemingly heightened by the geographical proximity of 'Australians' to (real or imagined) 'carriers of disease'. These carriers are still largely, although not exclusively, imagined in terms of their 'race' (Anderson 2009), although the emphasis is no longer on the supposed primordial, or innate, 'backwardness' of any one group or individual, but rather their proximity within particular spaces to other 'Australians'. This signals not only the spatial, but also distinctly chronopolitical, or temporal, character of political discourse(s) on immigration and TB contagion in Australia, with TB itself being imagined as both an ancient and distant disease on account of the notion that the campaign in the "middle of last century to eradicate tuberculosis was essentially successful" ((New South Wales Parliament 2006). As recently as 2006, the Hon. David Oldfield, former New South Wales One Nation Member of Parliament asserted,

[I]f people are not worried about themselves, they might like to consider who their children or grandchildren are at school with or who might bite them, spit on them, breathe on them or, for that matter, simply share a drink with them (emphasis added) (New South Wales Parliament 2006)

These comments, albeit made in the confines of the New South Wales State Parliament, have incredible currency in public discourse(s), illustrating the circulation and articulation of specific affects, such as fear, within political discourse(s) on immigration and TB contagion. In a study on attitudes towards vaccination by parents in Sydney, New South Wales, it was found that fears concerning immigration, and particularly contact between children and peers from 'foreign' backgrounds, largely in the school setting, strongly influenced the decision to vaccinate (Leask et al. 2006), signalling the ongoing salience of space, particularly as it pertains to geographical proximity to 'disease carriers', within public and political discourse(s). One parent, in a further study reporting on attitudes towards messages concerning vaccination in Sydney, New South Wales (Leask et al. 2006), pointedly remarked,

. . . things like sort of migrants and different nationalities and people from other countries coming in that [mean] your child is at risk of catching something if you don't have them immunised.

Undoubtedly, the articulation of signifiers such as the 'school', 'swimming pool' and 'hospital', all of which are constructed as spaces central to the imagined local, and national, community, within discourse(s) of immigration and TB contagion, has served to conjure up a sense of a shared political identity, which has, as its constitutive outside, the non-citizen, the recent migrant and the person of colour, imagined largely as a threat within these same specific spaces.

Perceptions of 'risk' in public and political discourse(s) of immigration and TB contagion in Australia are thus evidently tied to both (immigrant) population groups and the proximity to those groups to 'Australians' within highly specific 'public' spaces.

In a similar vein, the internal 'border lines' running through cities, which are increasingly manifest in spatial distancing between people and fears of TB contagion within specific ('public') spaces, are also played out with regard to TB screening. Here, aggregate population categories, and attendant 'risk categorisation' strategies, defined by reference to country of birth, citizenship and intended period of residence within Australia, are defining features of decisions whether or not to subject individuals to migration health tests for TB (Bashford et al. 2005). Indeed, the reason for the 'health requirement' itself is premised on, and necessitated by, the supposed 'threat' of TB, entrenched in the Migration Act [1958] (Australian National Audit Office 2007). This largely 'pre-emptive' logic concerning border screening, which is premised on arresting health 'threats' before they materialise (Massumi 2007), is centred on population level risk-categorisation strategies. These strategies stratify 'risk' according to 'high' TB incidence and 'low' TB incidence countries and, when codified as a 'threat' and 'reportable disease' in national security legislation, such as the National Health & Security Act [2007], signal the elision of a divide between public health and national security in our current age of 'insecurity'. This elision has largely been heralded, argue Hooker and Ali (2009), by the emergence of the pervasive discourse of the 'New Normal' in our current era, which is defined by reference to seemingly consuming 'threats' to human health and security and an attendant logic of pre-emption intended to forestall these same 'threats'.

In practice, this current regime of border screening in Australia requires all visa applicants from certain 'high-risk' countries (such as South Africa, India, China and Nepal) to undergo a medical examination prior to a visa being issued for a stay over a certain number of months in duration. However, on-shore screening is also permitted for applicants already lawfully resident in Australia (Alvarez et al. 2011), and arguably inhabiting the same 'public' spaces alluded to in public and political discourse on immigration and TB contagion. This signals the policing of risk through the interpolation of identity categories, which turn 'risk', in the context of available technology to 'test' for TB, such as a mantoux test, into something calculable and manageable. Critically, this 'risk', far from being imagined, and 'managed,' off-shore can now be assessed on-shore, within public space(s) that have themselves become of the focus of political discourse(s) on immigration and contagion. In this context, it is important to recognise that "the drawing of boundaries is, necessarily, an ongoing political and thus contingent social practice" (Howarth 2006), and the decision to institute an option for migration health screening within Australia, and critically, Australian cities, reflects a tacit acknowledgement that the 'nations borders are no longer external, but run through its cities' (Virilio 2005), and as such, need to be policed and managed through population level strategies of control, which estimate and importantly, distribute 'risk'. This risk, as I have argued, is distributed according to population level 'risk categories', tied to 'immigrant' identity, and increasingly realised as unfolding within specific 'public' spaces.

## **Conclusion**

Whilst the legacy of 'race' in Australia's history, and the connections between immigration and TB contagion,

endure, distinct pressures in Australian cities, imagined as largely 'spatial concerns', including chronic housing shortages in Sydney, have captured the public's attention amidst the ongoing 'threat' of TB, evoking a 'race for space' in our current era. This has served to expand the contours of exclusion in current Australian political discourse(s) beyond 'race' alone, to include distinctly spatial, but no less politically articulated, concerns and thereby entrenching the immigration/contagion nexus in the Australian public and political imagination.

### **Author Note**

Jed Horner is a research student at the School of Public Health & Community Medicine, UNSW, examining the materialisation and negotiation of the 'immigrant tuberculosis (TB) threat' in Sydney, Australia. His previous publications have focused on accountability in immigrant health and wellbeing research and he has an enduring interest in the construction and contestation of identity and meaning in the field of public health.

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## **Beyond 'Insiders on the Outside': Towards a Conception of Identity and Experience for the 'Second Generation'**

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*The relationship between experience and identity is not self-evident, but rather contingent and open to subversion. Successive generations of scholars concerned with the experiences of the children of immigrants have, however, largely unquestioningly painted them as one and the same. In the case of the second generation, the locally born children of immigrants, this has led to them being positioned as a proxy for migrant acculturation. I argue that such views are linked to broader discourses concerning immigration and immigrants within 'mainstream' society, which are variously couched in terms of 'racial difference' and 'cultural diversity'. In turn, I argue that far from producing 'objective representations of experience' researchers have been implicated in the construction of the second generation as 'insiders on the outside', struggling to negotiate an all-consuming cultural divide involving 'family', 'community' and the 'host' society. In reverting to 'culturally' and 'racially' based explanations, researchers participate in the literal making of an essentialised second generation identity, contingent on the seemingly homogenous experiences of this heterogenous population group. In challenging this view, I propose a move beyond the confines of acculturative ideologies in order to realise the multifarious spatio-temporal aspects of second generation experience(s) and identities.*

## **Introduction**

In an age of global migration, researchers are acutely aware of the need to consider not only the experiences of immigrants, but also those of successive generations (Portes & Zhou, 1993). It is thus unsurprising that a perennial concern within sociological and psychological research has been the experiences of 'second generation immigrants', that is, the locally born children of at least one immigrant parent. Despite this keen interest in the experiences of the 'second generation', efforts to conceptualise this group have proved complex and challenging, in part due to the often conflicting dynamics between experience and identity.

In this paper, I discuss how researchers, in countries with high levels of post World War II immigration, including the United States, Canada, and Australia, utilising a immigrant-centred framework, have been implicated in the discursive construction of the 'second generation' as 'insiders on the outside'. This construction creates a representation of the group whose major purpose is to negotiate the seemingly all consuming cultural divide between 'family', 'community' and 'host' society.

I argue that discourses regarding the role and place of immigrants in society have come to shape a 'second generation' research agenda focused on the acculturation process of immigrants through the 'integration' and/or 'assimilation' of their locally born offspring. As such an essentialised 'second generation' identity, contingent on the seemingly homogenous experiences of this population group, and embedded in 'cultural' and 'racial' constructions of difference, prevails within research concerning the children of immigrants in such contexts. In challenging this view, I argue for the need to move beyond an immigrant-centred framework, to realise the

multifarious spatio-temporal aspects of second generation experience(s) and identity(s).

### **Immigrants and Immigration in Discourse, Policy and Research**

Immigration has been a significant focus of political debates and policy developments in countries such as the United States, Canada, and Australia, with similar changes seen in each context (Collins 1993; Freeman and Birrell 2001; Ongley and Pearson 1995). During the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, all of these countries had adopted discriminatory immigration policies that aimed to promote immigration from European nations and restrict the entry of immigrants from non-European backgrounds. These policies were gradually abolished in the 1970s in favour of more liberal and expansive policies, involving selection systems based on economic and occupational criteria, family links and humanitarian considerations (Collins 1993; Ongley and Pearson 1995). As a result, contemporary immigration in each country has increasingly come to comprise successive waves of immigrants from increasingly non-European or mixed backgrounds which has led to the rapid diversification of these populations (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2011; Department of Immigration and Citizenship 2011; United States. Department of Homeland Security 2011).

As evidenced by the changes described, underpinning these comparative immigration policy developments were shifts in discourse relating to the role and place of immigrants in society. For instance, within the Australian context, immigrants from non-European backgrounds were initially construed as a potential 'threat' to society under the 'White' Australia policy, however during the post-1945 period Australia embarked on an extensive

immigration program to address the population and labour force decline (Collins 1993). The first Australian Minister for Immigration, Arthur Calwell's slogan "we must fill the country or lose it" (Australian Institute of Political Science 1953) demonstrates this shift in the positioning of immigrants from a 'threat' to a necessity for the survival of Australian society. This call remained in favour of 'white' immigrants, although this definition was broadened to include Eastern European countries as well as traditional Northern European source countries. As a result, in the Australian and Canadian contexts there have also been ideological shifts in the 'settlement' of immigrants, from an assimilative model during the 'White' Australia and 'White' Canada policy periods, to an integration focused model between the mid-1960 to early 1970s, where as part of broader social changes and civil rights movements, there was a shift to the model of 'multiculturalism' (Collins 1993; Ongley and Pearson 1995)

Whilst each of these ideological shifts involved a seemingly increased appreciation and 'acceptance' of diversity and cultural difference, the power relationships between the dominant, hegemonic mainstream and immigrants has largely remained the same. As Hage (1998) argues, discourses of 'tolerance' and 'enrichment' within multiculturalism have led to aspects of migrant cultures, such as food, music and dance, being positioned as consumables for, and by, the (white) majority. These cultural 'items', mediated by the (white) majority themselves, come to act as symbols of 'integration' and 'majority acceptance'. Uncomfortable differences, such as the burka, the need of individuals to support ties beyond the stereotypical or the nuclear family, or resistance to the incorporation of Christian holidays in a supposedly sectarian state system, however are viewed as subversive. Within this ever shifting context, immigrants

and subsequent generations are required to shift to fit within pre-existing social structures and norms defined by the (white) majority.

The discursive context of these developments has had a profound influence on research agendas, with considerable attention paid to ascertaining the potential and real impacts of immigration, in political, economic and social terms, whether through tracking the spatial and temporal movement(s) of population groups across and within national borders and approximating the economic 'burden' of this movement. For instance, the settlement experiences of immigrants and the social impact of immigration on society have been a concern of social scientists (Pedras 2000; Portes 1978). Within this research agenda, interest in the 'second generation' has grown, arguably in response to the need to extend current efforts to examine the political, economic and social impacts of immigration more broadly. Seminal empirical studies and theoretical developments in the United States, exploring aspects such as language adaptation (Portes and Schauffler 1994), educational and employment outcomes (Schmid 2001), mental health (Montazer and Wheaton 2011), intergenerational relationships (Choi et al. 2008), and identity (Waters 1994), have provided a rich foundation for research endeavours in other countries, including Australia, Canada, and parts of Europe as well as prompting some cross-context comparisons (Department of Immigration and Citizenship 2011; Heath et al. 2008).

### **Challenges to Conceptualising the Children of Immigrants in Research**

Whilst there has been increased interest in the 'second generation', particularly in the US, Canada and Australia,

researchers have faced substantial and on-going challenges in defining and conceptualising this population group. This, as the following discussion demonstrates, is due to the discursive positioning of the 'second generation' within a broader immigrant and immigration research and policy agenda.

The first challenge to defining the second generation has involved accounting for the potential different influences of having *one* or *two* migrant parents on one's life experiences. It has been argued that different parents (mother/father) play different roles in a child's life, with there being the potential for one parent to be more influential than the other (gender differentiation), particularly within intermarriages between couples of different ethnic/national backgrounds (Rumbaut 2004). Some researchers emphasise the nativity status/country of birth of the mother when determining second generation status, particularly in studies on 'cultural transmission' (Oropesa and Landale 1997). Conversely, others have emphasised the father's country of birth, often when exploring issues of social mobility or the impact of socioeconomic status on second generation wellbeing (Khoo et al. 2002). In response to this challenge, Rumbaut (2004) has proposed the term '2.5 generation', to refer to children with *one* migrant parent and to differentiate them from the second (2.0) generation who have *two* migrant parents. Montazer and Wheaton (2011: 25) argue that making a clear distinction between second and 2.5 generation populations is crucial because "there are more potential sources of parental conflict resulting from cultural or religious differences" within the 2.5 generation because of the presence of only one migrant parent.

The second challenge has involved the need to differentiate between first generation immigrants who

immigrated as children and their locally born counterparts. It has been argued that first generation immigrants who migrated as children have similar experiences to the second generation, because of their early and prolonged exposure to the 'host' society and mainstream 'culture' (Oropesa and Landale 1997; Thernstrom 1973; Zhou 1997). Based on the view that events during the 'formative years', prior to adolescence, play a significant role in shaping a child's life, younger immigrants are often grouped within the second generation for research purposes (Child 1943, Thernstrom 1973). However, grouping young first generation immigrants with the second generation is problematic as it dilutes the immigrant experience and makes the term second generation more ambiguous. In response to this dilemma Rumbaut (2004) has proposed a "seven ages typology", which provides a list of numerical labels, including the 1.25, 1.5. and 1.75 generations, according to seven life stages of arrival for first generation migrants. Through the use of these numerical categories or labels unique experiences said to be embodied within each stage can be explored in more depth.

### **Insiders on the Outside: A Discursive Construction of the Second Generation**

The challenges outlined above, I argue, underscore the immigrant-centred framework which has been employed to define the second generation, in that researchers have attempted to define the second generation in relation to their immigrant parents, their first and 1.5 generation peers and the process of immigration more broadly. In turn, a politically and socially constructed representation of the 'second generation' as 'insiders, on the outside', or that as the children of immigrants they are regarded as a component, or part of the process, of immigrant

acculturation has come to prevail within research. Portes' (1994) conception of the second generation as 'the generation in transition' pertinently captures this idea of a generation which is struggling to negotiate the supposed 'cultural divide' or experiencing what Zhou (1997: 83) has termed the "clash between two social worlds", that of their immigrant parents, family and/or community, and the contradictory 'culture' of 'mainstream society' in the country they have migrated to.

In line with these various conceptions of the second generation, researchers in a range of contexts including the US, Canada and Australia, have focused their attention on the acculturative experiences of the second generation with a view to measuring the factors that facilitate or hinder their ability to integrate into mainstream society. For instance, it has been argued that second generation adolescents may encounter 'intergenerational cultural dissonance' or a struggle to reconcile parental 'cultural values' with that of 'mainstream society' (Choi et al. 2008; Rumbaut 2004), with members of the second generation more likely to identify with the values and social practices of the 'host society' (Rumbaut 1997). As part of what Portes and Rumbaut (2001) term "dissonant acculturation", the second generation are vulnerable to "intergenerational conflict" encompassing issues regarding "independence, space, finances, activities outside home, sexual relationships, values, expectations of success, and family responsibilities" (Francis and Cornfoot 2007: 17).

Portes and Zhou's (1993) theory of 'segmented assimilation' provides an alternative perspective, highlighting three possible avenues of second generation (cultural) adaptation within the context of the United States, based on different immigrant groups. The first

corresponds with the 'straight-line' assimilation model, highlighting the acculturation patterns of members of the 'old' second generation from European backgrounds into the 'white-middle class'. Downward assimilation, a further take on Gans (1992) 'second generation decline', emphasises the integration of members of the second generation into lower-socioeconomic groups or the 'underclass'. For example, Bankston (1998) underlines the increasing presence of youth gangs, many of which have a strong second generation constituency in the United States, highlighting the phenomena of downward mobility within the 'new' second generation in the United States. Alternatively, upward assimilation, as a third possible avenue, draws attention to the role of 'coethnic' connections, or strong affiliations with communities and associated 'cultural values', in supporting and propelling the 'rapid economic advancement' of some second generation groups, often well above that of their mainstream peers.

Whilst segmented assimilation highlights the potential differential experiences of the second generation based on their visible differences or similarities to the white host society, I argue that culturally and racially based explanations are still problematic for conceptualising the experiences of the second generation, as they serve to reinforce the binary between the 'host' society and ethnic culture in question (Viruell-Fuentes 2011). As Viruell-Fuentes (2011: 38) comments in relation to the health outcomes of Latino second generation youth in the United States, "[s]uch treatment of culture fails to capture the complexity of collective systems of meaning and action that culture comprises and the ways these systems emerge and shift under specific social, historical, and political contexts". In reverting to 'cultural divide' explanations, researchers, I argue, are implicated in the literal making of an essentialised identity of the second

generation, contingent on the second generation's seemingly homogenous 'experiences of their family culture, the 'host' culture and the cultural divide, in turn foreclosing other possibilities and perspectives. In turn opportunities to capture other possible experiences and expressions of identity(s) outside this normative conceptualisation are limited.

## **Conclusion**

Issues related to defining and conceptualising the second generation highlight the complexities of immigration and the dynamics that unfold across subsequent generations. Through the use of numerical categories and subsequent research practices the immigrant-centred framework underpinning second generation research is continually reinforced and manifests as culturally and racially based explanations of the second generation experience, which is depicted as a singular experience of the on-going struggle to negotiate an all-consuming cultural divide. In employing this immigrant-centred framework, I argue researchers have tended to examine aspects of the 'acculturative journey' for 'second generation immigrants' as a means of understanding, if not attempting to validate, the process of immigrant acculturation, through the use of a 'cultural tension' or 'insider/outsider' argument, foreclosing opportunities to capture experiences outside this view. I contend that there is a need to move beyond the immigrant-centred view of the second generation, a move which may involve the following actions.

Firstly, I suggest that first generation immigrants should be considered as distinct from the 'second generation' (locally born children of immigrant parents) because migration, as a social and physical movement, has a strong potential to shape future experiences. For

example, children who move with their parents as a result of so-called 'push' factors (Kunz 1973) have been shown to be unwilling migrants, with the choice to migrate not being their own (Mason 1997). In fact, it has been argued that even if they immigrate at an early age, first generation immigrants still identify with their country of origin (Phinney et al. 2000). Determining at what life stages the experience of migration is most profound is difficult to predict as each individual has different interpretations of migration, whether it is the actual physical and social process which impacts on them, or their reflections on the process later in life. Thus, despite age or life stage, and whether the choice to move was theirs, immigrants have the ability to draw on their unique experiences of social and physical movement as a reference point for their identity. In turn, I suggest young first generation immigrants should be considered separately to the second generation.

Secondly, whilst there will always be a focus on acculturation within immigration research, I propose the need for more reflexive second generation research, which at a minimum acknowledges the immigrant-centred agenda of such research. Ideally, such research would attempt to explore the experiences of the second generation in a non-essentialising manner and instead acknowledges the multifarious, spatio-temporal, ever-shifting aspects of identity and experience. Through such endeavours, opportunities for the locally born children of immigrant parent(s) to (re)present their own lived experiences and identities will emerge.

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# **In Relationship with Indigenous Sovereignty**

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*This paper critically examines the way that whiteness impedes a non-colonial present between many white Australians with Indigenous Australians. It draws upon an empirical study with self-identified rural white Australians to explore multiple locations of whiteness and the complicity in the ongoing dispossession of Indigenous peoples and their land rights and sovereignty. Additionally the paper explores the counter-narratives developed by a number of participants who articulate a relationship with Indigenous sovereignty. These narratives counter the centrality of whiteness and open up the possibility of future relations that are non-colonial.*

## **Introduction**

The title of this paper engages with the fact that, to date, Indigenous sovereignty is not ceded in Australia and neither have any Treaties been signed that acknowledge Indigenous sovereignty. The claim of Australia as a nation-state, and therefore claims of belonging by any non-Indigenous peoples living in Australia, is thus predicated on the disavowal of Indigenous sovereignty. Irene Watson (2007: 25) argues that it is precisely "in thinking through how to engage with Aboriginal sovereignties that Australian society... becomes 'stuck',

where the ground of 'impossibility' lies, but it is this ground 'exactly' where our thinking should begin". The 'impossibility' Watson identifies is that of 'settling' two contending notions of sovereignty: the Indigenous claim to sovereignty based on the ontological belonging in country (Moreton-Robinson 2009) and the "unbridled sovereignty" of white possession embedded in the Australian nation-state's refusal to 'treat' with Indigenous sovereignty (Butler 2011). Fiona Nicoll (2007), in her discussion of the pedagogical issues of teaching "in Indigenous sovereignty", both enters the space of impossibility and attempts to think through or beyond it, bringing the issue of indigenous sovereignty into the sphere of the everyday relationships between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Australians. She argues that all non-Indigenous Australians are in relationship with Indigenous Australians, whether or not they have personally met any, by virtue of the continuing fact of Indigenous sovereignty. However, revealing this relationship inevitably destabilises the performativity of white sovereignty which is constituted on and through the denial of the sovereignty of the indigenous other (see also Giannacopoulos 2007; Povinelli 2010). Only by placing non-Indigenous Australians always in relationship to Indigenous sovereignty is it possible to avoid the inherent possessiveness of whiteness and go "beyond the scope of [white Australian state] political imagination" (Nicoll 2007: 27). In this paper, we take up Nicoll's question "What is the relationship of other Australians, in the name of whom national sovereignty is claimed and defended, to this Indigenous sovereignty?", and ask how can non-Indigenous people "fall into Indigenous Sovereignty" as proposed by Nicoll?

These questions are explored in this paper through qualitative interview data collected in 2003 with self-identified 'white Australians' living in three rural locations

in South Australia. Pseudonyms are used for all locations and respondents in the study. Part of a larger study into the social construction and reproduction of whiteness in contemporary Australia, the interview questions attempted to draw out how the respondents spoke about themselves in relation to Indigenous Australians. Here we consider the responses of five interviewees in terms of their discursive formation. While we do not claim “representativeness” for our study or for the few interviews able to be presented here, the five were selected as indicative of the range of discursive locations constructed in the 29 rural interviews transcripts conducted in the study.<sup>1</sup>

### **Thinking about Indigenous Relations**

When asked about their relations with Aboriginal people, the interviewee’s responses included a variety of discourses about Indigeneity, whiteness, migrancy and relations with difference. Most of the interviewees had no experience of relating with Indigenous peoples at a personal level, thus confirming Nicoll’s observation above (2007: 26). In the extract below, Louis and Phyllis reflect on their personal social geographies, centred around Greek ethnicity, in regard to indigenous people. Louis and Phyllis are growers on a small family farm. Louis works in a number of jobs including as an undertaker and Phyllis is a farmer and is very involved at their children’s school as a parent.

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<sup>1</sup> An urban segment of the study was conducted between 1998 and 2002 by Haggis (with S. Schech). This paper is based only on the rural interviews undertaken. The two segments will be synthesised in a forthcoming monograph under preparation by Haggis and Koerner.

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Interviewer: We talked a little bit before [when talking about childhood friendships] about whether you knew Aboriginal people who live in the area. Do you have any connections with Aboriginal people now?

Louis: Look at it, and jokes aside, we don't get any Aboriginal people coming to Greek Church, but no.

Phyllis: No, we don't really.

Louis: They don't – the Aboriginal community, the only place you would see them in Rivertown alone would be in the pub on pension day, for example.

Phyllis: At the footy.

Louis: You would see them at the local footy if they are involved.

Phyllis: I see some at school, but to have any interaction with them – we don't really.

Louis: In Rivertown, our Indigenous ones are mainly from Thursday Island and from out Queensland way...they came with the picking and they loved the place so much...When the can became more mechanised...they lost a bit of work out there and...They settled here. And they are different again and they are more approachable...Completely different to the Aboriginals. Nothing wrong with the Aboriginals, but we don't have any comings and goings with them. But these T.I's, they get involved with school. The kids are different. They have inter-married, the majority of them in a sense that they have got a family who has married a Greek.

Louis and Phyllis do not identify any connection with Aboriginal people in their everyday lives, yet several power relations interplay in Louis and Phyllis's reflections about their lack of connection with Indigenous people. Louis' observation that Indigenous people do not attend the local Greek Church centres Greek Australian cultural and religious practices. 'Jokes aside', an Aboriginal presence would not be expected. The place where Louis does expect to see Aboriginal people from the local area (as opposed to Torres Strait Islander people) is at the pub on pension day. Phyllis sees local Aboriginal people at the footy, in a separate team, and at the school that

Phyllis' children attend, but has no connection with Indigenous people in either setting. There is an invisible Aboriginal presence because Louis does not expect to see Aboriginal people in many of his social contexts. Yet the presence is expected in the pub, at the footy and at the school. Even in these settings, Aboriginal people are made to be out of place, even while being 'in their place' in terms of stereotypes of the drunk, lazy Aboriginal, or that Aboriginal people are 'naturally good at sport' and can therefore be expected 'at the footy'. All of these are narratives of power that discursively maintain Indigenous oppression within the white nation.

Watson (2007: 15) argues that Aboriginal sovereignty will always undermine settled spaces and therefore that it penetrates multicultural spaces in Australia as well. Louis's spatial figuring of Thursday Islander peoples in Rivertown illustrates this. Their presence does not disrupt the migrant presence. Rather, Thursday Islander families are viewed as another group of 'settlers', who work on the migrant family's farms and marry in to the Greek Australian centre (as opposed to Greek families marrying into Thursday Islander families). In this setting, the Torres Strait Islander families are engaged with as 'fellow migrants' in a multicultural matrix, rather than as Indigenous peoples. Instead, it is the Aboriginal people on whose land Rivertown is situated who are seen 'to be different' from, and therefore on the outside of, the migrant centre.

The observations of Louis and Phyllis illustrate a dominant theme amongst the majority of interviewees. It was not until a direct question was asked that most interviewees noticed the lack of connection with Indigenous Australians in their social geographies. In the racial mapping of Rivertown, Indigenous people are set apart in a way that is more segregated than migrant

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cultural groups. Indeed for some, Indigenous people are invisible or absent. Tony, a retired RAAF pilot living in the Rivertown region, answered a direct question about connections with Indigenous people by denying their geographical proximity while commenting on their socially disruptive presence.

Interviewer: Do you know who the Indigenous people from this area are and how do you relate?

Tony: Oh, there aren't any. Except for Blacktown [the name has been changed. Blacktown is the Aboriginal community in the region]. They only come into town to play football. I coach our local team. They all get drunk and cause fights. They are anti-social and aggressive, it's a big problem. They will get banned from the football competition if they keep it up.

Mary, a local amateur historian also from Rivertown echoes Tony's spatial configuration of absence and disruption. She replies to the same question with an observation on the historical presence of Indigenous people in the area but refutes any claim to continuous occupation, although her mapping of their 'absence' in her relational map clearly runs counter to this assertion.

For those few people who did figure Indigenous people in their relational networks, work was the socio-economic space that brought them together. Poppy is a woman in her mid-forties in Rivertown. In her work as a community worker, she developed relationships with Indigenous women also involved in community work in the town.

Poppy: Yes I have made many friends with Aboriginal women. Especially in community art projects that I have been involved with.

Interviewer: Are you still in touch now?

Poppy: Yes, we catch up for lunch every couple of weeks. My closest circle of friends and family are Greek and then the

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next circle of friends extending out is very diverse, including being Aboriginal.

Likewise, Liza made lasting friendships in the Indigenous community through her role as a teacher in Red Ocean. These connections continue despite her move to Rolling Hills, where she now lives and works, and where she intentionally developed new indigenous friendships.

### **Land Rights and Being Australian**

A second line of inquiry pursued in the interviews explored relational contexts in terms of Indigenous struggles for land rights and the interviewee's sense of being Australian. Responses to this question from some respondents revealed an emergent relationship to Indigenous sovereignty more indicative of what 'falling into indigenous sovereignty' might involve. David, a retired principal and secondary school teacher, illustrates this.

David: I have never felt threatened. I mean, my understanding of what land rights mean to Aboriginal people has evolved gradually throughout my life. I certainly didn't understand it as a young person. I only had the British idea of land ownership. The idea that a cattle station and an Aboriginal group could both own the same section of land, with owning having two totally different meanings never occurred to me. Just as it's never occurred I think to most station people.

It is possible that David 'never felt threatened' by Indigenous land rights in Australia because he has always lived in urban or rural towns. Thus, his own personal investment in land through home ownership was not directly questioned. However, his gradual realisation of the possibility of two different meanings of land ownership demonstrates a significant conceptual shift

that suggests the change required to develop a just relationship with Indigenous sovereignty. A similar shift is articulated by Citrus, a multigenerational settler Australian who is a horticulturalist in his mid 70s.

Citrus: Until we understand the philosophy, until we understand that land is an integral part of their thinking, their life, their whole being, whereas we look upon land as having a title and we buy it and it's part of what we do, but it's not part of what we are, we will never succeed [to address the social disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal people].

These brief extracts are obviously insufficient in and of themselves to establish a discursive shift among some of our respondents from a discourse of denial and possessive whiteness to acknowledgement of indigenous presence and a more 'post-colonising' whiteness. However, Citrus and David's remarks nevertheless indicate the dimensions of the continuum within whiteness as standpoint, location and identity; a continuum that shifts from the colonising discourses of negation and denial expressed most clearly in the words of Tony and Mary to one that may be a stronger base upon which to build a politics of recognition and non-possessive whiteness.

## **Conclusion**

This paper briefly explores the variety of responses from rural white Australians, many of whom are themselves migrants or children of migrants, when asked about their relationship to Indigenous people and to Indigenous land rights. We argue that this material suggests a discourse of "unbridled sovereignty" based on a possessive investment in whiteness continues to frame the ways in which non-Indigenous Australians relate to Indigenous

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sovereignty. In everyday narratives and intersections, the dominant theme still turns on relations of ruling between white Australians and Indigenous sovereignty. However, the data presented here also reveals counter-narratives that are examples of the fluidity of whiteness and the possibility for future relations to be different. The words of David and Citrus indicate how some white Australians are moving towards a relational map more open to the transformation of relations between coloniser and colonised (Sandoval 1997).

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## **Towards Reflexive Antiracism**

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*This paper introduces the concept of Reflexive Antiracism as a response to two major critiques of anti-racism theory and praxis, explored in the paper as the dangers of essentialism and the elicitation of counter-productive emotional reactions among participants. The paper explores these critiques as they apply to two broad approaches to diversity training: cultural awareness and antiracism. Reflexive Antiracism offers an alternative to existing approaches through a focus on racialisation (a concept that encompasses both racism and antiracism) as well as the formation and maintenance of racialised identities. An emphasis on the paradoxes of racialisation and the contingencies of minority and white antiracist identities promotes a realistic and productive understanding of cross-cultural work that avoids the noted pitfalls of diversity training.*

### **Introduction: Racism, Antiracism and Diversity Training**

Those who identify as antiracist would agree that racism exists in all societies, and should be actively addressed. However, relatively few antiracists are aware that attempts to address racism can sometimes backfire. For example, although promoting empathy is an established approach to reducing racism (Paradies et al. 2009), negative results can ensue when empathy is induced during an inter-racial interaction as each participant fears that others hold negative stereotypes about them (Vorauer and Sasaki 2009). Evidence that negation or

denial of stereotypes can increase the power of such stereotypes is another example (Gawronski et al. 2008).

The potential for antiracism to backfire is highlighted by review studies on diversity training.<sup>1</sup> Three review studies of over 32 diversity training programs in varying contexts found that while 50-60% of participants displayed less discriminatory attitudes and beliefs than they did before the training, or than those who did not participate in the training (where a control group is included), 15-20% of participants showed an *increase* in discriminatory attitudes or behaviours as a result of diversity training (Paradies et al. 2009). Such results highlight the risks inherent in antiracist practice and the need to anticipate negative outcomes.

Reflexive Antiracism (RA) is a novel approach to antiracism that aims to foster a sustainable and effective approach. It responds to two related critiques of antiracism, and particularly diversity training – the dangers of essentialism and negative emotional reactions - and acknowledges the ambiguities of antiracist practice.<sup>2</sup> These critiques will be examined, primarily

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<sup>1</sup> This includes training programs are associated with various labels, including: multicultural, cultural awareness, antiracism, cross-cultural, conflict resolution, equity, cultural competence, prejudice reduction, amongst others.

<sup>2</sup> In this article, we draw on the diversity training literature predominantly derived from the United States, complemented with insights from critical race theory, whiteness studies and social psychology. To this U.S.-dominated literature, we add examples and evaluations of diversity training from the Australian context where the minority group of interest is usually Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

within the context of diversity training programs that are designed for 'white' people with a specific focus on Indigenous Australians. Drawing from whiteness studies scholarship, we do not consider whiteness to be a 'natural' category based on skin colour. Rather, it is the structure through which white cultural dominance is naturalised and, thus, reproduced and maintained (Frankenberg 1993). The category of 'white antiracists' therefore is not limited just to those who have white skin, but to the broader group of antiracists who identify with and benefit from the racialised societal structures that privilege those with white skin along with other axes of advantage such as wealth and education.<sup>3</sup>

Critiques of diversity training highlight a tendency to essentialise 'other' cultural identities as well as the potential to generate 'backfire' effects among White participants (as detailed above). The first critique has been particularly directed at 'cultural awareness' approaches to diversity training that have said to contribute to heightened stereotyping and the entrenchment of racial identities in static immutable forms (Walcott 1997: 122; Kowal and Downing 2011; McGregor 1993).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> While our discussion of 'whiteness', 'white identities', etc does not exclude non-white people who benefit from aspects of white privilege (via their educational or economic advantage, for example), the phenomenon of racism against Indigenous people from non-white non-indigenous people will have specific features that are beyond the scope of this paper.

<sup>4</sup> This view is supported, for example, by the results of an Australian study, which found that that students were more likely to believe that Aboriginal people are all alike following an

Focusing on purported characteristics of specific minority groups can reinforce essentialist racial identities in a number of ways. For instance, portraying cultural groups in a simplistic way can encourage a false ideal of "mastery" of different cultures (Walcott 1997:122). Highlighting this risk, an Aboriginal scholar has voiced her concern that health workers who attend cultural awareness training feel a false sense of "cultural knowledge", stating that trainees "just go off for a two-day training course and have a piece of paper to say I know everything there is to know about Murri<sup>5</sup> stuff now" (Fredericks 2008: p. 90). Ultimately, service providers may fail to provide the highest level of care if they are encouraged to define clients on the basis of racial characteristics or identification.<sup>6</sup> Not only are cultural

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intervention that taught specific cultural information (Copeman 1989).

<sup>5</sup> This is a term for an Aboriginal person used in many parts of Queensland.

<sup>6</sup> To illustrate the dangers of perceived cultural 'mastery,' one nurse working with Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory admitted to "doing bad work" when attempting to conduct culturally appropriate practice: "I was working in community health and this lady came in and I had been doing the pain unit [at University] and they told us that Aboriginal people might describe pain as a snake in their chest or something like that so this Aboriginal lady came in and said she had a sore arm. And I said, 'Oh what's wrong with your arm?' And she said 'I think it's got a piece of wood in it' so I was thinking, 'oh, what would wood mean?' And I go on being really culturally appropriate and all this sort of stuff. Anyway so we put this bandage on it. And I got her to come back in two days time and I took the bandage off and it had sort

groups in danger of being portrayed in simplistic ways, but, in attempting to understand 'them' better, their 'otherness' is accentuated (Pettman 1988a: 8). This approach can reinforce power imbalances by emphasising those who tolerate and those who are 'tolerated', granting power to those who choose to provide or withhold toleration (Hollinsworth 2006a; Colvin-Burque, Zugazuga, and Davis-Maye 2007; Hage 2003).

Critics have questioned whether this approach can effectively address racism. Webb and Sergison (2003) argue, for instance, that the 'cookery book' or 'tick box' approach to training, where a 'recipe' for successful interaction with 'other' cultures is presented and racist prejudices are not challenged, can reinforce negative beliefs and practices rather than improve them. Similarly, Sarup (1991) argues "just to learn about other people's cultures is not to learn about the racism of one's own" (47). These views are supported by Reimann and colleagues (2004), who found that culturally competent care was most strongly related to recognition that cultural factors and awareness of personal biases are important (Reimann et al. 2004).

A second area of concern in diversity programs relates to negative emotions that can be elicited. This is particularly the case in diversity programs that take an 'antiracist training' approach.<sup>7</sup> Antiracist training has been

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of festered up a bit, so I was cleaning it out, and I went 'God! There's a piece of wood in there!' And she went, 'I told you it was stuck' and I thought 'Oh, god, I am so sorry'. And so you can just miss the point, because you are trying too hard." (Kowal 2007: 132)

<sup>7</sup> Programs that incorporate variations of this approach are sometimes referred to as Antiracism training, Racism Awareness, and Social Justice (Hollinsworth 2006).

developed partly in response to critiques of cultural awareness training. These programs reflect upon the sources and impacts of racism on society (including racism knowingly or unknowingly perpetrated by course participants). In response to the critiques raised by whiteness studies, and because the majority of students in diversity training courses are white, a major learning objective for many antiracism programs is to assist white people to develop an awareness of whiteness and white privilege and its meaning in their daily lives (Miller and Harris 2005). White people are encouraged by training facilitators to shift their thinking of racism from something that is individual, malicious, overt and possibly exaggerated by people of colour, to seeing it as a pervasive reality that they themselves have a responsibility to address (Miller and Harris 2005).

However, the goals of antiracism training programs can be hampered by essentialising white identities and inadequately managing negative emotions experienced by participants. Antiracism training risks reifying white racial identities as: inherently racist and incapable of being antiracist; as ignorant of racial issues (Miller and Harris 2005); and as generally deficient or even stigmatised (Kowal 2011). This precludes recognition of white racial identity as multifaceted and continually "in formation" (Winant 1994). The equally suspect outcome is that non-white identities are portrayed as inherently injured and morally pure (Warren and Sue 2011 ).

Essentialising white identities as inherently bad can be associated with negative emotions such as guilt and anxiety that are often not well managed. In the context of antiracism training, this issue is specific to 'motivated antiracists', that is, individuals who have an internal motivation to respond without prejudice, due to strong

egalitarian values. Scholars have noted that motivated antiracists are prone to negative emotions such as discomfort, distress, guilt, fear, anxiety, anger, inaction and withdrawal (Tatum 1992; Nicoll 2004; O'Brien 2009; Spanierman and Heppner 2004). These emotional consequences can be related to the essentialism of white and minority identities and the associated "we-them" perspective towards difference that Gosine (2002: 96) describes as simplistic and binary. An atmosphere of accusation and bias against white people can be created in diversity training courses (Von Bergen, Soper, and Foster 2002: 243). Further, when white people begin to acknowledge white privilege and the role that white people play in contributing to racism, they may no longer feel comfortable with their white racial identity (Lucal 1996; Mio and Barker-Hackett 2003; Helms 1996). This can result in both external and internal sources of negative emotions that can be challenging to manage constructively.

Psychologists use the terms "cognitive dissonance" or "value discrepancy" in reference to the sense of psychological discomfort people feel when their stereotypes and prejudices are shown to be inconsistent with their values or principles (Paradies et al. 2009). Guilt and anxiety are two outcomes of cognitive dissonance, and how these feelings are managed have implications for the effectiveness of diversity training programs.

Several studies have demonstrated the correlation between guilt and the recognition that white people are granted unearned privileges in most, if not all, societies (Branscombe et al., 2007, Swim and Miller, 1999, Spaniermann and Heppner, 2004). Some studies have found that guilt can result in positive responses (Swim and Miller 1999; Halloran 2007; Poteat and Spanierman 2008). However, there is also a risk that students will

recoil from feelings of guilt and consequently avoid interracial contact due to increased anxiety (Gaertner and Dovidio 1986), deny their privilege completely, or resist learning about race and racism after growing weary of being labelled an "oppressor" (Miller and Harris 2005). Students may also feel a sense of hopelessness or resignation (Chick, Karis, and Kernahan 2009). Alternatively, they may simply re-characterise their self-concept in terms of an identity that has less focus on antiracism and egalitarian values (Doosje, Ellemers, and Spears 1999; Slocum 2009).

Guilt about white privilege is closely linked to fear of committing further oppressive acts against non-whites. Fear of perpetuating racism gives rise to increased caution when interacting with individuals from minority cultures. While it is important that whites avoid excluding, marginalising or insulting people who are socially disadvantaged or discriminated against, for motivated anti-racists there is a danger that an atmosphere of walking "on eggshells for fear of unwittingly transgressing the rules of political correctness" can be invoked (Ely, Meyerson, and Davidson 2006: 80). This effect has been observed by social psychologists, with low-prejudiced individuals paradoxically appearing to be prejudiced in inter-racial interactions because they 'choke' due to anxiety about what the other person thinks of them (Vorauer and Turpie 2004).

Dealing with the guilt and anxiety produced in diversity training programs can potentially lead to antiracist outcomes, but may also result in behaviour that detracts from the goals of such programs. A certain level of negative emotions caused by a disjunction between antiracist intention and outcome can result in greater effort and success in achieving antiracist (or non-prejudiced) behaviour in the short-term (Monteith, Mark,

and Ashburn-Nardo 2010; Fehr and Sassenberg 2010). However, in the long-term there is also potential for such emotion to lead to 'backlash' and 'burnout' effects (Smith and Redington 2010; Slocum 2009) such as defensiveness or resistance (Kernahan and Davis 2007; Ancis and Szymanski 2001) or reduced support for affirmative action and higher levels of racial prejudice (Case 2007). In addition, such emotions can lead to dysfunctional 'rescuing', paternalism and a reluctance to employ confrontational skills when needed (Ridley 1995).

### **Towards Reflexive Antiracism**

In light of the above critiques we have sought to develop an approach to antiracism that addresses the negative effects of essentialism and emotional responses such as guilt and anxiety. Reflexivity is both a theoretical tool and a research method in many academic disciplines. Used as "a strategy for situating knowledges" (Rose 1997: 306), it requires that the researcher reflect on their own background; cultural 'baggage'; and importantly, their relation to research subjects (de Jong 2009). To be effective antiracists, white people need to be reflexive about the issues we have discussed in this paper. They need to recognise the dangers of essentialism common to antiracism: both essentialising minorities as 'good' and essentialising white people as 'bad'. They also need to recognise how they benefit from privilege without being overcome with guilt and anxiety and to accept that although they will always try to be cognisant of their privilege, they cannot erase the fact of their whiteness and the potential effects of this on antiracist practice.

The two major tools that constitute a Reflexive Antiracist approach are racialisation and identity formation. This paper will focus only on the concept

of 'racialisation'.<sup>8</sup> Within this scheme, racism and antiracism are both subsets of racialisation, rather than being mutually exclusive opposites. Drawing from Paradies (2005), racialisation is defined as:

A societal system through which people are divided into races, with power unevenly distributed (or produced) based on these racial classifications. Racialisation is embodied through attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, laws, norms, and practices that either reinforce or counteract power asymmetries.

Within a racialised societal system, actions can either enhance or reduce power asymmetries between the two (or more) racial/ethnic groups. Racism and antiracism can be defined on this basis. For instance, antiracism can be defined as:

an action that reduces power differentials through advantaging subordinate racial groups and/or disadvantaging dominant racial groups (Paradies 2005).

Racism can be defined as the opposite to this, that is, action leading to an increase in power differentials between two racialised groups. While the extremes of each concept are clear-cut, the line that divides them can be difficult to define and there are examples where it is arguable whether an act is racist or antiracist.<sup>9</sup> For

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<sup>8</sup> The function that racialisation serves is not considered here, but is clearly the subject of considerable debate. In the Australian context, scholars have pointed to the role of racialisation in the ongoing denial of Indigenous sovereignty (Moreton-Robinson 2005). Note that the topic of identity formation is covered in a separate manuscript under preparation.

<sup>9</sup> O'Brien (2009) makes a related argument that antiracism cannot be considered as the direct opposite of racism, as one

instance, efforts by an antiracist from a dominant group to assist a member of a minority group can be perceived as paternalistic, and a means to enhance the privilege of the antiracist rather than reduce power differentials between the two groups (Jensen 2006). A Reflexive Antiracism approach would recognise that in an instance such as this, valid arguments can be made to support both sides and a definitive judgment as to whether power differentials are reducing or increasing may not be possible.

Reflexive Antiracism allows antiracists to recognise that within a racialised field, the division between racism and antiracism is often unclear and in flux. It is characterised by a reflexive stance towards one's own attitudes, beliefs and behaviours as well as the reactions of others. Simultaneously, it involves maintaining equanimity in emotional reactions and a positive white antiracist identity despite the ambiguities of antiracism. This is similar to what O'Brien has termed "reflexive race cognizance" (2001), and to the inherent ambiguity and tensions between white privilege and antiracism recognised within "White dialectics" (Todd and Abrams 2011).

Racialisation can generate a constructive approach to situations that could otherwise lead to accusations of racism and consequent negative emotions. For example, a study that assessed participants' responses to a Cultural Awareness Training in South Western Sydney Area Health Service found that some participants questioned why Indigenous peoples should be viewed as being different to the rest of the population, and why so

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entity may practice antiracism in a manner that may perpetuate racism by another definition.

many resources should be devoted to one particular cultural group (Mooney 2005). For some commentators, examples such as these highlight the potential for cultural awareness training to act as a “Trojan horse created as a proverbial peace offering but containing within it the backlash of a restructured racism” (Brandt 1986: 118).

Taking a Reflexive Antiracist approach leads to a different interpretation. Rather than being labelled as an instance of racism that requires no further explanation, these comments can be explored in terms of racialisation. Indigenous people have been and are racialised in Australian society for a variety of purposes (Chesterman & Galligan 1998). In contrast with much more detrimental racialisations of Indigenous people pursued by Australian governments in the past, more recent modes of racialisation have sought to address inequalities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians and have been influenced by many factors, including the need to address historical and ongoing disadvantage experienced by Indigenous people as a group and the international Indigenous rights movement (see Rowse 2011). There are many other potential ways to classify the Australian population in order to address inequalities (e.g. by income or socio-economic position) and thus current forms of racialisation are neither inevitable nor self-evident. This comment also provides an opportunity to highlight the lack of a ‘level playing field’, make visible the ‘knapsack of white privileges’ (McIntosh 1990) and contextualise such affirmative action/positive discrimination as an always inadequate attempt to create an equitable distribution of life chances and resources in Australian society. Thus taking a Reflexive Antiracist approach can potentially lead to a broader discussion of racialisation, redirecting negative reactions towards constructive pedagogical purposes, rather than closing

down the conversation by immediately diagnosing it as racist 'backlash'.

## **Conclusion**

This paper has introduced the concept of Reflexive Antiracism as an alternative approach to cultural awareness training and antiracism training. It seeks to counter the detrimental effects of essentialism of both Indigenous and white racial identities and negative emotional reactions, such as white guilt and anxiety, through a focus on racialisation and identity formation. Further research, both qualitative and quantitative, is required to determine the effectiveness of this approach as an antiracism strategy.

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# **Racial/ised Visibility and Problematised Difference in Australian Workplaces: The Case of Skilled Black African Migrant Nurses**

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*The last three decades have seen a steady but significant increase in continental African migration (in particular, black African migrants) into Australia. Yet in spite of this increase, there is little research into black African migrant subjectivities in general, or specifically, the impact of their racialised 'visible difference' on their experiences of racism and racial discrimination. This chapter seeks to contribute towards addressing this gap in research by exploring the construction of black African visibility in Australia. The concern here is with the inscription of visibility onto black African migrant bodies. Hence, the premise of the chapter is that the 'visibility' of the black migrant body in Australia is not simply a matter of 'obvious' phenotypical differences, rather, it is a social construct, given meaning, produced and reproduced in*

*social relations of race. We use interview data from a pilot study conducted with black skilled African migrant nurses, about their racial encounters within nursing workplaces, to draw out the multiple and paradoxical meanings that visibilise the black African body in Australia, and their implications for black embodiment. Analysed within the context of workplaces hailed as raceless, diverse and multicultural, the experiences of the black African nurses reveal how the racialisation of black visibility is informed by a white racial frame that operates to 'whitewash' the workplaces while 'spacing-out' the racialised non-white worker. Ultimately, this chapter not only exposes the significance of 'visibility' (visible difference) in race-making, but also makes the connection between black phenotype - constructed as 'different' in stereotypical and problematic ways - and the racial encounters of black African migrants.*

## **Introduction**

As colour is the most outward manifestation of race it has been made the criterion by which men [sic] are judged, irrespective of their social or educational attainments... (Sir Alan Burns, 1948 cited in Fanon 1986: 118)

This chapter is about the social construction of 'difference' and the role of phenotypical characteristics (most significant of which is skin colour) in the daily realities of 'black' migrants in Australian workplaces. Specifically, it discusses the "constructed and negotiated nature" (Pierre 2002: 53) of racial/ised black visibility<sup>1</sup> in

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<sup>1</sup> We note and clarify here that our conscious choice to limit our analysis to black migrant visibility is neither an assumption of a homogenous black identity, nor an implication that racial classification in Australia is along a simplistic 'black-white' colour line. We acknowledge the complexity, multiplicity and diversity of

the context of “institutional and discursive practices that [centre and] reproduce whiteness as a hegemonic narrative of identity” (Colic-Peisker 2005: 623). Drawing on the racial encounters of black African migrant nurses with both patients and co-workers in Australian nursing workplaces, this chapter argues that variations in phenotype (the outwardly visible expression of the genotype) although biological in origin, generate socially constructed responses that are used to “create hierarchies among humans, with attendant power imbalances” (Tettey and Puplampu 2006: 9). Hence, this chapter is about the lived embodied experience of black visibility as socially constructed in Australian nursing workplaces. The analyses here will reaffirm debates about the ideological operations of a “white racial frame” (Feagin 2010; Feagin and Cobas 2008) that is informing ‘white’ workplaces, constituting and constructing the ‘difference’ of non-white black migrant workers. Our concern in this chapter is with the making and unmaking of problematised visible racial difference, as well as unarticulated meanings of racial/ised visibility and how these shape everyday practices in the workplace. In so doing, the paper “expos[es] the discursive and non-discursive impact of whiteness on the black body” (Yancy 2008: 141).

The Australian nursing workplace that is the location of this research is a site of rapid socio-cultural change and

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both the colour-line in contemporary Australia as well as of the ‘black condition’, particularly when it pertains to ‘non-migrant’ indigenous populations. Similarly, our exclusion of other racially visibly different groups in our discussion here does not imply that these groups do not experience the racial stratification process in similar ways.

increasing cultural diversity where the rate of migration-related change is amplified by the active recruitment of non-white overseas registered nurses (Mapedzahama et al 2011). For example, the active recruitment of registered nurses from Sub-Saharan African countries as a solution to the nursing shortages in Australia, has increased black presence in the nursing workplace: giving rise to the claim that it is now multicultural. In this way, the nursing workplace provides an exemplar of workplaces that promote the "myth of sameness" (hooks 1992: 162) while simultaneously being imagined and naturalised as white (Hage 1998; Hage 2003). It is a typical example of a multicultural workforce whose work/place requires engagement with multicultural clientele while also being comprised of workers who directly experience the racism that arises out of the social interactions that constitute a racially diverse work environment. The nursing workplace is also constituted at least in part by the public (patients, their relatives and visitors) so it provides an opportunity for investigating community attitudes, as well as those located within the formal boundaries of a workplace. In this way, the nursing workplace provides an example of the workplace as a socio-political and legal environment that is also a racially coded space: a space where racialised and racialising processes impact the experiences of those marked as different due to their non-white phenotype, through processes that are embedded in seemingly normal day-to-day interactions.

## **The Study**

The overall aim of the study from which this chapter draws was to examine how skilled African migrant nurses working in Australia forge social and professional identities within their transnational, cross-cultural

existences. The core of the research was sociological analysis of the interpretation by migrant nurses of their cross-cultural nursing experiences, the negotiation of professional nursing and diasporic identities, and how such negotiations inform their (re)construction of their identity as registered nurses.

Data were collected through interviewing 14 registered nurses (RNs) (13 females, 1 male) ranging in age from 30-47 years old. Participants were initially recruited through the lead author's personal networks (see Bourdieu 1996) and subsequently through a process of snowballing from students enrolled in a university course. Participants had all been recruited from sub-Saharan African countries under the category of skilled migrant<sup>2</sup>. All worked in the public or private hospital sectors or aged care sector in a large metropolitan city in Australia and had more than 5 years experience as RNs in their countries of origin as well as more than one year working in Australia at the time of the study. Many had left very senior positions in their countries of origin and a few had temporarily come to Australia on their own leaving spouse and children behind.

All participants were assigned a pseudonym for purposes of the study. The lead author undertook all interviews following institutional ethics approval. While sharing similar ethnic background to some of the participants, she was not from the same professional background. From this shared perspective, the interview relationship was able to "reduce as much as possible the symbolic violence which is exerted" (Bourdieu 1996: 19) in the

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<sup>2</sup> To further ensure anonymity and maintain confidentiality, the names of the African countries where the nurses migrated from are not identified in any publications of this research.

'usual' social and power dynamic of the research interview.

## **The Construction of Black Visibility**

[N]ot only must the black man be black, he must be black in relation to the white man. Some critics will take it on themselves to remind us that this proposition has a converse. I say that this is false. The black man has no ontological resistance in the eyes of the white man. (Fanon 1986: 110)

While many commentators agree that skin colour is one of the most conspicuous and best marked ways in which human beings vary, it is also apparent, as Sansone (2003: 141) notes, that "notions of race, and of what defines 'black' and 'white' are by no means universal – they are specific, deriving from a particular space, territory or country". Black visibility is therefore not a 'given', or simply about the visual, i.e. 'looking black', it is something given meaning or "made-up" (Alexander 2004: 650) in social relations of difference. As Sansone argues what is black in one country or context may be brown or even white in another (2003: 141). Martinot also eloquently puts it that: "one is not born black, or brown; one becomes black or brown in being categorised as such by a white society that refuses or denies full participation or membership through the imposition of that 'trait'" (2002: 23).

Wright contends that blackness only became a racial category with the presence of (West) Africans in the Western Hemisphere (2004: 1). Similarly, Mapedzahama and Kwansah-Aidoo (forthcoming) note, people are not "'black' in Africa; [where] blackness [is] the norm, the unquestioned...[and where] black skin... [is] taken for

granted and normalized". As one of our participants' commented:

The first time I realised I was black was here. I knew I was black but I never thought it would be a problem to anyone... The people who came to have the recruitment talks; they said once you are there [in Australia] you'll be treated like any other registered nurse in Australia. And you come with all that confidence and you think you'll be treated like any other registered nurse and we found it was nothing like that. (Mhai)

Mhai's statement reveals her "awareness of the significance that skin colour takes on in the west", and the fact that she has 'become' black (Mapedzahama and Kwansah Aidoo forthcoming, see also Adichie 2006). We have argued elsewhere, that the process of 'becoming black' is:

...the realisation of the meaning and significance of black embodiment in a white dominated society, that the colour of [one's] black skin locates them into the racialised category, 'black', with all its implications for ... identity (Mapedzahama et al 2011)

While it is by virtue of her recognisably 'dark' skin, that Mhai finds herself located into the category 'black', more important is that she is aware of the predetermined racial scripts attached to blackness in white contexts.

Yancy notes that the "meaning of ... blackness is constituted and configured (*relationally*) [original emphasis] within the semiotic field of axiological difference, one that is structured vis-à-vis the construction of whiteness as the transcendental norm" (2008: 3). Black visibility is thus created through processes that produce whiteness as the norm - invisible, unmarked and non-racial/ised:

... We are so different... I'm actually talking about colour because I'm a black nurse, there's a white nurse, that white nurse might be coming from Poland, where ... they didn't even speak English but when she's sitting at the front desk writing her notes somebody that comes in looks at her and cannot identify that she's a foreign nurse you see, already the attitude is different. Unlike me... I come from a country that spoke English but when I'm sitting at the front desk the person that comes just sees a black nurse so it makes me so different and I stand out... I know these challenges will continue for as long as I'm here." (Tete)

In the situation Tete describes, it is not simply her black body as a signifier of racial visibility or racial difference (from the norm of whiteness) that (pre)determines the encounter, rather it is the meanings given/attached to the visibility of her black body. Undeniably, there are clearly obvious visual /phenotypical differences between the black migrant nurses and the white majority, however what is significant is not the visual, but the marking and construction of the black body not only as different, but as a 'suspect' Other (Mapedzahama et al 2011). We contend that in the dominant (white) imaginary, Tete's black phenotype links her to a particular geographical location: broadly defined as 'Africa', and stereotypically defined as 'backward' and 'underdeveloped'.

Paradoxically, Tete's hyper/visibility is simultaneously rendered an 'invisible' presence: physically present yet also invisibilised. A hiddenness is assigned to her visibility: she is a physical presence that is deliberately unacknowledged/overlooked in the presence of whiteness. We argue that because of its visual difference, blackness disrupts the norm of whiteness in whitewashed spaces; its mere presence constructed as a potential threat. As one of our participants rightly pointed out:

They [white nurses] look at you as a challenge... It's not like you are there to do what you are there to do but they look at you as a challenge. It's like they [white nurses] feel we are a challenge and you mustn't stay there or they try to do things that really oppress you or make you feel you can't work anymore... [Imbai]

We interpret part of the 'challenge' of black visual difference to be the fact that it is a visible difference that cannot fit neatly into the images of the nursing workplace. The presence of black skin in the nursing workplace marks visibility that interrupts the progression of whiteness (white norms including the white body), and hence a threat to the white social order (Yancy 2008).<sup>3</sup> The black nurse's visibility is the source of white discomfort. Thus blackness becomes a 'challenge' which is of necessity countered by an effort to maintain the whiteness of the nursing workplace – black visibility politicises white space.

Moreover, while in Tete's statement: '*we are so different... I'm actually talking about colour*', she makes clear her understanding of her blackness as a visual marking of her difference, her comment that: '*already the attitude is different*' also indicates that she is aware that what is most significant for her social interactions are the distortions that construct that blackness in a white society. Furthermore, one can assume that the '*somebody that comes in*' is white, "seeing whitely" (Miller 2007: 138). Hence because of their black visibility, black African migrant nurses are "overdetermined from

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<sup>3</sup> We also acknowledge here that the whiteness of nursing workplaces is not only in terms of its composition, but the "white norms and white culture... [that are informed by]... interpretive frames of whites" (Ward year: 564)

without” (Fanon 1986: 116). Black visibility professionally stigmatises them, places them at the bottom of the rank in a predetermined racial hierarchy, and subjects them to informal white surveillance:

You can see people could not accept you. You could not be part of them, you know, they would come and analyse my reports - what I'd written in the notes. They would analyse when I'm doing medications... By the virtue of who they are and how I am, they think they know better than me, because I'm black.... They think I can't express as much; as good as they can and when everything is happening they think - they just think *they* know it (Sahwira)

Sahwira's comment is an example of the (non-formal) social regulation of black bodies necessitated by stereotypical constructs of black visibility. Social constructs that define these nurses in terms of their visible blackness not only confines them to the realm of the unknowing, unknowledgeable black Other (Mapedzahama et al 2011), but also renders them suspect: as ones who can not be competent enough to perform as nurses in a white western context. These constructs thus become the basis for mobilising various forms of surveillance of the 'suspect' black body by co-workers, management and even subordinates.

The visibility of the black body is thus rendered and constituted through the white racist gaze (Yancy 2008: 8), which mobilises various techniques of surveillance on the black body. Without the white gaze, blackness as it is understood would not exist. Yancy notes that whites have “the privileged status of being the lookers and gazers, with all the power that entails” (xviii). The power of white-gazing is twofold: first in gazing, whites themselves become the unseen, the invisible. Second, gazing commands power: the gazer has the power to construct

and name that which is gazed upon. Thus it is the white gaze on the black body which racialises blackness and sustains white privilege. As Alexander notes: whiteness is “something that is linked with access, the social construction of power, worth and value” (2004: 650).

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed the significance of skin colour in understanding skilled black African migrant nurses’ workplace experiences. Specifically, it has argued that black visibility is more than just about the physical, it is a social construction given meaning and sustained through social relations of race. Critical analysis of black African migrant nurses’ narratives of nurse-to-nurse and patient-to-nurse racism in Australian nursing workplaces reveal the significance of non-white phenotypes – most important of which is their blackness – in racial encounters and racial discrimination.

We have argued that nursing workplaces in which these black African migrant participants are located, though celebrated as ‘multicultural’ and inclusive, are informed by a ‘white racial frame’ which not only sustains the social creation of human hierarchies based on phenotypes, but also differing degrees of problematisation of the multiple ‘visibly different’ groups that constitute Australia’s multi-ethnic nursing workplace. We maintain therefore, that while there is an illusion or false sense of the equality of all nursing bodies, in reality there is a race-based system of exclusion which frequently positions African migrant nurses’ black bodies at the bottom of the hierarchy in the racialised order of the ‘multicultural’ nursing workplace.

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# **'A Political Monopoly Held by One Race': The Politicisation of Ethnicity in Colonial Rwanda**

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*In at least some parts of Rwanda, Hutu and Tutsi subgroups have existed since pre-colonial times. Under German and Belgian colonial rule, the distinction between the Hutu majority and Tutsi minority was perceived as a racial distinction. The Tutsi minority was regarded as racially superior, and given privileged access to education and indigenous positions of authority. Over time, this perception of Tutsi superiority was both institutionalized and internalised within Rwandan society. The 'Hutu Awakening' during the 1950s, however, saw issues surrounding race and privilege become highly politicised. As decolonisation loomed, the intersections between race and power became sites of bitter contestation. The Tutsi elite, long accustomed to their privileged status, sought to retain their hegemony through a rapid transition to independence utilising the existing power structure. The nascent Hutu counter-elite, by contrast, desperately sought access to the organs of power, lest they be 'condemned forever to the role of subordinate manual workers, and this, worse still, after achieving an independence which they will have unwittingly helped to obtain' (Niyonzima and others 1957: 3). Utilising a range of primary documents from the period, including manifestos of political parties, statements of leaders, and documents tabled at the United Nations Trusteeship Council, this paper will analyse the intersection of race and politics during the last decade of colonial rule in Rwanda. The roots of the*

*ethnic hatred that led to the 1994 genocide can be traced to this period of great ethnic tension.*

## **Introduction**

“The most advanced elements among the Bahutu are stirring, and beginning to make overt demands”, reported the United Nations (UN) Visiting Mission to the Trust Territory of Rwanda in 1957 (15).<sup>1</sup> Under the auspices of the UN Trusteeship Council, the triennial missions to this Belgian colony had both oversight and advisory functions. The previous mission, in 1954, had declared “There appeared to be very little development of general or even local public opinion” (United Nations 1954: 2) in the country; by 1960, however, the subsequent mission reported on the first major interethnic violence there (United Nations 1960). In a remarkably short period, relations between the Hutu majority and Tutsi minority had become highly politicised, polarised, bitter and violent. Racially motivated violence plagued the country during the independence process. By July 1962, when the country declared independence, some 100,000 Tutsi had fled as refugees (Webster 1966: 84); just eighteen months later ethnic massacres would claim the lives of 10-14,000 Tutsi (Segal 1964: 15; Lemarchand 1970: 225). This chapter will analyse how, and why, issues surrounding ethnicity so quickly became critical during the decolonisation period. It proposes that between 1954 and 1959, when ethnicity emerged as a major political issue in

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<sup>1</sup> The UN Trust Territory was officially the Trust Territory of Ruanda-Urundi, but Rwanda and Burundi were administered separately. Statements utilised throughout this paper from Trust Territory documents and reports refer to Rwanda only. For consistency, modern spelling of Rwanda is utilised throughout, however original spelling is retained within direct quotes.

Rwanda, three key factors combined to provoke extreme levels of ethnic polarisation. Together, these explain the high levels of interethnic violence that surrounded Rwanda's birth as a nation.

## **Background**

Rwanda has a long history of ethnic diversity, with the majority Hutu comprising approximately 85 per cent of the population, and the minority Tutsi 15 per cent.<sup>2</sup> A third group, the Twa, comprise less than 1 per cent. In at least some parts of the country, Hutu and Tutsi subgroups have existed since pre-colonial times. Tutsi were traditionally pastoralists, with a small Tutsi elite comprising the ruling class, while Hutu were traditionally agriculturalists, of generally lower status. The distinction between the Hutu majority and Tutsi minority subgroups has been variously described as one of race, tribe, caste, class, domination and subjugation, ethnicity and political identity. Each descriptor appears to have more than a kernel of truth, but also elements of distortion and inaccuracy. Moreover, the nature of these identities is not a static one, as they have changed over time and in response to both internal and external influences. Whereas today these identities are commonly referred to as ethnic identities (and will be referred to as such within this chapter), for much of Rwanda's history they were considered racial. For most of the period of German (1894-1916) and Belgian (1916-1962) colonial rule, the Tutsi minority was regarded as

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<sup>2</sup> A note on the terminology used in this chapter. Kinyarwanda is a language that uses prefixes extensively, but in conformance with general practice in academic writing on Rwanda, the terms 'Hutu', 'Tutsi' and 'Twa' will be used without prefixes, to denote both singular and plural. In Kinyarwanda the prefix 'mu' denotes singular, and 'ba' plural. Where quotes include these prefixes, they have not been altered.

racially superior, and given privileged access to education and indigenous positions of authority.<sup>3</sup> Over time, this perception of Tutsi superiority was both institutionalised and internalised within Rwandan society. Even as late as 1959, Belgium's annual report to the UN on the Trust Territory helpfully included a photo of the Hutu, Tutsi and Twa 'racial types' (*type de race*) (Belgian Government 1959).

Belgium managed the Trust Territory of Rwanda through a system of indirect rule, utilising the indigenous Tutsi elite to implement a range of policies. For the first three decades of its rule, most of these policies were economic and developmental. In the wake of World War Two, however, new challenges arose. The new United Nations mandate advocated rapid political development and preparation for independence in the colony. Triennial Visiting Missions insisted on the first steps towards the democratisation of the indigenous political system. At the same time, a new generation of Catholic missionaries and clergy brought anti-racial and egalitarian values to Rwanda after experiencing the Holocaust in Europe (Mamdani 2001; Linden 1977). Many Hutu children were now receiving a rudimentary education, there were increased opportunities for Hutu in the emerging monetary economy, and through further education in the seminaries. These factors led to the emergence of a Hutu consciousness in the mid-1950s, or what has been dubbed the 'Hutu awakening'. For the first time, race became a

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<sup>3</sup> Germany was 'allocated' territory that included Rwanda at the Berlin Conference in 1885, but the first German to arrive in the country did not do so until 1894. Belgium occupied Rwanda in 1916 in the course of World War One, the legitimacy of the occupation was confirmed under a League of Nations mandate in 1923.

contested political issue. In just a few short years, Hutu-Tutsi divisions led to the first major outbreak of interethnic violence, the Hutu uprisings of November 1959.

## **Interethnic Violence**

Arguably, three key factors combine to explain the very rapid and extreme polarisation of Hutu-Tutsi divisions, and the resulting interethnic violence. First, the critical nature of this issue to the nascent Hutu counter-elite cannot be underestimated. For this first generation of politically conscious Hutu, race was not one political problem amongst the many challenges that beset Rwanda, but *the* central issue, and the lens through which all other developmental issues were approached. In March 1957 this became apparent with the publication of the *Bahutu Manifesto*. Signed by nine members of the Hutu counter-elite, including future Rwandan president Grégoire Kayibanda, it has been described as “probably the most important document in modern Rwandan political development” (Wagoner 1968: 158). The *Bahutu Manifesto* challenged every facet of Rwandan society:

Some people have asked whether this is a social or a racial conflict ... In reality and in the minds of men it is both. It can, however, be narrowed down for it is primarily a question of a political monopoly held by one race, the Mututsi, and, in view of the social situation as a whole, it has become an economic and social monopoly. In view, also, of the *de facto* selection in education, this political, economic and social monopoly has also become a cultural monopoly, to the great despair of the Bahutu, who see themselves condemned forever to the role of subordinate manual workers, and this, worse still, after achieving an independence which they will have unwittingly helped to obtain (Niyonzima and others 1957: 3).

The *Bahutu Manifesto* identified a range of problems facing Rwanda and even proposed numerous solutions –

all of them highlighting a fundamental racial component. Thus integral to Rwanda's economic development was reform of the land ownership system, based upon traditional Tutsi privilege; while integral to education development was equitable access to education and government-funded scholarships (Niyonzima and others 1957). Political development required "that Bahutu should in fact be promoted to public office", and that positions such as sub-chiefs and chiefs should be elected by taxpayers (Niyonzima and others 1957: 8). For the Hutu counter-elite, the fundamental problem was Tutsi racial privilege, and addressing this issue was crucial for all areas of Rwanda's political and economic development.

The *Bahutu Manifesto* was prepared to highlight the critical issue of race relations to the 1957 UN Visiting Mission. The Visiting Mission also received a starkly different account of race relations in Rwanda, however, in *Mise au Point*, the *Statement of Views*. Published by the Superior Council, comprising Rwanda's Tutsi political elite, the *Statement of Views* also viewed race relations as "the fundamental problem in our country now" (High Council of State 1957: Annex II). Yet astonishingly, this statement was not referring to the problems of Hutu-Tutsi race relations – which did not rate a mention in the entire document – but race relations between whites and non-whites in the country. This highlights the high degree of racial awareness and the hierarchical nature of Rwandan society, but also a strong desire to de-emphasise the Hutu-Tutsi distinction and recast Rwanda as a homogenous nation in a bid for the elite to retain its power (Atterbury 1970). The primary focus of the *Statement of Views* was on preparing Rwanda for rapid independence, through proper training, recognition and utilisation of the current indigenous elite (Wagoner 1968). Self-government was an interim goal, and the Statement noted "It would be difficult at the present to specify when

it will be possible to grant us self-government, but we are anxious that we should be trained for self-government now" (High Council of State 1957: Annex II). The Superior Council's desire for rapid self-government, and omission of the Hutu-Tutsi issue, reflected an awareness of the potential threat posed by the nascent Hutu political movement, and a response designed "so they, the Tutsi, could use the machinery of government to maintain their power" (Webster 1966: 40). Both the *Bahutu Manifesto* and the *Statement of Views* were key documents in that they "provided the ideological basis for much of the political action which followed" (Webster 1966: 40; Harroy 1984: 237).

The second factor that contributed to the rapid ethnic polarisation of Rwanda during this period is the lack of responsiveness of both the Belgian colonial authorities and the UN Visiting Missions to this critical issue. Despite the *Bahutu Manifesto* and the *Statement of Views*, arguably neither authority realised the importance or disintegrative potential of the race relations issue prior to late 1959. The 1954 Visiting Mission completed failed to mention the problem of sub-group identity, and it was left to the Belgians to point this out in criticising their report (United Nations 1955: 47). Yet the Belgian authorities themselves made no attempts to address the issue. In 1956, a proposal to include Hutu representation on the (colonial-led) General Council of Ruanda-Urundi was defeated, leading its only proponent to resign. In a parting shot, Mr. Maus bemoaned "the conflict of interests between the Tutsi and Hutu communities which is the most pressing social problem and the most poignant human drama in the Territory, will therefore continue to be officially ignored by our institutions" (United Nations 1960: 40).

The *Bahutu Manifesto* and *Statement of Views* ensured at least some level of official acknowledgement of the race

relations issue in 1957, but led to little real action. The UN Visiting Mission welcomed "the increasing rate at which the traditional society in Ruanda-Urundi is adapting itself to modern democratic ideas and forms" (United Nations 1957: 9). Yet it also acknowledged, for the first time, that the acceleration of political development for which previous Missions had pressed so strenuously might be a cause of political turmoil (Rawson 1966):

The inevitable disintegration of such a civilisation [traditional Rwandan society] on contact with the modern world and its replacement by new forms may give rise to serious difficulties in spite of all the Administering Authority's vigilance (United Nations 1957: 12).

While noting the "especially delicate stage" of Rwanda's political development, it had little to offer of value, with hazy statements such as "Without minimising the danger of haste, the Mission believes that over-cautiousness is no less dangerous" (United Nations 1957: 12). The only practical suggestion it proposed – with extraordinary optimism – was further education:

Under the influence of secondary and university education and of contact with the outside world, traditional conceptions are giving way and the *elite* of the old regime are coming up against a new *elite*. It will not be long – and indeed there are already indications of this – before the traditional political structure and the respect for feudal institutions will be as irksome to the rising generation of young educated Batutsi as to the new Bahutu *elite* (United Nations 1957: 23).

The 1957 Mission appeared to seriously underestimate both the importance and severity of the issues surrounding race relations in Rwanda.

There is conflicting evidence as to how seriously the Belgian Administering Authorities regarded the Hutu-Tutsi

problem. Certainly they recognised the “deep cleavages which divide the Batutsi, the Bahutu [and] the Batwa ... Those cleavages are obvious ... and they dominate the whole of social life” (United Nations 1955: 47). But the stratified nature of society in Rwanda had been uncontested for decades – and indeed utilised as the basis of indirect rule – and the new Hutu challenge to Tutsi domination appears not to have been perceived as a pressing issue prior to the Hutu uprising in late 1959. Afterwards, this rapidly changed, and the report of the 1960 Visiting Mission claimed that “In his discussions with the 1957 Visiting Mission, the Governor described relations between the Tutsi and Hutu as the key problem of the Territory” (United Nations 1960: 42). But if that was the case, it was not clearly described as such in either the 1957 report, or Belgium’s annual reports on the Trust Territory. Indeed, a careful reading of documents during this period suggests that Vice-Governor General Jean-Paul Harroy did not concede until December 1958 that “the Hutu-Tutsi question posed an undeniable problem” – some twenty-two months after the *Bahutu Manifesto’s* publication (Lemarchand 1970: 152).

To the extent that the problem was recognised, the Administering Authorities appeared unsure how to address it. The General Council of Ruanda-Urundi passed a motion to study the *Manifesto*, but repeatedly postponed discussion of the Hutu-Tutsi polarisation (United Nations 1960). Governor Harroy initially adopted a stance that aligned closely with the position of the Tutsi elite, suggesting that the Hutu-Tutsi problem was largely an economic (rather than racial) issue, and warning of ‘misuse’ of the terms Hutu and Tutsi (United Nations 1960). This aligned with the Administration’s early position in favour of abolishing the terms Hutu and Tutsi – a position advocated by the Tutsi elite but strongly opposed in the *Bahutu Manifesto* for its potential to mask

discrimination (Niyonzima et al 1957: 11). As the democratisation process gathered pace ahead of anticipated independence, it did so in an environment of increasing polarisation.

The third, critical factor that contributed to the extremity of the ethnic polarisation was the confluence of the race relations issue with the democratisation and independence process. The rapid pace of decolonisation precluded the use of longer term conciliatory and ameliorative policies that might have improved Hutu-Tutsi relations over time. Rather, each side perceived the issue as immediate rather than chronic, and one that must be resolved prior to independence. Increasingly, that resolution came to be visualised as through a 'victory' of one group at the expense of the other. By 1959 the disastrous potential of the convergence of the race relations issue and the independence process was clear. Observer M.A. Munyangaju summed up the atmosphere on 30 January:

The situation is very tense between Bahutu and Batutsi. A small quarrel would be enough for starting off a ranged battle. The Batutsi realise that after this, everything is finished for them and are preparing for the last chance. The Bahutu also see that a trial of strength is in the making and do not wish to give up (Quoted in Bhattacharyya 1967: 218).

Race was *the* political issue when political parties were allowed to form. Thus the founding charter of *Union Nationale Rwandaise* (UNAR), the party of the Tutsi elite, declared in August 1959:

Although the Ruandais society is composed of individuals of highly unequal value, and it is not equitable to accord the same value to the vulgar thoughts of the ordinary man as to the perspicacious judgment of the capable ... Although universal suffrage will infallibly end in the enslavement of the educated minority by an uncultivated majority ... It is nevertheless

impossible to refuse universal suffrage to the Bahutu. An open opposition will provide one more argument to the colonists whose civilisation ... [and] loyalty is now known (UNAR Charter, in Nkundabagenzi 1961, translation utilised from Bhattacharyya 1967: 248).

The most popular Hutu party, *Mouvement Démocratique Rwandais / Parti du Mouvement et de l'Emancipation Hutu* (MDR-PARMEHUTU), announced its goal as "a true union of all the Rwandan people without any race dominating another as is the case today" (Manifeste-Programme du Parmehutu 1959, in Nkundabagenzi 1961: 113). The few, quiet proponents of moderation received little support. The bitterness of the debate is further illustrated by a September 1959 press release from the Hutu social party APROSOMA, which began "The plans of the Tutsi party in Ruanda – representing the Tutsi who are exploiters by nature, xenophobes [sic] by instinct and communists by necessity ..." (United Nations 1959:1). By November of 1959, these divisive, race-based politics contributed to the outbreak of the Hutu uprising, the first major incident of interethnic violence in the country.

## **Conclusion**

Ultimately, Rwanda was nation forged from a violent, divisive and racially-driven independence process. After the 1959 uprising, race relations continued to polarise and radicalise, despite some moderating efforts by the Belgian colonial authorities and the UN Trusteeship authorities. There were repeated incidents of ethnic violence through to the nation's independence in July 1962 and beyond. For the Tutsi elite and Hutu counter-elite, at least, the potential for this polarisation had been apparent from 1957. As the 1960 Visiting Mission to Rwanda remarked about the *Bahutu Manifesto* and the *Statement of Views*:

Those two documents contain the germ of all the ideological elements which inspired the disturbances of November 1959 and led to the Visiting Mission being received in Ruanda in March 1960 with mutually contradictory slogans: "Immediate independence. Get rid of the Belgians for us" and "Down with Tutsi feudalism. Long live Belgian Trusteeship" (United Nations 1960: 41-42).

Yet neither the Belgian Administration nor the Visiting Missions appear to have fully appreciated the critical nature of the race relations issue until it resulted in the first major outbreak of violence. It can only be speculated as to whether earlier recognition of the critical nature of race relations by the colonial authorities, and a more decisive response to the emerging polarisation, could have averted some of the violence that eventually resulted. Unfortunately, however, by the time the severity of the issue was properly recognised, the political environment was already highly polarised and opportunities for reconciliation severely circumscribed. Rwanda was born a nation divided.

### **Author Note**

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## Evidence of Numeracy on the Marae

### **Panetuku Rae**

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*On the Marae, Māori show exceptional talent as a people to maintain their tikanga (culture) and te reo Rangatira (Māori language of the ancestors). This talent is observed orally with waiata (song), karakia (prayer), whaikorero (speeches) and karanga (call) and visually with whakaīro (wood carvings), kowhaiwhai (rafter painted designs), tukutuku (panels made from vertical sticks with thin strands of flax woven over to create patterns), tāniko (weaving of thread by hand) and raranga (weaving of flax) to support the rich oral traditions of Te Ao Māori (Māori world).*

The marae was developed as the physical structure that would protect all things essential to the development and preservation of tikanga Māori (the culture, routines and religion), and Māori pedagogies (Mead; cited in Ka'ai 2008; McMurchy-Pilkington 1993).

*This chapter will focus on mathematical knowledge and skills base in the context of Marae and associated activities to explore the notion that there is a wide range of numeracy facilitated in day to day practices on the Marae rendering Māori as capable practitioners. A question I raise is that if Māori are capable mathematicians, why is academic failure a regular feature of Māori demographical analysis?*

## **Introduction**

The aim of this project is to investigate the numeracy events and practices in the context of a marae to explore what numeracy means for Māori. The writer will observe activities referred to as events. It is intended to expose numerical praxis within these events and to identify the numeracy practices that they occur within. Within this discourse, numeracy as social practice will be assessed and the significance of the theory of ethnomathematics considered.

The rationale for this project is to validate and legitimate Māori as skilled and capable mathematicians. By exposing differences of learning numeracy in the contexts of the marae and associated events, to formal schooling there is intent to highlight those social practices which support intergenerational, inclusive and discursive practices of learning.

Even though few people realise it, numeracy skills are used regularly in activities associated with the marae. They are used by the artisans, the caterers, the hunter, the fisherman, the builder, the hui (meeting, function) organisers, the marae committee, the car park attendants, in fact all kaimahi (workers).

## **Overview of the Topic and Key Concepts**

Māori pedagogy of numeracy practices will be highlighted as the situated social concepts of tīkanga (Māori custom and routines), manaaki (care of others), tautoko (to support and encourage), and awahi (help, nurture, support) have an impact on numeracy practices and social practices. This learning is underpinned by whānau (family), hapu (sub-tribe) and iwi (tribe) as the social

structures and foundations referred to as whakapapa (genealogy, ancestry).

According to Bishop (1965) Māori had traditional “means of accessing, defining and protecting knowledge before Europeans arrived in New Zealand”. Māori recorded their knowledge physically, spiritually and orally where the use of symbolism was significant. For example “whakaïro (carving) represented ancestors in the abstract” highlighted the human form (Harrison 1985: 12). With the “advent of reading and writing” images or symbolic representations were threatened and in some cases lost (Harrison 1985: 14).

The telling of stories was crucial for Māori to continue the patterns of oral traditions of reciprocity and the discursive teachings of expert to novice. Māori worked in communities that the novice would observe, listen and learn; consequently he would contribute to these activities and become the expert (Walker 2008; Harrison 1985). Wenger defines communities as communities of practice as being crucial to manage knowledge (2009). Communities of practice were seen to “situate itself as a meaningful space for a group of people who share a concern for something they do” (2009:1). Within this space the teaching and learning approach for Māori was an intergenerational approach.

## **Overview of the Context**

The people of Mangatangi marae enjoy working at their marae. The marae has several structures of which most are multi-functional and in good repair. It is located near the Mangatangi River. The marae whakapapa (links historically and traditionally) to the iwi (tribe) of Waikato Tainui. There are several hapu (sub tribe) in the area, the main one is identified as Ngati Tamāoho.

## **Definition of Numeracy**

To understand what numeracy is it is useful to look towards mathematics. From the 1900's mathematics had developed into a "cold, irrefutable logic, with nothing to do with feelings" to what it has become today as an "academic discipline and a body of knowledge" (Lave 1988: 44) which "maintains a specific way of interpreting the world" (Knijnik 2007). As an academic subject, it has become important as a way of gate-keeping access to higher education and denying access to others (Harris 1997). Mathematics is valued by "adult learners and their governments" as it guarantees access to the labour market (Coben 2002: 27). The gatekeeper system evolved to maintain a status quo where only a select few had "access to higher education and employment" (Tout and Johnson 1996). What this means for those who lack financial resources to access learning of mathematics is that they miss opportunities such as higher education and employment.

As numeracy includes basic arithmetic (Coben 2000) many have coped with life and work demands (Cockcroft Report). As learners identify and address feelings of powerlessness they become aware that they have 'funds of knowledge' to draw from and they realise what is possible to achieve and do (Tout and Johnson 1996: 66). This is significant as while they are taking part in decision making, participating and problem solving they are building up that 'fund of knowledge'

## **Numeracy as Social Practice**

Social practice describes "numeracy as a social phenomenon, with estimations, proportions and measuring" (Street 2010) with focus on "skills, knowledge and understanding what people own in their private,

family, community and working lives" (Jackson, n.d.). Numeracy as a social practice is embedded in numeracy in the activities or events we participate in the community (Coben 2003) making the connections between the learner, the tasks and the environment he is active in.

## **Numeracy Events**

Numeracy events are activities where numeracy has a role, such as measuring, calculation, proportions and estimation. It is made up of key elements including participants, settings, artefacts and activities (Street 2010). To understand how these elements were linked together visits to marae were made.

## **Numeracy Practices**

Numeracy practices mean learning to do something by repetition. It also refers to a collection of observable single numeracy events and at a more abstract level to the meanings and values attached to numeracy within particular social and cultural contexts (Street 2010; Wann 2004), for example the links between the numerical language and the social structures in which are embedded numeracy (Barton and Hamilton 2000).

## **Ethnomathematics**

Ethnography derives from a branch of anthropology which is concerned with the description of ethnic groups. Ethnomathematics was coined as "the mathematics practiced among identifiable cultural groups" (D'Ambrosio (1997: 16) and it is influenced by education, anthropology and political approaches. Ethnomathematics come from the epistemology of ethnography. Ethnography is defined as the observation of social groups. The ethnographer as a researcher "enters and leaves sites of learning over a

period of time” (Street 2010: 2003) to observe daily events in this case on the marae.

Ethnomathematics challenges the paradigms of the western model of mathematics (Powell and Frankenstein 1997) because of a strong commitment to social justice, and recognition of the mathematics embedded in a range of activities and practices (D’Ambrosio 1997; Gerdes 1997b; Saxe 1991; Bishop 1991; FitzSimons 1997a; FitzSimons 2000a; Knijnik 1997a), for example the mathematical practices of factory workers (Kane 1997).

In this project the writer explores concepts of ethnomathematics in the context of events and practices on the marae. Marae-based learning is considered to be “spiritual, material and encapsulating the ancestral and present day realities” (Rawiri 2005: 29).

Teaching practices such as discursive approaches, provide for the needs of Māori learners (Ingleton and O’Regan 2002; Wall 2006; Coben 2002). Māori respond to alternative teaching approaches such as the intergenerational learning style, which is inclusive (Hemara 2000) and which occurs regularly in the context of the marae (Smith 2007; Coben 2000).

### **Context: The Function of a Marae in Māori Culture.**

Traditional Māori were capable hunters, seafarers, artisans and warriors (Hemara 2000; Dewes 1993; Cummins 1989; Friere 1972; McMurchy-Pilkington 1993; Mead 2003). Having travelled from Polynesia where the climate was warmer, Māori needed to adjust and become resourceful in the colder climates of Aotearoa, New Zealand (Pendergrast 1987; Rae 2010; Mephram 1968). As seafarers it was not difficult to explore the shores of

Aotearoa to find territory that provided abundance of land, water, food and strategic locations to settle on.

As well as adjusting to a different physical environment it was necessary for Māori to establish social systems or societies to survive and develop economically and socially. Māori society is made up of iwi (tribe), hapu (subtribe) and whānau (extended family). Māori developed a village-type community referred to as the Pa site with the marae as the centre of activity or the hub of knowledge (Kelly 1949).

The marae was developed as the physical structure that would protect all things essential to the development and preservation of tīkanga Māori (the culture, routines and religion), and Māori pedagogies (Mead; cited in Ka'ai 2008; McMurchy-Pilkington, 1993). It is the "primary site of tribal governance and mana (dignity, pride, prestige), ritual, ceremony, collective art estate and intertribal exchange" (Te Puni Kokiri 1997: 15). Several structures were scattered throughout the Pa site. The main focus was on the wharenuī (main building or big house). Over several decades the wharenuī developed from a humble whare (house) to one of brilliant artistic and cultural expressions of Māori epistemology (Walker, 2008; Harrison 1985; Ihimaera and Ellis 2002).

The work of artisans, carvers, and weavers have been drawn together to support the oral language of Māori with the pictorial language evident in whakaīro (carving), raranga (weaving) and kowhaiwhai (woven lattice panels). And it is for these reasons that the marae is selected as an appropriate social context to capture those who work on the marae to maintain it, to beautify it and to manaaki (high levels of care for others) all those associated with the marae.

## Recommendations

The follow-up to this project will be to recommend interventions that will influence empowerment and participation by Māori at higher levels in the community locally, nationally and internationally.

## Conclusion

I wish to conclude that by understanding Māori day to day numeracy practices at Marae it is possible to acknowledge and honour their pragmatic approach to solving problems using numeracy. As well to acknowledge the valuable contributions of whānau, hapu and iwi and finally to participate in the establishment of remedies that will affect revitalisation, influence and dignity by addressing anomalies.

## Glossary of Maori Terms

<i>Awhi</i>	Help, nurture, support
<i>Hapû</i>	Sub-tribe, clam
<i>Harakeke</i>	Flax (Phormium tenax)
<i>Hau kainga</i>	People from that Rohe, this is their home
<i>Hôha</i>	Unfocused, nuisance
<i>Hui</i>	Meeting, occasion
<i>Iwi</i>	Tribe
<i>Kai hākari</i>	Feast of celebration
<i>Kai mahi</i>	Workers
<i>Kaitaki</i>	Guardian
<i>Kaumātua</i>	Elder
<i>Kaupapa Maori</i>	All practices valued by Maori, e.g. the language and traditions
<i>Kete</i>	Hand made bags from flax
<i>Kiekie</i>	Climbing plant (Freycinet banksii) used in weaving

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<i>Koha</i>	Gift
<i>Korero</i>	To speak, read; speech, reading
<i>Korowai</i>	Cloak
<i>Mahi</i>	Work
<i>Manaaki</i>	To provide high levels of care for others
<i>Muka</i>	Fine fibres in kiekie and harakeke (used for plaiting)
<i>Motu</i>	A district, for example Manukau region
<i>Nga Kete Wananga</i>	Marae of Manukau Institute of Technology
<i>Nga marae toopu</i>	A cluster of marae that support each other
<i>Noho marae</i>	To stay at the marae for the day or sleep over
<i>Pa</i>	Fortified village
<i>Poukai</i>	Annual anniversary held at most Waikato Tainui marae; held at marae that pay homage to the Waikato Tainui kingitanga
<i>Putiputi</i>	Flower
<i>Rangatahi</i>	Youth age group
<i>Raranga</i>	Flax weaving
<i>Tangi</i>	Funeral, sadness
<i>Tautoko</i>	To support and encourage. Help someone out
<i>Te reo</i>	The Maori language
<i>Tohunga whakaïro</i>	Expert carver
<i>Tïkanga Maori</i>	Maori custom
<i>Tukutuku</i>	Woven lattice panels in a meeting house
<i>Wananga</i>	Gathering, higher learning
<i>Whakaïro</i>	Carving
<i>Whakapapa</i>	Geneology
<i>Whaikorero</i>	Formal speeches on the marae by male elders
<i>Whânau</i>	Extended family

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<i>Whare kai</i>	Dining room/house
<i>Whare moe</i>	Sleeping or bedroom
<i>Whare nui</i>	Meeting house
<i>Whāriki</i>	Flax

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Panetuku belongs to the Waikato, Tainui people of the upper Waikato regions leading to the largest city in New Zealand, Auckland.

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## **Child Protection Consultation in the Solomon Islands, Capacity Building or Welfare Colonialism**

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*Since 2003, when the Solomon Islands ethnic conflict ended some of the Regional Assistance Mission Solomon Islands (RAMSI) aid agenda has been rectifying damage done to families and child care so that the nation's future citizens are untroubled by trauma. Part of the Australian contribution to the mission has been channelled through UNICEF (Pacific) to assist the Solomon Islands Government to develop systems that will ensure the protection and care of children. UNICEF and a range of other child-protection focussed NGOs comprise a significant presence in Solomon Islands and as they are well staffed and well resourced they appear to have significantly greater impact on the development of child-welfare than does the less well resourced Social Welfare Division (SWD) of the Ministry of Health. This power imbalance has significant implications for the development of independent democratic nationhood. An important national agenda relating to families and the care of children is being determined by bodies that are external to the national governance. One crucial determinant of the capacity-building /versus/neo-colonial credentials of these efforts relates to the way consultation is carried out within the nation prior to policy and legislative development. Several processes that characterise neo-colonial approaches are highlighted in this paper. The paper argues that external international development agencies*

*and workers (including ex-pats) must centre Solomon Island sovereignty (both Indigenous sovereignty and in state governance) in their approach to child protection consultation as current methods replicate and maintain colonising relationships.*

## **Introduction**

The term 'welfare colonialism' provides two important analytical considerations for examining the development of official child protection systems in Solomon Islands (SI). The first consideration is that any external financial or administrative support to the SI bureaucracy carries expectations regarding conformity with pre-determined models of governance. Secondly, a Government that is dependent on aid exposes the national administration to the more subtle 'moral' imperatives of intervening foreign nationals who judge the way citizens 'should' behave and who influence the way their behaviour is regulated (see Cronin 2007: 179). Together these processes need to be considered for their impact on both the sovereign rights of Solomon Islanders and the ethics of the powerful but seemingly benevolent international Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and the Governments that provide aid. This paper is particularly concerned with the neo-colonial approach inherent in the politics of benevolent expert committees that are implicit in the life cycle of such bodies (Laforteza 2007). It examines the development of expert intervention arrangements within Melanesian child protection processes and it considers the personal experiences of two of the authors while within the Solomon Islands. It reflects upon, and makes suppositions from, their perceptions of the nature of welfare-colonialism in the Solomon Islands in order that recommendations can be made for future non-colonial 'helping' in Melanesia.

Theoretical examination of the nature of colonialism reveals its contemporary implications as neo-colonialism, an adaptation to modernity, affecting the citizenship and democracy in 'developing' nations (Mbembe 2008: 4). It has been argued that rather than there being a 'break' or ending of colonialism at the commencement of self government, the contemporary situation in some democracies is a continuation of colonialism in new forms (Altman 2011). For the purpose of this paper, neo-colonialism is understood according to the Cambridge (nd) definition as "political control by a rich country of a poorer country that should be independent and free to govern itself". This definition can be applied when examining the power imbalance between financially and strategically influential governments or NGOs in comparison with poorer democracies such as SI.

The following discussion will examine the relationships between Solomon Islands and powerful NGO's, including those associated with the United Nations and Australia (via AusAID). It will do so by critiquing the practices that pertain to certain NGO programs which are currently engaging with SI to introduce child protection legislation. The discussion will underpin its logic with an examination of the process of racialisation, as this is arguably intimately connected with colonial projects (Moreton-Robinson 2000: 145). Racialisation refers to the way that the conceptualisation of 'race' normalises a social order through which groups of people are positioned within a hierarchy, often placing the colonised subjects in an inferior position referred to as the 'other'. This process privileges the colonisers, who are 'white' and 'western', and it places the colonised 'others' as 'black' and subordinate. The colonial institutional structures both naturalise and rationalise the difference in power (Goldberg 1990:30) and then they maintain the stability of these power relations. Racialisation is closely linked to

neo-colonial practice as, by positioning the coloniser over the racialised 'other', the normal practices of colonised subjects are afforded inferior status in respect to their rationality, significance and morality. Such subordination impedes the development of self efficacy and prevents independent democratic governance within small nations such as Solomon Islands.

## **Recent History**

The Solomon Islands is a nation of 553,000 people, situated 2000 kilometres northeast of Australia on 28,000 square kilometres of land and in the tropical South Pacific Region (DFAT 2011). More than 1000 islands make up the Solomon Islands archipelago, and these are divided between 10 different representative provinces through which 63 language groups exist (DFAT 2011). The population live mainly in villages or small towns but the capital of the nation, Honiara, is a tropical city of 50,000 people on the large volcanic island called Guadalcanal. Thought the Indigenous (First) peoples of Guadalcanal are the Guale people, they are a minority in Honiara itself and there are significantly more Malaitan residents in and around the capital. There was historically some conflict between different groups, yet for economic reasons several waves of immigration resulted in many people from the more populous island of Malaita moving to the capital.

The Solomon Islands is a country that was of colonial economic significance, and from 1893 until 1976 it was a protectorate of the British Government (DFAT 2011). Some might consider that Solomon Islands still holds strategic significance in the Pacific today, but the economy of the nation is more dependent on timber, fishing, mining and foreign aid (DFAT 2011). This area of the Pacific region was once the scene for the decisive WW2 Battle of

the Coral Sea, and it is still important enough to Australia's interests that there will be \$261.6 million (A) provided in aid funding by Australia in 2011-12 (DFAT 2011). The implication of this funding is that a significant proportion of the Solomon Islands budget appropriations are sourced from aid. There are economic and strategic reasons for this level of support including regional instability and requests by the Solomon Islands government for Australian assistance in 1999. From 1999 settlement issues precipitated significant ethnic conflict between Gule and Malaitan people in Solomon Islands to such an extent that in 2003 the Regional Assistance Mission Solomon Islands (RAMSI) was deployed to restore and then maintain peace in the country.

### **Solomon Islands Neo-colonialism/Foreign Aid**

Evidence of neo-colonial processes in Solomon Islands is spread across a diversity of observations. Firstly, contemporary visitors to Honiara will notice the significant presence of RAMSI staff in and around the capital. The RAMSI multinational task-force represents a number of the governments of the Pacific region and though it ostensibly works with the Solomon Islands Government to restore and ensure long term peace and stability it has a physical presence in a wide range of institutions. In 2011 there are nearly 700 Australians in Honiara and attendance at any significant government meeting or committee in the capital will present a visitor with some, if not a dominating, RAMSI presence as, particularly its AusAID staff, work towards the implementation of its Australian foreign aid programs.

The second impact of the hundreds of multi-national RAMSI staff in Honiara is the considerable power they hold regarding the allocation of program funds and development agreements which effect the economic power

arrangements experienced by Solomon Islanders. Though these programs were at first related to the restoration of peace, they now pertain to a range of capacity building programs, in improving governance, health services and education. This leads to another more subtle influence of the multinational task force pertaining to the interpretation of social issues.

One RAMSI strategy for restoring and maintaining peace has been to address the family violence that has been seen responsible for perpetuating violence after the family disturbances of the ethnic conflict. This family violence is considered to be a future source of violence in the nation as there is a view that any disturbance to safe and peaceful child raising has the potential to produce fearful and violent adults. In this aim recent moves by RAMSI to institutionalise child rights and women's rights in the Pacific region have seen the development of bodies such as the Solomon Islands National Advisory Committee for Children (NACC) and the 'SAFENET' committee for addressing family violence. NACC was approved by Cabinet and was established in 1992 to advise the Solomon Island Government on the CRC before ratification in 1995. Now there is an ongoing review on NACC to have the TOR on it.

AusAID has been a funding body that is both a part of the RAMSI intervention and it is also involved in funding international bodies to develop child protection mechanisms in the Pacific region. There have been a number of bodies contacted by AusAID in its 'capacity building' aim, in order to strengthen the capabilities of the Solomon Islands administration and NGOs in respect to improving the care and protection of children in the country. These bodies employed an author of this paper (Thompson) as the third of four consultant experts who have sequentially been deployed to assist the Social

Welfare Division (SWD) of the Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MOH) in its work to protect children and to further the welfare of Solomon Islands children and familiarise. The current international body was funded by AusAID in this aim and it contracts child protection and social policy experts to work in Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and a number of other pacific nations to develop child protective infrastructure. In this aim it also established an informal committee of experts to advise on child protection policy and other matters.

Though it could be said that the NACC and SAFENET were formed out of pressure from NGOs and the multi-national Regional Assistance Mission Solomon Islands (RAMSI) to include substantial indigenous representation, the third child-protective advisory body (CPAB) sits apart from significant influence from indigenous Melanesian representation. This body was formed out of the benevolent concerns of expert representatives of a colonial power and was for the assistance of a group of Indigenous people. Unlike the NACC and SAFENET the CPAB is not subject to political pressure from Indigenous Solomon Islanders, and its efforts to improve the lot of children in this region of the Pacific are purely based upon the knowledge and intuition of external experts.

In cognisance of Heppel's (1979) anti-colonial critique of the history of the Australian Housing Panel (AHP) in Australia, a working paper by Thompson was presented to the CPAB in 2009 to recommend Indigenous participation in the determination of child protective processes. This paper considered the colonial implications of Melanesian child protection development processes (see Thompson and Hil 2010) but unfortunately these arguments were rejected as being too theoretical for the purposes of the group. The CPAB was seen to need a clear practical

approach<sup>1</sup> that might be appropriate for implementing child protection policy and legislation in the region (including Solomon Islands). There was seen to be a need to be a need for clear thinking experts that could debate and ascertain the best approach for implementing a policy model which would effectively protect children in the region so that they would develop as happy, well adjusted and peaceful adults. Initially there had been a perceived need for a range of academic and practical experts but after two tumultuous early meetings it was perceived that the inclusion of advocates of differing approaches to child protection created conflict and it was decided that the expertise of the members of one Australian firm combined the expertise necessary for the CPAB. The CPAB was constituted as a body that was composed of members of that Australian firm and this body now advises its own members in their role as the expert consultants who implement the policy approach that is developed.

The preferred policy and legislative development process was earlier seen to require an extensive consultative process. In this aim one member of the firm organised a two day workshop in Honiara to develop the model that would support legislative drafting for child protection in the Solomon Islands. As the aim of the policy and legislative development process was to further the cause of child rights in Melanesia, the then representative of the key bodies involved in child rights and child protection in the country were collected together in an air-conditioned room for a presentation and feedback session regarding child rights and child protection. The consultant presented

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<sup>1</sup> For a collection of critiques on this approach in Australia see Altman, J. & Hinkson, M. (eds) 2007 *Coercive reconciliation: Stabilise, normalise, exit Aboriginal Australia*, North Carlton: Arena Publications Association

three possible models of child protection legislation that the consultant named as an old and colonial 'British' model of child protective legislation, a newer modified 'British' model that took into account some of the failings of the first model, and a new model that was claimed to be developed from the cultural ideas and values of Pacific island peoples. The group were asked which model they preferred and the third option was selected.

Now that the 'Pacific model' of legislation was endorsed by the consultative process, there was need to flesh out how it might work in the Solomon Islands community. Though the Social Welfare Division (SWD) of the Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MOH) had been in place for many years and though it was structured into several sections, (a child protection section, a youth justice section and a family support section) it was decided that the structure of Solomon Islands welfare services was an open and generic one that well matched the generic 'Pacific model' of policy and legislation. The consultant concluded from one focus group that the SWD was an open and unstructured unit through the team leader of the child protection section was actually present at that meeting. Though the misinterpretation of the SWD structure was corrected by two of the authors of this paper, the consultants perceived that the existing structure of the SWD was a problematic mismatch with the preferred 'Pacific model' for child protection legislation. In summation the staff of the SWD, some of whom had been employed in the welfare field for more than 20 years, are being led by foreign nationals in a policy development process that they have found out is a new 'Pacific model' and has never been implemented anywhere else in the world before being piloted in the Solomon Islands. These staff was by 2010 being perceived to be less aligned with the Pacific child protection policy agenda

than were the Ministry of Women Youth and Children's Affairs (MWYCA) staff.

The new policy model was apparently being specifically designed for the child protection needs of the Solomon Islands, presumably through the expert considerations of the CPAB members and consultation processes as described previously. The expert analysis of the child protection problem in the Solomon Islands was presenting the model as more important to the problem solution than were the existing staff or structures that the Solomon Islands government had endorsed as responsible for social welfare issues. A powerful non-Indigenous body had become responsible for constructing the social problem that needed to be addressed but it was also problematising the bureaucracy and the staff of the bureaucracy (see also Fredericks 2009). There seemed to be a perception that staff had different priorities and different characteristics from these well experienced and committed Solomon Islanders might be better at implementing the new 'Pacific model' of policy. These ideal staff and structures were, somewhat ironically to be more aligned with the values and priorities of the foreign stakeholders who were involved. In the process the Solomon Islander staff of the SWD are pushed aside to allow the apparently more authentic 'Indigenous Solomon Islander' model of child protection to be implemented and from the sidelines accommodate and resist where possible.

## **Conclusion**

The Solomon Islands government has little financial and political power in respect to implementing social policy in the country. Much of the funding for the program planning and policy development of the SWD has been funded by external bodies and these bodies define when the planning

will occur and how the priorities will be developed. The CPAB is supported by a powerful and financially robust body and the SI government administration is less powerful. Thus the government and administration of the SWD are less powerful in setting social policy including child protection policy than are the multinational NGOs and Quasi-Government bodies that are involved in the agenda setting process. This results in neo-colonialism through a number of factors discussed in the paper. These include that an external, western body determines the priorities and approach to policy development, programs and processes of the Solomon Islands as a State. That in these processes the external bodies over-rides legitimate and sovereign systems of governance. Non-Indigenous external models are packaged and portrayed as Indigenous to the SI. Meanwhile the Indigenous staff appointed through the SI government is marginalised and silenced.

One impact of the power relations between the multi-national NGO/Quasi-Government bodies and the SWD is that the SI advisory bodies such as the NACC and SAFENET are heavily influenced by non-Indigenous conceptualisations of social problems and social policy solutions to those problems. Another issue is that imposed determinations of problems and solutions carry implicit expectations regarding the implementation of solutions. It seems that non-indigenous 'stakeholders' can more easily conceptualise that policy is implemented by 'white' thinkers in dark skins and thus they seek to align

themselves with suitable candidates.<sup>2</sup> The actual processes that are normal to Indigenous Solomon Islanders are not normal to these stakeholders and they are likely to be constantly disappointed or frustrated by the progress that is made by Indigenous Solomon Islanders as these processes accord with local culture rather than neoliberal managerial expectations. The impact is that stakeholders seem to be constantly looking for 'better' people and better administrative structures for the Solomon Islands administration. Thus their capacity building is highly disempowering and damaging to the self-efficacy that is needed.

This paper has argued that there is a neo-colonial approach inherent in the politics of expert committees. The discussion examined the development of expert intervention arrangements within Melanesian child protection processes as an example of contemporary neo-colonialism. It referred to the personal experiences of two of its authors of this current paper while within Solomon Islands and it reflected on their perceptions of the nature of welfare-colonialism in Solomon Islands so that there can be non-colonial future 'helping' in Melanesia.

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<sup>2</sup> For a critique of this practice in Australia see Fredericks, B 2010 'Reempowering ourselves: Australian Aboriginal women. *Signs: Journal of women in culture and society*, 35(3), pp. 546-550, viewed 25 September 2011, [www.jstor.org/stable?10.1086/648577](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/648577)

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