



**The Complexities of Racism:  
Proceedings of the  
Second International Conference on  
“Racisms in the New World Order”**

**University of the Sunshine Coast**

**Editors**

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# Forward

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*Conference Conveners*

*International Conference on Racisms in the New World Order: Realities of Culture, Colour and Identity*

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*May you live in interesting times...*

This is a traditional Chinese curse which is very applicable to contemporary societies. The impacts of racist practice and racialised discourses permeate our lives in both subtle and open ways. We have recently witnessed in many Western developed nations, including Australia, a renewed focus on issues of national identity and how we can live cohesively with common values. Much of this discussion has been in the context of alarmed debates about national security and the war on terror. It appears that there is a retreat into an introverted view of 'Western civilization' that negates all forms of multiculturalism that exists within the nation. It seems that there is little recognition that the 'other' is actually within and that support for a concept of monocultural internal cohesion, as a way to achieve national security, is no longer viable. These debates have given licence to demonise different groups of people including Muslims, refugees and those who are visibly different. The public discourses have become conjoined with other issues such as asylum seekers, ethnic crime (e.g. Asian gangs, gang rape), national security, religious compatibility, validity of overseas skills (especially of medical professions), employment and gender roles across cultures. On the other hand, we see new forms of state paternalism and attempts to control the lives of Indigenous Australians. Issues of racism continue to penetrate all elements of the lives of the first people of this land. The public discourses in this area have including issues relating to child abuse, domestic violence, parenting, income support, substance abuse and social relationships, debates that have cast stereotypical negative images of Indigenous people which attempt to justify state intervention that we would not accept in other communities.

Many people in contemporary Australia refute that racism exists. However there is evidence to suggest that it persists in changing and dynamic ways. Racism defines the way in which social relations between people or society are structured and operates through a range of personal, relational, systemic and institutional practices that serve to devalue, exclude, oppress or exploit people. Racism is a relationship of dominance and subordination between social groups

and is subject to variation over time, place and circumstance. Direct acts of hostility have often replaced rather more covert behaviour/comments relating to moral character, alien cultural values and lifestyles.

These new forms are referred to as 'new racisms' and appear to have non-racialised characteristics. Racist behaviour can take place without seemingly contravening democratic or egalitarian values. 'Race discourse' and use of language and coded messages deliver very direct racialised messages while appearing as non harmful. Racism has consequences for life chances of people and it should be remembered that is an act of power and is a tool for maintaining privilege. Those who have 'unearned privilege' in social relations tend not to acknowledge that status or readily give it up. Denial of racism is, thus, a strong element of current manifestations of racism. There are often direct and indirect ramifications for people to raise this as an issue.

A continued critical examination of racism is fundamentally important to Australia. As a multicultural nation, acceptance of diversity is the cornerstone of the progress of the nation in many aspects including business, trade, education, workforce, industry, arts and social elements. Without a focus on racism, the hard edge issues that confront our society cannot be addressed. It is from this perspective that the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Racisms in the New World Order: Realities of Culture, Colour and Identity was jointly organized by the Centre for Multicultural and Community Development, University of the Sunshine Coast and the Institute for Community, Ethnicity and Policy Alternatives, Victoria University. The Conference was attended by national and international participants, and included academics, community development workers, policy makers and other government officials, media as well as community members who experience racism. The conference covered four themes:

- Manifestations of Racism
- Responses to Racism
- Nationalism
- Developing Anti-Racist Futures

The papers in these Conference proceedings provide thought provoking studies and ideas from diversity authors. Each paper in this section has been blind-refereed by two other academic peers and complies with normal academic referring processes.

# Addressing Denial: The First Step in Responding to Racism

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Racism is a set of beliefs and behaviors based on the presumption that “races” are inherently different, thereby excluding certain groups from equal access to social goods. Racist beliefs and behaviors are often manifested in multiple, historically specific, situationally variable, often contradictory ways that intersect very closely with nationalist and religious identity, and are gendered in complex ways. In Australia, the colonization process saw racism against Aboriginal people and ‘non-white’ foreigners dominated by notions of biological and moral inferiority (Hollinsworth 2006). This “*old form of racism*” in which ethnic minorities were viewed as biologically inferior was preeminent within the colonialism and institutionalized racism paradigm until the 1970s (McMaster 2001). As the voting power and contribution of immigrants of Non-English Speaking Backgrounds (NESB) began to become more visible, multiculturalism was adopted as a policy in Australia. This led to the recognition of the different ethnicities, cultures, religions and languages as well as ending the belief those other cultures were inferior to the mainstream white British culture (Freeman and Jupp 1999).

However, the changing policies have also lead to the transformation of the “*old racism*” in which ethnic communities were viewed as biologically and morally inferior into the “*new racism*” (also termed “cultural racism”) where the relationship of power based on constructing “others” as different in order to exclude or ignore or exploit them is still maintained. The power to represent others, to negatively evaluate others, and to make these representations and evaluations prevail in public domains are still key features of new racisms. New racisms, based on old racisms, are concerned with a broad understanding of race issues as related to:

- cultural dimensions of racism
- linkages with identity, ethnic signifiers or markers
- construction of whiteness, invisibility of white majority
- racism’s impact on certain subgroups e.g. women
- interconnections between race, nationhood, patriotism and nationalism
- changing language and discourses of racism
- dynamic nature of racism which can only be understood within historical specificity and change (Babacan and Babacan 2007, Solomos and Back 1996)

Racism defines the way in which social relations between people or society are structured and operates through a range of personal, relational, systemic and institutional practices that serve to devalue, exclude, oppress or exploit people. It is an act of power and is a tool for maintaining privilege. It involves the process of categorizing certain groups or individuals as inferior through the use of economic, social or political power that legitimates exploitation or exclusion (Mac an Ghail 1999; Vasta & Castles 1996). Racism has been located in different settings such as individual, institutional, informal, formal, direct and indirect. A number of writers note that racism now is often not demonstrated by direct acts of hostility but rather by more covert comments relating to moral character, alien cultural values and lifestyles (Pedersen et al. 2004; Fraser and Islam 2000). Some of the new forms of racism centre on concepts of 'cultural incompatibility' and new forms of nationalism, about who is and is not an Australian. Others include concepts of differential citizenship rights as a move away from basic human rights. One of the most common forms of the new racism is Islamophobia, which does not focus on biological difference but on religious and cultural difference (Babacan 2007). The discourse in this context plays a prominent role in the reproduction of racism. It conveys and legitimates ethnic or racial stereotypes and prejudices among dominant group members and may thus form or confirm the social cognitions of others (Van Dijk 2000).

Racism is not only the spectacular events such as those that took place in Cronulla (Babacan & Babacan 2007). The ordinary "every day" racisms silently experienced by individuals and communities are of equal importance (Essed 1991). However experiences of racism are often denied, silenced, dismissed in what Sue (2005:1) refers to as a 'racism and the conspiracy of silence'.

## **Discourse and Denial**

The problem of racism becomes even more of an issue when it is placed within the context of the range of contradictory discussions on many aspects of it, from the very definition of racism to the possible responses to it. An issue of particular importance in this is that of the contradictory actions of governments in accepting and legislating against racism on the one hand, while strongly denying its existence on the other. Often, the criticism of racism is couched in soft language, equating it with (negative) community relations or a need for harmony. This fails to address fundamental issues against discriminatory behaviour and action and ways in which legislation can be used as a facilitative mechanism to stop racist behaviour. The state policies of multiculturalism are not concerned as much with fostering cultural difference as much as creating safe channels that contain difference (Stratton 1998; Bottomley et al.1991; Stokes 1997). Racism is often covered up or downplayed as something else less deliberate or oppressive such as cultural misunderstanding by those who are not subject to its violence and belittling (Hollinsworth 2006: 40-45). There has been a reluctance to engage with root causes of racism by government and political leaders as it is seen as touching a sensitive nerve in their electorates. Rather wedge politics of using the

“other” for political gain has been mobilized. In practice, this leads to the increasing invisibility of racism and the denial of its existence or impacts.

An unpublished survey with 50 people from a cross section of the community, conducted in 2008 (Babacan) indicated a range of responses in relation to the question of ‘does racism exist in our society’. Majority of respondents felt it existed in a small way. Some of the comments included:

*Racism was in the past, there are some rednecks but they are thankfully less*

*Some groups just think that all their problems can be blamed on racism*

*Racism is no excuse to sit back and do nothing*

*Everyone has racism; ethnic groups are just as much racist against ‘Australians’*

Some of the ways in which racism is discussed or avoided forms the discourse of denial. Examples of racism denial in everyday talk are:

- *Denials, disclaimers or justifications are used to appear non-racist and block any inference of racism (e.g. I am not a racist but..)*
- *Denial as a strategy of defence as well as strategy of positive self portrayal*
- *Reversing the charge of racism (e.g. ethnic groups are racist too)*
- *Trivialising experiences or incidents or labelling it as an over exaggeration or referring it to as ‘alleged racism’ (i.e. language casting doubt)*
- *Using the word racism is treated as ‘taboo’ as we see in debates on Parliament- use of substitute words e.g. incivility, prejudice, misunderstanding, distrust*
- *Transference from self to reflect experience of others ( e.g. my neighbour thinks)*

By attributing racism to a small minority, the dominant group/individual can define themselves as non-racist. Malik (1996) also points out that in the last two decades we have moved from the notion of ‘right to be equal’ to the ‘right to be different’ which has taken the focus away from hard edged issues such as racism. This is further exacerbated by the State positioning itself as ‘raceless’ when in fact it reflects the dominant society norms (Babacan 1996). Hage points out that the relationship between minority of hard core racists and those who perceive themselves as non-racist:



*Violent racists are always a tiny minority. However, their breathing space is determined by the degree of “ordinary” non-violent racism a government and culture allow to flourish within it.*  
(Hage 2002: 247).

Much of the lay understandings of the world we live in are generated through a process of ‘sense-making’ through individual and collective attempts to make sense of events (Fletcher 1995). These cultural understandings based on sense-making are the centre of phenomenon such as the public support for Pauline Hanson, as the perceived spokesperson for the ‘silent majority’ and the ‘ordinary battlers’ (Rothwell 1997). Much of prejudice and discrimination can be unpacked in analyzing sense-making explanations that are supported by reference to in-groups and out-groups, racial and cultural difference and perceived injustice. As an example, racism focused on particular migrant groups can be situated within an easy-to-understand explanation of how a complex problem like unemployment is caused by these migrants taking all the jobs at the cost of the in-group.

Although racism appears contrary to democratic societal values, racism can still be articulated without denouncing democratic principles and, through transformation into more palatable concerns, becomes legitimate concern (Henry et al. 2000). Thus public discourses on immigration, multiculturalism, refugees and citizenship can often perpetuate coded societal messages. The stereotypical image of the ‘other’, the migrant or refugee, precedes their arrival in the new country through the media and other channels. This is further exacerbated by grand narratives built around international issues like the ‘War on Terror’, linking in to issues relating to Australian values, national identity, fear of the ‘other’, new forms of patriotism and the construction of a homogenous national identity that excludes some while uniting other sections of the community (Babacan & Babacan 2007). The discourse of nationalism can cover a hidden racist discourse through establishing who and what is Australian and unAustralian, from people through to values and to labels such as the ‘Aussie Battler’. Carol Johnson has observed that “ordinary Australians are not Aboriginal, Asian, homosexual, lesbian, feminist or migrant” (2000: 64-65).

Riggs (2005) identifies that there is ‘a collective psychical nature of racism’ rather than an individual one. This means that at unconscious level individuals of the ‘dominant society’ have already invested in racism. However, when incidence of racism is voiced there is an implication for the individual. This is an outcome those individuals resist as they have difficulty in accepting that they have invested in racism, are beneficiaries of it and need to be accountable. At the individual level, the sense of belonging of those affected by race denial is constantly challenged with negative psycho-social results. Recent social psychological research for example shows how race denial is manifested in subtle and usually unconscious ‘micro-aggressions’ that serve to invalidate and devalue the racial and cultural identity and lived experience of those outside

dominant groups (Derald et al. 2007). These processes contribute in very subtle ways to denial strategies and is achieved by not locating self in understanding racism, not challenging unearned privilege and not placing or seeing self in a network of racialised power relations in that society. Derald et al. (2007:275) state that “The power of racial microaggressions lies in their invisibility to the perpetrator and, oftentimes, the recipient”. This also denies that dominant or ‘white’ subjectivities, as well as those of minorities, have been shaped in the historical context of colonial, racialised violence, the legacy which lingers today. The social consequences denial is manifested in:

- Lack of acceptance of unearned privilege of whiteness - is associated with a way of life and perspective where as racism is unseen or is considered an exceptional aberration
- Resentment of critique of whiteness as many see themselves as ‘battlers’, or oppressed in some way too
- This broad anxiety about the social order is embodied in political programs that emphasize a return through cultural renewal to a more secure – often mythical – idea of community.

The consequences of this is racialised subjectivities are constructed in ‘talk’ (discourse) which in turn reflects back to us the broader social context. Riggs (2005) points out that discourse shapes and constructs the way we view racism, both for members of the dominant society and targets of racism. He outlines two useful concepts: *Subjectivities* leading to denial of racism by dominant group members and *Subjectification* leading denial of racism by victims or target groups. As individuals are shaped by their society, it is often surprising to find targets of racism engaging in denial discourse. *Subjectification* is useful in analyzing that the targets’ own perceptions are formed by what is mirrored to them in society. This leads to non-recognition of racism due to a range of factors such as self-blame, lack of knowledge of what constitutes racism, wanting to fit in and not stir up trouble and fear of further discrimination.

Racism denial has been widely identified as one central manifestation of ‘new racism’ that is pervasive and subtle, yet powerful in its capacity to exclude those signified as ‘other’ due to their racial, cultural and ethnic backgrounds and characteristics (Augoustinos and Every 2006). By racism denial we refer to the widespread belief that racism is no longer a feature of modern social relations, which is articulated through commonly expressed views such as; ‘racism was in the past’, ‘it only exists in a minority of the population’ or ‘we need to focus on what unites us and our commonalities’ (Babacan 2008). Such beliefs and views are generated through discourse or, as van Dijk (2000) puts it, ‘...they are expressed, enacted and confirmed by text and talk, such as everyday conversations, board meetings, job interviews, policies, laws, parliamentary debates....’. While race denial may appear to be less harmful than the very clear effects inflicted by ‘old racisms’ such as slavery or race segregation, its power lies normalizing and sanitizing dominant belief systems while excluding and

marginalizing the beliefs and views of those defined as 'other'. Statements such as 'I'm not racist but...' render racism invisible and legitimates racist behaviour. Such statements position perpetrators outside the boundaries of racism, while still expressing derogatory views about particular groups and assuming a power to define who belongs and who doesn't within a given community or society according to racial and cultural characteristics. As such, the effects of race denial are harmful and serve to reinforce patterns of inclusion and exclusion, dominance and subordination.

Denial of racism can also send a clear message that racist behaviors are permissible and will not meet with sanctions. The Cronulla riots in New South Wales are an example of this process. In the aftermath of the incidents, the Prime Minister of Australia denied that racism played a key role in the unfolding of these events. Poynting et al. (2004) argue that the then Prime Minister's refusal to accept race as a cause of the riots led to the State's refusal to act on the issues of racism and sent a clear message that there is state "permission to hate". Smith (2006:9) argues that if the then Prime Minister had accepted that racism was an underlying cause for the incidents then he would have had to specify the causes of such sentiments, thereby drawing negative attention to his government's policies and practices.

The denial of racism fails to validate victims' experiences and transfers the blame from the perpetrator to the victim, blaming them for their failure to fit in, a process that has major consequences on the self-worth and well-being of the victims. It also works by trivializing the concerns and needs of minorities and by a refusal to recognize the contribution of minority groups and individuals. This form of denial and silence is denoted as a form of oppression by Stokes as:

*A person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Non-recognition or mis-recognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted and reduced mode of being.*  
(Stokes 1997:19)

A clear understanding of racism denial and its impact on society is difficult to articulate because of a number of factors. The tendency of governments to respond to the issues of racism by the 'soft approach', affirming the positives, adds into the agenda of racism denial by glossing over the hard data required to work on the issues. It does not allow for research into the area of racism, and ensures there is very little evidence as how racism is constructed, where and how it is manifested, and what works in terms of anti-racism strategies (Babacan 2008). Even where research is conducted into these issues, it is often severely curtailed in terms of its scope and scale by the denial of racism within the structures that guide the research. Furthermore, racism denial also ensures that there are no policy responses to address the issues of racism or its impacts, no validation of the experiences of those who experience it on a daily basis, nor any

attempt to redress the suffering (Babacan 2006). Racism denial is also strengthened by the fact that only a small percentage of racist incidents are reported to the official structures that exist to deal formally with them. Some of the reasons for this underreporting that emerge from research include:

- Fear of authority.
- Lack of information about their rights.
- Do not want to be seen ungrateful.
- Cannot identify forms of racism.
- They have come from worse situations of racism and feel any unfair treatments are mild.
- Lack of English language skills.
- Fear of the consequences of complaining.
- Do not have the time.
- Do not have support systems to assist them with complaints.
- Do not have confidence to undertake complaints, with feelings of powerlessness.
- Do not believe in the efficacy of systems of redress and feeling that complaints will not change things. (Babacan 1998, HREOC 2004)

The relationships between racism denial and broader social outcomes are also difficult to quantify, as racism denial is not easily measured on a clear and quantifiable spectrum between racist and non-racist. Rather, race denial is often seen as common sense, benign in its intent and shaped by context. There is no simple expression of racism denial but rather a combination of often contradictory practices, expressions and beliefs that play out differently, with different effects in different contexts. Similarly, there is no clear division between those who are included and excluded within and between groups. By this, we mean for example, that there are racial divisions and racist behaviors expressed within non-white populations as well as in dominant and white population groups. As such it is impossible to identify clear and direct relationships between racist discourse and specific social outcomes.

Often people who are targets of racism are blamed for overreacting to a particular event, incident or person. Writing in the context of racial microaggression, Derald et al. (2007:279) point out that responses for minorities are contextual and arise from a variety of life experiences of individuals. For minorities, a particular incident was not the first time that similar situations had occurred. What may appear as a random event to a member of the dominant culture is a familiar and repeated experience for the person from minority culture. People from dominant cultures, while making appraisals about whether a situation or event was racist, do not share these multiple experiences; and they evaluate either the incident or their own behaviors in the moment through a singular event (Dovidio & Gaertner 2000). Thus, they fail to see a pattern of bias and can easily deny any form of racism or discrimination (Sue 2005).

Even though race denial is difficult to measure, the harm that is generated through racist discourse is real and there are real effects. There is ample evidence to show that racism itself impacts on life chances and social inclusion outcomes. Studies indicate that life chances of racialised minorities are adversely affected (Li 1998, Bonnet 2000). Social signification based on “race and culture” facilitates social exclusion and hinders inclusion. The findings of studies confirm that the life chances are impacted in the areas of occupational status and earning, educational achievement and social integration. Racism denial exacerbates the impacts of racism by denying the victims of the validation of the experience and also creating an environment where appropriate responses are not developed. Decisions such as who gets let into the country and who does not, who gets a job and who doesn't, who can participate in community affairs and who can't, are all shaped by discursively constructed norms and values (van Dijk 2000). The outcomes have effects at both the structural and the individual level. At the structural level, patterns of socio economic status have a racial character with those from non-white population groups situated subordinate to white population groups (Pyke 2008).

Access to discourse is, itself, a form of domination (van Dijk 2000) and opinion makers reformulate the prejudices found in society- through the search for core national values, creation of national identity, heroes, legends which are exclusionary or tokenistic while at the same time treating race as a taboo subject. Strategies of denial has a “special role in the formulation and the reproduction of racism” (Van Dijk, 2000: 193).

Overcoming denial of racism is the first anti-racism response...

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# **The Practice of Discipline: The Child's Right to a Culture vs. The Child's Right to Safety**

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This paper attempts to raise a rather difficult question of child protection that frequently arises in service delivery, which is, how does one intervene in instances of the (sometimes fairly severe) physical and corporal punishment of children where these practices seem to have some level of acceptance within the child's culture? Professionals often find themselves in very real dilemmas which often seem to involve making a choice between the child's right to safety and the belief that the professional should not intervene in accepted cultural practices, based on the child's right to a culture, both of which are children's rights as secured in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). (Article 8 states the child's right to an identity, including a name, nationality, and family ties; Article 30 reinforces this right for children from minority cultures; Article 19 protects children from 'all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse'.) This same dilemma does not seem to arise in instances of child sexual abuse, as it has been well-documented that few cultures practice adult-child sexual contact, and where this does occur, it is usually in the context of time-limited initiation rituals or where the age difference between the adult and the young person is not excessive (Davenport, 1992; Fontes, 2005; Korbin, 1981; 1987; 1991; NSW Child Protection Council, 1993; Scheper-Hughes, 1998, pp. 299-301; see also Marks, 2008, for a discussion of this issue in relation to child sexual abuse allegations which emerged on Pitcairn Island).

Some cultures, such as the traditional Hawaiian and the Ancient Egyptian, seem to have tolerated sexual contact between siblings, but not across generations. In addition, most countries have legislated against sexual contacts between adults and children and education campaigns have often been conducted to remind professionals of their responsibilities to report instances of adult-child sexual contact which come to their attention. (I am aware that I am setting to one side a type of sexual abuse which does regularly occur in some cultures, female circumcision, or female genital mutilation as the practice is often called in Australia, which I do personally regard as abusive to the girls on whom it is performed, but which I feel unqualified to comment on further, for further information, see Ganguly, 1997).



This situation is very different where the physical punishment of children is concerned. The topic has been generally neglected over the past several decades as new and more exotic forms of child abuse (such as Munchausen's syndrome by proxy or satanic abuse) have come to public attention. The physical abuse of children was the first to be discovered and discussed in the child abuse literature in the early 1960s, and has been increasingly neglected in the boutique world of child abuse research. In addition, it has not always been easy to decide what constitutes the physical abuse of children. Corporal punishment, or spanking (as it is more commonly called), is widely supported throughout the world (e.g. Duke, 1995; Ritchie & Ritchie, 1997), and to this writer's knowledge only a minority of countries worldwide have legislated against any form of spanking (Durrant & Olsen, 1997; c/f Cashmore & de Haas, 1995; Office of the Community Advocate, 1994). At the date of this writing, about twenty countries, located mostly in Europe (e.g. Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Norway, Sweden and others) and South America (Chile, Costa Rica, Uruguay, Venezuela), have legislated against the corporal punishment of children in all contexts (End All Corporal Punishment of Children, 2008).

More countries have allowed parents to spank their children, but have drawn the line against school or public service personnel (e.g. youth workers, detention centre employees, foster parents) doing so (this is the case in most, but not all, Australian states and territories, see End All Corporal Punishment of Children, 2008). Equally, most countries acknowledge that although parents may hit their children, excessive force does constitute child abuse, and is grounds for state intervention. (The New South Wales legislation is quite specific about what forms of spanking are allowed and disallowed - so is the new legislation in Great Britain; see Brisbane Courier-Mail, 8 September, 2001, p. 19). In Australia, professionals are expected to assist in child protection by reporting to public authorities cases where they believe children have been subjected to excessive force (for example, see Frey, 1999).

However, it appears that, when dealing with children from certain culturally and linguistically diverse background (CALDB) families where physical discipline appears to receive a cultural sanction, in an effort to affirm multiculturalism, even child protection professionals are applying different standards in their consideration of whether to intervene when they see force being used against a child than they would apply when dealing with children from the dominant culture (see also Maitra, 2005). These cases seem to be indicative of a general confusion in societies which espouse multi-culturalism, as can be seen in the following examples:

- This issue came up some years ago in some training Diversity in Child Care, Inc. was doing in a suburb outside of the city of Brisbane. Diversity in Child Care, Inc. provided resources and training to child care professionals tasked with increasing the access of child care to CALDB families. Although the training was actually about helping

children who had been exposed to trauma as a result of fleeing wars and persecution overseas, it quickly became apparent that staff were more concerned about instances of physical punishment they had witnessed amongst families from non-English speaking backgrounds. One pre-school teacher mentioned having witnessed one such parent hit her child across the head. The teacher stated that, although this incident had concerned her, she had made no attempt to intervene. I questioned this teacher carefully about whether she would have intervened had the family background been Anglo-Australian, and why. She told me she would have intervened with an Anglo-Australian family because a parent can cause serious harm to a child by hitting the child across the head. I asked her why she assumed a CALDB parent would not want to know that this practice could endanger her child, and she replied that she felt hitting the child across the head was accepted in the child's culture, and she felt that by challenging this action, she would be undermining the child's regard for their culture and imposing the foreign Anglo-Australian culture on the child instead. It seemed to me as though she genuinely believed that the physical effects of being struck, and therefore physical risk (as opposed to emotional risk) actually varied by culture.

- I encountered a similar argument quite a number of years ago at a presentation on child abuse given at a conference for school counsellors from the international schools of the Asia-Pacific region held in Bangkok, Thailand. On this occasion, it became very apparent that most of the school counsellors were extremely reluctant to intervene in almost any instance of child abuse. This was partially due to uncertainty about legal requirements, and the availability of resources in a wide variety of countries, and probably partially due to the social prominence of many of the parents whose children were in international schools. However, the major reason for this reluctance seemed to be the difficulty the counsellors had in determining whether apparently abusive practices were culturally accepted (or at least culturally commonplace). One counsellor cited the case of a Japanese high school student who had come to school with a black eye, and explained that her father had hit her in the eye the previous night when he threw a telephone at her, but quickly added, "Its okay - I deserved it." He said he had not intervened because he felt this practice was accepted by both the father and his daughter (and seems thereby to be indirectly acknowledging that she had somehow deserved to have a telephone thrown at her). Although this incident happened many years ago, the attitude the counsellor displayed is, in some cases, still quite contemporary.
- Anthropologist Helen Morton makes a similar observation of the child discipline practices she first observed as a young married woman on

the island of Tonga (the writer apologises for the length of this excerpt but it is necessary to give a full flavour to the Ms. Morton's dilemma):

*One day not long after my marriage an incident occurred that, in retrospect, was the beginning of my fascination with Tongan childhood. It was Sunday, a day of churchgoing and rest in Tonga. The girls had worn new white dresses to church and against their mother's (the author's sister-in-law - RF) orders had kept them on after church while they played in the now muddy yard. To punish the girls for their disobedience their mother lined them up from oldest to youngest and beat each in turn with a piece of wood, on their legs and hands. By the time it was the youngest girl's turn she was sobbing with fear, but her mother, sitting cross-legged on a mat, resolutely administered her punishment.*

*I watched the scene in horrified amazement...this incident jolted me into a sense of "culture shock." I was shocked that the children were beaten with a piece of wood, I was amazed that they were expected to stand in line waiting to be beaten, and I was even more amazed that they complied. Their mother's calmness also confounded me: she just sat there and implacably hit her children, one at a time.*

*My sense of shock was compounded when, very soon afterward, I saw (this) mother cuddling the youngest daughter. I turned to my husband (who was Tongan - RF) in bewilderment and asked why, if the mother had been angry enough to beat her children only minutes before, she was now showing affection. I cannot remember his exact words after all these years, but they were something like "She is showing that she loves them. They have to know that she only punishes them because she loves them."....*

*As it turned out, my sister-in-law was a gentle woman who punished her children only infrequently, and her punishments were mild relative to the many incidents I later witnessed. Yet it was that first incident that affected me most profoundly, because it forced me to confront the reality of cultural difference. (Morton, 1996, pp. 1-2)*

- Similar confrontations by anthropologists with apparently severe physical child rearing practices, (as well as other practices which would generally be deemed destructive to children by child development professionals), and the ethical dilemmas these created for researchers are also described in chapters by Weiss (on the treatment of children with disabilities in Israel), Bourgois (on Puerto Rican families in New York) and Goldstein (discipline practices in a specific family in a favela in Brazil) collected by Scheper - Hughes and Sargent (1998).

- Finally, I think it important to note that these dilemmas also arise with Anglo subcultures as well, where the use of corporal punishment is still widely approved. I can recall as a child protection officer in a small

Australian country town being called by a woman who had just witnessed her neighbour hit his primary school aged child with a rubber pipe. Upon arriving at this family's home, I was confronted by the child who had been hit snugly asleep on the father's lap. The father explained to me that the family were Christian, and believed that discipline had to be administered physically to their children, who after being punished, were required to pray and ask God's forgiveness (and their parents' forgiveness) for what they had done. He explained further that their faith forbid them to use their hands in spanking their children because "the hand gives love" and they did not want their children to associate their parents' hands with pain. So the parents had used a stiff rubber pipe instead. Further, it was clear that the parents saw me, in my capacity as a child protection worker as an agent of an Unchristian government which was attempting to stop parents from raising their children according to "God's plan," and were therefore unprepared to listen to anything I had to say about their methods of discipline. It was also clear that all the children were firmly bonded with their parents, and to remove them would disrupt this attachment. It was equally clear that the parents would not change their practice of hitting their children with a pipe. In this situation, do I respect the children's right to be raised in an alternative culture? (Greven (1991) analyses this dilemma, especially regarding American Christian sub-cultures in great detail, although not from a "neutral" perspective - I will leave it to the reader to guess which of two unpleasant options I took at the time, an option with which I have never felt comfortable).

It is significant to note that this issue does not arise only in dealing with issues of physical discipline. It also arises where cultural practices seem to confront other human rights treasured in Western political thinking, which through a variety of international conventions, now has an international influence (see Schepers-Hughes & Sargent, 1998b, pp.7-10; a critique of human rights can be found in Glendon, 1991). These issues surface when considering the treatment of women around the world generally and the physical discipline of married women (what we would rightly, I believe, term domestic violence) specifically. It also arises in the treatment of people with disabilities (see for example Weiss, 1998). In the STAR program's manual *Children Crossing Cultures* (1999), Hurriyet Babacan and I discussed this dilemma in regard to instances where culture seems to conflict with equality of rights and opportunities for girls and boys. That same year, Raquel Aldunate and I raised the issue in regard to domestic violence at a conference on this issue in Brisbane (see Bamborough, 1999). Drawing on some of the considerations first suggested in *Children Crossing Cultures*, and later raised at the conference, and developed further over the intervening years, I would like to explore here some issues which may clarify, if not satisfactorily resolve, the issue over intervention in instances of physical child discipline.

To begin with, I would like to comment on the inadequacy of the approach which asserts that whatever the practice has been in the parent's home country, it must now be modified because that family is now living in a different place and is subject to the laws of the new country. This was the approach we were encouraged to take in late 1980s when I trained as a child protection officer with the New South Wales Department of Youth and Community Services, and recent discussions (2007) between refugee parents from the Horn of Africa and child protection authorities facilitated by the staff of Catholic Education, to which I acted at the time as a consultant, indicates that there is still a strong temptation to take this approach. At one level, of course, it is true that families living in Australia are subject to Australian laws, families living in Canada subject to Canadian laws, families living in India subject to Indian law and so on. However, as mentioned above, these laws are rarely clear as to what constitutes physical abuse, and how physical abuse is to be separated from ordinary discipline. If I spank a child on the bottom, I have not abused that child, yet if I spank a child hard enough to leave bruises, I probably have abused that child.

Equally, families who have not come from Western countries may be unfamiliar with this level of government intervention into their daily lives, particularly intervention which is purportedly in their children's 'best interests' (see also Connolly, Crichton-Hill, & Ward, 2006; and Fontes, 2005, for further discussion on the general context and life experiences of refugee and CALDB families). They may in fact see the government as prohibiting the disciplining of their children and thus contributing to the child's disobedience and immorality, and not really understand why the government would do this. (This is a common concern amongst immigrant families in Australia, who often regard Anglo-Australian children as having lower standards of morality and too much freedom). This places any concerned parent in a difficult situation where they must choose between obeying the law, and satisfying their moral and religious standards, the imposition of which they believe to be in the best interests of their children. This issue was highlighted when we were interviewing a group of women from the Horn of Africa in 2001, in a totally different context, for a project to examine how a variety of cultures respond to children with disabilities. In the course of the conversation it emerged that the women had been informed that spanking was illegal in Queensland (this was not true then, and to the best of my knowledge, is still not true). The women had clearly been told that in Australia, naughty children were sent to their rooms for "time out." Several of the women admitted this alternative left them feeling very uncomfortable, and that they continued to spank their children, only indoors where authorities could not see them. They said they found the alternative which had been suggested to them, "time-out", a much more appalling form of child abuse. They felt a brief intervention via a swat on the child's bottom was far superior to sending a child away from the family circle into isolation, even for a brief period. To them, to administer a brief hit seemed a far more appropriate intervention than the separation of the child from the family, which seemed to magnify the infraction. I note that women from the Horn of Africa interviewed on video by the VICSIG (in the Australian state of

Victoria) made very similar statements about discipline. (I do not mention this because I personally approve of spanking, I do not, but because it shows how the very attempt to provide parents with alternatives first, distorts the actual practices of Australian parents, and second, demonstrates how little consideration was given to how other cultures might hear the alternatives - and one could argue here, taking these women's concerns seriously, how potentially abusive some of the alternatives really are.)

On further reflection, it seems to me that both the "culturally tolerant" attitude and the "you must obey the local laws" attitude belie subtle forms of racism, and indeed, raise vital questions about the nature of a multicultural society. It seems to me both attitudes betray an unwillingness to engage members of other cultures in discussion, even when the practice being discussed (physical discipline of children) is hardly a practice foreign to the dominant Anglo-Australian culture, and has been subject to intense debate within this dominant culture. There seems to be a kind of Orientalism (Said, 1978) occurring here, where a common practice, developed for a common end (the development of one's children) can no longer be commonly discussed due to a barrier called "culture." The teacher mentioned in the example above would not have hesitated to share her concerns with a parent from her own culture, yet believed that these concerns could not be attended to by a parent from a different culture because somehow this thing called "culture" would convince this parent that concerns about the safety of the discipline practice were irrelevant. (It may be overstating the case a bit, but it almost seemed as though this teacher were assuming that "culture" would prevent a parent from caring about their child). The same applies to the case mentioned above of the child protection officer (me). I also assumed too quickly that the family would not be willing to discuss their practice with me due to this inhibition called "culture." Yet, there were a number of questions I could have asked had I not begun from an assumption that this family would not be willing to talk to me; technical questions such as, whether they were aware that using an implement to hit a diminishes the amount of control one has over the impact of the strike, and may result in non-intentional injury; or more broad ranging questions such as how the children would not notice who was holding the implement, and still associate punishment with that person's hands (as the family had asserted the "hands give love").

I note, too, that this type of thinking uses a very simple and non-complex definition of "culture," quite inconsistent with its use in modern scholarship. It assumes a single, unified culture which expresses itself unproblematically in parental practices. It neglects the probability that within any culture there are many sub-cultures and that even within a single family, different members of the family may participate in quite different cultures, such as male culture, female culture, children's culture, youth culture and so on (see Maitra, 2005). In Anglo countries these cultures are at least tacitly acknowledged by advertising designed to target specific sub-cultures, such as the "youth market". In addition, it is readily recognised that sociological variables such as race, class, location

(e.g. rural vs. urban), religion, level of education, and gender are all potentially capable of creating sub-cultures (for further details see Fontes, 2005). There is a very real sense in which a father's culture is not a mother's and a parent's culture may not be a child's. Unfortunately, whilst most Anglo professionals would readily acknowledge this about Anglo-Australian culture, they often do not extend to other "cultures" the honour of being complex. Instead, what manifests most easily to an observer outside the culture, which is usually the dominant culture, is taken to represent the entirety of the culture (the reader is again referred to the illustration of this conflict between dominant and sub-cultural understandings of child abuse in the case of Pitcairn Island, Marks, 2008). This would be unthinkable in Anglo-Australian practice (unthinkable but not necessarily "undoable"), yet this sensitivity to other non-dominant discourses is often poorly applied when considering other "cultures."

Change in the treatment of children in the Anglo-Australian culture occurred, and continues to occur, because someone, or a group of someones, decided that ways of treating children, whether it be through severe physical punishment or sexual abuse, or child labour, was counter to the best interests of children. An argument could have been made, and still can be made in several of these cases, that these practices were accepted in Anglo-Australian cultures, and therefore were not able to be discussed, let alone challenged and changed. To suggest that no culture is perfectly sensitive to children's needs is surely not an example of Western cultural imperialism - it is incumbent on all of the world's citizens to think about what is best for our children, and to borrow practices from each other that seem more loving and respectful than our own. In my own life with children, I have been strongly influenced by Indigenous American sanctions against the physical punishment of children (see for example Ehle, 1988; Schaefer, 1995). Further, I am deeply grateful that the Indigenous writers who have touched my thinking on this issue did not decide not to engage with me on the basis that spanking is allowed in most Anglo societies, so must therefore be a part of my culture. I have also seriously curtailed my advocacy of "time out" after discussions with African and Indigenous Australian parents, and try to use it as infrequently as possible as a discipline practice. At Diversity in Child Care Inc., we developed a set of questions, in an Australian context, which we thought might initiate cross-cultural discussions about child discipline measures which might lead to conversations about discipline rather than sophisticated forms of intimidation or persuasion:

- Would this practice seem severe enough to be reported to a child protection agency if it occurred in an Anglo-Australian family?
- Is there some reason to believe that this practice distresses, endangers, or has a negative impact on the child?
- Does it appear that the practice is being carried out with the intention of assisting the child?
- How does the parent explain the practice? What does the parent hope to achieve by this practice?

- Is this in fact a cultural practice, or is it more likely to be a practice idiosyncratic to this family, or to this parent? Would it bother members of the child's own culture? (Use of a cultural broker to discuss this set of questions might be very helpful).
- Even if the practice is widely carried out in the child's culture, is it none-the-less regarded as controversial (as "spanking" is in the Anglo-Australian culture)?
- Are there other practices which might achieve the same effects/goals without endangering the child in the same way?
- How open is the parent to considering these alternatives, particularly if they believe that doing so might assist their child?

The Anglo-Australian culture has been engaged in discussions about the intent and practice of the physical discipline of children for at least a century. Historical trends indicate that with each passing year, fewer and fewer parents find that physically disciplining their children suits their own goals and ideals to promote the development of their children into emotionally mature adults. However, many parents in the Anglo-Australian continue to use physical discipline, at least in some circumstances. That the trend is increasingly away from physical discipline, in the absence of prohibitive legislation, seems almost entirely due to conversations initiated about the broad purposes of parenting. Parents in CALDB communities have been all too frequently excluded from these conversations due to "cultural" differences yet they are expected to abide the outcomes of these conversations, even when the apparent outcome is far from unanimous even within the dominant culture. It is fairly easy to conclude that this exclusion is the real source of racism in child protection. Anthropologist Nancy Scheper-Hughes concluded (1998b, p. 9), "traditional cultural and moral relativism (in anthropology) may no longer be adequate for the complex transnational world in which we live. If anthropology is worth anything at all, it must be grounded in a new ethics beyond the cultural relativisms of the past." Such an ethic can only arise from cross-cultural discussions about the purpose of parenting children, and these discussion cannot occur unless Anglo-Australian open ourselves to conversations with members of other cultures, and be prepared to have our own oppressive child-rearing practices challenged thereby.

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# Anti-Racist Cultural Competence: Challenges for Human Service Organizations

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## Abstract

The value of cultural competence for individuals and organizations is increasingly being acknowledged and accepted across industry and is especially a key area of focus in the human services sector. In this paper, I argue that the cultural competence literature and models do not take sufficient heed of the issues of racist ideology and actions and as such fail to deal with their impacts on people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The paper further looks at how anti-racist strategy could be incorporated into cultural competence models, using one such model as an example.

## Cultural Competence

Cross et al. (1989) argue that cultural competence is a set of congruent behaviours, attitudes and policies that come together in a system, agency or among professionals and enable that system, agency or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations. In the context of human services, cultural competence can be viewed as the “ability to transform knowledge and cultural awareness into health and/or psychosocial interventions that support and sustain healthy client-system functioning within the appropriate cultural context (McPhatter 1997:256)”.

Cross-cultural situations that arise within human service work essentially bring two or more worldviews into close contact, and cultural competence provides the bridge, in terms of structures, awareness, knowledge and skills, between these worldviews. It exists within a paradigm of inductive learning, for both the individual and the organization, where the process of interaction is always a learning process. As such, it is an ongoing process and as Lum (1999:175) says, cultural competence “is a process and arrival point.”

Most of the models of cultural competence focus on four areas of cultural competence:

- Self-awareness of the worker’s own values, biases and power differences with clients. This includes recognition of the worker’s own worldview, that they are also culturally constructed, and how that impacts on the

interaction with the client, levels of ethnocentrism, an understanding of power and how it shapes thinking as well as an understanding of how this self-awareness will lead to more meaningful interactions.

- Knowledge of the practice environment, the helping methods and the client's culture. This would include knowledge about the culture that the client comes from as well as more generalised knowledge about how cultures vary and interact with each other. A common problem here is of cultural stereotyping which has the implicit assumption that all people from one culture share the same characteristics, an assumption that is often incorrect and leads to cross cultural conflict.
- Skills in verbal and non-verbal communication and
- Inductive learning based on the worker- client interaction (Gopalkrishnan 2006; Lum 1999; McPhatter 1997; Sue et. al. 1982).

While the delineation of these four levels of cultural competence is useful, they do not effectively look at the impact of the environment and the organisation on the worker. They do not articulate the close interrelationship between the organisational culture and the worker's worldview and consequent behaviour as well as the nature of the client's experience of the organisation (Gopalkrishnan 2006). Thus much of the discussion of culture and "difference" is restricted to the professional interaction between the client and the worker and not expanded further into the context of organisational change (Nybell et al. 2004). Over the recent years, this problem has been recognised and the significant models are beginning to emerge that examine cultural competence at levels beyond the individual. The National Mental Health and Research Council draws on Eisenbruch et al. (2001) to delineate four dimensions of cultural competence. Their model (with the health-specific references removed) highlights the following:

- **Systemic**— effective policies and procedures, mechanisms for monitoring and sufficient resources are fundamental to fostering culturally competent behaviour and practice at other levels. Policies support the active involvement of culturally diverse communities in matters concerning their health and environment.
- **Organisational**—the skills and resources required by client diversity are in place. A culture is created where cultural competence is valued as integral to core business and consequently supported and evaluated. Management is committed to a process of diversity management including cultural and linguistic diversity at all staffing levels.
- **Professional**—overarching the other dimensions, at this level, cultural competence is identified as an important component in education and professional development. It also results in specific professions developing cultural competence standards to guide the working lives of individuals.
- **Individual**—knowledge, attitudes and behaviours defining culturally competent behaviour are maximised and made more effective by existing

within a supportive organisation and wider system. Individual professionals feel supported to work with diverse communities to develop relevant, appropriate and sustainable programs. (NHMRC 2006:30)

This model is supported by those of Goode (2000) and Nybell et al. (2004) who view the processes of gaining cultural competence as involving levels of policy making, infrastructure building, program administration and delivery as well as development of the individual as also development of diversity within the organisation reflective of the client population. By broadening the concept of cultural competence, these models ensure that cultural competence embraces the relationship of the worker and the client while ensuring that organisations are also accountable and relevant to diverse client populations.

Another issue critical to the effectiveness of these models of cultural competence is the lack of focus on racism as a major factor that needs to be addressed by the individual and the organization before any significant advances can be made in terms of increasing levels of cultural competence and improving cross-cultural interactions. Much of the literature overlooks the significance of racism in this context, limiting the models to a more 'positive approach' towards dealing with issues of cross-cultural interactions. Even where racism is identified as a major problem, as with the NHMRC model (2006), very little is done to specifically deal with its issues and impacts through the processes of building cultural competence, other than in an indirect fashion.

## **Racism**

The United Nations' *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* (1965) defines racial discrimination as:

*Any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.*

While this definition is useful in placing the discussion within the context of Human Rights, it suffers from the traditional assumption that race is something that exists and has a scientific basis, a concept that has been thoroughly debunked since then. The American Sociological Association (2003) states that race has no scientific foundation and is a social phenomenon that, in the United States and among other nations, continues to be used to categorize, assess and judge people. Zelinka (1996) traces the phenomenon back to the 15<sup>th</sup> Century when concepts around the so-called 'inferiority' of indigenous peoples were used to justify colonization, slavery and genocide. This was later added to by 19<sup>th</sup> Century pseudo-science regarding the hierarchy of races and concepts of a Master Race.

Over the last few decades, new expressions of racism have replaced the old ones, with biological differences of skin colour being replaced by discrimination based on a hierarchy of cultures, with some cultures, and religions, being perceived to be superior to others. McConnochie et al. (1988, p. 23) refer to “cultural racism” as “ethnocentrism”, defining it as:

*The belief that one's own culture is superior to the cultures of other people, that members of one's own culture are superior to members of other cultures, and that these beliefs provide justification for discriminating against people from other cultures on the grounds of perceived cultural superiority.*

Racism can be overt or hidden, direct or indirect, and can be manifested in acts of *everyday racism* that impact strongly on the life chances of individuals who are not part of the mainstream. It is very opportunistic and avoids definition in an absolute and fixed manner. Nevertheless, it continues to rely on the notion of an essence attributed to a human population, whether biological or cultural, and social outcomes that do, will, or should flow from this (Anthias 1998). Racism is also significant in that it can be manifested in the acts of an individual or can be reflected in the policies, structures, culture and processes of an organization. McConnochie et al. (1998) clarify that individual racism is “the expression of racist attitudes in the behaviour of individuals in face-to-face situations”, and institutional racism refers to, “the ways in which racist beliefs or values have been built into the operations of social institutions in such a way as to discriminate against, control and oppress various minority groups”.

In the context of institutional racism Pettman (1992) focuses on the impact of institutions on the life chances of individuals. She states:

*Institutions validate rules, roles and certain understandings about entitlements which are often seen as fair or universal, but which actually reflect and protect dominant social interests - through, for example, understandings about who is a good parent, a reliable tenant or borrower, or the best for the job. They are activated by bureaucrats, social workers, receptionists and so on, whose own perceptions, priorities and values are fused with cultural meaning that speak of their own personal histories and social location. Within particular constraints and in their own ways, they do their job (Pettman, 1992:57-58).*

The context of organizations impact on the lives of individuals in numerous acts of *everyday racism* inequitable practices can enter daily life and become part of what is seen as ‘normal’ by the dominant group (Essed 1991). These can be reproduced at a number of levels including political structures, the judiciary, the media, educational systems and the processes of knowledge production (Van Dijk 2005). Racism as experienced everyday, at the individual and the institutional level, can have significant impacts on the lives of individuals. Tyson (2007) points to a number of sources to elucidate this point in the context of mental health, where she argues that institutionalized racism has major negative impacts on people belonging to racial and ethnic minorities. Many others point to impacts such as increased social isolation, anger, fear, anxiety, trauma-related

psychiatric issues as well as ghettoization and divisions within and between communities (Babacan 1998; Bromberg & Klein 2005; *Ismae* 2004; Poynting & Noble 1994).

## **Anti-racist Cultural Competence**

Babacan examines the commonly cited belief that racism is no longer a feature of modern social relations, as being only the purview of a few rednecks or as belonging to the past. This leads to responses to the issues of racism only by affirming the positives and glossing over the hard data (2008). This approach, while seeming very positive and affirming, actually exacerbates the impacts of racism through denial and marginalization. The overwhelming silence of the literature on the anti-racist aspect of cultural competence points to the possibility of buying into dominant and essentially racist ideology. Given the impacts of racism and its multiple levels of operation, it assumes significance that models of cultural competence should incorporate anti-racist strategy as part of their core business to ensure that the interests of the less powerful groups are met. As an example of this, using the NHMRC model cited earlier (NHMRC 2006:30) as one possible model of developing cultural competence, we can incorporate the concepts of anti-racist strategies into it to make it more effective towards effective change.

**Systemic**— Incorporating policies and procedures on fostering culturally competent behaviour and practice at all levels, incorporating anti-racist and anti-discriminatory policies and procedures in all cultural competence activity. Racism is recognized as a key issue and procedures are in place to deal with power differentials based on perceptions of race in all interactions whether with clients or among workers or with the organizational structures themselves. Mechanisms for monitoring and sufficient resources are fundamental to fostering anti-racist and culturally competent behaviour and practice at other levels. The policies procedures and practices incorporate concepts of ‘racial’ privilege (as relevant to the site of power) and how they can support the maintenance of institutionalized racism (Tyson 2007). The policies support the active involvement of culturally diverse communities in matters concerning them including building anti-racist cultural competence.

**Organisational**—the skills and resources required by client diversity and marginalization in the community are in place. A culture is created where anti-racist cultural competence is valued as integral to core business and consequently supported and evaluated. The covert nature of many forms of racism, especially as a consequence of lack of power is acknowledged and a culture bringing these issues out into the open and transparently dealing with them is encouraged. Management is committed to a process of diversity management including cultural and linguistic diversity at all staffing levels.

**Professional**—overarching the other dimensions, at this level, anti-racist cultural competence is identified as an important component in education and professional development. Education and professional development methods and material are free of racial bias and proactive in challenging issues of ‘racial’ privilege. It also results in specific professions developing anti-racist cultural competence standards to guide the working lives of individuals.

**Individual**—knowledge, attitudes and behaviours defining anti-racist culturally competent behaviour are maximised and made more effective by existing within a supportive organisation and wider system. Individuals need to develop processes of self-reflection to analyse how racism and hierarchies of privilege have impacted on them, including issues of internalized racism (Tyson 2007; Jones 2000) Individual professionals feel supported to work with diverse communities to develop relevant, appropriate and sustainable programs and to challenge situations, structures and individuals that show racist bias.

Using this multi-level approach to cultural competence and incorporating anti-racist strategy at all levels, this model of cultural competence becomes a well-rounded tool towards dealing with the issues that arise from cross-cultural interactions in Human Service Organizations. It requires an acknowledgement of what is often perceived as the ‘negative’, the impact of racism on people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and leads to an affirmation of their experienced reality, thereby empowering them towards positive change. Anti-racist cultural competence can be a powerful tool towards organizational change in Human Services, if it is undertaken in an open, honest and transparent way.

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# The failure of the Howard Government's 'practical' reconciliation policy

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## Introduction

In 1991, the Australian Commonwealth Parliament unanimously passed the *Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation Act (Cth) 1991* (hereafter the CAR Act). The CAR Act instituted a process that aimed to reconcile Indigenous and non-Indigenous people by the end of 2000, in time for the Centenary of the Federation of Australia. This ten-year process had three primary goals: to educate the wider Australian community about reconciliation and Indigenous issues; to foster an ongoing national commitment to address Indigenous socio-economic disadvantage; and to investigate the desirability of developing some form of document of reconciliation, and if it was considered desirable, to provide advice concerning the content of such a document.

The election of the Howard Liberal/National Coalition Government in 1996, halfway through the reconciliation decade, saw a significant shift in the Commonwealth Government's approach to both reconciliation and, more broadly, Indigenous Affairs. The new Howard Government largely rejected the previous Hawke and Keating Labor Governments' policies of advocating a limited notion of Indigenous rights (such as self-determination and native title, but not a treaty or national land rights) and symbolic reconciliation (such as formally recognising the Aboriginal flag). The Howard Government also largely ignored the three primary goals of the reconciliation process - education, socio-economic disadvantage and a document of reconciliation - which had been bipartisan policy when the CAR Act was unanimously passed by the Commonwealth Parliament just five years earlier. Instead, the Howard Government implemented a new policy of 'practical' reconciliation. This policy advocated that the Government priorities should be primarily to address the substantial socio-economic disadvantage experienced by many Indigenous people in health, education, housing and employment.

In this paper, I analyse the Howard Government's policy of 'practical' reconciliation over the past eleven years. I argue that the policy has been a substantial failure on three main levels. First, the policy ignored the importance of symbolic reconciliation in providing some justice to Indigenous people. Second, the policy did not recognise the fundamental nexus between Indigenous rights,

such as self-determination and land rights, and Indigenous socio-economic disadvantage. Third, the policy did not actually succeed in alleviating Indigenous socio-economic disadvantage.

### **'Practical' reconciliation**

Following their election victory in 1996, the Howard Commonwealth Government abandoned the approach of the previous Hawke and Keating Labor Governments on both Indigenous Affairs and reconciliation. The new Prime Minister was determined to reject any notion of Indigenous separateness, even of a symbolic nature. One of his Government's first acts was to dramatically reduce the budget of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (see Gunstone 2006). Indigenous leaders criticised this change. Geoff Clark (1998: 5) stated "from the outset, the Coalition Government has systematically attacked Indigenous rights". Instead, the Howard Government focussed on 'practical' reconciliation rather than on issues of symbolism and Indigenous rights. The policy of 'practical' reconciliation argued that the Government's main focus in Indigenous Affairs should be to address Indigenous socio-economic disadvantage, particularly in health, education, housing and employment. Thus, of the three broad goals outlined at the beginning of the reconciliation process in 1991 - education, Indigenous socio-economic disadvantage and a document of reconciliation - the Howard Government stated that just one - Indigenous socio-economic disadvantage - would be their primary focus in Indigenous Affairs. The Prime Minister justified the new policy of 'practical' reconciliation in an article written in 2000:

*It is right that we address in a practical and effective way the ongoing consequences of these aspects of our history. Reconciliation is about attitudes and acceptance just as it is about policies and programs ... it calls for practical policy-making that effectively addresses current indigenous disadvantage particularly in areas such as employment, health, education and housing ... the cornerstone of the reconciliation process should be a renewed national focus on the substantive causes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage. Through practical measures to which I will return, the government has focussed its efforts on the areas of indigenous health, education, housing and employment (Howard 2000: 88-90).*

Howard's attempt to redefine reconciliation as that concerned primarily with improving Indigenous socio-economic disadvantage rather than either the three broad reconciliation goals or symbolic acts of reconciliation, such as apologising to the stolen generations, was most famously articulated during his speech to the 1997 Australian Reconciliation Convention, a speech that resulted in many in the audience turning their backs on him:

*Reconciliation will not work if it puts a higher value on symbolic gestures and overblown promises rather than on the practical needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in areas like health, housing, education and employment ... This practical, on-the-ground approach will remain a primary focus of our policy making (Howard 1997).*

This refocusing of Commonwealth Government priorities onto 'practical' rather than symbolic forms of reconciliation initiated a fierce debate in the wider Australian community concerning the emphasis that the Howard Government should place on either or both of these forms of reconciliation. Several conservative commentators agreed with Howard that 'practical' reconciliation, rather than any symbolism, was required to address Indigenous socio-economic disadvantage. For instance, McGuinness (2000: 239) argued, "the dreadful hopelessness and mounting suicides in Aboriginal communities ... do not require a peace treaty or a formal statement of reconciliation. What is needed is some real effort at overcoming actual problems by practical means" (see also Hughes 2003: 11; Albrechtsen 2002: 39).

However, there were numerous critics of the Howard Government's prioritising of 'practical' over symbolic reconciliation. Although recognising the urgent need to address Indigenous socio-economic disadvantage, these critics attacked the Howard Government and the Prime Minister's stance as reducing the meaning of reconciliation to merely one of assimilation. Reynolds (2000: 53-54), for example, argued, "the prime minister, Mr Howard, has resolutely resisted any discussion of a treaty and appears to see reconciliation as being about improving service delivery. It is a narrow, unimaginative and essentially assimilationist view" (see also Clark 2000: 229; Pearson 2000: 166; Rigby 2000: 9).

Howard was also accused of failing to comprehend the importance and connectivity of both symbolic and 'practical' acts of reconciliation to the overall success of the reconciliation process. The former conservative Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser argued "there will never be reconciliation with Aboriginal people and other Australians unless we understand that there are both material and spiritual issues involved" (Fraser, cited in Burney 2000: 69; see also Naidoo 1998: 142).

Some Indigenous commentators, such as Mick Dodson, former Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner for the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, and co-author of the *Bringing them Home* Report, argued that 'practical' reconciliation is really just about the citizenship rights of Indigenous people to access quality education, health and housing services (M. Dodson 2000; see also Clark 2000: 229; Anderson 1999: 232). These commentators asserted that reconciliation should be defined as involving both symbolism and Indigenous rights, such as land rights and sovereignty, but not as a process involving simply citizenship rights. Recent experiences in South

Africa have highlighted the importance of recognising the citizenship rights of all groups and not confusing the recognition of these rights as having achieved reconciliation. Rather, other actions, including symbolic acts, are needed in order for reconciliation to succeed (see Hamber 2000: 224).

Howard was also criticised for using this focus on 'practical' reconciliation for his own political purposes. When he rejected the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation's *Document towards Reconciliation (2000)* due to "his rigid refusal to recognise Indigenous societies as pre-existing entities with rights and entitlements", he resorted to "the spurious grounds that only 'practical reconciliation' can ameliorate the 'problems of the Aborigines'" (Langton 2000: 28). The Howard Government's emphasis on 'practical' reconciliation was also seen by commentators as an attempt to avoid any discussion and debate about the need for structural, institutional changes in Australian society (see Clark 2000: 229).

Further, Howard was accused of emphasising his government's support for 'practical' reconciliation to avoid being accused of not actually doing enough to address Indigenous socio-economic disadvantage. "John Howard's empty rhetoric professing commitment to indigenous health, education and employment (reported without any serious analysis by the media) is in stark contrast to the lack of effective government programs in these areas" (Tickner 2001: 47; see also Tatz 2000: 75; Behrendt 2003: 10). Despite the Howard Government's public commitment to 'practical' reconciliation, it predominantly failed to develop effective programs and policies to address this commitment to address Indigenous socio-economic disadvantage (Tickner 2001: 47; Pearson 2002).

This failure can be illustrated by several examples of the Howard Government implementing, or failing to implement, certain Indigenous Affairs policies, the effects of which were detrimental to Indigenous socio-economic conditions. One such example was the refusal of the Howard Government to overturn the Northern Territory's mandatory sentencing legislation, instead merely removing juvenile offenders from the legislation's jurisdiction (Loff 2000: 2071). This was despite both the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody's key recommendations to divert Indigenous offenders away from the prison system and the evidence of the increased incarceration rate of Indigenous people in the Northern Territory following the introduction of the mandatory sentencing legislation (Loff 2000: 2071; NAALAS 2000: 11).

Another example was the Howard Government's changes to Abstudy, an important and long-standing scheme designed to support and encourage Indigenous people accessing all levels of the education system. These changes, which ensured the mainstreaming of Abstudy, saw a significant reduction of over 10 percent in the number of Indigenous people accessing both University and TAFE sectors in a single year, from 1998/99 to 1999/2000 (Brabham et al. 2002: 12).

Yet another example was the lack of resources spent on Indigenous health. Indigenous health is about three times worse than overall Australian health, yet, in 2002, on a per capita basis, the Howard Government spent, in the health programs that it directly controls, only 74 cents on Indigenous people for every \$1 spent for the wider Australian population (Ring and Elston 1999: 228; Ring and Brown 2002: 629). In terms of funding from all sources, in 1998-99, for every one dollar spent on overall Australian health, only \$1.22 was spent on Indigenous health, despite the significant health disadvantage suffered by Indigenous people (AIHW 2001: 2). Further, in the two main Commonwealth-funded health programs - Medicare and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme - the level of expenditure for each Indigenous person was just 37 percent of the level of expenditure for each non-Indigenous person and overall the two health programs only contributed 7.3 percent of the total amount spent on Indigenous health, compared to 23.9 percent of the total amount spent on non-Indigenous health (AIHW 2001: xiv). Finally, from 1995-96 to 1998-99, the proportion of funding spent on Indigenous health from the overall health funding area, (including Commonwealth, State, Territory and Local Governments, private health insurance and out-of-pocket expenses), only increased from 2.2 percent to 2.6 percent (AIHW 2001: 16; AIHW 2002: 211). As Ring and Elston (1999: 231) argued, "the current situation [in funding for Indigenous health], where the Commonwealth is spending perhaps a fifth of what it should be spending on a needs basis, is a major impediment to effective reconciliation".

These and many other examples suggest that the new approach to Indigenous Affairs policy adopted by the Howard Government was based less on an attempt to improve policy and more on being seen to reject the previous Keating Government's policies. Further, this approach by the Howard Government was also driven by opinion polls and populist policies.

Altman and Hunter (2003) have also questioned the effectiveness of the Howard Government's emphasis on 'practical' reconciliation. They examined socio-economic outcomes for Indigenous people throughout the decade of the reconciliation process and compared these socio-economic outcomes for Indigenous people in the Hawke and Keating era and the Howard era. They concluded that, "while practical reconciliation forms the rhetorical basis for Indigenous policy development since 1996, there is no evidence that the Howard governments have delivered better outcomes for Indigenous Australians than their predecessors" (Altman and Hunter 2003: v; see also Hunter and Schwab 2003: 94-96; Ross 2001: 155; Wyatt 2001: 181-182; Gunstone 2007).

Another significant concern with the promotion of 'practical' reconciliation by the Howard Government and its ideological allies was that the widespread debates that occurred in the broader Australian community following the development of this policy were concerned predominantly with 'practical' versus symbolic reconciliation. However, while non-Indigenous people mostly focussed on the

various advantages and disadvantages of 'practical' and symbolic reconciliation, many Indigenous people, including political leaders Pat Dodson, Geoff Clark and Gatjil Djerrkura, advocated the need for substantive reconciliation (see P. Dodson 2000: 270-272; Clark 2000: 233; Djerrkura 1999). Indigenous people who articulated this approach included those who worked within the reconciliation process as well as those who were marginalised by the process (Pratt, Elder and Ellis 2001: 145). They argued that substantive reconciliation would address those issues, such as Indigenous rights - including sovereignty, land rights, a treaty and self-determination - and the transformation of existing power relationships, which had been largely ignored by both symbolic and 'practical' reconciliation (see Gale 2001: 131).

However, the arguments for substantive reconciliation were largely ignored by Governments, the Opposition parties and the wider non-Indigenous community due to the fierce debates, outlined above, concerning whether symbolic or 'practical' reconciliation was the most appropriate approach. Thus, these debates not only contributed to the confusion concerning the meaning of reconciliation, they also assisted in preventing any widespread discussion of substantive reconciliation.

Finally, in recent years, it seems that the Howard Government might be winning this battle over 'practical' and symbolic reconciliation. Shanahan (2003: 11) argued that Howard's focus over many years in advocating 'practical' reconciliation "has worn down and worn out the public arguments" and has ensured that he has "won the rhetorical war" on this issue. Thus, some Indigenous leaders have now adopted elements of Howard's language on 'practical' reconciliation. Richie Ah Mat has praised the Howard Government's approach to reconciliation and dismissed "progressivist platitudes about symbolic reconciliation and walking bridges" and both Ah Mat and Noel Pearson have argued that symbolic reconciliation can be an "impediment" to alleviating issues such as welfare dependence and domestic violence (Scott 2003: 6; Hughes 2003: 11). Some Labor politicians have also utilised the rhetoric of the Howard Government. In 2003, Judy Spence, then Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs in the Labor Queensland Government, argued that there are "more important issues" than a stolen wages campaign by Indigenous people, and that Indigenous protesters should "have the same focus" on 'practical' reconciliation as does the Queensland Government (ABC 2003). However, a number of Indigenous leaders have heavily criticised this new emphasis on 'practical' reconciliation, including Pat Dodson, who described it as a "virulent form of assimilation" (Rintoul 2003: 3; see also Huggins 2003: 11; Ridgeway 2002: 6; Dodson 2007).

## Conclusion

The Howard Government's policy of 'practical' reconciliation has been a dismal failure. In implementing the policy, the Howard Government argued that previous governments had not focussed enough on Indigenous socio-economic disadvantage. Yet, eleven years after the announcement of this 'practical' reconciliation policy, Indigenous socio-economic disadvantage remains, in general, at appalling low levels, both in absolute terms and in relation to non-Indigenous socio-economic conditions.

The Howard Government's almost exclusive focus on 'practical' reconciliation and refusal to consider symbolic issues shows this Government to be one that has failed to embrace the importance of symbolism in bringing some form of justice to Indigenous peoples. Also, by refusing to recognise Indigenous rights, such as enacting a treaty, recognising Indigenous sovereignty and respecting Indigenous land rights, the Howard Government has failed to understand the fundamental links between Indigenous socio-economic disadvantages and Indigenous rights.

Further, it appears that the Howard Government has learnt little over the past eleven years of policy failure in Indigenous Affairs. In June 2007, the Government announced that it would dramatically intervene in the management of Northern Territory Indigenous communities. After a decade and more of largely ignoring Indigenous socio-economic disadvantage in the Northern Territory, including predominantly ignoring the Northern Territory mandatory sentencing regime, the Howard Government suddenly decided to become involved in these communities. Yet, how did this involvement occur? The Commonwealth Government passed legislation that involved temporarily suspending the *Racial Discrimination Act (Cth) 1975*, withheld government benefits from Indigenous people but not non-Indigenous people, dismantled many key aspects of the Northern Territory land rights regime and largely refused to engage with Indigenous leaders about the Commonwealth legislation and its implementation (see Altman and Hinkson (2007), particularly Behrendt (2007) and Mansell (2007) for more information and perspectives on the Commonwealth Government Northern Territory intervention). This involvement illustrates that the Howard Government continues to completely fail to understand the critical connections between Indigenous rights, (including self-determination and land rights), symbolism and 'practical' reconciliation. The involvement also shows that the policy of 'practical' reconciliation, as a stand alone Indigenous Affairs policy, is essentially one of assimilation in that it claims to aim purely for 'formal' rather than 'substantial' equality.



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# The Criminalisation of Asylum Seekers in Australia

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## **Abstract**

Throughout the 1990s and into the post 2000 period, the Australian government implemented a range of legislative measures directed at deterring and preventing asylum seekers from arriving on its shores. These policies were accompanied by political discourses which 'depicted' asylum seekers as 'criminals' or 'queue jumpers' who posed a threat to Australian society and were therefore unworthy of Australia's compassion and 'citizenship' rights. The same period was also marked by a growth of security politics across Australia.

Much of the literature concerning Australia's legislative policies relating to asylum seekers places emphasis on the impact of globalisation and Australia's attempts to close its borders to unwanted immigration and the impact of September 11 and the security politics pursued by the Australian government. This paper sets out how the language and policies relating to asylum seekers is similar to the portrayal of criminals. Through portraying asylum seekers as 'criminals' who pose a 'threat' to Australian society, asylum seekers were deemed to occupy the same societal role as criminals. This in turn promoted hostility and racism towards them.

## **The historical construction of asylum seekers**

Historically, democratic states used refugee and asylum policy against the persecutory actions and policies of persecutory states (Watson: 2006, Gale: 2004). Particularly in the heightened environment of the Cold War, western states, including Australia, built their asylum and refugee law and policies around the theme of humanitarianism. This also accords with preamble of the Refugee Convention 1951 United Nations. In the context of asylum law and policy, the humanitarian theme portrayed the asylum seeker as a victim of persecution and as a fellow human being who should be afforded protection. Conversely, the receiving state was depicted as a compassionate liberal, western

democratic state that offered refuge to people who had been persecuted (Watson: 2006. Gale: 2006).

The contemporary policies of most western states were formulated in the aftermath of World War Two with the Cold War being a driving force behind refugee policy. Provision of asylum for refugees from the communist states was part and parcel of the West's fight against communism (Shukre: 1995, Whitaker: 1998, Martin: 2000, Hollifield: 1997) and Australia was no exception.

## **Reconstruction of asylum seekers in the post Cold War period**

Following the downfall of communism, the portrayal of asylum seekers and the definition of 'humanitarianism' were fundamentally altered in western liberal democratic societies (Watson: 2006). In Australia, this especially occurred with the election of the Coalition government in 1996. Unlike previous decades where asylum seekers were depicted as being worthy of our compassion, they were portrayed as people to posed a danger and a risk to the state and to its citizens. The state continued to be depicted as a compassionate, western liberal democratic state (Watson 2006). Particularly in the securitised environment of the post September 11 period, the state was depicted as being threatened by a range of players including asylum seekers. That it was necessary to protect Australia's humanitarianism to that it would be able to continue to assist those 'genuine' asylum seekers who were in need of its protection. Those who jumped queues to arrive on Australia's shores or were 'illegal migrants' undermined the integrity and fairness of Australia's refugee determination system (Gale: 2004). Given the threat from asylum seekers, the state's humanitarian identity required protection and accordingly, it was essential that the state maintained its sovereignty which was being undermined by the arrival of onshore asylum seekers (Watson: 2006).

In Australia, the defence of the state's humanitarianism and sovereignty translated into the enactment of harsh legislation and the adoption of policies designed to deter the arrival of asylum seekers and to keep them out of the community. For example, in 1999, the *Migration Amendment Regulations (No 12)* created a new **Temporary Protection Visa** (TPV) for successful on shore asylum seekers (Subclass 785). The TPV restricted welfare benefits and family reunification and excluded asylum seekers' rights to membership through the limitation of the protection period offered to a maximum of three years (Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia: 2003). This effectively created two classes of refugees in Australia as the visas provided different access to benefits. The TPV was the centrepiece of the government's deterrence strategy (Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia 2003:91). The Government justified the introduction of the TPV on the grounds that it would curb the "increasing misuse of Australia's onshore protection arrangements by organised people smuggling rackets" (DIMA 2002).

In 2001, amongst a raft of legislation, the Government introduced *the Migration Amendment (Excision from Migration Zone) (Consequential Provisions) Act 2001 (Cth)* which barred unauthorised arrivals from applying for a visa in an excised offshore place (s. 46A) and allowed the Commonwealth to move these people to a declared safe country (s. 198A). It also provided for offshore entry persons to apply for a visa to the Immigration Minister (s. 46 A (2) (3) (4)). The granting of such visa was subject to the Minister's discretion. The new legislation also granted Australian authorities powers to detain and move asylum seekers from excised places and ensured that asylum seekers could not seek legal proceedings against the Australian Government (s. 494AA).

Prime Minister Howard clearly articulated the government's view to 'unauthorised' arrivals: *"Every nation has a right to effectively control, its borders and to decide who comes here and under what circumstances, and Australia has no intention of surrendering or compromising that right. We have taken this action in furtherance of that view"* (House of Representatives Official Hansard 29 August 2001, pp. 30517). Underlying the raft of legislative measures introduced in 2001 changes was the Australian Government's insistence that Australia was a sovereign country who would decide who can and who cannot stay in its territory (DIMIA Factsheet 70, 2002).

## **Criminalisation of asylum seekers**

The post September 11 politics relating to asylum seekers can be characterised as a conflict between the states' commitment to the process of globalisation and pre-occupation with security issues (Muller). Since the 1990s, state discourses have depicted asylum seekers as deviant and illegal. Coupled with such discourses, the treatment of asylum seekers through law and order practices has been similar to that of criminals (Pickering 2005, Whitaker 1998).

In the media, the government portrayed a number of narratives. These included

- Asylum seekers were associated with criminal activity and people smugglers and that they were illegal;
- Australia's culture and sovereignty was being challenged and/or under attack;
- Those who sought asylum were not genuine refugees;
- Those who made it to Australia's shores were not deserving of our compassion;
- It was to implement tougher border control and other inhumane policies including mandatory detention in order to protect Australia (Wazana: 2004)

Gale (2004) rightly points out that language is crucial in setting out the policy problem and the perceived solution to the problem., Pickering and Van Acker and Hollander draw out in some detail the specific use and impact of language in the

criminalisation of asylum seekers (Pickering: 2001, 2005, Van Acker and Hollander: 2003). Oppositional terms such as deserving/ undeserving or legal/illegal are systematically used to create a value system whereby difference is established and asylum seekers are criminalised (Van Acker and Hollander: 2003). The use of binary oppositional terms do not create difference (whether it be racially, nationally or criminally), but also publicly justify the appropriateness of state practices towards asylum seekers (Van Acker and Hollander: 2003, Pickering: 2001, 2005).

Devetak (2004) reminds that the anxieties about being invaded from the North, the 'Yellow Peril', were part of Australia's nation building process around notions of nation, security and race. Philpott rightfully maintains that the historical fears of being invaded from the North have been laden with contemporary notions relating to invasion, namely by asylum seekers (Philpott: 2004). An asylum seekers crossing of the border has been rendered as the criminal act which justifies harsh action by a sovereign state which is under threat of being invaded (Pickering 2005). The exceptionally harsh measures adopted by the Australian government against asylum seekers in 2001 is a demonstration of how far the narratives relating to invasion, security and sovereignty can be taken by a nation state (Devetak) (Tazreiter).

Pickering and Lambert (Pickering and Lambert: 2003) argue that Australian government's media rhetoric serves to reinforce a belief in the populace that the government's mistreatment of asylum seekers is natural and normal . In the process the portrayal of asylum seekers as people who are illegal and deviant plays a significant role in the general public's acceptance of their mistreatment by the state . Such a distancing of the citizen from the asylum seeker enables for the easier implementation of punitive regimes (Philpott: 2004).

A binary system of representation also attempts to naturalise belongingness and otherness (Hall 1992). Asylum seekers have been perceived as a threat to the social cohesion of the state (Tazreiter: 2003). The Coalition government's victory in the 2001 Federal election on the issues of border control is a clear indicator of the conjoining of racism and border protection, which issues were also blurred and enmeshed with issues relating to security and the war on terror (Gale: 2004)

Gale highlights that old racisms have been replaced by new racisms which place emphasis on cultural incompatibility and what is a threat the Australian way of life/ culture (Gale 2004). The relationship between the media reporting and political representation of asylum seekers is a reflection of the intersection between populist politics and the imaginings of Australia's national identity (Gale: 2004). Social harmony, national interest and 'genuine' refugee status become blurred and race assumes naturalness (Pickering: 2001)

## Conclusion

The discourses initiated by the Australian government have created stereotypes and prejudices about asylum seekers, arguing that, as illegal and deviant people, they should not be afforded Australia's assistance and compassion. Wazana (2004) rightly argues that "*in the face of international condemnation by human rights groups, the creation of such categories as the 'illegal' and the 'legal' becomes a way of 'justifying' state practices*". However, the Australian government's actions and policies have come at a high cost to asylum seekers and bitterly divided the Australian community.

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# Challenging Liberal Foundations: A Critical Examination of Funding Sources for Anti-Racism Activism

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## Abstract

Today in America, tens of thousands of philanthropic foundations finance social change, in the year 2000 alone they distributed \$26.7 billion worth of grants. Scholarly attention has been paid to the role of right-wing foundations in promoting often racist neoliberal politics, but to date few studies have critiqued the role of liberal foundations in funding anti-racism projects. For instance, despite having long associations with both the US's Central Intelligence Agency and the civil rights movement (relationships that were sustained simultaneously throughout the 1960s), the Ford Foundation – a prominent liberal foundation – continues to play a crucial role in funding anti-racism work. For example, in 2001 the Ford Foundation played an important role in funding the United Nations World Conference Against Racism. This paper will provide a much needed overview of the problems associated with liberal foundation funding of progressive anti-racism activities and research. It will then provide a number of recommendations for how anti-racism activists may begin to move away from their (arguably unsustainable) reliance on liberal foundation philanthropy.

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Today in America, tens of thousands of philanthropic foundations finance social change; in the year 2000 alone they distributed \$26.7 billion worth of grants (Roelofs, 2003: 19). Thus given the not insignificant amounts of money being distributed by such foundations, an important question to ask is: how has this funding influenced anti-racism research and the evolution race-related activism more generally? Yet to date few scholars in the field of race relations have attempted to address this simple yet critically important question. Scholarly attention has of course been paid to the role of right-wing foundations in promoting often racist neoliberal politics, but for reasons unknown, the influence of liberal foundations has for the most part been left untouched. This phenomenon is worrying given the small yet growing critical literature on philanthropy (for a recent edited collection, see Faber and McCarthy, 2005).

As might be expected, liberal philanthropists like many other unaccountable and undemocratic bodies regularly downplay the magnitude of their influence on society, successfully disguising the arguably crucial hegemonic function they fulfill for ruling elites. Of course, similar claims from other key powerbrokers – like the mainstream media – are rightfully met with skepticism; but, in the case of liberal foundations the opposite appears to be the case. Consequently researchers (in most fields) have naively accepted the liberal foundations' own benign sounding rhetoric at face value, and have ignored or belittled their influence on democratic processes.

One of the most important books exploring the detrimental influence of liberal foundations on social change was Robert Arnove's edited collection *Philanthropy and Cultural Imperialism* (1980). Contrary to popular interpretations of the effects of liberal philanthropy, Arnove (1980: 1) observes that liberal foundations like the Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, and Carnegie Corporation "have a corrosive influence on a democratic society" and "represent relatively unregulated and unaccountable concentrations of power and wealth which buy talent, promote causes, and, in effect, establish an agenda of what merits society's attention". Arnove and Pinede (2007: 391) recently updated this critique noting that, while the big three foundations' – that is, Ford, Rockefeller, and Carnegie – "are considered to be among the most progressive in the sense of being forward looking and reform-minded", they are also "among the most controversial and influential of all the foundations". Indeed, as both Berman (1983) and Saunders (1999) demonstrate, the activities of all three of these foundations have been closely entwined with the work of US foreign policy elites, including most notably the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

Despite having long associations with both the CIA and also the civil rights movement (relationships that were sustained simultaneously throughout the 1960s, see Berman, 1983), the big three foundations continue (without criticism, except from the Right that is) to play an important role in funding anti-racism work. Therefore in the light of this information, this paper will provide the first comprehensive (and critical) historical overview of the role of liberal philanthropy in funding both racially based advocacy efforts and anti-racism research. The study will begin by highlighting the role played by liberal foundations in the production of two academic books that are widely recognised as having exerted an influential role on the evolution of the civil rights movement. Then, with a strong focus on the role of the Ford Foundation, the paper will review how liberal philanthropists deradicalised the civil rights movement, and the paper will then go on to provide a brief overview of the range of anti-racism projects that the Ford Foundation has supported to date. Finally, the paper will conclude by offering a number of recommendations for how anti-racism activists may begin to move away from their (arguably unsustainable) reliance on liberal foundation philanthropy.

## Early Race Research and Liberal Philanthropy

“Nearly all our [Negro] scholars are in the grips of the white foundations”  
(Rogers, 1944 cited in Plummer 1996: 228)<sup>1</sup>

Liberal foundation funding for race-issues has a long oft-neglected history, and by the late 1930s the Carnegie Corporation (alone) had diverted “more than \$250 million to institutions concerned with problems of race” (Lagemann, 1987: 442). However, a particularly monumental decision in racially motivated liberal philanthropy arose in the “aftermath of the Harlem riot of 1935, [when the] Carnegie Corporation’s Trustee Newton Baker conceived of the idea of undertaking a broad study of ‘the Negro Problem’ in America” (Singh, 2004: 134). Shortly thereafter, in 1938, the Carnegie Corporation commissioned sociologist Gunnar Myrdal to carry out what turned out to be the landmark study of black-white relations. The end result of this “lavishly funded” project was Myrdal’s seminal book, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (1944), a study that Eliaeson (2000: 336) suggests might “well be the most influential book on Afro-Americans and American civilization in the 20th century”.

In keeping with the elitist nature of liberal philanthropy – briefly outlined in the introduction – Eliaeson (2000: 336) notes that Carnegie wanted a writer “who was neither to be considered prejudiced nor imperialist”, thus Myrdal identifying as a democratic socialist fitted this position well. Furthermore, Myrdal’s liberal pedigree was already well established as from 1929 to 1930 he had also served as a Rockefeller Foundation fellow; consequently it is fitting that that Beardsley Ruml of the Rockefeller Foundation played a key role in helping to convince Myrdal to take on the Carnegie project (Eliaeson, 2000: 337). Yet despite the noble intentions of the Carnegie project, the end result – that is, Myrdal’s book – was considered by many coloured scholars to have “addressed more the conscience of white liberals than the real issues they themselves were confronting” (Eliaeson, 2000: 338). Indeed, Bernhard J. Stern suggested that while “Myrdal at first took a tough-minded conflict-power approach to the Negro problem [he later] changed it to the ‘softer’ conception in accord with the moral values of the white middle class because of Carnegie Corporation sponsorship” (cited in Robbins, 1996). Cox (1959: 538) also concluded his important critique of Myrdal’s work by suggesting that the book “in many respects may have the effect of a powerful piece of propaganda in favour of the status quo” and “contributes virtually nothing to a clarification of the many existing spurious social

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<sup>1</sup> Plummer (1996: 228) writes that: “Journalist and self-published historian Joel A. Rogers had bemoaned the ingress of philanthropy on black scholarship in his Pittsburgh Courier column as early as 1944. ‘Nearly all our scholars are in the grips of the white foundations and philanthropists, who use them,’ Rogers complained. The purpose was ‘to keep the Negro in his so-called place’ and help ‘discredit, belittle, and create mistrust of the few Negroes who dare to have a soul of their own.’”

theories of race relations". Likewise, Aptheker (1946) rounded off his rebuttal of Myrdals' book by noting that "we find Myrdal's philosophy to be superficial and erroneous, his historiography demonstrably false, his ethics vicious and, therefore, his analysis weak, mystical, and dangerous." These are strong words indeed for a book that went on to have such a powerful influence over the discourse of American civil rights.

Another key book that helped sustain the civil rights movement – and is also widely credited with providing the launching pad for the Ford Foundation funded/driven War on Poverty (Raynor, 1991) – that benefited from the largesse of liberal philanthropy is Michael Harrington's (1962) *The Other America: Poverty in the United States*. Again although rarely mentioned in historical accounts relating to the book, liberal foundations were integral to the completion of the book. Indeed, the founding director of the Ford Foundation's Fund for the Republic, the oil executive Richard R. Parten, worked closely with the Fund's president "to establish programs, including... Michael Harrington's project on poverty (published as *The Other America*)".<sup>2</sup> Like Myrdal, Harrington was the perfect black voice-piece for the Ford Foundation: having previously founded the Democratic Socialists of America: furthermore, as Starr (1995) surmised, Harrington "advocated nothing more radical sounding than rallying trade unions, liberal thinkers from the major political parties, black leaders, poor farmers, women's groups, and average Americans, all to combine to defeat poverty".

This brief introduction to the involvement of liberal philanthropy in funding two historically significant race studies is by no means meant to be exhaustive. Instead it merely serves to illustrate that liberal foundations have played an important role in defining the boundaries of race research. Thus the following sections of this paper will go on to illustrate how liberal foundations were able to insinuate themselves into the heart of the civil rights movement, and will also demonstrate how they have continued to maintain a high level of involvement in funding anti-racism projects to the present day.

## **Taming Both the Civil Rights Movement and British Race Studies**

Liberal foundations only started seriously funding progressive activist organisations (like the civil rights movement) in the 1960s: and through a process referred to as strategic philanthropy, liberal foundations were arguably able to successfully moderate civil society by directing the bulk of their funding towards more conservative progressive groups, thus reducing the relative influence of more radical activists through a process either described as channeling or

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<sup>2</sup> In 1962, Richard R. Parten served in the Kennedy administration as official advisor for oil policy for the secretary of the interior (Stewart Udall), see <http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/PP/fpa93.html>.

coopting (Arnove, 1980; Barker, In Press; Colwell, 1993; Jenkins, 1998; Fisher, 1983; Roelofs, 2003; Wilson, 1983).<sup>3</sup>

As might be expected, at first liberal foundation support went almost entirely to supporting moderate professional movement organisations like, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and their Legal Defense and Education Fund, and the Urban League, while foundations also helped launch President Kennedy's Voter Education Project (Jenkins and Eckert, 1986). In the last case, a strong case can be made that foundation support for the Voter Education Project was arranged by the Kennedy administration who wanted to dissipate black support of sit-in protests while simultaneously obtaining the votes of more African-Americans, a constituency that helped Kennedy win the 1960 election (Jenkins, 1998: 212).<sup>4</sup>

Haines (1988: 82-99) argues that the increasing militancy of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee and the Congress for Racial Equality (CORE) in the 1960s meant most foundation funding was directed to groups who expressed themselves through more moderate actions. He referred to this as the "radical flank effect" – a process which described the way in which funding increased for nonmilitant or moderate groups (reliant on institutional tactics) as confrontational direct action protests increased (Haines, 1984). However, even in the case of the more radical CORE, Ferguson (2007: 69) argues that both the Ford Foundation and CORE "sought to 'organize the ghetto' by making working-class blacks a decipherable and controllable constituency through schematized topdown expert intervention and the development of indigenous leaders/brokers amenable to both groups' respective visions for the black community." Indeed, Allen (1969: 61) suggested that the Ford Foundation might have been the "most important, though least publicized, organization manipulating the militant black movement." So given the uneven power relations between the CORE and Ford, it is little surprise that even though CORE took the lead "by approaching the Ford Foundation to fund it", at the end of the day it was "Ford Foundation's vision [of organizing that] ultimately prevailed" (Ferguson, 2007: 69). In conclusion, Ferguson (2007: 96) noted that:

"Having found a model to control the black community by containing it according to its pluralist model, the Ford Foundation would use its experience with CORE in Cleveland as a base to complete its vision for African Americans in post-civil rights America."

Indeed, although Ford was clearly active in post-civil rights America (see next), even prior to the rise of the civil rights movement the Ford Foundation had been

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<sup>3</sup> It is important to note that radical activists were also literally eliminated by the CIA and FBI during this period (Churchill and Van der Wall, 2002).

<sup>4</sup> In addition, liberal foundations also provided support to black capitalist organisations like the Negro Industrial and Economic Union, which in 1968 received \$520,000 from the Ford Foundation (Ford Foundation, 1968: 29).

busy manipulating race relations research not just in America but overseas as well.<sup>5</sup> Clapson (2006) demonstrates that from the 1940s to the early 1970s the Ford Foundation fulfilled a fundamental role in contributing to the urban sociology of race relations in Britain. In this regard it is integral to note that in 1952 the Ford Foundation helped found the Institute of Race Relations (IRR), and remained the Institute's "biggest provider during the 1960s" with its strong support "enable[ing] the IRR to survive into the following decade" (Clapson, 2006: 265).

Clapson (2006: 272) observes that the Ford Foundation's activities might be viewed as the "philanthropic expression of the 'enlightened capitalism'", as he added that "[i]t adopted an approach that sustained the status quo between ethnic groups through research for policies to ameliorate social problems." By 1974, however, Ford money had stopped pouring into the IRR; mainly it seems because Marxists within the Institute rebelled against the "involvement of large capitalist concerns in the Institute's Research". Indeed in 1974, the IRR's librarian A. Sivanandan, published a pamphlet titled *Race and Resistance: The IRR Story*, which critiqued the Institute's links to capitalist elites like the Ford Foundation, and accused the Foundation of "wanting to pacify blacks both in Britain and abroad as part of corporate strategy of neo-colonial control and exploitation" (Clapson, 2006: 272).

Yet despite his familiarity with the Ford Foundation's work in the UK, Clapson (2006: 272) belittles the importance of their influence on coopting race studies as part "as an extension of American hegemony" and erroneously highlights their support for Left and Liberal reformers in Britain (e.g. Ruth Glass and the Centre for Urban Studies), as evidence that this could not be the case. Supporting liberals is of course the staple of liberal foundations, but the support they provide for the odd radical is also consistent with their cooptive practices, as not only do such actions help shield their work from critical enquiry, but they also provide a handy means by which liberal philanthropoids might keep abreast of current advances in radical theory.

Having reiterated the important role the Ford Foundation played in the history of civil rights activism and research, the following section of this paper will now investigate how America liberal foundations act as a "leading force in shaping racial liberalism in the United States" (Ferguson, 2007: 96).

## **Funding Anti-Racism Advocacy and Research**

“[In] the year 2000 alone, the [Ford] foundation's Peace and Social Justice program made some \$80 million in grants for human rights worldwide, including \$26 million for minority rights and racial justice.” (Ford Foundation, 2000: 50)

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<sup>5</sup> At the same time the Ford Foundation was also supporting eugenic-inspired population control research (Barker, In Press) whose "main thrust... was directed at the developing world" (Harkavy, 1995: 5).

“[T]he Ford Foundation is undeniably one of African American Studies’ earliest, biggest, and most enthusiastic financial supporters”. (Noliwe, 2006: 28)

The major role played by Ford Foundation monies in funding race-related studies was highlighted many decades ago by Sutton and Smock (1976: 68) who showed that that between 1954 and 1974 the Foundation provided around \$20 million to US-based African studies. They also determined that during this same period funding on African research beyond US African studies programs amounted to around \$164 million (Sutton and Smock, 1976: 71). Of course, race-related liberal philanthropy is by no means limited to the Ford Foundation’s activities, but for brevity this part of the paper will simply examine the integral role the Ford Foundation has played in shaping the evolution of various race related advocacy and research initiatives in the US. (For an extended discussion of the Ford Foundation’s support for international research programs, see Berman, 1983.)

## **The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People**

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was formed in 1909 and is oldest and largest civil rights organisation in the United States. A key part of the NAACP’s litigation work is undertaken by their related NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, which was formed in 1940 under the leadership of Thurgood Marshall to provide legal assistance to poor African Americans. As previously observed, during the civil rights movement the Ford Foundation was an important funder of the NAACP’s work, and even in the late 1960s Wasby (1995: 93) noted that the “NAACP’s litigation activities could hardly have continued without the Ford Foundation’s \$4.35 million grant to the Special Contribution Fund in the decade starting in 1967, much of which, including grants for northern school litigation, went to the NAACP’s Legal Department.” So given the strong connections between the Ford Foundation and the NAACP it is fitting that Thurgood Marshall’s son, Thurgood Marshall Jr., should have been recently appointed as a trustee of the Ford Foundation: furthermore, it is ironic given the high incarceration rate of African-Americans in the US’s colossal prison system (Parenti, 1999) that Thurgood Marshall Jr. should also be a director of the largest prison corporation in the US, the Corrections Corporation of America (for a critique of this corporation see Bates, 1999).

Given Marshall Jr.’s strange corporate ties is also worth pointing out that Henry Louis Gates, Jr., who is a director of the NAACP’s Legal Defense and Educational Fund, and the W.E.B. Du Bois Professor of the Humanities at Harvard University, is also a trustee of the neconservative nonprofit stronghold Freedom House (Barahona, 2007). Furthermore, in 1999, Gates also co-edited



the encyclopedia *Encarta Africana* with Kwame Anthony Appiah (who is a director of the Sabre Foundation).<sup>6</sup>

Three other particularly interesting (current) NAACP's Legal Defense and Educational Fund directors are Vernon Eulion Jordan, Jr. (who is a former Rockefeller Foundation trustee), Karen Hastie Williams (who is a director of the Fannie Mae Foundation, and is former member of the Trilateral Commission), and Andrew Jackson Young, Jr. (who a former civil rights leader, is a former trustee of Freedom House, and owns a public relations firm, GoodWorks International, which represents clients like Wal-Mart, see Dixon, 2006). Other noteworthy emeritus directors of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund include Marian Wright Edelman and John Hope Franklin (who both serve on the board of counselors of the Institute for Democratic Renewal, see later), and Michael I. Sovern (who is a director of Atlantic Philanthropies, and is the director of Comcast Corporation – the largest cable company in the United States). Such NAACP-corporate overlaps should hardly be surprising because as Roelofs (2006) observes:

*“The NAACP has always had strong connections with major corporations. The civil rights movement of the 1960s prompted new close links between activist organizations and business. The Urban Coalition was formed, and thereafter, corporate philanthropy became more focused on defusing systemic threats. Its goal was to challenge segregation and discrimination while discouraging the more radical suggestions of that era’s activists...Today, Lockheed, GE [General Electric], and Boeing are important funders of the NAACP.”*

## **The United Negro College Fund**

The United Negro College Fund (UNCF) was founded in 1944 by Frederick D. Patterson, and according to Gasman (2004: 74) owing to Patterson's close relations with the Rockefeller-sponsored General Education Board (GEB) he was “able to convince John D. Rockefeller, Jr., to publicly endorse the UNCF”. Gasman (2004: 74) also adds that although Patterson envisaged the UNCF obtaining most of its support from the general public the “majority of its support comes from foundations, wealthy individuals, and corporations.” Consequently, in line with their funding base it is not surprising that “[t]hroughout its early years-between 1944 and 1954 – the UNCF directed most of its publicity toward wealthy white donors, and wealthy white business people delivered the fund’s mission and messages” (Gasman, 2004: 75). Furthermore, Gasman (2004: 75) also observes that “[m]ost of the[ir] early publicity had a conservative tone” and she cites John D. Rockefeller Jr. as noting that the UNCF was “the most promising,

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<sup>6</sup> Professor Appiah is the Laurance S. Rockefeller University Professor of Philosophy at Princeton University, and in 1996 he published *Color Conscious: The Political Morality of Race* with Amy Gutmann (who incidentally is a trustee of the Carnegie Corporation).

non-controversial approach to the solution of the whole perplexing problem of race-relations.”

Today UNCF boasts that it has distributed over \$2.5 billion, and is “nation’s largest and most successful minority higher education assistance organization”. Crucially, UNCF still obtains massive support from liberal philanthropists, and in 1999 they received over \$1 billion from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. It is also perhaps strange that in 2000 UNCF received \$1 million from the world’s leading military contractor, Lockheed Martin Corp. (Standifer, 2000), while the recently retired chairman of Lockheed Martin, Vance D. Coffman, has also served on the board of directors of UNCF. Furthermore, UNCF’s current president and chief executive officer, Michael L. Lomax, maintains good elite connections as he is a trustee of the Carter Center, and was appointed by President George W. Bush to the President’s Board of Advisors on Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Finally, the late Christopher F. Edley Sr. – who incidentally was a former Ford Foundation program officer – served as the president of the UNCF from 1973 to 1990: his son, Christopher Edley Jr., continues to work with liberal foundations on race related issues as in 1996 he cofounded the Civil Rights Project (see next).

## **The Civil Rights Project**

Founded in 1996, the Civil Rights Project was founded at Harvard University as a “multidisciplinary research-and-policy think tank and consensus-building clearinghouse” which was intended to “provide needed intellectual capital to academics, policy makers and civil rights advocates.”<sup>7</sup> The Project’s two founding co-directors were Christopher Edley Jr. (who from 1999 to 2005 served on the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, is currently a trustee of the Russell Sage Foundation and the Century Foundation, and “was one of the Clinton administration’s leading legal and policy strategists on the issue of affirmative action”), and Gary Orfield (who is linked to the Poverty and Race Research Action Council, see next).<sup>8</sup>

In addition to receiving funding from the Ford Foundation, the Civil Rights Project is also supported by many other liberal foundations like the Carnegie Corporation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Rockefeller Foundation to name just a few. More interestingly though is the financial support the Project obtains from the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), a civil rights organisation that was founded in 1971 by Morris Dees, Joe Levin, and Julian Bond. Bond, the SPLC’s founding president (although presently serving as just a

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<sup>7</sup> In 2007 the Project moved to UCLA.

<sup>8</sup> In 1996 Christopher Edley Jr. published the book *Not All Black and White: Affirmative Action, Race and American Values*. In 2007, former RAND Corporation researcher (1980-85) Patricia Gandara became the Civil Rights Project’s new co-director, working alongside Orfield. Gandara’s most recent publication is *Over the Ivy Walls: The educational mobility of low-income Chicanos* (1995).

board member), helped form the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (later becoming their communications director) and he has been the chairman of the NAACP since 1998. Dees' also has an interesting background as in 1972 he was the finance director for Democratic presidential nominee George McGovern campaign, a position in which he "raised over \$24 million from 600,000 small donors, the first time a presidential campaign had been financed with small gifts by mail".

Dees went on to use his financial wizardry to good effect at the SPLC, because as Silverstein (2000) points out in his critique of Dees' background, the "Center earned \$44 million last year alone – \$27 million from fund-raising and \$17 million from stocks and other investments – but spent only \$13 million on civil rights program, making it one of the most profitable charities in the country." Controversially though, Silverstein (2000) goes on to note that as well as providing "legal services for victims of civil rights abuses" the SPLC also spies "on private citizens who belong to 'hate groups,' shar[es] its files with law-enforcement agencies, and su[es] the most prominent of these groups for crimes committed independently by their members—a practice that, however seemingly justified, should give civil libertarians pause." Moreover he adds that:

*"What the Center's other work for justice does not include is anything that might be considered controversial by donors. [Indeed i]n 1986, the Center's entire legal staff quit in protest of Dees's refusal to address issues—such as homelessness, voter registration, and affirmative action—that they considered far more pertinent to poor minorities, if far less marketable to affluent benefactors, than fighting the KKK."*

Thus it is interesting to note that journalist Jeffrey Blankfort (2006) has charged that SPLC acts as a Zionist front group: indeed, the SPLC most recent 'anti-semitic' target has been Professor Kevin MacDonald, who published the book *The Culture of Critique: An Evolutionary Analysis of Jewish Involvement in Twentieth-Century Intellectual and Political Movements* (1998).<sup>9</sup> This Israeli-link perhaps helps explain why in 1994, SPLC's chair, James McElroy, was awarded the (Zionist) Anti-Defamation League's National Civil Rights Achievement Award.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> For more details on how Zionists utilise this smear tactic, see Mearsheimer and Walt (2007: 188-196).

<sup>10</sup> "In 1993, the District of Attorney of San Francisco released 700 pages of documents implicating the Anti-Defamation League, an organization that claims to be a defender of civil rights, in a vast spying operation directed against American citizens who were opposed to Israel's policies in the Occupied West Bank and Gaza and to the apartheid policies of the government of South Africa and passing on information to both governments." (Blankfort et al., 2002)

## ***The Poverty and Race Research Action Council***

The Poverty and Race Research Action Council (PRRAC) is a Ford-funded civil rights policy organisation that was established in 1989 “by major civil rights and anti-poverty groups... to help connect social scientists with advocates working on race and poverty issues, and to promote a research-based advocacy strategy on issues of structural racial inequality.” To date, PRRAC’s work has been supported by a gamut of liberal foundations which include the Ford, Rockefeller, Kellogg, and Levi Strauss Foundations, as well as George Soros’ Open Society Institute. Furthermore, prior to joining PRRAC in 2003 their executive director, Philip Tegeler, served as the legal director of the Connecticut American Civil Liberties Union for six years – an organisation that has received strong ongoing support from the Ford Foundation.

One particularly noteworthy Ford-connected member of PRRAC’s board of directors is Mike Miller, who formerly served as an advisor to Martin Luther King, Jr., and is presently the director of the Project on Inequality and Poverty at the Commonwealth Institute – a “public policy research center doing critical studies in the fields of international security, inequality and poverty”. The latter Institute is interesting because their Project on Defense Alternatives has an advisory board that includes numerous military advisors, a notable one being the Brookings Institution’s Michael E. O’Hanlon, who in 2005 was the signatory of a letter from the Project for the New American Century. Another interesting person linked to the Ford Foundation at PRRAC is Gary Orfield, who serves on their social science advisory board, and is a cofounder and director of Harvard University’s Civil Rights Project.

## **The Institute for Democratic Renewal**

The Institute for Democratic Renewal (IDR) is another Ford-funded initiative that works to strengthen movements for racial and social justice that was founded in 1998 at Claremont Graduate University as an initiative of the Levi-Strauss Corporation; other funders of this project include the Carnegie Corporation, and the C. S. Mott Foundation. Noteworthy members of IDR’s board of counselors include Lynn Walker Huntley (who formerly served as the director of the rights and social justice program at the Ford Foundation, and is the president of the Southern Education Foundation, see next), Marian Wright Edelman and John Hope Franklin (who are both director emeriti of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund), Stewart Kwoh (who is a director of the Fannie Mae Foundation, serves on the Ford Foundation’s Leadership for a Changing World National Selection Committee, and is the president of Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California), Sherry Magill (who is the president of the Jessie Ball duPont Fund, and is a trustee of the Southern Education Foundation), and Lori Villarosa (who founded Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity (see later), and is a former program officer for the C. S. Mott Foundation).

## The Southern Education Foundation

The Southern Education Foundation (SEF) was formed in America in 1867, and their stated mission is to “improve educational excellence and equity in the South”. Their president, Lynn Walker Huntley, in addition to being associated with both the Ford Foundation and the Institute for Democratic Renewal, also serves on Human Rights Watch’s U.S. advisory committee, on the advisory board for the Southern Initiative for George Soros’ Open Society Institute, and serves as a director of CARE USA (for more critical information on these organisations see Barker, 2007). SEF’s chair, Emmett Carson was “the first manager of the Ford Foundation’s worldwide grantmaking program on philanthropy and the nonprofit sector”, and is a former president of the Council of Foundations. Furthermore, SEF’s secretary Judith A. Winston, was the deputy director of the Women’s Legal Defense Fund (in Washington), and serves on the boards of directors of Partners for Democratic Change, and is a former member of the board of PRRAC.

In 1995, SEF launched the Comparative Human Relations Initiative (CHRI), which they describe as “a unique collaboration among people and institutions in Brazil, South Africa, and the United States for exchanging information, ideas, and strategies to overcome discrimination and inequality”.<sup>11</sup> Although a full list of the foundations and groups funding SEF are not available (online), the CHRI’s funders include the Ford Foundation, the C. S. Mott Foundation, the Levi Strauss Foundation, the Coca Cola Foundation, and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. Since 1996, CHRI has worked in collaboration with the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (Idasa) – a group that is an integral democracy manipulator linked to the work of the notorious National Endowment for Democracy (NED), and which received a massive \$1.165 million from the Ford Foundation in 1996 (Hearn, 2000: 827).

To help guide the work of the Comparative Human Relations Initiative an International Working and Advisory Group (IWAG) was created that is “comprised of distinguished men and women from the three nations.” Again it is not surprising that advisory board reads like a who’s who of liberal philanthropy, and includes Lynn Walker Huntley, Peter D. Bell (who is president of CARE International, and worked for the Ford Foundation for 12 years, see Barker, 2007), Wilmot G. James (who is the former executive director of Idasa, and is a trustee of the Ford Foundation), Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro (who serves on the international advisory council of the NED-funded Center of Legal and Social Studies), Khehla Shubane (who is a director of the George Soros’ Open Society Foundation of South Africa), and Franklin A. Thomas (who was the president of the Ford Foundation from 1979 to 1996).<sup>12</sup> In addition, IWAG lists a number of

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<sup>11</sup> In 2001 at the World Conference Against Racism in Durban, SA, SEF releases *Beyond Racism*, a unique comparative anthology on Brazil, South Africa, and the United States offering insight and analysis about lessons learned in SEF’s Comparative Human Relations Initiative.

<sup>12</sup> In 1991, the president of the Ford Foundation, Franklin A. Thomas, received nonedible apples as Brotherhood Week awards from the Association for a Better New York and 100 Black Men –

other people who have helped their work, and one of the most notable of these individuals is John A. Powell (see next).

Given the Ford Foundation's evident interest in Brazil, it is fitting that Bourdieu and Wacquant (1999: 46) highlighted the "driving role played by the major American philanthropic and research foundations in the diffusion of US racial doxa within the Brazilian academic field at the level of both representations and practices." Furthermore it seems a little more than coincidental that in 1997 the Ford-funded elite planning group, the Council on Foreign Relations (see Shoup and Minter, 1977), organised a conference titled *The Meanings and Construction of Race in Brazil, South Africa, and the United States*. This conference was directed by Nelson Rockefeller, David Rockefeller, and Kenneth R. Maxwell (who is the director of Latin America studies at the Council on Foreign Relations, is a member of the executive committee of the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, and was formerly a program director at the Tinker Foundation).<sup>13</sup> Notable attendees of the conference included Lynn Walker Huntley, Khela Shubane, Anthony Marx (who was a consultant to the CHRI, and has even received a fellowship from the NED's sister organisation the US Institute for Peace), the late Elliot Skinner (who in the 1960s served as the US ambassador to Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso, and "chaired the early Ford Foundation program for grants to young African Americans for study in Africa"), and Manning Marable (see later).

Finally it is worth recalling that although rarely mentioned the Ford Foundation played an integral role in undermining any significant democratic gains in South Africa's transition from apartheid. The Foundation appears to have first become involved in coordinating South Africa's 'democratic' transition in 1978 when the Rockefeller Foundation brought together a *Study Commission on US Policy*

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an award that is given annually to two people for improving race relations. This is particularly interesting because two years earlier, in May 1989, after spending three years and a massive \$3 million the Ford Foundation released a report called *The Common Good: Social Welfare and the American Future*. The report set out to critically examine the US's social welfare system, given that "in 40 years there will be an aging population supported by a work force that is more black and brown in its composition. It was to take account of the deterioration in the school system and the pressures created by immigration, the changing American family, racial tensions and violence" (Franklin cited in Teltsch, 1989). As might be expected with a Ford-supported project, although some commentators were concerned that the report was going to suggest that there was something fundamentally wrong with the social welfare system, Robert Ball, the former United States Commissioner of Social Security, noted that the report simply concluded that "what we have is fundamentally sound and what is needed is improvements" (Teltsch, 1989).

<sup>13</sup> The Tinker Foundation was established in 1959 to address environmental policy, economic policy or governance issues by distributing grants to organisations concerned with the affairs of Spain, Portugal, Ibero-America and Antarctica. Critically, the Tinker Foundation provides funding to a number of key 'democracy promoting' organisations including Freedom House, and Partners for Democratic Change. In addition, they have provided support to various groups that have also received NED aid, including the Venezuelan NGO Consorcio Desarrollo y Justicia, the Peruvian NGO Agenda: PERU, and two Argentine NGOs, the Center for the Implementation of Public Policies Promoting Equity and Growth, and the Civil Association for Equality and Justice. For further details see Barker (2007a).

*Toward Southern Africa* which was chaired by the Ford Foundation's president, Franklin A. Thomas. In fact, after the 1976 Soweto uprising, the international community (that is, first and foremost foundations and international development agencies), became increasingly interested in South Africa. Indeed, Roelofs (2003: 497) notes that liberal foundations played an important role for Western elites by "disconnect[ing] the socialist and anti-apartheid goals of the African National Congress." Moyo (2005: 4) also documents how rather unsurprisingly "American Foundations sought to influence the struggle and thus the shape of a future democracy in a liberal rather than socialist direction." On this point Moyo (2005: 149) cites a former South African Ford Foundation program officer, who observed that:

*"Philanthropy is pushing the agenda of capital. The political implications of this are that as long as the agenda is perceived to be anti-the interests of capital, then that agenda would not be supported by philanthropy... Donors arrive at priorities through deliberate choices whose impact is to channel the interests and the activities of NGOs into areas where funding is available."*

As both Bond (2000) and Pilger (2006) have amply (and regrettably) illustrated there has been no transition to democracy in South Africa (that is, to the type of democracy that the majority of people want); rather instead there was a transition to a harsh neoliberal form of 'democracy' which only served to intensify inequities for the majority of South Africans.

## **The African American Forum on Race and Regionalism**

In 2002, another Ford initiative known as the African American Forum on Race and Regionalism (AAFRR) was founded. This Forum aims to enable the Ford Foundation, and its co-chairs (Angela Blackwell, John Powell, and Robert Bullard) and their Secretariat (Deeohn Ferris) to "work collaboratively through the Forum to help broaden, strengthen and promote the involvement of African Americans and African American organisations in policy development, decisions and place-based projects."

AAFRR's first co-chair, Angela Blackwell, is a former senior vice president for the Rockefeller Foundation, and in 2002 she coauthored a book with Manuel Pastor (whose work receives strong support from liberal philanthropists) and Stewart Kwoh (see earlier) titled *Searching for the Uncommon Common Ground: New Dimensions on Race in America*. Similarly, the background of AAFRR's two other co-chairs John Powell and Robert Bullard is also informative with regards to their links to liberal foundations.

Powell is a famous race relations scholar who has recently coauthored a book with Manuel Pastor and Michael Omi titled *Structural Racism in a Diverse Society* (forthcoming). Furthermore, like the many other race relations scholars Powell

maintains intimate relations with various liberal philanthropists, and has served a consultant for the Ford Foundations Africa program in 1994, and has also given recent talks to both the Ford Foundation and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Formerly Powell served as the national legal director of the Ford-supported American Civil Liberties Union, he also founded the Institute on Race and Poverty, and he presently serves as the executive director of the Ford-supported Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at Ohio State University. Finally, Powell also serves on the advisory boards of both the Center for Social Inclusion, and the Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity, and on the editorial advisory board for *Souls*.

The last AAFRR cochair, is the radical environmental justice advocate, Robert Bullard, who wrote the seminal *Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class, and Environmental Quality* (1990). Since 1990, Bullard has written another twelve books concerning the US environmental justice movement (including one published by the radical publisher South End Press), and he is currently “working on a Ford Foundation-funded study of how government actions have endangered the health and welfare of African Americans over the past seven decades” (Dicum, 2006). Bullard’s Ford-link is controversial to say the least because numerous recent studies have documented how limited support from major liberal foundations have meant that those groups in the more radical environmental justice movement have received barely enough money to survive (see Brulle and Jenkins, 2005).

## **The Center for Social Inclusion**

The Center for Social Inclusion (CSI) was founded by Maya Wiley (who is a former board member of John Powell’s Institute on Race and Poverty) and Jocelyn Sargent to work to dismantle structural racism. The Center’s two founders met while working on race and poverty issues at George Soros’ Open Society Institute, and CSI’s work obtains the “generous support” of the Open Society Institute and the Ford Foundation. As mentioned earlier, John Powell, serves on CSI’s advisory board, but another notable CSI advisor is Richard Healey, who is the president of the Grassroots Policy Project – a project whose board of directors includes Anne Bartley, who incidentally is a vice chair of the Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors.

## **The Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity**

The Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity (PRE) was established in 2003 and is a “multiyear project intended to increase the amount and effectiveness of resources aimed at combating institutional and structural racism in communities through capacity building, education, and convening of grantmakers and grantseekers.” To date, PRE’s coordinating work has been funded by the C.S. Mott Foundation, as well as the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Ford Foundation, and Annie E. Casey Foundation. PRE’s director, Lori Villarosa, was formerly a



program officer with the C. S. Mott Foundation, and she currently serves on board of counselors for the Institute for Democratic Renewal, on the Program Committee of the Association of Black Foundation Executives, on the Racial Equity Committee of the National Network of Grantmakers, and she is also a member of Hispanics in Philanthropy. PRE's advisory board is home to many Ford-linked individuals which include John Powell, Jacqueline Berrien (who is an associate director-counsel for the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund), Kumi Naidoo (who is the secretary general and chief executive officer of the Ford-funded CIVICUS), and Makani Themba-Nixon (who is a director of Africa Action).

Makani Themba-Nixon's affiliation to Africa Action is particularly noteworthy because this group was established in 1953 and it is the "oldest organization in the U.S. working on African affairs": according to their website their "mission is to change U.S. Africa relations to promote political, economic and social justice in Africa." Until late 2007, the executive director of Africa Action was Nii Akuetteh, and it is important to note that she was also the founding executive director of George Soros' Open Society Initiative for West Africa. Akuetteh's replacement at Africa Action is Gerald LeMelle, who formerly served as the Deputy Executive Director for Advocacy at Amnesty International USA, and prior to this was the director of African Affairs with the Phelps-Stokes Fund. LeMelle is also a member of the Ford-funded elite planning group the Council on Foreign Relations.

Ford-related members of Africa Action's board of directors include their chair Mark Toney (who was the executive director of the Ford-funded Center for Third World Organizing), Howard F. Jeter (who was the former US Ambassador to Nigeria, is a director of the NED/Ford-funded Africare, a former Ford Foundation doctoral fellow, and is a former executive vice president of GoodWorks International, see earlier), Ayesha Imam (who is the current chair of the Africa Democracy Forum – which is host to a number of NED-funded groups), and Inca Mohamed (who is the executive director of the Management Assistance Group, and prior to this was a program officer at the Ford Foundation).

## **Other Miscellaneous Projects**

Although there are far too many Ford-funded projects to list in this brief overview of their work, some other initiatives that demonstrate the diversity of the Foundation's interests include: Harvard University's Pluralism Project which was founded in 1991 to "document the contours" of the US's multi-religious society, although in 2000 they started examining other multi-religious societies as well; the Advancement Project, a "policy, communications and legal action group" that was formed in 1998 that "addresses a bedrock racial justice issue: expanding the

active electorate”;<sup>14</sup> the UN-sponsored world conference against racism in South Africa, which obtained more than \$10 million from the Ford Foundation (Marable, 2002/2003; for further details on the Foundation’s involvement in this conference see Barker, Forthcoming); ERASE Racism which was launched in 2001 to lead “public policy advocacy campaigns... to promote racial equity in housing, public school education and healthcare”; the W. E. B. Du Bois Lectures at Harvard University, a lecture series which was “established in 1981 with funding from the Ford Foundation”; and the University of California’s Center for Black Studies AfroGEEKS conference.

## **[Non]Controversial Ford-Funded Media Projects**

In 1988 the Ford Foundation launched a “media program to support projects using film, video, and radio to explore public policy issues.” Funding for this media program was initially quite modest, but in 2005, the Ford Foundation distributed just under \$38 million of grants for media projects (\$2 million of which was designated for international media programs). With regard to racism related media projects, in 1991 the Ford media program gave a \$200,000 grant to Blackside Productions to produce a film about Malcolm X. The irony of the Ford Foundation funding such a project appears to have been lost on most media commentators, because as noted earlier, the Ford Foundation’s selective funding of the civil rights movement played a key role in undermining public support of Malcolm X (Haines, 1984; Jenkins and Eckert, 1986).<sup>15</sup> Yet despite the controversial nature of this documentary’s funding, the film was released in 1994 as *Malcolm X: Make it Plain*, with no public examination of the Ford Foundation sponsorship of the film – a film that Manning Marable notes “is the best film resource currently available on the subject” (Per Comm. 2007).<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> The chair of the board of the Advancement Project, Gerald Torres, has served on the advisory board of the Open Society Institute, is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, and “was honored with the 2004 Legal Service Award from the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) for his work to advance the legal rights of Latinos.” Lloyd and Montague (1970: 15) note: “In Texas, Ford invested \$2.2 million to establish the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, generally known as MALD. Patterned after the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, MALD was intended by Ford to be South-west-wide, and perhaps national in scope. In New Mexico at least, MALD has been conspicuously absent from the more controversial issues.”

<sup>15</sup> Similarly in 1993 the Ford Foundation provided \$1.5 million to a group to produced a public television series called *America’s War on Poverty*, which “document[ed] the programs initiated by the federal government in the 1960s to assist disadvantaged groups.” Again, there is an obvious conflict of interest here, as the Foundation itself was the primary architect of the government’s War on Poverty (Raynor, 1991). In the same year, the Foundation also supplied \$0.7 million to another group to produce a “documentary film series titled *Chicano! A History of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement*, and another group with \$0.5 million to make “a television series documenting the contemporary women’s movement.” As in the Malcolm X case, it is ironic that the Ford Foundation also played a crucial role in undermining the radicalising tendencies of both the Chicano and Women’s movements (Jenkins, 1998, pp. 214-5; Proietto, 1991): but again there is no critical commentary of these documentaries with regards to their controversial funding.

<sup>16</sup> Email Correspondence. January 13, 2007.

In email correspondence with Marable on the subject of Ford Funding of anti-racism work I pointed out that: “The real problem is that if we want to move towards some form of participatory democracy it is unlikely to be funded by undemocratic liberal foundations who divert most of their funding to groups that maintain the status quo.” In response to this and other criticisms Marable said:

“Ford is still more complicated than you suggest. A number of Marxists and left intellectuals have been employed there as program officers since the 1990s, so many of their Third World projects have been good and progressive. Your overall critique, however, is absolutely correct.”<sup>17</sup>

Paradoxically, given Marable’s evident concurrence with my general critique, it is ironic that a few months after our correspondence it was announced that Columbia University’s Center for Contemporary Black History (CCBH) – a Center founded by Marable in 2002 – had accepted a \$91,219 grant from the Ford Foundation to work with the Electronic Publishing Initiative at Columbia to develop a “prototype [teaching] module for the period covering the modern Civil Rights and Black Power Movements (1954–1975).” The CCBH is the research unit of the Institute for Research in African-American Studies, which was founded by Marable in 1993, and is currently running three initiatives, the Malcolm X Project, the Africana Criminal Justice Project, and *Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture and Society*.

Looking more closely at the work of the latter project, the quarterly academic journal, *Souls* (which was launched in 1999, and is edited by Marable), it is apparent that Marable has a number of other indirect Ford-links. These come through *Souls* editorial working group which includes Dana-Ain Davis (who is the consulting executive director of the Adco Foundation, and serves on the board of the New York Foundation, a foundation which in the past has included Helene L. Kaplan – the current chair of the Carnegie Corporation – on their board of directors), and Black Power researcher Peniel E. Joseph and Dorian T. Warren (both of whom have been the recipients of Ford Foundation fellowships).<sup>18</sup> Two notable Ford-connected members of *Souls* editorial advisory board are John Powell and Anthony Marx (see earlier).

Finally, it is interesting to observe that Marable is a member of New York Jobs with Justice, a group which describes itself as a “permanent coalition of community, labor, religious and student organisations working to build power for poor and working class people” in New York. Other liberal philanthropy-linked members of this coalition include Derrick A. Bell, Jr. (whose influential book *Race, Racism and American Law* (1973) was published with Ford Foundation aid, while he himself has served as Counsel for the NAACP Legal Defense

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<sup>17</sup> Email Correspondence. January 18, 2007.

<sup>18</sup> In 2006 Joseph published two books, *Waiting 'Til the Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in America*, and the edited volume *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil Rights-Black Power Era*.

Fund), Gara LaMarche (who is the vice president and director of US programs for the Open Society Institute), William Lynch, Jr. (who is a director of the Advancement Project), Ruth Messinger (who is the president of American Jewish World Service – an international development agency, and a director of InterAction), and Rabbi Jennie Rosenn (who is a program director for the Nathan Cummings Foundation).

## Conclusions

Counter to popular misunderstandings of their work, rather than promoting progressive and more participatory forms of democracy, liberal philanthropy actually serves the opposite purpose by helping preserve gross inequalities, thereby legitimising the status quo (Brown, 1979; Guilhot, 2007; Lundverg, 1969; Roelofs, 2007). It should not be surprising that Arnove and Pinede (2007: 393) note that although the Carnegie, Rockefeller, and Ford foundations' "claim to attack the root causes of the ills of humanity, they essentially engage in ameliorative practices to maintain social and economic systems that generate the very inequalities and injustices they wish to correct." Indeed they conclude that although the past few decades these foundations have adopted a "more progressive, if not radical, rhetoric and approaches to community building" that gives a "voice to those who have been disadvantaged by the workings of an increasingly global capitalist economy, they remain ultimately elitist and technocratic institutions" (Arnove and Pinede, 2007: 422).

The inherent contradiction of anti-racism activists and researchers receiving significant support from liberal elites becomes clearer when it is understood that the two most influential liberal foundations, the Ford Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundations, first created and continue to provide substantial financial aid to elite planning groups like the Council on Foreign Relations and the Trilateral Commission (Shoup and Minter, 1977; Sklar, 1980). As INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence (2007) dryly observe in their book titled *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded*, the one revolution that capitalists will not bankroll will be the revolution at home, that is, here in our Western democracies.

In stark contrast to the democratic rhetoric of the philanthropic activities of liberal foundations, much evidence contradicts their democratic credentials (for an excellent review, see Roelofs, 2003). No doubt all philanthropists are attempting to strengthen a democracy of sorts, but the root problem (or issue at stake) lies in differing definitions of democracy. Progressive grassroots anti-racism activists tend to call for more substantial or participatory forms of democratic governance, while liberal foundations tend to be more interested in promoting procedural democracy or polyarchy (Dahl, 1971).

Unfortunately, given the insidious activities and far-reaching influence of liberal foundations' – as demonstrated in this article – the "very existence of many social justice organizations has often come to rest more on the effectiveness of

professional (and amateur) grant writers than on skilled-much less 'radical' – political educators and organizers” (Rodriguez, 2007: 27). So now more than ever, it is vital that progressive citizens committed to racial equality (and more often than not more participatory forms of democracy) work to develop alternate funding mechanisms for sustaining anti-racism activism and research that can breach the limitations imposed by liberal foundations. Indeed as Guilloud and Cordery (2007: 111) point out, “[d]eveloping a real community-based economic system that redistributes wealth and allows all people to gain access to what they need is essential to complete our vision of a liberated world. Grassroots fundraising strategies are a step in that direction.” Anti-racism researchers and activists need to work alongside community activists to address the vexing issue of liberal philanthropy, because if this issue is not addressed now it will no doubt continue to have dire consequences for the future of progressive activism – and democracy more generally.

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# Prejudice against Australian asylum-seekers and their function: Suggestions for anti-prejudice strategies

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## Abstract

Over the last decade or so under the Howard Government, there has been a great deal of controversy regarding the unauthorised arrival of asylum seekers. In this study, we analysed data collected from 602 Western Australians. We investigated why people think the way they do about asylum seekers using the function of attitude literature as a base; specifically participants' values, their experience with asylum seekers, and their reliance on other sources for information. Results indicated that the Perth community overwhelmingly based their attitudes (positive or negative) on their values. Finally, we integrate these findings with other research regarding prejudice against asylum seekers, and give suggestions for attempting to present an alternative – more positive – view of asylum seekers than that often given.

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Over the last decade or so, there has been a great deal of controversy regarding the issue of people applying for asylum onshore without official authorisation by Australia to do so. Many members of the Australian community are extremely negative about asylum seekers (Klocker, 2004; Schweitzer, Perkoulidis, Krome, Ludlow, & Ryan, 2005). This negative rhetoric stems from a number of sources; including at times prominent politicians (Pedersen, Watt & Hansen, 2006). Clearly, this hostility can negatively affect asylum seekers, 90% of whom are ultimately found to be legitimate refugees and are granted asylum in Australia

(Brennan, 2003). It also affects Australian society as a whole – it is much harder for refugees to integrate with such hostility directed toward them (Allison, 2007) and this is detrimental to all concerned.

One theoretical avenue of research which may be useful in addressing the question “why do people think the way they do about asylum seekers” involves the function of attitudes literature which started over 50 years ago (Smith, Bruner, & White, 1956). More recently, Herek (1987) categorised functions into four categories: *experiential-schematic* (to do with personal experience), *value-expressive* (to do with deeply held values and beliefs), *social expressive* (to do with a sense of belongingness with significant others) and *defensive* (to do with maintaining one’s self-esteem). In a Western Australian study that used this scheme, it was found that the two most prevalent functions with regard to prejudice against Indigenous Australians were experiential-schematic and value-expressive (Pedersen, Contos, Griffiths, Bishop & Walker, 2000).

## **Overview of the present study.**

We investigated prejudice against asylum seekers within the function of attitudes literature with three main aims. The first was to identify the major function of respondents’ attitudes – why do people think the way they do about asylum seekers? Secondly, do non-prejudiced and prejudiced participants differ in the reporting of their attitude functions? Finally, we integrate the findings of the present study with past research and set out suggestions for strategies to reduce prejudice against asylum seekers.

## **Method.**

Procedure and participants. The present data are taken from a larger survey conducted in 2004 (for more detail, see Pedersen, Watt & Hansen, 2006; Pedersen, Dudgeon, Watt, & Griffiths, 2006; Pedersen, Griffiths & Watt, 2008). A sample of 2,400 Western Australians from Albany, Kalgoorlie, and Perth was randomly drawn from the 2004 phone book, and a questionnaire was mailed to each person. Two weeks after the first questionnaire was sent, a reminder letter was sent. In total, 653 respondents returned the questionnaire (27%). There were slightly more females than males, participants were generally older (average age = 53) and were relatively well-educated.

### Measures.

*Prejudice against asylum seekers.* Following an open-ended question on why people felt the way they did about asylum seekers, participants completed the Attitudes Toward Asylum Seekers Scale (ATAS; Pedersen, Attwell & Heveli, 2005). After recoding, the higher the score, the higher the prejudice.

### *Function of Attitudes toward Asylum Seekers*

The Attitude Function Inventory developed by Herek (1987) was used as a model to write items to assess each of the functions of attitudes; in particular, experiential-schematic (e.g., my own experiences with asylum seekers), value-expressive (e.g., my concern that we uphold principles of justice in Australia), and a new function category developed for the present study based on indirect experience (e.g., explanations about asylum seekers that I have heard from people I know). Few respondents in the Pedersen et al. (2000) study used defensive or social-expressive functions so they were not measured here. Respondents' functions were classified as "experiential-schematic" if their score on this function was higher than their scores on the other three functions. Respondents' functions were similarly classified in the other two categories (value-expressive and indirect experiential-schematic). The higher the score, the more important the function was.

## **Results.**

After excluding variables which detracted from the reliability of the function scales, reliability was satisfactory (see Table 1). On the ATAS scale, 75% of the sample scored above the midpoint; in other words, three-quarters of participants reported negative attitudes about asylum seekers. There were no location differences with respect to the ATAS, the value-expressive function scale or the indirect experiential function scale. However, participants from Albany scored significantly higher on the experiential schemata scale ( $M=1.67$ ) compared with the Kalgoorlie participants ( $M=1.38$ ) ( $F(2,624) = 5.22$   $p = .006$ ).

**Table 1. Descriptive Characteristics of Scales**

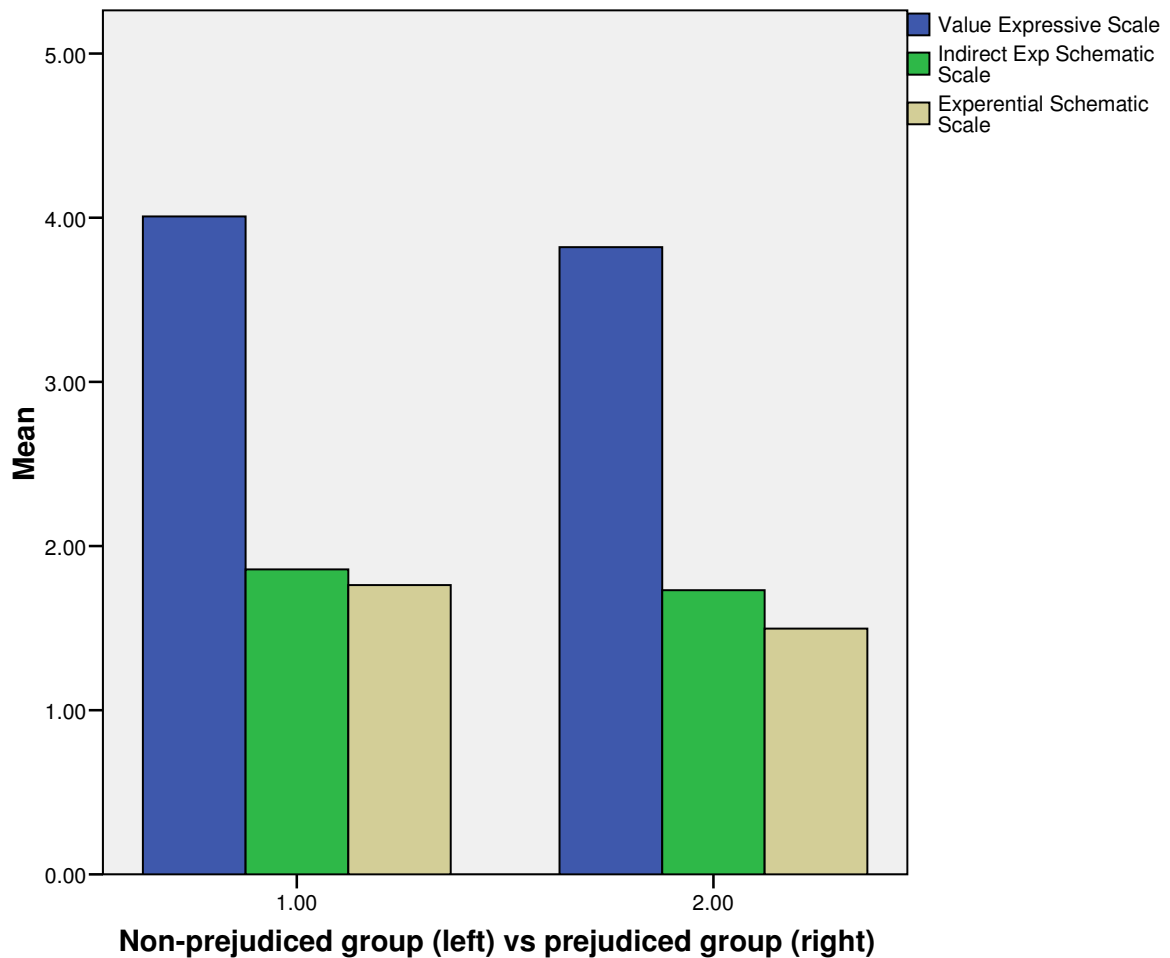
SCALE	Mean	SD	n	□	Range
ATAS scale	4.37	1.42	18	0.93	1-7
Functions					
Experiential Schematic	1.56	0.89	3	0.79	1-5
Indirect Experiential Schematic	1.76	0.89	2	0.78	1-5
Value-expressive	3.87	0.87	4	0.69	1-5

The most frequently reported function of attitudes was value-expressive (96%), followed by the indirect experiential-schematic function (2%) and the experiential-schematic (2%) function (6.7% of participants did not fit into any one category, and were not included in the final count).

Our next question was: do these functions differ depending upon the prejudice levels of the participants? Three independent *t tests* were conducted. There was no significant difference in indirect experience ( $t(245)=1.39$ , n.s.). However,

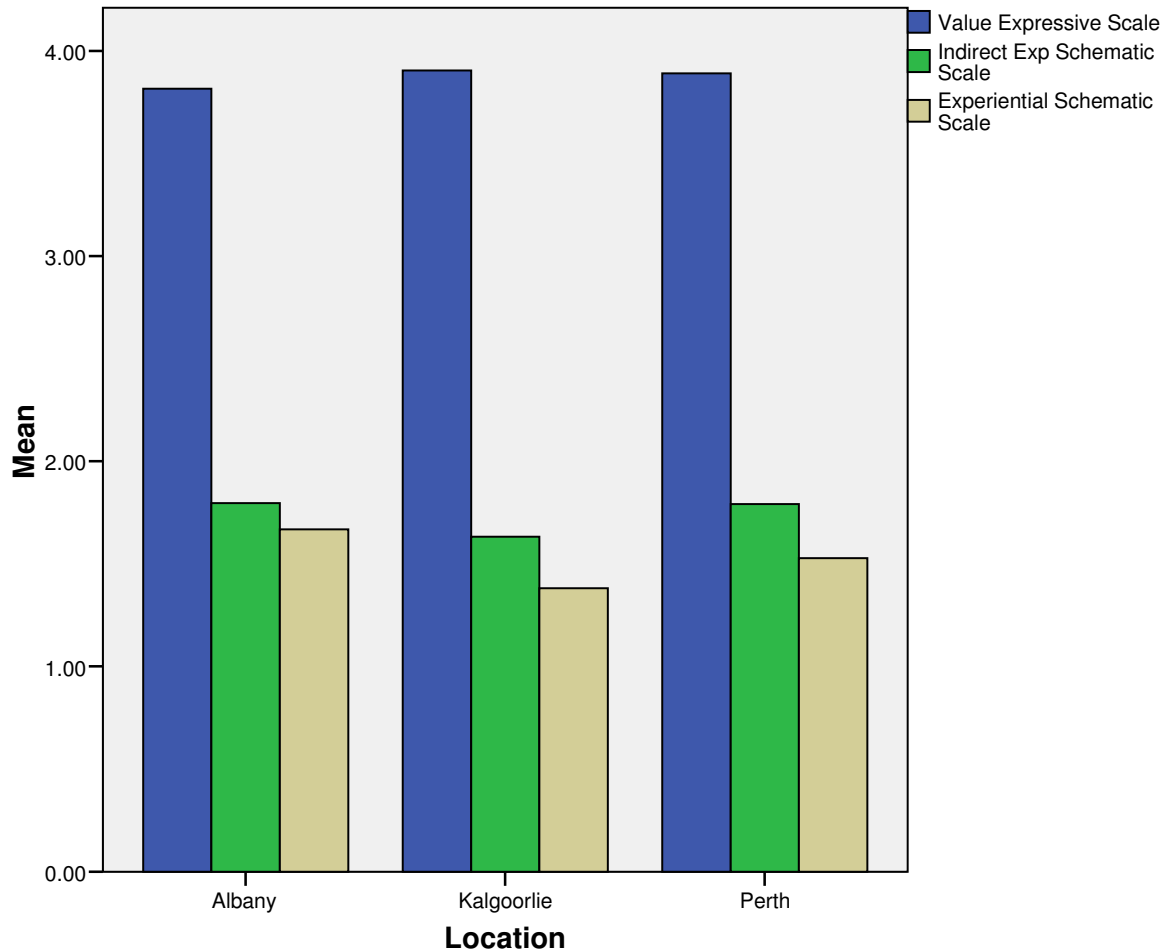
non-prejudiced participants reported more experience with asylum seekers ( $t(226)=2.88, p=.004$ ) and they also relied more on values ( $t(348)=2.76, p=.006$ ). It should be pointed out that although these relationships were statistically significant, they were not particularly large; the same applies regarding the location difference described above (see Table 2 for a graphic representation of function by prejudice – clearly there are more similarities than differences). Further, the functions are not mutually exclusive: as can also be seen by Table 2, even though participants clearly reported their values as taking precedence, the other two functions were not unimportant.

**Table 2. The three function scales x prejudice split.**



Similarly, more similarities exist than differences with respect to the significant location difference (see Table 3)

**Table 3. The three function scales x location split.**



## Discussion.

First, we briefly discuss some results not specifically addressed in our aims. The first is that there was a location difference with the experiential-schematic function: Albany participants were more likely to have experience with asylum seekers than Kalgoorlie participants. This is not a surprising finding; a number of newly released asylum seekers moved to Albany for work in the local meat-works. This location finding supports other researchers who argue that geographical differences must be taken into account when looking at prejudice and racism (e.g., Dunn, Forrest, Burnley, & McDonald, 2004; Forrest & Dunn, 2007). However, we also showed that there were more similarities than differences between locations which are also to be expected: given the small

numbers of people seeking asylum, generally very few people in the Australian community would know them. Thus, we argue that when conducting anti-racism strategies one must look at the specifics of the target group – location may be more relevant to some target groups compared with asylum seekers (for example, Pedersen et al., 2000, with respect to prejudice against Indigenous Australians).

We now turn to our first aim which was to identify the major function of respondents' attitudes. Overwhelmingly, our participants reported the reason that they thought the way they did about asylum seekers related to their values (96%). This figure is higher than studies with other groups. Specifically, 83% of Perth respondents stated their most important function was value-expressive regarding Muslim Australians and 68% did so regarding Indigenous Australians (Griffiths & Pedersen, in press). This difference is likely to be due to the fact that often asylum seekers are kept out of sight in desert camps, and when they are released, there are not many of them for the Australian community to have experience with. It is worth noting here that there is a difference between the function of attitudes and the source of the function. While their attitude may stem from (for example) politician rhetoric (see Pedersen et al., 2006), the function may still be a perceived value violation.

So what are the implications of findings relating to this first aim? Our results indicate that attitudes toward asylum seekers are primarily driven by values regardless of whether such attitudes are prejudiced or not-prejudiced. One could be negative toward asylum seekers based on a feeling that they were queue-jumpers and stopping “real refugees” from entering Australia. Anti-racism strategists would need to discuss this topic fully and also pointing out that most asylum seekers are found to be legitimate refugees (Brennan, 2003). Alternatively, one could also be very positive toward asylum seekers based on a feeling that human rights should be respected regardless of the entry into Australia. This could also be discussed within an anti-racism strategy – including the information that seeking asylum without authorisation is legal under international and Australian law (Burnside, 2008).

Given that three quarters of the sample fell into the “prejudiced” category, and it is these participants who we would like to target in any anti-racism strategy, we concentrate on values leading to hostility. When looking at some qualitative data from the same dataset, it would appear that some participants felt that Australian values would be violated by asylum seekers. For example, *“It would be detrimental to Australia to allow asylum seekers to come as they please into our country. It also compromises our way of life by an influx of different values, language and regard for our laws and customs”*. What the threat to “Australian values” actually entails is open for interpretation - a love of cricket, perhaps? But as argued by some, a nostalgia for an ethnically homogenous culture (e.g., English; Irish) can create new forms of racism or patriotism that excludes other groups such as asylum seekers (Babacan & Gopalkrishnan, 2008). This

viewpoint has been perpetuated by prominent politicians. As Australia's Prime Minister John Howard (1995-2007) stated publicly: "we've drawn back from being too obsessed with diversity to a point where Australians are now better able to appreciate the enduring values of the national culture that we proudly celebrate and preserve" (The Age, 2006). In fact, if one examines Australian values as per the controversial citizenship test: primary values include "Judeo-Christian ethics, a British political heritage and the spirit of the European Enlightenment" (DIAC, 2008). As Fiske and Briskman (2008) point out, Australian values are still organised around exploitative beliefs and values driving imperial expansion. Thus, if anti-racism strategists are attempting to present another view of asylum seekers other than the negative view, it may be advisable for participants to examine their own values and identity and where they stem from. Every and Augoustinos (2008) show clearly that discourses regarding national identity can be used to *include* asylum seekers as well as *exclude* them. It should also be pointed out that with cultural diversity comes strength (Fiske & Briskman, 2008) even if there is a short adjustment period (Putnam, 2007).

It would also appear that some participants felt that their personal values were violated by asylum seekers. For example, "*Asylum seekers are illegal immigrants and queue jumpers and do not deserve to be "rewarded" with preferential treatment ahead of those applying through the correct channel*". In other words, "queue jumping". This finding relates to past research which finds that prejudice is strongly related to the acceptance of false beliefs such as queue jumping ( $r = .77$ ; Pedersen, Attwell & Heveli, 2005). As noted by Pedersen et al. (2005; 2006), there are often no queues to jump; also, former Immigration Minister Phillip Ruddock collapsed the onshore and offshore queues effectively pitting one group of asylum seekers against the other. Asylum seeker advocates would be well advised to fully discuss this issue which would seem to inflame animosity against asylum seekers.

With regard to indirect experience, our results indicate that there was no significant difference between the groups. With respect to the prejudiced participants, the focus of anti-racism strategies, this indirect experience can be influenced by a number of sources which can end up in a situation known as serial reproduction; otherwise known as the game of Chinese Whispers. What may start out as an unverified source such as the internet (see Pedersen et al., 2008) may spread "urban myths" and become part of mainstream discourse. Again, it would be advisable to include this in any anti-racism strategy. With regard to experience, this was the least reported function within the present study which – as discussed earlier - is the least reported function. One may even wonder, given how few asylum seekers are in Australia, whether participants were actually referring to refugees rather than asylum seekers.

Our second aim was to examine whether non-prejudiced and prejudiced participants differed in the reporting of their attitude functions. Results indicated that there were two significant differences: non-prejudiced participants scored

higher on experience and values than prejudiced participants. Regarding experience, this is not surprising as many Australians base their negative attitudes toward asylum seekers on false beliefs (Pedersen et al, 2005). It follows that the more experience a person has with asylum seekers, the more correct information will be available which can only be beneficial. Regarding the value-expressive finding, our findings indicate that even though both groups' values were very important, the non-prejudiced values (e.g., an emphasis on human rights) were even more important than prejudiced values (e.g., queue-jumping). These non-prejudiced values should be incorporated into anti-racism strategies. We stress, however, that although these differences were statistically significant, in the overall scheme of things they were relatively unimportant.

Our final research aim was to bring together the findings of the present study with past research as an integrated whole to guide anti-racism strategists. In particular, if one is to run an anti-racism strategy, these mechanisms may be helpful in how the message is communicated. As can be seen by Table 4, there are a number of potential ways forward in this regard. Some may be more relevant to others depending on the circumstances. For example, location may be useful with some target groups more than others and discussion on "whiteness" would be less relevant if the strategy involved many participants of colour. We also stress that other more structural action also needs to be taken as well as individual strategies (see Donovan & Vlasis, 2006; Paradies, Forrest, Dunn, Pedersen & Webster, in press). We note that there are many other references which would be helpful apart from those in Table 4, but are beyond the scope of this paper. We also note that there are links between the mechanisms such as violation of values and – say – imparting of accurate information.

**Table 4. Suggestions for potential mechanisms to combat prejudice against asylum seekers**

<b>Mechanisms</b>	<b>Example(s)</b>	<b>Reference</b>
Addressing people's violated personal values	Queue jumping	1. The present study 2. Pedersen, Watt & Hansen (2005) 3. Pedersen Attwell & Heveli (2005)
Imparting of accurate information	The collapsing of onshore and offshore queues	Mares (2002)
Values and identity: Examine own identity and cultural biases	National identity	1. The present study 2. Pedersen Attwell & Heveli (2005) 3. Every & Augoustinos



	Self-identity; "whiteness"	1. Green & Sonn (2005) 2. Sibley & Barlow (2008)
Including values which participants may see as important, but are often not in the community's discourse about asylum seekers  The above relates to: "Alternative talk"	The "fair go" principle  Alternate (non-prejudiced) talk should be discussed which can find its way into Australian discourse. How to deal with racist talk should be discussed.	The present study  Guerin (2003)
Include knowledge gained from others	Serial Reproduction	The present study
Emphasising commonality and diversity	Participants may feel that asylum seekers' cultures are too different to integrate successfully. Emphasise there are cultural differences, but many more similarities, and the benefits of a multicultural society.	1. The present study 2. Pedersen Walker & Wise (2005) 3. Tilbury (2007)
Addressing dissonance	Those prejudiced against asylum seekers  Those who support tough asylum seeker policy, significantly over-estimate their support in the community	Pedersen et al. (2008)  Hartley & Pedersen (2007)
Building empathy rather than simply guilt	Too much guilt – an aversive emotion – can cause	Leach Snider, & Iyer (2002)

	participants to “zone out”	
Promoting dialogue	Giving participants space to speak their mind so controversial issues can be addressed	Pedersen, Walker & Wise (2005)
Positive contact	Under the right circumstances, inter-group contact is useful to combat prejudice.  Sometimes, there can be a short-term “conflict” period  Other stories can also be useful via other means such as DVD	Pettigrew & Tropp (2006)  Putnam (2007)  Pedersen & Barlow (2008)
Local needs	Take into account specific issues within each locality	Pedersen, Walker & Wise (2005)
Evaluate properly	There is a dearth of information regarding effectiveness of anti-prejudice strategies	Pedersen, Walker & Wise (2005)

To conclude, even though the policy of mandatory detention remains, and Christmas Island is still the preferred destination for asylum seekers who land in excised islands, some positive social change in Australia has occurred thanks to a group of concerned Australians who were outraged by what was happening in their country and took action (see Mares & Newman, 2007; Pedersen et al., 2008) and a change in federal government. For example, asylum seekers are no longer being sent to Nauru and Manus Island. As reported by Immigration Minister Chris Evans, even aside from the very real humanitarianism and effectiveness concerns, this cost the Australian taxpayers \$309.8 million from 2001-2008 (Evans, 2008): an enormous amount of money. Additionally, Australia has seen the abolishment of temporary protection visas and potentially the use of community detention rather than asylum seekers being locked behind razor wire. However, we cannot become complacent – with so much violence overseas, it is only a matter of time before more boats arrive and the people on such boats need to be dealt with fairly and humanely. To deal with this, we clearly need to have structural change such as the protection of human rights

legislated in Australian law. Also, asylum seeker advocates need to be prepared for a regurgitation of past hostility. We need to know why the general public think the way they did and learn from the lessons of the last decade. Along with structural change, understanding how to counter prejudiced community attitudes is an important issue.

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# Fear is the Parent of Cruelty: Racism, the Military, Terrorism and War

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*"Religion is based ... mainly upon fear ... fear of the mysterious, fear of defeat, fear of death. **Fear is the parent of cruelty**, and therefore it is no wonder if cruelty and religion have gone hand in hand . . . . My own view on religion is that of Lucretius. I regard it as a disease born of fear and as a source of untold misery to the human race."*

*"Patriotism is the willingness to kill and be killed for trivial reasons."*

*"The trouble with the world is that the stupid are cocksure and the intelligent are full of doubt."*

Bertrand Russell

## Abstract

In my 2005 presentation, entitled ***Australian Nationalism, Conflicted Identities, Militarism and Exclusion***, at the previous conference in this series, I argued that Australian nationalism is very much alive but is also conflicted, complex and problematic; and argued that this *could* be an indicator of the future direction of nationalism elsewhere. I have in mind other societies focussed on the military aspects of their history that Samuel Huntington would describe as 'Praetorian', that is, strongly influenced by a deep embeddedness of the military in the civil institutions of the nation state (Huntington 1970).

In this paper I postulate that a relationship may exist between societal attitudes to 'other' ethnicities and the military experience. I examine the military culture and indoctrination, war crimes and punishment, dehumanisation of opponents, killing distance and callous attitudes, racial attitudes, fear of numerical superiority and the propaganda that reaches the wider community. I have focussed on Australia, the United States and, as a case study, Israel.

The military has a special role in the forging of national identity and creation of the narrative of national mythology by political elites. In Australia, the celebration of ANZAC Day, the resurgence of militaristic depictions of Australia's history and national identity and the former Prime Minister, John Howard's concerns for the teaching of history in schools.

I will develop this theme of military identity as it applies to the dissemination of the 'national mythology', racial attitudes, drawing out the synergistic relationships of racism, military training and indoctrination and the experience of combat against peoples of outgroup 'other' ethnicities.

There appear to be synergistic relationships between racism, military training and indoctrination as well as the experience of combat against peoples described by Social Psychologist, Matthew Hornsey, as being of outgroup 'other' ethnicities (Hornsey 2004) (Hornsey M September/October 2004). It is noteworthy that many of the wars and warlike actions that have involved Australian military personnel have been against ethnic 'others'. These engagements appear to significantly amplify and ingrain authoritarian, patriarchal behaviours and attitudes and the practise of simplistic racial stereotyping in Australian society.

## Introduction

The purpose of this essay is to describe the phenomenon and suggest that more work needs to be done.

In my 2005 presentation, entitled ***Australian Nationalism, Conflicted Identities, Militarism and Exclusion***, at the previous conference in this series, I argued that Australian nationalism is very much alive but is also conflicted, complex and problematic; and argued that this *could* be an indicator of the future direction of nationalism elsewhere (Bach 2005). I have in mind other societies focussed on the military aspects of their history that Samuel Huntington would describe as '*Praetorian*', that is, strongly influenced by a deep embeddedness of the military in the civil institutions of the nation state (Huntington 1970).

Since the Cronulla riots, which coincided with the 2005 conference, the term 'face paint patriotism' has been coined. This phenomenon, described by Gideon Haigh, depicts the emergence of a disturbingly xenophobic and aggressive strand of nationalism, capable of vicious and divisive violence in Australian society. It included 'enforced flag kissing' followed by assaults that occasioned significant physical injuries. These 'patriots' targeted Australians with the appearance of being other than 'Anglo (Haigh Sep 19, 2007)'.

This tendency has been noted again in response to, or coincident to, statements by former federal Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Kevin Andrews. Resettlement organisations and Sudanese people, who described the Minister's statements as hurtful and detrimental to the successful resettlement of African and Sudanese refugees, have documented these statements and outcomes that resulted from the 'dog whistle' response. The former Minister expressed no regret, nor did he give his condolence to the Melbourne Sudanese family whose son had been violently killed.

I drew attention in 2005 to the role the military has in the forging of national identity and creation of the narrative of national mythology by Australian political elites. I mention here the celebration of ANZAC Day as “the one day of the year”, the resurgence of militaristic depictions of Australia’s history and national identity and former Prime Minister, John Howard’s micro management of the teaching of history in schools to his personal prescription. I will further develop this theme of military identity in this paper.

I intend to draw out the synergistic relationships of racism, military training and indoctrination and the experience of combat against peoples described by Social Psychologist, Matthew Hornsey, as being of outgroup ‘other’ ethnicities (Hornsey 2004) (Hornsey M September/October 2004). It is worthy of mention here that many of the wars and warlike actions that have involved Australian military personnel have been against Africans, Arabs, Koreans, Indonesians, Vietnamese, Afghans or Iraqis. These engagements, I argue, significantly amplify and ingrain authoritarian, patriarchal behaviours and attitudes and the practise of simplistic racial stereotyping in Australian society.

## **The military culture**

The military is a part of society with a special role as servants of the government in power. That role is what Rod Lyon refers to as “the management of violence”. The military is an instrument of violence that needs to be very carefully managed by civil authorities in a democratic society (Lyon July 2004). Its personnel are the sons and daughters of this society. It is a mirror of society, yet it is a mirror that exaggerates the need for obedience, hierarchy, patriarchy, and the simplification of problems to the point where all problems are seen as threats, whose solution is ‘the default position’: the application of violence. “The man with a hammer sees everything as a nail”. (Rex Brown, Texas##)

In my experience as a young soldier in the British Army, I was frequently told that I was not paid to think. If I made a mistake I would acknowledge this and was told, “not to be a hero”. The military is a ‘brotherhood’ (and a ‘sisterhood’) that protects its own. The organisation does not like to admit mistakes; or it minimises their significance. The military does not mention ‘courage’ when obliged to admit that it makes mistakes. It can require members to tell lies under oath, as in the cases of Col Oliver North and Admiral John Poindexter in the 1987 inquiry into the Iran-Contra scandal.

This can also be seen in the various ADF responses to (a) accusations of sexual harassment, mainly but not only from female personnel, (b) accusations of ‘bastardisation’ and (c) occasional suicides by military personnel whom bullying and intimidation may have unduly stressed. The ADF continues to fail in correcting its wrongs. Covering up and protecting its own take priority over any willingness to reform or administer just outcomes for individuals. Admitting mistakes requires courage.



The family of Pvt Jake Kovco have their own experience of this, as they continue to seek the truth about Jake's shooting in his Baghdad barrack room and compensation for the loss of his life. Was Jake inept in the routine task of cleaning his weapon in a safe manner, or was he playing Russian roulette? Why are we not allowed to know about the state of a sniper's mind? Neither of these explanations would sit well with the national mythology of 'the digger'. It is 'unthinkable' that such a soldier would take his own life. The military were simply unwilling and unable to tell the truth (Baird 7 May 2006).

## **Indoctrination of the military**

The word indoctrination is employed here to embrace all aspects of military culture, including the siting of most military concentrations away from civilian populations, if through necessity, and the emphasis on separateness from and difference to the civilian society. Military personnel are generally subjected to the same education, societal conditioning influences and media exposure as most other citizens. But, additionally, they are acculturated into the military interpretation of history and a 'national identity' that focuses on conflicts, 'victories' and the claimed qualities of 'bravery' and 'heroism'. The Australian mythology about 'the diggers' is a useful construct in this scenario.

In this 'parallel universe' there is no room for nuanced explanations why the military were deployed into particular theatres of operation. To tell soldiers simplistically "the bad guys were there" fails to analyse or engage with critical thinking. Qualities of that nature are singularly threatening and unwelcome to military obedience and cohesion. The civilian population are silenced, as in current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, by admonishments to "support our brave boys (and girls)". All analysis and critique is suspended for the sake of national and military morale.

Brian Martin examines this differentiating aspect of military culture and indoctrination in his 1984 book, *Uprooting War* (Martin 1984). Brian Martin develops his arguments regarding the military in Chapter 9, where he says:

"Even in societies where military forces are overtly subordinate to civilian elites, military perspectives and interests can penetrate deeply into a society's fabric. This process of militarisation has been especially noticeable in industrialised countries since World War Two. Since then, 'peacetime' military spending has provided a rationale for continuing state intervention into economies and for the turning of industrial and professional efforts toward military priorities".

**65**

Brian Martin is referring here to the viral effect of military attitudes that are adopted by their families and children. These attitudes find a life of their own as

they spread through schools, workplaces, social institutions, government and the media.

Furthermore, as Brian Martin details the specialised functionality of the military community:

*“Internally, military forces are bureaucratic in form, with a strict hierarchy and division of labour, rigid rules and duties. The function of military forces is to be able to use organised violence against opponents, usually seen as similarly organised. Because killing of other humans is not readily undertaken by many people in modern societies, military recruits undergo extensive training, indoctrination and isolation in a military environment. The key to military performance is unquestioning obedience to orders, which again has much in common with non-military bureaucracies.*

*Military forces use violence as the ultimate defence of state interests, and not surprisingly the ultimate sanction against internal resistance in armed forces is also violent: imprisonment or even execution. Military forces even more than other bureaucracies are similar to authoritarian states in their denial of the right or opportunity to dissent, in their demand for obedience and in their use of reprisals against recalcitrant subjects”. 151*

The military act with various degrees of secrecy that are incompatible with accountability and democratic governance. This is especially relevant when the military is accused of committing serious wrongs. Many military operations are covert in nature, consisting of violent acts against undeclared enemies, sabotage of civilian utilities, and assassination of individuals, in locations that have not been declared as war zones, and often with the intention of transferring the blame for these essentially terrorist acts onto other actors. Black Ops and Psy Ops, as they are known, do not acknowledge the agency of regular military forces, are exceptionally hazardous and are likely to lead to denial of these activities. This has happened in relation to Indochina and other theatres of warlike activity and will be one of the problematic outcomes from what is termed the ‘war on terror’.

Covert warriors travel light. They move fast and take no prisoners. For anyone squeamish about this, they kill all prisoners (who may or may not be in uniform – and may or may not be combatants). The traumatic act of killing at very close quarters is generally by strangling or stabbing. Guns are too noisy. It is interesting indeed to learn from former US Secretary for Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, that the Geneva Conventions that also protect the soldiers of democracies are now considered to be “quaint” (Gutman R (Editor) November 5, 2007).

Unacknowledged civilian casualties are another result of this style of war fighting, as the deaths and injuries go unrecorded and the media opinion-makers try to focus public attention on “our brave boys”, bearers of the ‘national mythology’, who, in this case, were not there anyway. Callous public attitudes that are necessary to the prosecution of war, assume that the entire population of the opposing nation state are the ‘enemy’, their places of habitation are ‘battlefields’ or ‘battle space’, which makes them ‘free-fire zones’, and that their lives are worthless and not a significant concern to us.

## **War crimes and punishment**

If military personnel are taught to kill, they also need to be taught only to use lethal force when ordered to do so. There are several levels of response to perceived threats that military personnel learn, as they interpret and respond to situations that they face. This is known as the graduated response. There are penalties for unlawful killing. An undisciplined force or a vengeful, permissive and unprofessional leadership can readily lead to excesses in lethal response behaviour. At the time of public discovery, there were attempts to explain away the My Lai massacre, which may have indicated a breakdown in the normal restraints of good discipline as well as a state of denial. The ‘one-off incident’ explanation assumed that this was what had happened at My Lai.

The overall prevailing strategy of the civil and military leadership elite *can* also *include* the indiscriminate killing of as many civilians as possible. Negative attitudes to the ethnic ‘other’ and the preconditioning messages received in military training are critically important enablers. So too are the precise language and ‘messages’ embedded in their orders. When Serb paramilitary troops executed Bosnian Muslim prisoners in Srebrenitza the effects of this ‘conditioning’ were exhibited. (**video**) Military orders require a directive ‘task oriented’ approach that eliminates any moral values that might hinder the act of killing.

Additionally, we need to consider the soldiers’ desensitisation to killing other human beings – or ‘sub-human beings’. In most societies that make claims of decency and civility, people do not like to think that they have sanctioned barbaric behaviour and breaches of the Geneva Conventions. This is one of the reasons why returning veterans are disillusioned and bewildered by society, families and friends, who turn away or refuse to hear about their awful experiences.

The most serious incidents of war crimes and crimes against humanity evoke a protective, secretive response from military leaderships. This is not surprising as the Nuremberg Principle places the blame on senior officers to a greater degree, and for good reason. More recent experience shows that accountability being increasingly shirked in favour of placing greater blame at the lower end of the chain of command. Exceptions to this rule would be Rwandan genocide,

Colonel Théoneste Bagosora and former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milošević, who have both been tried by United Nations tribunals, though the latter took his own life before the completion of the trial.

The My Lai massacre, which took place on 16 March 1968, during the Vietnam War, demonstrated that the US government and military were unable and unwilling to satisfactorily investigate the incident, and ultimately blamed it on a junior officer, the Platoon Commander, Lt James Calley, making him the token 'bad apple' in a blameless professional leadership. Claude Cookman, a former US Special Forces soldier, explains how this happened in his paper, ***An American Atrocity: The My Lai Massacre Concretized in a Victim's Face***, he also states *that other massacres took place on the same day* (Cookman June 2007).

It is important to note that the US military 'cordoned-off' My Lai from other massacres. As Claude Cookman explains, "on that same day another company massacred at least ninety women and children a mile away [from the acknowledged massacre], in My Khe—an atrocity few have heard of". In fact there were deliberate, random, both authorised and unauthorised killings taking place in many regions of Indochina, Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, for the duration of the war and beyond. These actions were ordered by or condoned by the senior staff officers and the administration to the level of President, whose guilt or innocence was never tested in court. These were flagrant breaches of the Geneva Conventions and the Nuremberg Principles.

There are many examples that demonstrate a culture of impunity in the US military that has continued till the present war in Iraq. In the Mekong Delta, the US 'Brown Water Navy' was ordered by General William Westmoreland to treat all signs of habitation that personnel could see from their swift boats on the rivers and canals as 'free fire zones'. This resulted in the razing of villages with bombing, strafing, napalm and automatic weapons fire, causing the deaths of an unknown number of Vietnamese civilians. It is significant to mention that the oldest, youngest and least mobile would have been disproportionately represented among the civilian casualties.

More recently, in 2003, the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq produced just a handful of low ranking defendants, MPs Spc. Charles Graner, Ivan Frederick, Pfc. Lynndie England, and Spc. Sabrina Harman, all of the 372nd MP Company. It was clear from the memos from then Secretary for Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, that he had *authorised* the use of 'aggressive interrogation techniques' – code for torture by another name (FOX News Catherine Herridge April 26, 2007).

General Janis Karpinsky accused Donald Rumsfeld of authorising torture, as she claimed to be sidelined by a parallel chain of command, the CIA and by 'private contractors' over whom she had no authority. So, Pvt Lynndie England and her superior, First Sgt Graner were "just following orders", albeit with some creative

interpretations. **Richard Matthews (Matthews 5 July 2007) and Alfred McCoy** both produce incontrovertible evidence that torture needs to be 'routinised', subject to regulation and rules of engagement and provisioned with funding, wages and equipment (McCoy December 26, 2006) (Matthews 5 July 2007). They show that the practise of torture has been widespread throughout the past fifty or so years.

This paper does not propose to accuse the Australian Defence Forces (ADF) with direct participation in such war crimes. Nevertheless, a large body of evidence emphatically proves that United States forces, allies of Australia, and colleagues in many combat tasks, have carried out activities that gravely compromise the integrity of Australian forces. **Ben Saul** In his 2006 book on the War in Iraq, *'The Weapons Detective'*, Rod Barton describes how he tried in vain to inform his superiors, to the level of former Foreign Minister, Alexander Downer, of his troubled conscience and eventually resigned whilst informing the media of the reasons for abandoning his career (Barton 14 February 2005).

## **Dehumanisation of opponents**

The euphemistic language used by military and civilian elites is well documented, as are the effects of these particular words and phrases in military operations. They are known as 'weasel-words' and 'unspeak'. The latter term is taken from British journalist Steven Poole's 2006 book, ***Unspeak: How Words Become Weapons, How Weapons Become a Message, and How The Message Becomes Reality***. These words were described by George Orwell, in his 1946 essay, ***Politics and the English Language***, and in his book ***Nineteen Eighty-Four***, published in 1949. There are probably too many jokes about 'collateral damage', however, this term summarises a range of callous and indiscriminate acts that needlessly cause civilian casualties. These casualties can result from the use of 'overwhelming force' otherwise referred to in Humanitarian Law as 'disproportionate force' (Gutman R (Editor) November 5, 2007).

The term 'collateral damage' has the effect of erasing the significance and value of the human lives that are extinguished by lethal conflicts. Terms like 'ethnic cleansing' now have a sinister ring as the Serbian leadership used this, but genocide would have been just as appropriate. Terms like 'cordon and search' and 'eliminate' and 'take out' have much the same outcome of trivialising the killing of human beings. More banal, perhaps, would be the use of the term 'battlefield' to describe a suburb of Baghdad, but the effect of 'clearing the battlefield' is to create a 'free fire zone' with the same terrifying consequences for civilians. Similarly, the term 'civilian targets' depicts people as objects to shoot at. This act should always be referred to as the 'targeting of civilians', which is indisputably a major war crime (Gutman R (Editor) November 5, 2007).

English is not the only language that facilitates what are otherwise unconscionable acts. When questioned about the killing of East Timorese women

and children in 1975, an Indonesian officer informed John Pilger, "When you clean the fields don't you kill all the snakes large and small?" Richard Woolcott, Australia's Ambassador to Jakarta explained to John Pilger, "Although we know it's not true, the formal position of the Indonesian government is that there is no Indonesian military intervention in East Timor. We should act in a way *designed to minimise the impact in Australia* and show private understanding to the Indonesians" (italics added). The Rwandan genocidaires used euphemisms like "cutting down the tall trees" and referred to Tutsis as "cockroaches".

Whether the military are deployed to carry out legitimate tasks on behalf of their domicile state or to commit war crimes, there are some aspects of their training and conditioning that remain constant. In all cases dehumanisation of opponents, 'the enemy', must be employed to *enable* soldiers to kill, at close range if necessary. The opponent is always labelled as something less than human, given a nickname like 'Charlie', 'gook', 'slope', or 'rag-head' that conveniently excuses random acts of killing, disrespect for the corpse, maltreatment and even murder of prisoners and massacres of civilians.

US Lt Col David Grossman (rtd), in his book, ***On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society***, explains how young men (as they were, prior to more recent conflicts) were conditioned to accept that their job was to kill, that killing is a normal, routinised activity, and that they must learn to cope with feelings of remorse or revulsion and blot out any empathy they may have for fellow human beings (Grossman November 1, 1996) (Grossman August 10, 1998). In some military forces, there is heavy alcohol consumption and sometimes other drugs are used. Some rebel militias in Africa administer drugs, by scratching the temples of their child soldiers and rubbing in amphetamines or heroin. This practise was well documented with child soldiers in Sierra Leone, but it is widespread. This is said to numb their emotions and erase fear. Drug use can transform into physical dependence or addiction. Inga Clendinnen mentions this in relation to new, inexperienced German reservists who were posted to Poland and ordered to massacre civilians during World War II. ***Reading the Holocaust*** (Clendinnen May 6, 2002).

As David Grossman develops his argument, the act of killing, the participation in combat, the soldier's experience of being adrenalised, hyper-vigilant and frightened for extended periods can inevitably lead to a high incidence of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), psychotic episodes and psychiatric disease. The percentage of combat-hardened veterans that David Grossman claims to suffer from these disorders can be as high as 97%. These veterans are suffering mental illness as a result of their military service. There is an extremely high rate of suicides among these veterans, which can sometimes be identified in a specific act, or which may manifest in persistent risk-taking behaviours. This may be born out by returned American veterans of the Iraq war.

## **Killing distance and callous attitudes**

For some combatants, especially from technologically advanced nations, there is also the opportunity, as Susan Sontag explains, to “kill beyond the range of retaliation” (Sontag and Jump 06/03/07). This phenomenon gives rise to callous explanations by air force pilots and naval personnel that “I was just doing my job”. The job can be a matter of identifying dots on a video screen and pressing a button.

There was little public questioning during World War II of the Allied incendiary bombing of the German cities, Hamburg and Dresden, except for some later disquiet in Britain. There was mainly a triumphant satisfaction in Allied nations following the fire bombing of civilian homes in sixty seven (**check**) Japanese cities, including Tokyo, and the symbolically demonstrative atomic bombing experiments in Hiroshima and Nagasaki :

*“The first indiscriminate bombing onto residential area was examined in March 10, 1945. The Great Tokyo Air Raid killed 80,000 people in just one night. After that, other major cities like Nagoya, Osaka, Kobe, and so on were also attacked.*

*Since June of 1945, relatively small cities like NAGAOKA had also become targets of indiscriminate incendiary bombings”.*

<http://www.echigonagaoka.com/bomb/n06.html> **58**

US Air Force General Curtis Emerson LeMay and British RAF Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Harris, known also as ‘Bomber Harris’ and sometimes as ‘Butcher Harris’, were architects of these several significant events including the incendiary bombing of Hamburg and Dresden and LeMay in the Japanese incendiary bombing raids, followed by the atomic bombings.

I mention this as I reflect on what I saw in the German city of Essen in 1952, but also because justice needs to be understood and accepted by all stakeholders. Japanese denial of war crimes, revision of history and Prime Ministerial visits to the Yasukuni Shrine of Class A Japanese war criminals are symptoms of Japanese discontent and sense of grievance. There is also long-standing anger in Korea, China and Mongolia regarding the Japanese occupations of those countries and a strong sense of injustice, as there is a perception of ‘unfinished business’ relating to these World War II crimes.

Western, particularly American attitudes to the frequency and conduct of warfare, have been influenced by the absence of any trials of Allied officers at the end of World War II. The Puritanical beliefs that the USA is an embodiment of the ‘light on the hill’, and America’s role in the world, characterised by what is termed ‘American Exceptionalism’, confers virtual immunity from prosecution for US military and intelligence personnel. I contend that hegemony alone has created this unhealthy

paradigm, which confers extraordinary powers and impunity on the USA and on no other member of the community of nations.

This point is significant to the arguments in this article, as US General Curtis Emerson LeMay threatened in May 1964, “You want to know my solution to Vietnam? Tell the Vietnamese they’ve got to draw in their horns or *we’re going to bomb them back into the Stone Age?*” The statistical evidence documents the heaviest bombing in history by the US against the three nations of Indochina. This statement indicated an intention to inflict unprecedented civilian casualties, coincident to General LeMay’s threat, and in clear breach of Geneva Conventions and Just War Theory stipulations against the use of disproportionate force. References to the Stone Age have echoed on through every twentieth and twenty first century conflict since 1964. As President Johnson told American officers in Vietnam, October 1966, “Boys, I want you to come home with that coonskin on the wall!”

### **Racial attitudes driven by fear of numerical superiority**

The “coonskin” reference suggests very strongly that the President considered the Viet Cong and their allies as less than human. This translated on the ground to a spree of indiscriminate killings. When we try to examine the reasons for the use of this overwhelming force, indiscriminate air power and egregious weapons in Indochina we find in the documentary evidence that these military strategies stemmed from a deep-seated Western fear of being ‘swamped’ by endless waves of millions of Asians. The Pentagon Papers and documents in the British National Archives are irrefutable on this point.

Further examples of how attitudes of racial superiority and contempt informed the military campaign can be seen in the words of US General William Westmoreland, as he explained his readiness to kill 3.5 million Indochinese people in these terms:

*“The Oriental doesn’t put the same high price on life as does the Westerner. Life is plentiful, life is cheap in the Orient. As the philosophy of the Orient expresses it: life is ... is not important”.*

*US General William Westmoreland*

*Film documentary, Hearts and Minds, 2002*

[http://www.turnerlearning.com/cnn/coldwar/images/viet\\_s2b.gif](http://www.turnerlearning.com/cnn/coldwar/images/viet_s2b.gif) 48

Noam Chomsky’s close reading of the Pentagon Papers yields these revealing passages:

*“America’s early strategy, as [Townsend] Hoopes describes it, was to kill as many VC as possible with artillery and air strikes:*

*As late as the fall of 1966... a certain aura of optimism surrounded this strategy. Some were ready to believe that, in its unprecedented mobility and massive firepower, **American forces had discovered the***



***military answer to endless Asian manpower and Oriental indifference to death. For a few weeks there hung in the expectant Washington air the exhilarating possibility that the most modern, mobile, professional American field force in the nation's history was going to lay to rest the time-honoured superstition, the gnawing unease of military planners, that a major land war against Asian hordes is by definition a disastrous plunge into quicksand for any Western army.***

*But this glorious hope was dashed. The endless manpower of Vietnam, the Asian hordes with their Oriental indifference to death, confounded our strategy. And our bombing of North Vietnam also availed us little, given the nature of the enemy. As Hoopes explains, quoting a senior US Army officer: 'Caucasians cannot really imagine what ant labour can do.' In short, our strategy was rational, but it presupposed civilized Western values:" 196*

The casualness with which these people spoke their minds when discussing the killing of millions of people, most of whom were civilians, demonstrates that they believed their worldview to be normal and widely held. Lt George Coker, USN explained to a group of American children: "If it wasn't for the people it [Vietnam] was very pretty. The people are very backward and very primitive and they just make a mess out of everything."

Film documentary, ***Hearts and Minds***, 2002

<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/thumb/7/75/GeorgeCokerMay1966.jpg/200px-GeorgeCokerMay1966.jpg>

Lt Coker might not have been aware of the ancient cultures of the places that he was engaged in destroying nor the 5,000-year history of the Vietnamese. His sense of superiority was reinforced by his war experience.

During bayonet practice soldiers are ordered to make "blood-curdling yells" as part of psyching them into jabbing a bayonet into a sack of straw. I too had to do this. It helps to yell, as adrenalin is a necessary ingredient. The exercise seems more real that way. David Grossman describes group absolution, vicarious role models and intimate brutality as explanations of the aims and outcomes of military training. He further explains why these learned responses could not be turned off when combat veterans return to their home environment.

Grossman describes the military turning people into killers. This was seen in the films, ***Tigerland*** and ***Full Metal Jacket***, in which the drill instructor repeatedly tells the young US Marines that they are "killers" (and this was something to be proud of). In the film ***Gardens of Stone*** the main character, another US Marine 'true believer', is heard to say, "death is our business – business is good" when describing the relentless slaughter in Indochina.

So, inevitably, we hear lines like, “Waste the Gook”, from the characters in films like **Casualties of War** and **Full Metal Jacket** – it was an expression commonly used. A helicopter gunship door gunner, in the film **Full Metal Jacket** explains to colleagues

*“If they run they are VC, if they stand still they are disciplined VC.”*

Whilst US forces were destroying a substantial part of Vietnam’s forests, agriculture and economic infrastructure, many of the troops believed they were there to help the Vietnamese and saw their hosts as “ungrateful”, which puzzled them and made them feel resentful. Some shared General Westmoreland’s contempt for the lives of Asians and readily obeyed their orders.

Australia has been carried along in this direction through this country’s involvement in the wars of great and powerful allies. Political leaders like former Prime Minister, Sir Robert Menzies were happy to fan the flames of hate and fear. Consequently, Australian troops, for example, sometimes had no time or cover to bury dead Vietnamese, so they set off an explosive charge next to the body.

This was called “a C4 burial” – much easier than digging a grave and giving that person a dignified burial. Memories of these events led very often to PTSD.

**Daniel Ellsberg**, in 1971, relates this snippet of discussion:

*“Exhausted men concentrated on immediate means rather than eventual ends. A poignant example of this thinking was recalled by TIME Correspondent Jess Cook. In the spring of 1967, after a long and fruitless retrospective interview, he asked McNamara: “Isn't there anything you regret at all about how the war was conducted?”*

*There was a long pause.*

*“Yes,” replied the weary Secretary. “There is one thing. We should have been able to come up with a better technique for population control.”*”

Further examples can be seen in Robert McNamara’s explanations of war crimes in the film, **The Fog of War**, which relates to the ordinariness of the routinised tasks of managing wars. Hannah Arendt’s 1963 book, **Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil**, bears a chilling similarity to the career of Robert McNamara, who speaks about war crimes in the film, even using that terminology in referring to LeMay.

## Psychological theories – Case Study: the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF)

One of the most revealing racist statements that has emerged from the conflict in Israel and the Palestinian Territories is recorded in Hansard, the British Parliamentary record. Sir Robin John Maxwell-Hyslop (Conservative) recorded (Commons, 18 October 1973), a visit to the Israeli Parliament, the Knesset:

*“After lunch, the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee spoke with great intemperance about the Arabs. When he drew a breath, I was constrained to say, ‘Dr Hacoheh, I am profoundly shocked that you should preach of other human beings in terms similar to those in which (Nazi) Julius Streicher spoke of the Jews. Have you learned nothing?’ I shall remember his reply to my dying day. He smote the table with both hands and said, ‘**But they are not human beings, they are not people, they are Arabs.**’*

When combat veterans return to society and their families they bring these values, including the racist stereotyping of the 'other', with them, thereby reinforcing the legitimacy of these values in society.”

In her essay, ***Jewish Trauma and the Palestinian/Israeli Conflict***, Avigail Abarbanal describes how every family in Israel has at least one young adult son or daughter serving in the IDF and the parents' generation also participated in the exclusion of Palestinians and the occupation of their lands (Abarbanal 10 June 2003). She describes how the whole society is imbued with the same authoritarian militarist racist values. As she describes this in her question, **“What does it mean to base a whole identity on the experience of trauma?”** –

*“Throughout my upbringing in Israel I experienced the culture as aggressive and impatient and as society with a chip on its shoulders. Israel felt to me like a pressure cooker. I left in late 1991 not because I was threatened or persecuted in any obvious way. I left because I felt suffocated.*

*Indoctrination is also an important function of the military, and since every Israeli is required to do military service the control is comprehensive.*

*The phrase “a good Arab is a dead Arab” was commonplace and as children we used to sing songs that called for the destruction of all the Arab countries and their leaders.*

*It means to view the world as mostly a negative and dangerous place. It means to have an “us and them” mentality. The world is divided between our group and all the others and the others are not to be trusted. It means to not be particularly respectful of others. It means to be aggressive, defensive and emotionally reactive. It also means to personalise everything and think that everything that happens is about us.*

*When people suffer from trauma it is extremely difficult for them to see someone else's point of view or to empathise with others. Being traumatised does not exclude success, intelligence or creativity. In fact there are many traumatised people who occupy important positions and who do extremely well in some areas of their life. But trauma causes people to be chronically anxious, see enemies everywhere and always anticipate negative outcomes. They live in a permanent state of urgency and emergency and it is hard for them to be patient. Traumatized people live in a private hell. The philosophy of life of the traumatized can be quite fanatic and narrow minded. The world they live in is so scary that they desperately try to hold on to their way of seeing things, to the point where they can be quite rigid and uncompromising. Views different to their own present a real threat to their world."*  
Avigail Abarbanel **337**

Carmen Lawrence explains this phenomenon of dehumanisation in her 2006 book ***Fear and politics*** (Lawrence 2006). She writes:

*"There's considerable evidence that when fear is engendered in any community, people become more punitive and less concerned with the welfare of those they've been asked to define as the others, the outsiders. High levels of threat and fear reduce our capacity for rational thought. They increase our reliance on group stereotypes, and increase the likelihood that we'll behave towards others with heightened distrust, suspicion and prejudice. And there's a mountain of evidence in social psychology and sociology to that effect".* **81**

Carmen Lawrence further deconstructs the politics of fear with references to the Holocaust:

*"What I want to talk to you about this morning is the role that fear of the other, fear of the stranger, xenophobia, sometimes called, plays in generating violence and in eroding human rights. And in speaking to you, I'm speaking from a concern that developed along, in me, a long time ago. My personal journey of exploration into this subject really began when I was introduced at a university like this, as a psychology student, to the work of Erich Fromm and Wilhelm Reich, and through them to a much fuller awareness of the horror of the Holocaust. And in researching their attempts to understand the genesis of fascism and authoritarianism, I embarked, like many before and since, on what was really a gruesome quest, to try to understand how human beings arrive at the point where they can torture and kill one another without apparent regret.*

*That so many ordinary Germans, and for that matter, people in Eastern Europe, could stand by as their Jewish neighbours were first branded and*

*then excluded from normal life, then herded into ghettos and cattle trucks, and say they didn't know what was happening...."*

*"These weren't the actions of a disordered few. Oppressive regimes and terrorist organisations can't operate at all without these willing executioners, without a bureaucracy to keep the wheels of the system turning, without finance to pay for the cattle trucks, without factories to manufacture the gas, and without the majority of people turning a blind eye, to the disappearances and the brutality taking place around them."*  
Carmen Lawrence 260

Winnifred Louis has studied the social psychological reasons for Australians agreeing to allow their government to subject asylum seekers to extraordinary cruelty after the Australian public had been repeatedly told that these vulnerable people represented a threat to Australian security and identity (Louis 5 July 2007).

Jessica Stern wrote ***Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill***, which was published in 2004, in which she studied fundamentalist terrorists by interviewing them. Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu and Buddhists were all subjects in her study (Stern August 17, 2004) (Stern August 17, 2004). She found that their preparedness to kill large numbers of non-combatant civilians rose in direct proportion to their religious zeal.

## **Conclusions: propaganda to the wider community**

I have postulated that war begets prejudice, concluding that this area requires further examination in future studies. Propaganda depicting racial stereotypes is only one manifestation of the dehumanisation, which relates to the training of military personnel. This indoctrination has a clear purpose, and probably detrimental post-facto societal effects. Making war brings unintended consequences. I have examined existing knowledge and drawn together threads that I regard to be logically related, but which may not have been connected in previous work.

War has many hidden costs in advanced democracies that engage in power projection through military means. One of these is the traumatising of the veterans, their wives, and families, especially the children. The whole society pays an intergenerational price for the presence in their midst of one or more physically or psychologically damaged cohort.

Society also pays for a form of often latent, sometimes expressed and sometimes acted-out, xenophobia and racism. This racism has been born out of military indoctrination and combat that veterans of a nation like Australia have experienced. This includes the manner in which they treated people of 'other' ethnicities. This is a virus with a very long memory.

In researching the roots of racism it is possible to find crosscurrents of guilt and illusions of superiority stemming from conflict, thus sowing ethno-religious disharmony into the future.

Part of the mental process of indoctrination appears to feature the essential ingredient of fear in most examples that I have examined. Bertrand Russell famously said that "fear is the parent of cruelty". It appears that fear is indeed a potent driver that enables people to kill other human beings, as long as this person has been dehumanised as 'other', not like us, and labelled as an 'enemy'.

The more ignorant we are of the 'other' human being the more likely we are to use excessive, lethal force, and the more cruel will be the killing. Community approval or at least apathy and disinterest enable military personnel to carry out the task allotted to them. This only helps them to get through the task but is no help when they return traumatised to reintegrate into the society. It is even harder when they do not feel able to articulate what they have experienced and when the society has lost interest in the issues.

Myth making begins where the national elite finds political expediency that suits the purpose of nation building. The link between religious zeal, nationalism, deep-seated fear of the 'other' and xenophobia is strong. The links to military actions and the national mythology are also there, but require further study.

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# Developing anti-racist futures through anti-bias multicultural early childhood education

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## Abstract

This paper draws on a doctoral study nearing completion to suggest that anti-bias multicultural education is essential for developing anti-racist futures and visioning an alternative world that reflects an inclusive and respectful multicultural society. The paper argues that, to lay solid foundations for the development of anti-racist futures based on respect and mutual accord, it is imperative that anti-bias multicultural education begin in the early years. However, at the time of this study teachers were struggling to find appropriate pedagogical strategies that would promote and support anti-bias multicultural education in their classrooms. This paper discusses how the study utilised children's literature to assist teachers with strategies that would enhance an anti-bias multicultural curriculum and teaching for social justice in preschool settings with a culturally homogeneous group of preschool children. The study's collaborative research methodology (Participatory Action Research) is highlighted in this paper as a socially just mode of inquiry that upheld respectful relationships and partnerships that produced the co-construction of change in two preschool settings.

## Introduction

'Multiculturalism, both as policy and as principles, supports the ideals of a democratic society in which every person is free and equal in dignity and rights' (Calma 2007b, p.2). It has been argued that multicultural education is a key factor in developing anti-racist futures and visioning an alternative world for a productive multicultural society (Denman-Sparks & Ramsey 2006; Siraj-Blatchford & Clarke 2000; Siraj-Blatchford 1995). This paper suggests that an anti-bias multicultural curriculum is needed to sow the seeds of change for a productive, inclusive multicultural humanity and a society that values difference and diversity. The term *anti-bias multicultural* was used by Derman-Sparks and Ramsey (2006) to describe their work and similarly is employed throughout this paper. Derman-Sparks and Ramsey (2006, p.3) explain that 'multicultural education has broadened its scope and has shifted from a focus on cultural pluralism to critical thinking'. The focus has moved from "appreciating diversity" to working toward social justice. This paper uses the term *anti-bias multicultural education* to 'embrace the 30-year history [of multicultural education] and to



emphasise the struggle towards social, economic and cultural equity' (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey 2006, p.3). It puts forward the imperative for anti-bias multicultural education to begin in the early years to lay solid foundations for lifelong learning based on respect and mutual accord, where all individuals may contribute to social, economic, cultural and political life 'irrespective of race, religion, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin' (Calma 2007b, p.2). This necessity underpins the importance of specifically investing research energy into early childhood education to assist educators with strategies to implement anti-bias multicultural programs and teach for social justice. The paper outlines how this was addressed by investigating the use of children's literature during storytime sessions in two Australian preschool settings over a six month period. The employment of the collaborative design of Participatory Action Research (PAR) as a socially just mode of inquiry is also highlighted in this paper.

## **The Importance of Anti-bias Multicultural Education**

There is no such thing as a *neutral* education process. Education either functions as an instrument that is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes "the practice of freedom", the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world. (Shaul, cited in Freire 1996, p.16; *emphasis in original*)

In *Global Perspectives: A statement on global education for Australian schools* (Global Education Project 2002) social justice is inextricably linked to issues of global poverty and development, human rights, peace and conflict. It suggests a curriculum that is focused on the future must stress an approach that acknowledges these interconnections and promotes knowledge, skills and values that prepare young people to become involved in constructing solutions. Similarly, Apple (2004) urges educators and policy makers to design an education that opposes social inequalities and helps students to examine their world critically to bring about substantive changes.

Owing to improved telecommunications and transport the planet is becoming increasingly "smaller". Hence the need increases to appreciate diversity, difference and human dignity through inclusion, understanding, compassion and the valuing of human rights. Indeed 21st century Australian students are members of a global community (Swiniarski & Breitborde 2003). Classrooms are shared among Indigenous Australian, Anglo Australian, European Australian and Asian Australian classmates from varying religious, political, cultural and economic backgrounds. An optimist may claim that these classrooms are a rich source of cultural exchange. Yet this "melting pot" often breeds severe discontent. Siraj-Blatchford (1995) gives the example of 13 year old Ahmed Ullah who was stabbed to death in an English school playground because he had dark coloured skin. Siraj-Blatchford (1995, p.10) states that in all such abhorrent

tragedies 'there are two victims: the victim of racism and the dehumanised racist as a victim of a racist society'. Numerous academics, researchers, liberationists and educationalists (Mandela, cited in Collopy 2000; Freire 1996; Greene 1995; Siraj-Blatchford 1995; Klein 1990) highlight the dehumanising effect that prejudice has, not only on the victims, but also on the perpetrators. As Klein (1990, p.17) states 'racism ... hinders both sides from a fully human experience. The victims, dominant or dominated, cannot have a normal relationship with themselves or with others. Racism destroys both parties; it dehumanises.'

Racism, sexism and prejudice are rife in today's society (Sachs 2002). Omeima Sukkarieh (2004), community liaison officer for the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC), reported on findings of research conducted nationally by the HREOC: 'since 11 September 2001 in particular, Muslims and Arabs around Australia have reported increased levels of prejudice, discrimination and vilification and community leaders say these attitudes have caused fear, isolation and uncertainty within their communities.' The research reports stories of harassment and abuse. It also found that discrimination against other minorities - including Sikhs, Jews, Christians, Arabs and non-Arab Muslims - was prevalent. Tom Calma (2007a; 2007b), Australian Federal Race Discrimination Commissioner, attests that race and racism are still burning issues in Australian society.

These concerns highlight the need to educate children against racism, prejudice and violence. Both Sukkarieh (2004) and Calma (2007a; 2007b) see education as a priority to combat these social ills: 'One of [the HREOC's] goals is to help people to understand their rights as well as their obligation to respect the rights of others' (Sukkarieh 2004, p.3). Educators need to uphold human rights and dignity with compassion, respect and understanding in their classrooms. The United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989, cited in Siraj-Blatchford 1995, p.100) states the aim of educators should be 'to prepare the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin.'

## **An Imperative: Anti-bias Multicultural Education in Early Childhood**

Current theorists, based on research on the affective and cognitive development of the young child, place an emphasis on the importance of beginning the study of global education during the earliest years of childhood... To resolve world issues, protect the environment, seek viable means of employment, and ensure peace and tranquility within and between nations, tomorrow's citizen will need to be comfortable working cooperatively in settings with a diverse membership. (Swiniarski & Breitborde 2003, p. 18)

Today's preschoolers are tomorrow's parents, citizens, leaders and decision makers (Connolly 2003; Swiniarski & Breitborde 2003). There is no doubt that throughout the preschool years children are not only becoming more conscious of their world and how to act in it but also developing their moral structures by absorbing the attitudes and values of their family, culture and society (Nixon & Aldwinkle 1997). The preschool years are crucial in shaping cultural and racial understandings and are critical in forming attitudes toward diversity and difference (Mac Naughton, 2003a). However, prejudices form very early in life (MacNaughton 2003; Swiniarski & Breitborde 2003; Siraj-Blatchford 1995; Derman-Sparks 1989; Ramsey 1987). The most common form of prejudice young children experience is through name-calling and/or through negative references to their gender, dress, appearance, skin colour, language or culture (Siraj-Blatchford & Clarke 2000). Gandhi (cited in Collopy 2000, p.39) considers name-calling, insulting, teasing and disrespectful behaviour forms of passive violence and believes they must not be tolerated, yet these injustices are happening in schools every day.

Research has demonstrated that by the time children reach preschool age they have already become socially proficient in the ways they appropriate and manipulate racist discourses (Mundine & Giugni 2006; Connolly 2003; Van Ausdale & Feagin 2002; Siraj-Blatchford 1995). Numerous investigations initially pioneered in the early 1900s and repeated in a multiplicity of forms since then have revealed that children have the capability to distinguish racial differences and to develop negative attitudes and prejudices towards particular groups from the age of three (Connolly 2003). An Australian study by Harper and Bonanno (1993, cited in Nixon & Aldwinkle 1997, p.64) clearly shows that Anglo-Australian preschoolers can verbalise their negative bias against Indigenous Australian children. Observers documented comments such as 'You're the colour of poo' and 'Rack off, wog; we don't want to play with you'. Thus, early childhood educators share a major responsibility for fostering an anti-bias multicultural curriculum that challenges racism and prejudice and upholds equity, justice and human dignity. These educators must be encouraged to advocate a curriculum that 'becomes a practice of freedom' (Shaul cited in Freire 1996, p. 16) where children are guided towards an appreciation of difference and diversity while honouring peaceful and just practices. Such a curriculum will prepare future global citizens to participate in an inclusive and respectful multicultural society and will go far towards creating a peaceful and just world.

## **The Early Childhood Education Research Project**

Education, because of its crucial role in the production and reproduction of particular identities and social positionings, is a particularly fruitful site in which to consider the playing out, or the performance, of social justice and identity issues. (Vincent 2003, p. 2)

Early childhood education sets the foundation for lifelong learning and participating productively in a multicultural society (Swiniarski & Breitborde 2003). However, a number of researchers discovered that educators struggle to find appropriate pedagogical strategies to support and promote an anti-bias multicultural curriculum in their classrooms (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey 2006; Lingard, Mills & Hayes 2000; Siraj-Blatchford & Clarke 2000). Moreover, Derman-Sparks and Ramsey (2006, p.1) suggest that early childhood educators find anti-bias multicultural education problematic in classrooms 'if all the kids are white'. Scholars, critical thinkers and research philosophers have called for research into new pedagogies that will inform policy and teacher development regarding anti-bias multicultural education (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey 2006; Connolly 2003; Mac Naughton 2003b; Elenes 2002; Lingard et al. 2000; Noddings 1995). Therefore, it is imperative that research initiatives are developed with the aim of exploring pedagogical strategies to assist early childhood educators in implementing an anti-bias multicultural curriculum that will guide young children to value difference and diversity for the sake of a productive, inclusive and respectful multicultural society.

The current study embraced this imperative by examining how storytime sessions could assist with strategies to support and promote an anti-bias multicultural curriculum and teaching for social justice. It is well documented (Whitmore et al. 2005; Hansen 2004; Snipe 2000; Rosenhouse 1997; Short 1995; Eeds & Wells 1989) that discussion following storytime gives children the opportunity to extend their experiences vicariously, also allowing them to engage actively in rethinking how they view their world. Wolk (2004) suggests that picture books have undergone a profound transformation over the past few years, with authors exploring social justice issues such as cultural appreciation and peace, ethnicity and race, empathy and compassion and social responsibility. Books that sympathetically treat other cultures and beliefs and portray life from different perspectives demonstrate to the reader that other realities, apart from one's own, exist and have the right to do so (Nodelman 1988). This is particularly beneficial in classrooms where "all the kids are white".

This study adopted the collaborative research design of Participatory Action Research (PAR). It is a socially just mode of inquiry for all participants, allowing each a "voice" and honouring and respecting individual history, knowledge, expertise and understandings (Denzin and Lincoln 2005). PAR values and invests in those who will benefit from the findings and has been demonstrated to be influential to the social justice movement through its participative nature and transformative action (Fine et al. 2004; Torres 2004). The application of PAR was appropriate for this study because it is a means that produces knowledge and improves practice through its collaborative nature: the direct involvement of participants in setting the schedule, data collection and analysis, and use of findings (Greenwood & Levin 2005; Kemmis & McTaggart 2005; MacNaughton 2001; Carr & Kemmis 1986). Through active research participation teachers and children were driven to critically scrutinise their understandings of, and

appreciation for, difference and diversity. By actively and collectively shaping and reshaping these understandings through storytime sessions children became more sensitive to and aware of social justice issues and teachers developed strategies for implementing an anti-bias multicultural education.

The study involved two preschool groups (Preschool A and Preschool B) from the same Australian regional centre. Both groups were mostly homogeneous, coming from middle class families of Anglo backgrounds. The research team, comprising two preschool directors, two preschool assistants, a preschool teacher and myself (a doctoral researcher), wished to explore how this action research could positively impact on the two groups to value difference and diversity. All team members had a declared interest in exploring strategies that would promote and support an anti-bias multicultural curriculum and teaching for social justice in their classrooms. They also wanted to investigate children's literature to discover which texts worked best to enhance young children's interest, reflection and understanding of social justice issues. These educators had also noticed gender stereotyping and exclusion occurring during play and wanted to explore strategies that would encourage acceptance and inclusion. They believed that anti-bias multicultural education and teaching for social justice were not only theorising on the concepts but must inspire positive action (Leistyna 2005; Greene 1995).

Crucial to this research were two sets of semi-structured interviews with each preschool child regarding a critical text (picture books that celebrated difference and diversity and addressed such issues as racism, stereotyping, prejudice, (dis)ability, suppression, gender and culture). One set of interviews was conducted at the end of the orientation phase. These are referred to as "initial" interviews. The second set of interviews was conducted at the end of the action research and data gathering phase. These are referred to as "concluding" interviews. Consistency was maintained by a set of questions asked of each child (Breakwell 1995); however, for the most part each interview was child-directed, allowing the child freedom to discuss what interested him/her. The text read to Preschool A for both sets of interviews was *Bunyips Don't* (Odgers 1996), which addresses bullying, suppression, stereotyping and freedom of speech. The text read to Preschool B for both interviews was *The Paper Bag Princess* (Munsch 2006), which also addresses bullying, gender stereotyping and prejudice. Before both sets of interviews each text was read to the preschool group by the preschool teacher (a member of the research team) with no group discussion because the initial interviews required individual responses that were not influenced by the group. These responses set the scene for the research and gave it direction. Individual responses were also required of the concluding interviews to ascertain any individual disparity between these and initial interview responses.

Children's responses during the initial interviews highlighted the need to investigate what strategies would best facilitate an understanding of suppression,

stereotyping, bullying and prejudice and challenge these social ills. From both groups only two children identified a character acting unjustly. Many children could not articulate their thoughts and answered with “I don’t know”. From Preschool A, 21 children were interviewed, with most children contending that the *status quo* of the story should be upheld even though the authority figure acted in a bullying and unjust way. From Preschool B 14 children were interviewed, with all (articulate) children concentrating, in a negative way, on the Paper Bag Princess’ appearance and lack of cleanliness. No child identified her bravery or resourcefulness and no child identified Prince Ronald’s lack of grace and unjust behaviour. Six children contended that the Paper Bag Princess should marry Prince Ronald “only when she gets cleaned up” and three children said emphatically that “Prince Ronald should never marry her because she’s dirty!” Four children declared the issue of a girl rescuing a boy as problematic. Davies (1994) discovered similar responses to this picture book in her preschool study, which highlights the fact that little has improved in over 13 years regarding the stereotyping of roles by preschoolers.

Intense data gathering and collaborative weekly meetings with the research team followed the orientation phase. During our weekly meetings the team critically studied two videotaped storytime sessions and post discussions from each preschool (i.e., four storytime sessions).

Through observation on, and reflection and analysis of, what the teachers and children were saying and doing regarding issues of race, gender, culture, ethnicity, (dis)ability etc., picture books for the next week were chosen and a plan of action outlined. Initially, the study began comparing children’s responses to critical texts with their reactions to non-critical texts (picture books that attended to mundane issues). It was found that critical texts did encourage deeper reflective discussion within the preschool groups. However, the research team quickly realised that indeed all texts (including what were considered non-critical) had the potential for critical examination, thus becoming “critical texts”. Often the children’s responses to what the team considered a non-critical text produced such reflective discussion that both the children and teachers were driven to explore underlying social justice issues. As the action research progressed discussions following storytime became longer, more reflective, more articulate and more in depth (on the part of both teachers and children). Teachers utilised higher order and open-ended questions that encouraged insightful responses by the children. However, most importantly, the teachers found that carefully and purposefully **listening** to children’s responses during storytime and clarifying, without judgment, what was being said drove the post storytime discussion. Children “bounced off one another” during discussions to examine their world and the social justice issues that the stories highlighted. These post storytime discussions assisted the research team to critical plan for following sessions. Reflective planning of storytime produced a superior learning experience for both teachers and children.

Strategies that were successfully tried and implemented during the action research included elevating storytime status from a transition activity to an important session of the day, allowing ample time for discussion and response (for example beginning the preschool day); reading and discussing critical texts that celebrated difference and diversity of race, ability, culture, gender, ethnicity, colour and religion; reading and discussing texts that challenged the *status quo*; utilising open-ended and higher order questioning techniques; listening to children's responses and reflectively choosing (and allowing children to choose) texts that would consolidate the social justice issues that had been highlighted in previously read texts; revisiting whole texts or parts of texts for clarification; placing the social justice issues covered in the texts into the preschool context; responding to social justice issues through action (for example encouraging the sharing of what the children have – clothes, toys – with those who go without; supporting inclusion in play situations at preschool); inviting people of other cultures to the preschool; encouraging artistic response to the texts read (for example re-enactment, drawing, construction, dramatic play, singing and dancing); reinforcing and consolidating social justice issues read in texts by displaying related posters and making available relevant jigsaws, dolls and games; involving and informing parents.

During the final week of the research project concluding interviews were conducted. These interviews employed the same books, the same technique and the same interview schedule as were used for the initial research interviews. Contrary to the initial interviews all children who were involved in the first interview and subsequent action research could articulate their thoughts, feelings and ideas. For Preschool A, in opposition to the initial interviews where no child made the parallel between bunyips and people, 20 children made the link and commented that it is "okay" and right for people to be different. 19 children showed concern towards injustice and used such terms as "not fair" and a "bully" (terms not used in the initial interviews). For Preschool B where 20 children were interviewed, only five children concentrated on the importance of appearance. Most of the children could identify the bravery of the Paper Bag Princess and the ungraciousness and bullying behaviour of Prince Ronald. In opposition to the initial interviews 12 children felt that the Paper Bag Princess should not marry Prince Ronald owing to his unkind behaviour. The gender issue of girls rescuing boys was not raised.

These findings are very encouraging as to the use of children's literature when implementing an anti-bias multicultural curriculum in early childhood settings. The children's responses during the concluding interviews display a heightened awareness of and sensitivities to the social justice issues of bullying, stereotyping, suppression, prejudice and freedom of speech. These interviews reveal that the preschoolers now recognise characters acting unjustly, something not noticed by the children in the initial interviews.

The research team believes that the intervening pedagogical strategy of examining social justice issues through children's literature and employing the strategies mentioned above have been successful. The study has impacted positively on the development of preschoolers' understanding of and sensitivities to social justice issues and has assisted the educators in implementing an anti-bias multicultural curriculum. At the end of the school year, and one term after the action research had completed, teachers documented that the preschool groups involved in the study were more cohesive, harmonious and inclusive than they were before the study began.

This study will provide some answers for early childhood educators who are struggling to find strategies to support an anti-bias multicultural curriculum and teaching for social justice. Social justice - care of self, others and the planet - should be of paramount importance in education. Many years ago Maxine Greene (1995) wrote the following which is still pertinent today:

*We can bring warmth into places where young persons come together ... we can bring in the dialogues and laughter that threaten monologues and rigidity. And surely we can affirm and reaffirm the principles that centre around belief in justice and freedom and respect for human rights... (Greene 1995, p. 43).*

Anti-bias multicultural education and teaching for social justice matter. It is the responsibility of researchers to help educators discover strategies that will support and promote an anti-bias multicultural curriculum in their classrooms.

## **Conclusion**

This paper has argued that anti-bias multicultural education is a major factor in developing anti-racist futures and visioning an alternative world. However, it has stressed the imperative that anti-bias multicultural education must begin in the early years to ensure a multicultural society that values difference and diversity with the view to a dynamic, inclusive, respectful humanity. With considerable concern this paper has articulated that educators struggle to find appropriate pedagogical strategies to implement an anti-bias multicultural curriculum. The paper then offered solutions to this problem by outlining current research that has investigated strategies that were successfully implemented in preschool classrooms to promote an anti-bias multicultural curriculum. The research design was discussed and highlighted as a socially just mode of inquiry whereby respectful relationships with all participants were upheld. The current study may contribute to the development of theories that inform anti-bias curricula with a view to raising preschool children's positive recognition of difference and sensitivity to social justice issues. This in turn could inform policy relating to early childhood multicultural education and future teacher development to equip educators with strategies to implement an anti-bias multicultural curriculum.



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# **Institutional Racism in Victoria: Always and Everywhere a Different Phenomena.**

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## **Introduction**

Ethnoracial discrimination is a complex phenomenon that occurs within a social ecology. That is to say that there are multiple causal factors that influence its reproduction at all levels of society. As such, solutions need to be tailored to the multiple sites where racism is reproduced and importantly where discrimination occurs. Finding solutions requires explicit recognition of context, a reflective approach that attributes the reproduction of racism to not only individual attributes, but also to institutions and environments. This paper argues that though they are one of a number of sites for interventions, institutional contexts are critical to addressing ethnoracial discrimination.

Further, while locality is important, the nature of different institutions and their manifestations of discrimination are often contingent on the nature of the relationship between service provider and the public, evident in the commonality in the forms of discrimination manifested in institutions across regions and countries. This commonality extends not only to the nature of discrimination but also to policy and practices to counter discrimination in these settings and consistency in failures across jurisdictions.

This paper will first define ethnoracial discrimination, exploring institutional discrimination as a critical factor in the reproduction of discrimination. The paper will then examine an institutional setting; namely the police force; and an institutional practice, namely the human resources' task of recruitment to explore the nature of ethnoracial discrimination in these sectors and the commonality of issues and responses between Victoria and other settings to argue the critical importance of addressing the specifics of particular institutions as part of a broader ecological approach to addressing ethno-racial discrimination.

## **Defining and Exploring Ethnoracial Discrimination**

Racism can be broadly defined as the unequal distribution of power among ethnoracial groups resulting from attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, norms and practices within societies. The term ethnorace is used to capture notions of both ethnicity and race which in discourse and practice are highly interdependent (Paradies 2006).

Racism can occur at three conceptual levels (which overlap in practice):

- (i) internalised racism: the incorporation of ideologies within an individual's world view which result in the unequal distribution of power across ethnoraces;
- (ii) interpersonal racism: racist interactions between people (i.e. the interactions between individuals which serve to increase power differentials between ethnoraces); and
- (iii) systemic/institutional racism: the production, control, and access to material, informational, and symbolic resources within society which serve to increase power differentials between ethnoraces (Paradies 2006 and Paradies & Williams in press).

Racism can be expressed through stereotypes (racist beliefs), prejudice (racist emotions/affect) or discrimination (racist behaviours and practices). Internalised racism can involve any of these three expressions of racism. However, while interpersonal and institutional racism are (in some cases) based on stereotypes and prejudice, its expression is only obvious through discrimination. As such, this paper will focus primarily on highlighting ethnoracial discrimination.

As noted by Bhavnani et al. (2005), ethnoracial discrimination is a social phenomenon reproduced through social and institutional practices and discourse and as such is multidimensional, context specific and changing. Ethnoracial discrimination is created and situated within current ideologies and structures. The ways in which it is reproduced is related to the nature of political and economic change in society and as such racist exclusion and exploitation has been differently expressed in different times and places.

At the simplest level, this explicitly assumes that ethnoracial discrimination can be understood to be determined by both individual and structural factors mediated by context including;

- *Individual psychological factors and experiences* including; educational level, personal psychology, age, family values, experiences and personal and political beliefs and employment status.
- *Community level/institutional* factors such as the social environment (isolation and integration within broader society, degree of global interaction), the local historical context (attitudes of the majority ethnoracial members), leadership/political climate within the local community/institution, historical and contemporary contact/proportional representation of different ethnoracial group members, employment levels and types, and average incomes.
- *State, National and Global environment* including legislative frameworks, the media and the political landscape.

The implication of this approach is that any preventative, remedial or supportive program or policy to deal with ethnoracial discrimination and disadvantage and their consequences will necessarily require both behavioural and social/institutional responses across these three domains, together with explicit consideration of context. What is explored in the rest of this paper is the nature of institutional discrimination as a critical component of broader discrimination strategies.

## **Institutional Ethno-Racial Discrimination**

In the UK the Macpherson Report (1999) defined institutional racism as:

*The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people. (p.28)*

This definition can be further elaborated to include not only external service provision but also those internal practices that negatively impact on hiring and/or the working conditions and environment of ethnic peoples. It should be noted that this paper will assume that institutional prejudice does not always have to be 'unwitting' and can, in fact be intentional or conscious, whether premised on racist ideology, nationalistic sentiment or belief in the cultural hegemony of Anglo-Saxon custom.

Bhavnani et al., (2005) further argue that a focus on changing processes and policy alone, in the context of new public management approaches with their emphasis on symbolic, bureaucratic outcomes (e.g number of individuals from ethnic minorities employed), fail to address the underlying causes of racism within institutions, which need to be concurrently addressed to truly mitigate against behaviours and practices that discriminate.

The following section examines a key institution – the police – and a key institutional practice – human resources management, in particular, staff recruitment - as potential sites for institutional discrimination, examining some of the key issues identified within the sectors in Australia and in Victoria and comparing these issues with those presented by these sectors internationally, to make an argument for the importance of adopting an institutional approach in any broader anti-discrimination strategy.

## **Police**

According to a recent study of over 4000 respondents in Victoria, Forrest and Dunn (2007), found that those from Non English Speaking Backgrounds were more than three times more likely to experience intolerance and discrimination in Policing than those born in Australia. Further, in a highly integrated local area in Victoria with a high proportion of newly arrived immigrants from the Horn of Africa, the local Community Legal Centre has lodged more than 18 complaints about brutality, harassment, racism and racial profiling with the Office of Police Integrity on behalf of young refugees over a period of 18 months. The Legal Centre claimed that these instances of excessive force, brutality and racism were perceived as not just one off events, but rather as symptomatic of police culture and management failure (Hopkins 2007). They noted that despite lodging these complaints the legal service is still receiving serious reports of police brutality in Victoria.

In addition to these findings, in a report on dialogues between Muslim communities and law enforcement agencies, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (2007) noted that a number of participants in consultations throughout Victoria and NSW thought that they would be treated differently by the police because of their race and religion.

Contemporary claims of profiling of certain ethnic communities and more broadly racial discrimination by the Police is evidenced across a number of Anglo Western countries (Wortley 2003, Bowling et. al. 2002, Engel et al. 2002). A recent survey of 1,522 of Black, Chinese and White respondents in Toronto, Canada (Wortley 2007), found that a significant majority believed that the police treat Black people worse than white people. In the UK, recent publications highlight that not only are there perceptions amongst black youth that police officers are motivated to a greater or lesser extent by racism (Wilson et al. 2006) but also that officers from the Black Police Association themselves believe that racism and discrimination within the police force still exists though much of it is covert rather than overt (Holdaway and O'Neill 2007).

## **Responses**

Despite the above issues, Victoria has been at the forefront in Australia in addressing racism in the police force and encouraging better relations between the police and minority communities. Victoria was the first State to introduce a Multicultural Advisory Unit as part of its Operations Unit using bilingual sworn and unsworn staff to advise police on multicultural issues, provide cross-cultural training for police members and informing Victorians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds on the role of police. Amongst other strategies and projects, it has also established the Police and Community Multicultural Advisory Committee as well as Regional Multicultural Liaison Units that liaise with various community and religious leaders within rural and regional areas to

establish mutual trust and open up communication between the police and the culturally and linguistically diverse communities in their region.

In addition to its Multicultural program, the Office of Police Integrity was established in November 2004 to ensure that police corruption and serious misconduct is detected, investigated and prevented. The office of Police Integrity provides a formal complaints process that is available to members of the public. To facilitate access to those from CALD backgrounds OPI provides full access to translation services and an ability to submit a complaint in any language.

Further research is also currently being undertaken examining issues around CALD communities undertaking policing as a career. This research is in addition to a 2006 census of all Victorian police staff which is part of the Victoria Police Diversity Strategy which includes attraction and retention initiatives to produce sustained growth in the diversity of its workforce.

Similar approaches to cultural diversity have been undertaken in NSW (Chan 1997), the UK (Bhavnani et al. 2005) and Canada (Wortley 2007). In the UK there has been an emphasis on training, ethnic monitoring and recruitment (Bhavnani) and the establishment of minority police associations (Holdaway and O'Neil 2007). In Canada a suite of programs similar to those in Victoria and NSW including anti racism training, minority hiring and promotion initiatives and community outreach officers, programs and committees have been established and in place for over 11 years (Wortley 2007).

## **Efficacy of these Approaches**

While these approaches highlight a strategic focus on encouraging positive relations between the Police and CALD communities, perceptions of ethnoracial discrimination in the Victorian and other contexts remains. In Canada perceptions of ethnoracial bias persist despite the significant initiatives that have been in place for over a decade (Wortley 2007). Similarly, despite the Inquiry into the Death of Stephen Lawrence in the UK where Institutional racism within the police was identified and consequent ethnic monitoring and training systemically implemented there has been 'no evidence that [these] interventions benefitted the community, since they [have] experienced no difference to the Stop and Search procedures...[which] continues to disproportionately affect racialised groups (Bhavnani 2005: 106). Similarly in NSW Chan (1997) found that despite clear strategic leadership and the implementation of community outreach programs in NSW, little cultural change occurred within the police force resulting directly from these top down approach.



## Explanations

Despite successes with respect to increased community engagement, affirmative action policies and cross cultural training for police the ongoing perception that police racism and conflict between ethnic communities still exists, particularly in areas of high concentration of ethnic communities, suggesting that there is a degree of issues consequent to 'on the ground/task environment'. The nature of the police force and more particularly, the work of general duty police is of a specific nature which distinguishes it from other institutional structures. Most particularly, there is a significant focus on petty crime and the maintenance of order with white collar crime predominantly being relegated to specialist units that act largely removed from local branches. The risk and danger attributed to policing petty crime and maintaining order, is argued to induce role related anxiety which, according to cultural theories (Schein 1985) provokes anxiety avoidance behaviours, resulting in negative and defensive responses to the challenges presented by their work (Chan, 1996). In this context, simple systems of cognition are adopted to process multiple stimuli which can be largely unquestioned further resulting in overt suspicion (whether valid or not) and type casting.

This finding is confirmed by research undertaken by Chan (1997) and by Wortley and Homel (1995) who found that training did not reduce (nor increase) prejudice however, the experience in the field, did. Further, they found that this increase in prejudice also increased in relation to the size of the aboriginal population beyond a certain threshold level. These findings appear to support the notion that police prejudice has a significant experiential component, implying that the immediacy of the work and the local realities of the police environment are likely to have a significant impact potentially counteracting formal training and top down anti-racism policies.

The task environment alone however, cannot fully explain police behaviours which are believed to be complex and impacted by a number of variables. Chan (1997) found in an examination of attitudes of the NSW Police to indigenous and ethnic communities in 1991 that attitudes are a complex product of the field and habitus (cultural norms) of the officers. Her study of police attitudes and practices was undertaken when the Police Force in NSW was undergoing significant change as a result of the reforms introduced by the new Police Commissioner who had a strong focus on community policing and engagement. The study provides an interesting example of the efficacy of top down approaches focussed on changing culture and attitudes to minority communities in a large institution.

The findings of Chan (1997) highlight cultural resistance to change from top down approaches. Significant change in the culture of the organisation was only evidenced after two major scandals reported in the media had elicited a strong media and public backlash. Chan proposed that changing culture requires concurrent structural/field changes, such as the use of administrative tribunals,

civil and criminal law sanctions, democratic control of policing and audit based monitoring of police conduct. While top down approaches can provide leadership and reframe philosophical positions, at the operational level external accountability reinforces notions of community expectations around behaviours.

The solutions therefore require ongoing work around facilitating relevant programs that address the immediacy of the work. Broad recruitment and training programs, strategic plans and community consultation on their own may not be effective. Approaches such as; career trajectories for ethnic minority staff to ensure embeddedness and voice within the organisation and mainstreaming of diversity in the force, ensuring strong ties between community liaison officers and operational police (or indeed recruiting operational police to undertake both roles), reinforcement of what discrimination is, that it does occur and that there is zero tolerance, providing positive role models particularly in areas of high ethnic concentration, ensuring that representatives of communities are, in fact representatives of the marginalised and that community consultation is provided in a safe space are some basic approaches that could be considered.

More broadly, the implications of the Chan study and findings both in Victoria and elsewhere is that despite significant work, the immediacy of police work itself and the on the ground nature of police contact with the public needs to be a significant component in addressing discrimination and changing perceptions of discrimination within the institution. This particular characteristic of police work explains why generic anti-racism/anti-ethnoracial discrimination programs driven by top down approaches, while a necessary condition for change are not in and of themselves sufficient. Adopting an institutional approach that focuses on the nature of service delivery is the challenge for institutional specific strategies that must be undertaken as part of a broader suite of programs at various levels within the societal domain. The following section will now examine a specific institutional practice within the employment sector to further reinforce the need for specific institutional approaches.

## **Human Resources Management: Recruitment Practices**

Employment is one of the most central components of an independent, healthy life. As part of the settlement experience of migrants, it has broad ranging impacts on individual and family life, providing not just an income for housing, food and other basic needs but also opportunities to interact with other Australians, opportunities to practice and improve English skills, and to build social connection and mutual feelings of trust and belonging (Richardson et al 2002). While some studies show employment improves for recent migrants the longer they have settled in to Australia (Richardson et al 2002), this is not always the case (Ho & Alcorso 2004).

Certain cultural groups are locked out from economic participation in society. Across Australia, researchers have found that Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islanders, and North African, Middle Eastern and Vietnamese migrants all face more difficult employment trajectories, despite their qualification and skills capacity (Junankar & Mahuteau 2004; Kler 2006; Ho & Alcorso 2004). In Western Australia, Colic- Peisker and Tilbury (2007) found “that there is a segmented labour market where racially and culturally visible migrants, especially those from refugee backgrounds, are allocated the lowest jobs regardless of their human capital (formal qualifications, skills and experience)”.

Emerging research from an Indigenous scholar looking at the social determinants of health in Victorian rural Aboriginal populations found that education was not a determinant of health per se, as regardless of the education level, local Aboriginal people were unable to find suitable employment (personal communication, 2007).

This is confirmed by research collated by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Library (Kryger, 2005), that found a 20.3 per cent unemployment rate for Indigenous Australians aged 18 – 64 years, compared with a corresponding rate for the population as a whole at 5.9 per cent, and a much higher degree of underemployment (measured as part-time workers looking for full-time employment) than for non-Indigenous Australians. This research also found that persons from North Africa, Middle East and from Vietnam “have rates of unemployment much higher than other overseas-born persons”. At June 2005, unemployment rates were 12.1% for people from North Africa and the Middle East and 11% for people from Vietnam. This compared to a rate of 5.3% for all overseas-born, and 6.2% for those born in all non-English speaking countries.

The employment experiences for migrants mirror trends in the UK. Between 1991 and 2001 diverse ethnic minorities experienced diverse labour market experiences, with some groups such as Pakistan- and Bangladesh-born migrants having the worst employment outcomes. Despite favourable economic conditions, there was little evidence of occupational progress among some ethnic minorities during that decade, with some Black minorities with higher educational qualifications finding it “increasingly difficult to obtain professional or managerial jobs” (Clark & Drinkwater 2007).

## **Responses**

There are a number of barriers that could potentially be addressed to reduce the unequal employment outcomes for some migrant groups and for Indigenous Australians. These include improved monitoring, qualifications recognition, employment assistance, use of intermediate labour markets, and more traditional anti-racism approaches such as education in the workplace – particularly for those in managerial positions who may have hiring responsibilities.

Australian policy-makers rely on research evidence to identify differential employment (and resulting socio-economic) trajectories for cultural groups in

Australia. Government-auspiced research such as the Longitudinal Study of Immigrants in Australia (Richardson et al 2002), for example, found overall good outcomes for migrants settling in Australia, despite clear evidence of underemployment for specific cohorts. Unfortunately, such studies rely solely on human capital dimensions of employment and migration settlement, and do not factor in occupational mobility, underemployment or equal opportunity in the workforce. Additionally, such studies have not sought to compare employment outcomes for immigrant and local workers.

The limitations of aggregate data are compounded by limited data monitoring diversity in the workplace. There are some requirements for listed companies to manage a diversity register, and the Australian public Services Commission monitors diversity profiles at each level of authority within the Commonwealth Public services. Such monitoring however, has not found its way into mainstream business practice.

Uneven recognition of qualifications creates real constraints to adequate employment in Australia –particularly for refugees settling in Australia (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury 2007). This requires more dynamic policy responses, such as implementing the recommendations of the 2006 Commonwealth Inquiry into skills recognition, upgrading and licensing.

With respect to employment assistance services Colic-Peisker and Tilbury's research (2007) highlighted a number of shortcomings in the Australia context, noting previous research (Colic-Peisker & Waxman 2005), as well as findings of the Australian Productivity Commission (2005) that found migrants and refugees "did not find the Job Network services useful". They recommend more targeted assistance for skilled and professional migrants from non-English speaking countries.

In addition to broader employment strategies, anti-racism approaches in the workplace are also critical in directly combating the impacts of discrimination in hiring decisions. As noted by Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2007):

*"Recruitment procedures are usually not transparent, leaving applicants unclear as to why they have not been given the job ... and enabling employers to apply personal prejudices and informal discriminatory practices. Education of employers about what constitutes discrimination, the value of a diverse workforce, the broader societal benefits of providing employment opportunities minorities, and encouraging a broader application of the Australian motto of 'a fair go', would go a long way to improving outcomes for 'visibly different' migrants and refugees."*

In Victoria, a review of the equal opportunity legislation has commenced, and this review may provide some opportunity to take action on these systemic solutions.

## **Efficacy of these Approaches**

Evaluation of social policy is poorly undertaken in Australia and internationally (Petticrew 2007). In many instances, social policy amounts to a “living experiment” that is never measured in terms of its capacity to deliver on the assumptions it is built on. The evidence at present is built on researchers who have analysed existing data, or conducted smaller studies with local populations, in order to prove that institutional racism is impacting on the employment opportunities of refugees and – in particular – migrants from non-English speaking countries. Thus, good monitoring datasets and the development of indicators provides the foundations for future evaluations on the efficacy of interventions trialled to address institutional racism. In the interim however, as noted above, data suggests that the skill base of migrants cannot significantly explain the employment or underemployment of many Australian migrants.

## **Explanations**

A number of reasons have been suggested for why these particular cultural groups face additional barriers in community life, and it is important to analyse these in order to determine if institutional racism is at play, or whether these outcomes are attributable to personal or other factors beyond the institutional setting. For recently arrived migrants, research has shown that initial disparities lessen over time so that after settling in to Australian life, people’s options for economic and social participation in the community increase (Richardson et al 2002). Language, previous education histories or even the impact of war trauma have all be theorised to reduce an individual’s potential across the life course. However, evidence shows that such factors cannot fully account for the poorer employment outcomes of particular cultural groups, and instead, the data demonstrates that institutional racism – however invisible – is at play (Colic-Peisker 2007; Kryger 2005).

The settlement experience and its adjusting tendencies which lead to improvements in outcomes for migrants is often cited as an influence that corrects itself over time. As people get used to local health, education and employment systems, as people settle in to local communities, and as English-language proficiency improves, participation outcomes improve and health outcomes level up to the rest of the community. This has been found in several longitudinal studies tracking migrants in multiple waves of migration across changing migration policies in Australia (Richardson et al 2002). However, closer analysis of this data and the resulting trends in unemployment rates indicate that settlement does not balance outcomes evenly for all migrants (Ho & Alcorso 2004). The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission found that for Muslim Australians, “even after more than 10 years or residence in Australia, the average unemployment rate was still almost double that of the Australian average” (DIMA 2005). The settlement experience also does not explain the

continued barriers facing urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Victorians who also have excessive unemployment levels.

Skill capacity also does not fully explain these differences. There is no doubt that strong English skills will increase access to cultural activities, employment, or other participation opportunities. However, not all people from non-English speaking countries have as much difficulty in everyday life. For example, while unemployment for all non-English speaking born migrants was 6.2%, it was almost double that for Middle East and North African migrants, suggesting something other than English proficiency is affecting employment options (Kryger 2005). Australian research – both national and from individual states – also demonstrate that skills and qualifications held by North African, Middle East and Asian migrants are not improving employment options for these cultural groups (Colic-Peiker & Tilbury 2007). International studies on IQ levels and previous education refute arguments that people from some cultural backgrounds are unable to develop skills as well as others (Arai & Vilhelmsson 2001). Similarly, uneven employment and participation outcomes amongst refugees entering Australia on humanitarian visas show that common experiences of war trauma do not evenly impact on employment outcomes or levels of community participation (Ho & Alcorso 2004).

By continuing to lock out particular cultural groups, current Australian political and social systems are reinforced as the status quo. Those within positions of decision-making are not encouraged to reflect on why some cultural groups are not represented, and this may act to further deny access to these groups. Research conducted in WA found that most employers do not reflect on the diversity of their workforce nor consider whether it reflects the wider population dynamics of the area (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury 2007). This is despite the fact that the majority of complaints to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission under the Racial Discrimination Act have consistently related to employment.

Interpersonal and institutional racism are, at times, difficult to separate, and to do so deny the mutually reinforcing nature of race-based discrimination. Interpersonal racism may influence one worker's assessment of employee applicants, however, the lack of systems within the organisation that measure levels of cultural diversity in the workplace, or opaque assessment processes in which qualifications or other skills are taken into account, entrench the interpersonal racism into institutional arrangements, often in a way that denies the existence of racism, or at the very least, make it more difficult to expose.

The uneven experiences of different cultural groups demonstrate that personal skills, experience and capabilities cannot fully explain the lack of success in securing appropriate employment for specific ethnic minorities. This suggests that discrimination remains within employment practices and that policy and projects that merely address the skill base of migrants will not be sufficient to

ensure truly equal opportunity for migrants in securing employment. Unless specific institution wide anti-discrimination practices are adopted including the collection and monitoring of ethnic representational data, transparent recruitment practices and appropriate skills recognition, employment outcomes differentials will continue to exist for particular ethnic communities.

## Conclusion

Policies and practices designed to address differential outcomes for specific ethnic communities continue to fail to address inequalities and perceived discrimination within areas and practices such as policing and employment/recruitment. Broad based anti-discrimination legislation and diversity strategies simply cannot appropriately address the systemic inequities that are present in particular institutional settings. As such a critical reflection on the nature of the institution, its practices and the nature and determinants of discrimination within these settings will be the only way that the inequalities caused by discrimination can begin to be appropriately addressed.

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# Deconstructing White Masculine Privilege: Racism, Cultural Diversity and Creative Writing

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## Introduction

This paper explores a 'reflective' creative writing process that underpinned the writing of "Preston Girl", a work of short fiction. "Preston Girl" tells the story of a young couple who struggle to overcome the challenges of racial and cultural difference in their relationship. These factors influence the decisions both characters make about their careers, the directions of their lives and the nature of their relationship as it progresses over time. The narrator of the story is a young, ex-Christian guy born in Melbourne who is a talented cartoonist working in a supermarket and studying part time. He meets and falls in love with a young Muslim woman from Pakistan. She is whip-smart, funny and completing a higher research degree while she struggles to find work and experiences overt forms of racism and discrimination in her day-to-day life. The story is not autobiographical, is narrated in the first person, and uses humour to prevent a sentimental and romanticized depiction of their relationship.

In this paper I provide a critical reflection on the writing of this story and how theories relating to race and cultural diversity informed and inspired the creative work and were combined with the craft and techniques of fiction writing. Both the short story and the critical reflection on the writing process aim to explore and deconstruct the notion of white masculine privilege in relation to racism and cultural diversity. The short story is not included with this essay as it is in the final stages of drafting for submission to Australian creative writing journals. However, this paper provides the necessary summary information about the story relating to plot points, themes and character developments as part of its analysis of the reflective creative writing process. The purpose of this paper is to provide a research and writing model for students, researchers, teachers and writers interested in creating anti-racist stories and narratives in a range of media.

## The Impact of Stories and the Media

As a writer and dramatist working across a range of media, including newspapers, magazines, film and websites, I have become more keenly aware of the role stories play in the ongoing discourses concerning racism and cultural diversity in Australia. The negative or stereotypical representations of people from a variety of racial, cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds have an impact on our understanding of racism, and our attitude towards the multicultural society that makes up Australia. 'Stories' in this sense can mean narratives within numerous types of media. For example: a news report about Sudanese youth appearing in current affairs television programs such as those screened in Melbourne in October 2007; films Strictly Ballroom, Loaded and Romper Stomper; works of fiction such as Archie Weller's Going Home: Stories or Thomas Keneally's The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith; or even a sequence of photographs in an online multimedia exhibit like the recent "From Sudan, In Australia" (<http://www.theage.com.au/multimedia/2008/sudanese/index.html>). Stories have the potential to initiate change, address issues of social justice and encourage empathy with different points of view, lifestyles and ways of seeing the world. However, stories can also have the opposite effect. They are often constructed in a way that privilege certain assumptions, values and ideologies that reinforce the status quo in regards to race relations and the way we imagine the culturally diverse mix of communities within Australia. Stories lacking complex racial and cultural representation can become a way of building racist sentiment, as Wilson, Gutierrez and Chao argue in the American context. "Media effects research is less definitive than other areas of communication research. Nevertheless, studies have shown that negative, one-sided, or stereotyped portrayals and news coverage in the media very often reinforce racist attitudes in prejudiced members of the audience and can channel mass actions against the group that is portrayed stereotypically." (Wilson, Gutierrez and Chao, p. 47)

In writing the story "Preston Girl", I wanted to challenge what I saw as racist mainstream attitudes and to present a complex representation of a young Muslim woman from Pakistan. I could see the potential for positive representations of race and culture in storytelling, particularly for young people. "Children in both minorities and the majority are particularly affected by entertainment characters portraying minority groups. In contrast to the effects of negative portrayals, programs portraying better interracial understanding and cooperation among people of different races can stimulate positive attitudes and behaviour, especially among children." (Wilson, Gutierrez and Chao p. 47). While my target audience with "Preston Girl" is young adults and university students, here we can

see the wider need for and benefits of stories with positive and complex portrayals of cultural diversity.

My first step in writing my story was to consider the position or point of view from which I was imagining the world of my fiction and my characters, and in turn the way in which I was narrating the story through the voice of the main character. I had to deconstruct the lens through which I saw racism and cultural diversity. This was intrinsically related to my position as a writer having published work in a wider media machine, an employee in a large bureaucracy, and a former student of secondary and tertiary environments. These environments, and other life experiences, have shaped and created a white and masculine perspective which is privileged in relation to other identity constructs as they are played out in media, institutions and other spheres of influence. The world I was trying to represent in my story had partly grown from an 'imagined national culture' which, as Stratton argues, is disseminated and repeated in a myriad of ways: "The national culture itself is expressed through, and most importantly reproduced by, a unified education system, print media including books and newspapers, and the mass media." (Stratton, p. 34) This in turn meant that in writing my story I had to be careful to avoid normalizing a white and masculine view of the world which is consistently placed at a mythologized 'centre' of mainstream Australian society and others 'minority' groups. Both Stratton (Stratton, p. 134) and Babacan (Victoria University Connections, 2007) identify the persistence of this identity construct, the latter identifying this identity construction with 'Simpson and his donkey'. "There is an attempt to construct an Australian identity in a particular way. Indigenous Australians are invisible in these debates and Australia history is portrayed as mainly white. For example, the creation of an Australia identity based on images such as Simpson and his donkey build a particular image – mainly white and masculine – of what it means to be Australian. This is a highly homogenous image and excludes many sectors of the Australian populace." (Victoria University Connections, 2007)

A reflective creative writing process, one in which I considered my own point of view as a writer with particular values, assumptions and agendas, enabled me to write from a more open ended and innovative perspective. I was able to recognise a 'privileged white and masculine' construction of identity, its pervasive influence throughout various forms of media and the Australian consciousness, its mythic status as a 'centre' of mainstream culture. This was an important platform for writing complex representations of racism and cultural diversity.

## **The Art of Story: Creative Writing as Research**

In the Australian university sector creative writing has been established as a recognised field of academic work. Students are able to complete undergraduate courses in creative writing and then pursue higher degrees by research such as MAs and PhDs. It is possible, given applicants meet the necessary entry

requirements, for a creative work such as a novel, epic poem, collection of short fiction or film script, to constitute the major component of an academic thesis. Researchers such as Brophy (1995) and Dawson (2005) have traced some of the history and evolution of the creative discipline and inherent tensions related to teaching creative writing and the function of creative writing research in the academy. While the nature of higher degrees by research in the creative writing field vary across different institutions (a useful list of Australian writing courses and degrees offered can be found at the Australian Association of Writing Programs website: <http://www.aawp.org.au/courses>) a common format for research degrees is a creative component accompanied by an 'exegesis'.

There has been considerable debate concerning the nature and role of the exegesis in creative writing research degrees. The academic journal TEXT devoted a special issue to this ongoing dialogue (Illuminating the Exegesis: <http://www.textjournal.com.au/speciss/issue3/content.htm>), but for the purposes of this paper, I define an exegesis as a long essay that explores and outlines the research processes underpinning the writing of the creative piece. Some writers and academics approach the exegesis in different ways, for example contesting the apparent reliability and/or objectivity of the exegesis in relation to the creative product, and constructing alternate forms of writing for the degree, such as 'meta-fiction' or 'ficto-criticism'. However, I modelled the reflective creative writing process for "Preston Girl" on my PhD experience, which was more conventional in form. My new piece of short fiction has been informed by my reading and exploration of theories relating to race and cultural diversity. In a sense, this essay is the exegetical component of my writing process and is meant to accompany my piece of short fiction.

A key feature of the writing process for "Preston Girl" was the fusing of the techniques of storytelling with my understanding of theories relating to racism, cultural diversity and the white masculine identity construct. As a writer I have a strong commitment to the craft and art of writing stories. During my undergraduate degree and work with various editors at newspapers, magazines and websites, I have learned about and implemented specific narrative techniques such as: use of voice and point of view (e.g. 1<sup>st</sup> person, subjective 3<sup>rd</sup> person); dramatic structure; characterisation; metaphor; pace and tension; imagery; humour; and, active visual description. These are only some elements of my approach to the craft of writing fiction, and many writers approach the act of writing and story construction in different ways.

In my experience, there is no set formula or single method for creative writing. Many writers develop their own writing process, although there are numerous texts and resources available for the teaching and study of writing including: Grenville's The Writing Book, Stein's How to Grow a Novel, Disher's Writing Fiction and Booth's The Rhetoric of Fiction. In relation to writing from a dramatic perspective, and for use in both film as well as print mediums, McKee's Story, Field's Screenplay and Egri's The Art of Dramatic Writing are useful references.

Stories themselves are also an important 'how to write' resource. For the purposes of writing "Preston Girl", the works of various writers were important references in relation to their use of the short form. These included Etgar Keret, Tom Cho, Peter Carey, Beverly Farmer and Kevin Brophy among others. Additionally, cinema was an important resource for me during the writing process, particularly Ryan Fleck's Half Nelson, Ang Lee's Ride with the Devil and the Spike Lee films Do The Right Thing, Summer of Sam and Inside Man. All these texts and narratives helped to form the cultural landscape from which I could draw inspiration in terms of thematic content and the craft of storytelling. Some dealt with issues specific to racism and culturally diverse communities, others were used only for their use of the short form.

The use of conflict was an important writing device for "Preston Girl". Here I was able to draw on the conventions of drama, specifically character motivation, and combine this with my reading of theory relating to racism and cultural diversity. "Preston Girl" is driven by character conflict. As the romantic relationship moves beyond a superficial 'honey moon' phase, both main characters desire different things from their lives. They begin to make crucial decisions about their careers and lifestyle. The pressures rising as a result of the differences in their racial and cultural backgrounds make it hard for their relationship to grow in positive ways during this process.

The life of the narrator in story is quite easy. He benefits from the privileges of being white and male in a society where racial and cultural diversity might be the reality of the world in which he lives, but is not reflected in the institutional structures that he deals with on an everyday basis. It's easy for him to get a job, deal with Centrelink, interact with his friends and navigate his way through a complex education system. His girlfriend, on the other hand, experiences racist and discriminatory behaviour in the workplace, at university and while out socialising with friends. It is also much harder for her to find a job that enables her sustain herself while she studies. As represented in the story, these negative factors associated with racial and cultural differences make negotiating and building a future together more difficult. Eventually, the couple break up as a result of the strain, caused by white masculine privilege. In terms of the craft of drama and establishing character motivations in a story, here we can clearly see the link between the theory relating to racism and cultural diversity, and the craft of writing story in terms of the use of character conflict to drive the story forward. Both theory and drama have been combined in a reflective writing process designed to present complex images of racism and culture.

## **A Framework for Understanding Racism and Cultural Diversity to Write Short Fiction**

My understanding of racism and cultural diversity for the purposes of writing short fiction grew not only from my reading of media theory, but also historical

accounts of racial and cultural discrimination, and biological, essentialist and postmodern approaches to the subject. Finally, I also drew on my own experience working in a support, administrative and research capacity for the past five years within a research department that engages with a range of culturally diverse communities in Melbourne's west.

At the beginning of this essay, I explored the implications of a white masculine identity construct in relation to media and story construction. However, this issue also resonates for me beyond the experience of being a story teller. Roughly five years ago, I used to live, work and study in environments where dialogues around racism and cultural diversity were rare. I like to think of this now as a cocoon, a kind of privileged state of being which is reinforced and sustained through various institutions, attitudes and sites of cultural expression in public and personal spheres of life. As Cashmore and Jennings identify, a consequence of this is that it can be hard to see how racial and cultural privilege functions and its impact on how we understand racism and cultural diversity:

*... it is difficult to recognize racism because it is so imbued within a system of white-skin privileges. The social, cultural, and political order that supports such a system becomes normalized in the world-views of some groups, and therefore, the argument that racism is pervasive is both abhorred and challenged. Racism is abnormal, on other words, while white-skin privileges, while unacknowledged, represents the norm. The latter might be invisible, in a sense, because it represents a way of thinking, a socialization process that is not abrupt but rather constantly at play. (Cashmore and Jennings, p. xiv)*

For me the reflective and creative writing process of "Preston Girl" was an important step in my understanding of race relations and cultural diversity – namely, that I carry 'privileged baggage' and see the world from a subjective position that normalises white masculine values, often unconsciously. It's like a default setting for seeing the world and is reinforced by economic, social, cultural and institutional factors. We can trace this in a historical sense, and the impact of this systematic repetition of white masculine privilege and how it sets parameters and boundaries for the experience of racism. In a 20<sup>th</sup> century context, Stone and Dennis explore the importance of not only the self determined nature of culturally diverse groups, but also how the 'outsider' shapes and defines these groups (p. 57). Stratton in *Race Daze* offers a sharp insight into how racist attitudes morph and change over time in an Australian context in both his analysis of Pauline Hanson's re-packaging of racist attitudes in the late 90s (p. 63), and the representation of racially and culturally diverse groups in Australian films since the 1970s (p. 36)

With regards to scientific and biological perspectives on racial difference, I found that these positions were at odds with my intentions in writing "Preston Girl". My goal was to deconstruct white masculine privilege and to explore through story

the modes of discrimination and forms of exclusion that negatively impact on a romantic relationship. These positions are problematic in that they are used to reinforce and justify the status quo with regards to racial inequality. Tucker argues that when scientists conclude a group to be 'genetically inferior' this had led to the support of right-wing political groups, fascists and racists. There are distinct political consequences of the scientific research:

*The question of genetic differences between races has arisen not out of purely scientific curiosity or the desire to find some important scientific truth or to solve some significant scientific problem but only because of the belief, explicit or unstated, that the answer has political consequences. (Tucker, p. 382)*

Recent reports by Victoria University researchers, Refugee Access and Participation in Tertiary Education and Training, Communicating with Victoria's Emerging African Language Communities and Relocation of Refugees from Melbourne to Regional Victoria also highlighted the challenges that many newly arrived people face in engaging with various institutions, such as accessing and engaging with tertiary education and essential health and support services. While these reports focus on people of different racial and cultural backgrounds from the main characters in my short story, these were important sources of contextual understanding for the real barriers facing recently arrived people with regards to economic, language, religious and lifestyle differences.

I approached postmodern ideas relating to racial and cultural difference with a certain degree of caution. On the one hand I did not want to be caught in an essentialist mode of thinking for writing my story which could reduce the characters to stereotypes. I didn't want the characters to be one dimensional and portrayed in a way that reinforces culturally diverse people as constantly at the edges of a 'white and masculine normative centre'. At the same time, I wanted to assert and represent very real racial and cultural differences, but in positive ways. As Richmond argues I was caught in the dilemma of resolving the local and particular with the universal:

*"Taken to extremes, postmodernism leans towards nihilism and the rejection of all claims to knowledge as 'truth'. Objective truths are replaced by hermeneutic truths, which are entirely subjective and relative to the point of view of the interpreter. This argument fails to distinguish between instrumental and expressive knowledge... Issues such as private property ownership, territorial claims, torture and the death penalty, the status of women, the rights of minorities, the preservation of lifestyles, the survival of languages, the practice of religion, and freedom of expression are caught in the paradox of universalism versus particularism." (Richmond, p. 90)*

So I wrote from a position similar to Stratton's in *Race Daze*, whereby: "Australian culture... is polymorphous and rhizomatic; that is, it takes multiple



forms and is endlessly varying, developing from the ground up and always, ultimately, out of the control of government and bureaucracy. There is an ideology of national culture that thinks of it as a unified and homogenous whole.” (p. 36) I tried to combine both universal and specific characteristics relating to racial and cultural difference in both characters, and to show them changing as people in different ways over the course of the story.

Finally, my own personal experience working and studying in the university sector was an important source of information for writing my story. I have worked with a range of people from different backgrounds in a large bureaucracy in Melbourne’s west for the past five years. Often, it has been difficult processing day-to-day financial and administrative matters for staff from a range of racial and cultural backgrounds. These include staff payments, travel arrangements, reimbursements and other matters that require complex paperwork (written in English) be completed, often according to tight deadlines. I argue this becomes more complex due to organisational systems which are generally based on a white, English speaking and Western style of engagement with employees. I have found it necessary to adopt a culturally sensitive approach to my own work, which is an ongoing learning process as I meet and engage with new people and cultures, and this provided a unique platform of experience from which to write. As Tatum argues, this is one way of increasing understanding of how racism works within institutions:

*“... certain kinds of experiences (increased interaction with people of colour or exposure to new information about racism) may lead to a new understanding that cultural and institutional racism exist. This new understanding marks the beginning of the Disintegration stage.” (Tatum, p. 319)*

These different theoretical perspectives and personal experience regarding racial difference and cultural diversity directly influenced the writing of my story (and my own understanding of these discourses) in two significant ways. Firstly, the narrator of the story goes through this deconstruction process in the story. He comes to understand how white masculine privilege is a factor in race relations and that it influences the way he behaves in and perceives the relationship with his girlfriend. Secondly, creating complex characterisations of the narrator and his girlfriend was of vital importance. By showing the full range of their personality traits, the likes and dislikes of these characters, their shared sense of humour and compassion, the similarities in their approaches to their study and professional careers, the common experiences they have as young people living in Melbourne, allowed me to draw on the racial and cultural backgrounds of both characters, show how they change over time, and yet not reduce them both to stereotypes.

## Conclusion

In this paper I have demonstrated how a reflective creative writing process can construct an innovative story that deconstructs white masculine privilege and creates positive, anti-racist representations of racially and culturally diverse people. In particular, I have shown how specific writing techniques, such as character motivation and complex characterisation, can be fused tightly with theoretical learning relating to racism and cultural diversity. The practical and theoretical become intertwined in a constructive way in order to recognise and acknowledge white masculine privilege, and also find ways to combat racist and discriminatory representations of a multicultural and multiracial Australian society, and in turn move beyond homogenous, white and masculine images of Australian identity.

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# Meeting the Challenges of Multicultural Service Delivery under Neo-liberalism

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## **Abstract**

A key aspect to the successful settlement of refugees and migrants in Australia is the delivery of services by multicultural and community organisations. The focus of this paper is on the impact that neo-liberalism, and in the Australian context, economic rationalism has on such service delivery in South East Queensland, Australia. It discusses how market-based ideologies, which advocate the provision of 'individual justice' through market efficiency, impact on delivery of 'social justice' objectives informed by the Queensland multicultural policy. The paper draws upon interview data gathered from workers in organisations that provide multicultural service delivery in the Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast in Queensland. Their reported experiences demonstrate that neo-liberal policy reforms such as government competitive tendering, contract agreements and government efficiency frameworks challenge worker efficacy through significantly increased reporting and accountability requirements via performance indicators. They also challenge organizational survival and undermine cross-sectoral collaboration as service agencies increasingly must compete with each other for limited funding. These reforms challenge the basic principles of community development which guide the objectives and service delivery of multicultural community workers and agencies. Nevertheless, workers report responding to these challenges through strategies that aim to ensure their organisations' service delivery remains socially just.

## **Introduction**

Neo-liberalism, and in the Australian context, economic rationalism is impacting on the delivery of services by multicultural and community organisations in South East Queensland, Australia. In particular, there is a conflict between the first priority of 'efficiency', which guides the current government economic reforms policies, and the community and multicultural agencies that hold the priority of social 'equity' and access within service delivery, informed by the Queensland multicultural policy. Drawing upon interview data gathered from workers in organisations that provide multicultural service delivery in the Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast in Queensland this paper identifies a number of challenges affecting multicultural service delivery. Such policy reforms are creating a new manifestation of structural racism, presented through individualist market efficiency principles and practices. The challenges experienced by the respondents show that there are problematic aspects to applying a market

efficiency model to human and social structures and work on many different levels. Nevertheless, workers report responding to these challenges through strategies that aim to ensure their organisation's service delivery remains socially just.

## **The Study**

The findings from this research project were based on the examination of scholarly literature and government policy, and the analysis of interview data collected from multicultural and community workers involved in organisations that provide multicultural service delivery. The methodology adopted for the study was informed by the theoretical perspective of critical interpretivism and underpinned by a constructivist epistemology (Bryman 2004:17; Crotty 1998:67-68). Following ethical approval for the research, seven workers employed in multicultural community agencies and services in Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast areas of Queensland, were selected using non-probability purposive sampling and interviewed. The multicultural agencies in which they worked were both non-government funded agencies, and a multicultural network and ethnic peak body, involved in the provision of different programs and services to both multicultural and disadvantaged communities.<sup>19</sup> Each respondent was interviewed in-depth<sup>20</sup> enabling the collection of rich data about their perspectives and experiences working with the different levels of service delivery to the multicultural sector. Interpretation of this data enabled the researcher to understand and theorise the meanings and experiences of multicultural workers interviewed within the broader social and political context, which encompasses a critique of neo-liberalism (Wadsworth 2005: 267-284; Sugden & Tomlinson 2002: 10-12).

## **A snapshot of Neo-liberalism: the emergence within Australian public policy under economic rationalism**

Neo-liberalism is derived from the 17<sup>th</sup> century theory of Liberalism, which holds a set of principles based upon the ideal that human good and social justice can be delivered most efficiently by the 'free market' to the individual (Cook 1999; Locke 1632-1704; Nozick 1974; Smith 1986; Stafford & Furze 1997; Raphael 2001). This liberal ideal has been reinforced by neo-liberalism, developed as international market ideology in the 1940's, as a political and social solution to the crisis of high inflation, unemployment, and economic recessions in liberal nations. This enabled the international neo-liberal Bretton Woods institutions, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), to push for neo-liberal market reforms to revive capitalist economies (George 1999; Kelsey 1995; Pusey 2003; Bell 1997; Harris 2003; Mendes 2003). Furthermore, the

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globalisation of financial structures promoted by dominant American and international financial players and policy makers, enhanced by the use of new technological and communication avenues, enable neo-liberal policies to gain wide acceptance (Bell 1997; Gopalkrishnan 2001; Everingham 2003).

Such processes and events facilitated the ideology of neo-liberalism to reform Keynesian structures, and promote market discipline in social provision and resource allocation, which found favour with western governments (Dow 1994, 1999; George 1999; Pusey 2003 & Mendes 1997, 2003; Rapely 2004). In the last 20 years, the Australian Governments of Hawke, Keating and Howard have embraced neo-liberal structural adjustments more closely associated with the Anglo-American model of 'free market capitalism' (Campbell & Pedersen 2001; Dow 1994; George 1999; Hay 2001; Harris 2003; Pusey 2003: 8-9; Rees 1995; The Productivity Commission 1998). The adoption of 'free market capitalist' economic reforms has resulted in major reduction of social expenditures, economic and government deregulation, dominance of market principles, privatisation of public structures, and an emphasis on efficiency, competition and the 'individual' within policy formulation (Dow 1994; George 1999; Harris 2003: 87-90; Rees 1995; Robinson 1994; Stilwell 1996). These reforms have manifested under the policies and practices of economic rationalism (Pusey 1991, 2003: 7-11).

Fundamental to neo-liberalism are the principles of the 'individual right to freedom' and the right to pursue 'rational self-interest' (Kasper 2000; Marginson 1988; Smith 1986). Further, the principle of 'process orientation', states that 'efficiency' is achieved when individuals are left to freely choose whether or not they voluntarily enter a 'contractual agreement' with one another in the free market (Stafford & Furze 1997: 198; Kasper 1999:136-142; Marginson 1988; Mendes 2003: 33-34; Queensland Government 1994; The Productivity Commission 2001). Thus, following Smith (1776), faith in 'the invisible hand', the autonomous force of the market, is conceptualized as the most efficient and 'just' means to allocate goods and services to satisfy individual wants and needs (Kasper 2000; Marginson 1988: 110; Stafford & Furze 1997: 197-198). Accordingly, the 'efficiency-equity trade-off' principle states that any non-individualist ethics of social justice and equity will reduce the efficiency of free market (Kasper 1999:134-136; Stafford & Furze 1997:198; The Productivity Commission 2001). It is evident that these market based principles are strongly integrated and advocated by the current Queensland government economic rationalist policy reforms.

Under the requirements of the Australian National Competition Policy (1995), the Queensland Government has been exposed to private sector market practices to enable a 'level playing field' in a competition based environment, guided by 'competitive neutrality', which:

*“does not require that all firms should compete on an equal footing; indeed, differences in size, assets, skills, experience and culture underpin each firm’s unique set of competitive advantages and disadvantages. Differences of these kind are a hallmark of a competitive market economy’ (1996: 10).*

The Queensland government competition policy framework of Competitive Neutrality and Queensland Government Business Activities (July 1996), enforce that the practice of a competitive tender process is to ensure the right to funding for a service provider, either under a ‘contract’ as an external provider, or through a ‘service agreement’ as an in-house service delivery unit. The service provider is defined, measured and evaluated on the amount of ‘output’ characteristics such as location, community group, service quality and quantity and period and timing of services (Queensland Government 1999:1-2). Those organisations that prove to be the most efficient and accountable to government money will then be selected as the best tender. Competitive tendering has produced shorter funding contracts for these organisations, the community workers, programs and services, such as 1-3 years. Hence, organisations have to undertake ongoing competitive tendering process to procure recurrent funding (Queensland Government 1994; 1996; Quiggin 1996).

However, such government competition policies are argued as a justification of institutional and structural disadvantage, inequality, and discrimination to certain sectors of society (Australian Council of Social Services 2004; Mendes 2003; Marginson 1988; Rawsthorne 2005; Stilwell 1995; Webb 1996; Wong 2003; Valentine 1999). As Jones (1993) states, the economic rationalist language of ‘freedom’ and ‘choice’ for the individual refers to the ‘generic individual’, that is the economically strong individuals, and can exclude the individuals who are in disadvantaged socio-economic sectors or specific groups with complex needs (Hoatson, Dixon & Sloman 1996; Mendes 2003: 38-39; Williams 2005). The Australian Council of Social Services (2004) further argues that disadvantaged and specific groups may not have the knowledge, information or importantly the economic capacity to seek services as consumers. Therefore a market assessment of need, by people accessing services, is insufficient and unfair for disadvantaged and specialist groups (Jones 1993: 260-261). Thus ‘survival’ for certain disadvantaged groups of people and the organisations that provide services to them are in jeopardy in this individualised competitive market structure (Mendes 2001: 50-54; Wong 2003; Jones 1993). This message was expressed when one respondent stated:

*‘Economic reform processes is a tenet of a liberal way of thinking which believes it is ok to have inequality, winners and losers, but it is not a level playing field. The organisation, [on the other hand], is guided by different principles such as fairness and justice for chances and resources to people in the community.’ (Respondent 1)*

Such market policies and principles are impacting on the very basis of social justice principles guiding service delivery provided within the multicultural sector, which is vital for migrant and refugee settlement.

### **Migrant and Refugee settlement: Specialist multicultural service delivery within the non-government sector informed by the principle of 'Equity'**

Multicultural and community agencies within the non-government sector are responsible for socially just service provision for migrants and refugees. According to Butcher (2006), the non-government sector (NGOs) consists of 'non-state entities' which make up the 'third sector organisations' (TSOs) (p: 70-90). This evolving 'partnership' between government and the 'third sector organisations' is considered an efficient structure by governments, to best meet and address the social and welfare needs of disadvantaged sectors of society, rather than through traditional welfare means of the public sector (p: 70-75). Such organisations' objectives and services adhere to community development frameworks (Crimeen & Wilson 1997; Butcher 2006), and are responsible for the implementation of Australian social policies concepts and practices of social justice, which as Benn (1991) states is:

*'...associated with the promotion of social equity by the reduction of barriers to access to goods and services, the expansion of public participation in government decision-making, and the extension of equal legal, industrial and political rights (cited in Crimeen and Wilson 1997: 47).*

Furthermore, these agencies create and maintain the 'social capital' structures, namely: voluntary action; community-building; shared values; and building of trusting networks, all of which create the civic culture within Australian society (Butcher 2006: 70-80).

The Queensland government funded multicultural community agencies and workers, who make up the non-government multicultural sector, are informed by the social justice and equity principles within the Queensland Multicultural Policy (2004) -*Multicultural Queensland- making a world of difference*. These principles include access, participation and cohesion, which guide the development of multicultural strategies to ensure migrants and refugees quality of life<sup>21</sup> (Multicultural Affairs Queensland 2004). Agencies and workers are also required to adhere to the Federal and State government policy framework of the *Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society* (1998). This policy framework outlines principles to ensure equity through access and participation of more ethnic persons in government, social, economic and political society.

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Furthermore, it also seeks to ensure efficiency and effectiveness, responsiveness, communication and accountability in the implementation of public policy and service delivery to culturally diverse people in society (Australian Government 1998: 1-8). However, the multicultural and community agencies within the sector do not play a homogenous role within service provision.

The successful settlement of refugees and migrants in Australia depends upon the access and equity of services provided by multicultural and community agencies. The multicultural sector consists of refugees and migrants, referred to as Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) and Non-English Speaking Background (NESB) persons, and is one of the most disadvantaged sectors of Australian society (Babacan 2003; Missingham, Dibden & Cocklin 2006; Jayasuriya 1998; Jupp 1992; Vasta & Castles 1996). This disadvantage results from low socio-economic situations exacerbated by barriers arising from differences of culture, language and gender within an Anglo-Saxon dominant population and country. Such barriers can include structural and personal racism, discrimination and isolation, which in turn results in a situation of CALD and NESB persons experiencing 'double disadvantage' (Francis 2007; Lupish 1993: 81-83; Australian Bureau of Statistics 2000: 16-20). Furthermore, meeting the complex needs CALD and NESB persons to enable a successful settlement process, require specialist services that may not necessarily be provided through mainstream organisations and service delivery (Babacan 2003; Gopalkrishnan, Babacan & Khakbaz 2004; Jupp 1992; Waxman 1998), as explained by one respondent:

*'Migrants and refugees are not the same as other people applying for jobs, they need specialist service for assistance. [As a CALD worker in multicultural specialist service] I have been working in the area for 20 years and have personally experienced what people come to get help for and share the experience [Therefore] I can understand the issues of language, cultural difference and educational experience ....Migrants and refugees have a complexity of need and service delivery is not straight forward. It's not one size fits all.'* (Respondent 6)

All participants in the study told of the specialized and complex needs of CALD and NESB people who access the services of their particular organisations, and described the implications this has for service delivery. For example, an agency addressing CALD and NESB mental health services is one specialist area:

*'In the multicultural agency area, people from CALD backgrounds were not accessing mental health services because of the culture and language in services and the stigma [associated with mental health]. Our service has come into being as a link between the multicultural sector and mental health for CALD and NESB persons to be able to access services and understand services.'* (Respondent 3)

However, services differ to cater for the complexity of issues and needs faced by another section of the multicultural sector, namely, NESB women who face domestic violence:

*'[NESB women have] a complexity of issues. [Within the organisation service] delivery workers don't just look at sexual/domestic violence but [take into consideration that clients] are women who are refugees [who have been] displaced and isolated in Australia, [who have] literacy issues, [who may have been in] detention centres, or on temporary bridging visas. There are many other layers. While sexual and domestic violence is the main issue, we cannot ignore the other layers.'* (Respondent 5)

Thus, specialist service delivery provided and enabled through the multicultural sector is crucial in the provision for access and equity of the disadvantaged multicultural sectors in Queensland. However, there is a challenge for multicultural agencies, whom are simultaneously guided by the market efficiency and social justice principles within the Charter (1998), as well as implementing Queensland Multicultural policy equity principles and government compulsory competitive tender requirements.

### **Efficiency-Equity Trade-off: Compulsory competitive tendering, organisational survival and 'one size fits all' funding model**

This study found that the efficiency-equity trade-off principle is a challenge experienced by for community and multicultural agencies and workers in the provision of socially just policy objectives and services. The first challenge associated with maintaining equity within the sector and service delivery, relates to organisational survival under the compulsory competitive tendering framework. Two managers (Respondents 1 and 2 ), one from a neighbourhood centre and one from a peak-body, were of the view that compulsory competitive tendering processes favour large generic NGOs in ways that threaten the multicultural service delivery provided by smaller NGOs:

*'[There is a] threat of take over from the big NGOs....bigger NGOs have larger infrastructure and income...Government wants to minimise [providers], government talks to and wants to consult only a few providers [because it wants] less numbers of organisations providing service... [Government] wants to just see efficiency and cost effectiveness.'* (Respondent 1)

Thus competitive tendering funding cycles render organizational and worker 'survival' (Respondent 2) dependent upon the government process of selection of successful firms in a market system (Alchain 1950: 213-214; Wong 2003).

Respondents explained that it is the 'fittest', that is the larger better resourced organisations with more economic lobbying power, that survive in this framework. This experience was apparent in the views of Respondent 2, who was employed by a larger organisation that represents the smaller multicultural agencies who struggle to meet such reporting and efficiency requirements, due to minimal financial and worker resources:

*'[The] smaller NGOs cannot compete against such big organisations that pick up all the funding, [this situation is] easier for government, [it] sees bigger organisations as cheaper, [with] no core costs...[Government favours] dealing with one agency, such as the Red Cross, not 14 little agencies [because there is] only one report to evaluate.... [These bigger NGOs] are closer to government and have more lobbying power.'* (Respondent 2)

Thus, a 'hierarchy' develops within the multicultural sector, creating 'mainstreaming' implications of specialist service delivery provided by smaller agencies. As one respondent expressed:

*'Competitive tendering is a threat to multicultural service delivery because private companies and businesses are trying to mainstream services but do not appropriately address [specialist] needs. [Within] competitive tendering [it] is who does the better submissions.'* (Respondent 6)

These hierarchies within the sector are dominated by males and pay 'lip service' to the advocacy and community development needs of the more specialised and disadvantaged needs of the multicultural sector. For example, one respondent argued that there is a challenge from a feminist perspective and agency providing specialised services to NESB, as women's issues within the needs identification process of policy making can be de-valued and not recognised given that men are predominately the decision- makers within the economic policy reform agenda (Cox 1993; Eisenstein 1996). Respondent 5 took the following view:

*'The economic policy reform agenda [is] driven by men. My question is how does that impact on issues for NESB women? Men continue to be leaders in community in Australia ... Women's rights and issues are not brought forward with same amount of interest.'* (Respondent 5)

Thus the specialized and disadvantaged groups that consist of the new communities, women, mental health and refugees can be undervalued within government policy and funding attention or relevance (Wong 2003: 47-54). This was voiced from a number of respondents involved within smaller, specialized service provision agencies:

*'[Government needs to be] recognising the specialist nature of work in delivering to the needs of [a multicultural] target group because of the complexity of needs.'* (Respondent 5)

Multicultural organisations are finding it harder to operate and survive and smaller organisations are getting 'pushed out' (Respondent 1) and minimized under the government competitive tendering. This was referred to by a number of respondents as a 'one size fits all' (Respondent 5 and Respondent 6) funding model, which was not inclusive of the specialist nature of multicultural sector needs:

*'[There is] rhetoric about access and equity [in government policy]. [Because] how policies are implemented does not reflect the service delivery for specialist work done by services in this agency [and specialist work] does not reflect funding. [The government funding model is] one size fits all [because the government] policy in place does not reflect demand for services in community.'* (Respondent 5)

Respondents expressed the concern that the 'one size fits all' re-current government funding model focus on 'targets', is problematic when dealing with service delivery to the multicultural sector:

*'[The government] Department funding expectation is "what we want you to spend money on" targets, but then you have a complex situation. [The reality is] one family of nine is not the same as another family of nine. Government guidelines say everyone will need 2 hrs and that's it but this is not the case [because it is] not one size fits all.'* (Respondent 6).

The specialist agency is disadvantaged because the competitive market funding framework lacks recognition of the complexity of work, specialist skills and services within multicultural organisations and again shows government's limited value of the social justice and multicultural service that they deliver:

*'In the competitive tendering world, the money went somewhere else to another service agency that had nothing in place to work in this service [specialist multicultural service]. [With] in competitive tendering, the agency is disadvantaged [because it] puts services against each other without recognition of appropriate skills or history of service working with specific area.'* (Respondent 5)

The hierarchical nature and 'mainstreaming' within the sector, has adverse effects on the provision of social justice, access and equity to certain CALD or NESB groups (Wong 2003). Hence, this does not adequately reflecting the Queensland Multicultural policy objectives, creating business frameworks in which social and human objectives must be provided (Mendes 2003).

## **Efficiency-Equity Trade-off: the impact of compulsory competitive tendering on community development, cross-sectoral collaboration, and social justice output indicators**

The second challenge associated with maintaining equity within the sector and service delivery, is that the government competitive tendering framework favours an individualist contract service framework at the expense of community development structures and social justice outputs (Hoatson, Sloman and Dixon 1996; Palmer 2001; Williams 2005). Organisations are narrowed to being service providers to the individual consumer, focused on competitive business efficiency guidelines, economic out-put indicators and individual 'target' service delivery, rather than active community development agents and community builders (Wong 2003). The respondents' experiences and views indicate that there is a major concern for the diminishing priority and value for and fostering of community development structures and principles, which are paramount in nurturing and implementing social justice objectives within an agency, achieving equity and building the social capital within society (Hoatson, Sloman and Dixon 1996; Butcher 2005; Williams 2003). One Respondent stated:

*'[The] impact on the future of resources for the community sector as competitive tendering creates animosity between groups. [Governments] are not investing in social capital, which is damaging the economic productivity for future.'* (Respondent 6)

This is because community and multicultural agencies and workers' are increasingly required to meet government efficiency and accountability objectives, through reports and output based funding contracts, leaving limited time and resources for service delivery and networking:

*'There is an increasing number of government departments requiring this [efficiency process], but reporting and accountability can put too much pressure on the organisation which is often under funded ... A disproportionate work load goes into accountability and reporting.'* (Respondent 2)

*'There's more reporting reviews ...checking of statistics [through] interviews to check financial accountability.... [Within this government funding process] we are]doing applications all the time... it's exhausting doing all the paper work... spending time [doing reporting and accountability work] rather than spending time with the people [through service delivery].'* (Respondent 6)

The respondents' experiences express how a competitive tender funding framework places equity issues as a second priority, as greater emphasis is placed on efficiency reporting requirements (ACOSS 2005; Crimeen & Wilson 1997; Rosemann 2000:193; Webb 1996). Respondents expressed concern

about how increased reporting and accountability can trade-off the first priority for the service delivery in an organisation:

*'In the past there was more time for service delivery...now there are more reports for accountability...less time for service delivery, whether there's increased productivity... I don't know if this accountability has increased productivity.'* (Respondent 3)

*'The money put into [the community] sector is directed to manage reporting and accountability and service delivery is second.'* (Respondent 4)

However, this is problematic within the multicultural sector, as the main purpose is provision of services to disadvantaged groups, which is measured according to access, equity and community development outcomes:

*'[This] Government efficiency framework does not measure the human and social aspects.... such as connections [between people], caring, [the] relationships built, feelings and happiness. This is an unintended consequence of efficiency framework.... It creates more sterile [environments] and less human resources to go into providing services. [Governments] don't increase the resources to easily do both...it's hard to focus on the social and human services.'* (Respondent 2)

The second priority of community development and equity structures is circumscribed further by government, as funding accountability requirements restrict multicultural workers community development practices. According to the experience of one respondent:

*'the incredible business demands of economic reform policies and government guidelines restrict participation to engage in networks and community engagement. We have to select what is a priority because of all of the other pressing demands. Multicultural networks and mainstream networks are critical of our agency because it does not work in isolation.'* (Respondent 5)

Furthermore, compulsory competitive tendering is undermining cross- sectoral collaboration as service agencies increasingly must compete with each other for limited funding (Wong 2003). All respondents acknowledged that their organisations are currently engaging in competition instead of collaboration. Respondent 2 and 6 both explained the impact of competitive tendering has:

*'[The multicultural] sector is resourced by funding. The way government puts out funding creates more competition between organisations.'* (Respondent 2)

*'Created a competitive environment, where there is less funding and less resources because every organisation trying to get the same thing. [This] stops collaboration and causes organisations to keep information from each other.'* (Respondent 6)

Interviewees expressed their concerns about the impact and challenge this presents to collaboration, networking, community engagement and the importance of building social capital between the workers, organisations and the sector at present and in the future.

Respondent 5 and 6 were particularly vocal on this issue:

*'I miss out on networking because of lack of time. Networking is important to [be able to] pass on information and [provide] updated information to clients [as well as to] liaise with most agencies. I prefer to do this [because this] helps in my job and the job seekers, [which is a] priority for service delivery.'* (Respondent 6)

*'The relationship between the organisation and community [is important to] maintain an ongoing dialogue to ensure improvement in service delivery instead of the dominant cultural view [from government] being imposed all the time.'* (Respondent 5)

Another interviewee (Respondent 7) explained the difficulty of being in the co-ordinating position for a collaborative multicultural network in Queensland in the context of a competitive tendering environment:

*'Organisations are talking about competing when they should be together. This is one thing that this government has been destroying. Competitive tendering is creating competitiveness between organisations, [therefore] have to clarify that [the multicultural] network is not competing with any Multicultural agency. Some agencies have become worried that \* network is another competitive arm for funding. The challenge is, to make them more sure [about the network] and not against us.'* (Respondent 7)

The respondents wanted their work in community development and service to be valued more by government. In particular, the relationship between government and the community sector to be more inclusive and partnership-like to redress the dominance of economic output over social input and reinstate the importance of social capital (Rawsthorne & Christian 2004: 1-20):

*'[There should be] collaboration between funding bodies and the community sector. [It should be] a more genuine relationship, not just power relationship.'* (Respondent 5)

All respondents commented that collaboration and networking needed to be adopted as strategies and practices by multicultural and community organisations and workers to deal with the current short term funding cycles and competitive tendering environment and achieve social justice goals in multicultural service delivery. Respondent 6 described this issue in depth:

*'Service delivery has to be collaborative with other organisations because of the competitive environment, whether you like it or not [because you might be] on the other side of table with the organisation. [However I am] more into collaboration than competition.'* (Respondent 6)

Respondent 6 later added:

*'The collaboration between organisations is very important to identify certain issues and work collaboratively rather than individually because if [organisations] don't work together they will lose what they have now. People pass the buck on to other departments [this is] the cycle [but we need to] break the cycle and everybody should work together, departments, community organisations, state [government], federal [government], [should be] putting resources together.'* (Respondent 6)

However, despite advocating the practice of collaboration and networking, respondents found that workers have to juggle their priorities of due to the impact of two differing cultures and the dominance of the economic policy requirements (Crimeen & Wilson 1997: 47-52).

A further challenge in the achievement of equity and community development practices are the negative impacts from the application of performance indicators and outputs to human and community development work. In particular respondents found that measuring efficiency of the organisation, workers and service delivery via quantitative indicators of 'economic capital', rather than qualitative equity-based indicators of 'social capital', made it a harder environment for them and their organisations to provide socially just service delivery (ACOSS 2005: 5-6; Wong 2006;). Two examples typical of this concern were:

*'In community development work, the results are not fast... It takes a long time to do well and get the product of work because real work is about building relationships and capacity building [which can be] a slow process.'* (Respondent 1)

*'In the [community and multicultural] sector we are working with people whose performance outcomes are not commercially based and not measured on profitability.... [Therefore the] outputs of the human services is not easily measured and accessed.'* (Respondent 2)



Again respondents emphasized that the community development principles and processes, that guide multicultural service delivery, conflict with the government business efficiency guidelines that require regular reporting, measurement and evaluation of profit 'outputs' and accountability of the organisation to the community and government to receive continued funding (McGuire 1997; 106-118; Rosemann 2000: 192-193): Respondents 2 and 7 described this in depth:

*'[Government is] transferring the business model and language and performance indicators [into the community and multicultural sector]. How do you put a measure on output measures on human services?.... It is a different performance indicator model. The business terminology [being] put into the human services is this government's practice.... every time you have to set goals, strategies, performance indicators... [You] need to do a course just to get around the terminology.'* (Respondent 7)

*'Efficiency is measured by government legislation and policy in terms of the hand rails in nursing home [that have] to be this high or fire alarms in every room and [they] have to pass verification every six months. [This is] instead of measuring efficiency in terms of the worker providing the service to an elderly person by holding their hand each day and giving them time to be listened too... which means much more to the client.'* (Respondent 2)

As Wong (2006) argues, there is limited recognition or models for measuring community development principles and outputs in terms of qualitative indicators of 'social capital' such as community building, collaboration, social relationships, empowerment, support and networking and advocacy, under neo-liberal policies.

## **Community development: responses to the Efficiency- Equity trade-off principle of government policy**

The finding also show the awareness and practice of counteractive thought and action present within the multicultural community sector, against the dominance of neo-liberal and economic rationalist market principles guiding the human and community services. Multicultural and community workers report responding to these challenges through strategies that aim to ensure their organisations' service delivery remains socially just. It was a common belief amongst respondents that the 'frame that sector works in is economic rationalism, it is part of the sector' (Respondent 2). However, the strategies emphasized by all workers to 'deal with issues and to achieve community centre role and objectives under these processes' (Respondent 1) involve basic community development principles of advocacy, community building, education and engagement, collaboration and partnerships and networking to support organisations and workers in service delivery and that leads to building social capital (Frank & Smith 2006; Ife 2001; Williams 2003). Again Respondent 1 voiced what this involved:

*'We are applying community development principles to self as organisations and band together. [Also] strategically planning to be aware of what's going on and know what's going on [this involves] networking.'* (Respondent 1)

Respondent 7 also expressed this view stating that a multicultural network is a strategy that involved:

*'the building of a sense of network to feel connected and not isolated in one's work, looking at the broader vision and sharing in the network. People talk about quality, and the best quality of service needs to have a vision of networks, strong systems, strong community, building the capacity of the community, social capital and advocacy. [This involves applying] community development principles and supporting people.'* (Respondent 7)

Another particular strategy adopted by respondents and their organisations to achieve these principles involved regional organisations banding together and smaller organisations supporting larger organisations and peak-bodies (Black 2006). For example, Respondent 1 described the importance of making horizontal and vertical connections:

*'Horizontal means connecting with similar organisations [who are] doing similar work and vertical means connecting with peak-bodies and other organisations and council, because they are more powerful and have more bargaining power. [This allows smaller organisations to] use the strength of council resources and power to achieve work in order to still achieve social justice objectives and community development principles.'* (Respondent 1)

Thus, multicultural community workers within the non-government sector increasingly see the importance of a community development framework and the application of such principles to the sector as a way of surviving this model of competition to keep the multicultural sector strong and productive. These findings concur with what Rees (1993), states in regards to challenging the impacts of economic rationalism, that is such practices and partnerships of collaboration and networking 'implies that interdependence has priority over individual entitlement' (1993: 301) and is one step of the process of 'transforming the discourse' from economic rationalism to social justice (294-297) (see Appendix 1).

## **Conclusion:**

The orthodoxy of neo-liberalism and the market efficiency principles it promotes has manifested within Australia, under the economic reform policies and practices of economic rationalism. This study has confirmed that such economic

policy reforms implemented by the Queensland government present a number of significant challenges experienced by multicultural community agencies and workers in the achievement of multicultural service delivery. In particular, such market-based policies, which advocate the provision of 'individual justice' through market efficiency, impact on delivery of 'social justice' objectives informed by the Queensland multicultural policy. The interview data consistently shows that the 'equity' priority, within the Queensland government social justice policy frameworks, is challenged and de-valued by the market 'efficiency' principle dominant in government policies of competitive tendering and recurrent funding.

Compulsory competitive tendering has created a funding framework, guided by the efficiency and accountability requirements of reporting and 'outputs' This process if referred to as a 'one size fits all' funding model, which favours larger agencies, challenging organizational survival within the multicultural sector. The actual result of competition policy reforms is namely, the lack of funding for, and mainstreaming of, the service provision to the specialist needs of CALD and NESB groups. Community development structures based on social justice and social capital outputs are also being challenged and disregarded under government competitive tendering policies. The emphasis put on 'competitive business efficiency', based around individual target service delivery, within multicultural agencies and services, rather than encouraging and rewarding community development, community building, networking and collaboration within the sector. This challenges equity in regards to cross-sectoral collaboration, social capital building and thus equitable service delivery within the sector. However, multicultural and community workers and agencies are still determined to prioritize, practice and achieve principles of social justice and a framework of community development within multicultural service delivery. This response was expressed by applying social justice structures and practices as first priority and in conjunction with economic efficiency and accountability requirements of policy, rather than just merely achieving market efficiency and output guidelines.

It is evident that the competitive tendering policy framework reflects the neo-liberal principle of efficiency-equity trade-off, and this guides the current partnership between government and non-government multicultural and community agencies. Such policies are presenting a new manifestation of structural and institutional racism, and further disadvantages for migrants and refugees' access and equity to appropriate services for successful settlement in Australian society. This is presented through government economic rationalist policy rhetoric and principles that justify individual self interest and justice, inequality and competition in society. Thus, problems with providing effective and equitable multicultural policy and service delivery arise when often means to more 'effective' policy ends in replacing 'equity' values and practices.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Out of the seven participants interviewed, five were in management positions, one was the co-ordinator of an established multicultural network program and one was a volunteer at a community –based organisation, where the majority of workers are volunteers. Some of the larger and more established organisations in which the interviewees work provide a range of functions, programmes and services. These include peak-body and network roles, advocacy and information provision, settlement and refugee services to migrants and refugees such as aged care, children services, health services referral and general access and equity provision to settlement needs. The other smaller organisations deliver programs and services to specific areas of the multicultural sector for temporary refugee visa holders, migrant and refugees experiencing mental health issues, and services to NESB women and children who experience domestic violence and sexual assault. One organisation was a centre that worked with all sectors of the community and provided a multicultural program.

<sup>2</sup>The sample was interviewed by the researcher in a semi-structured hour long interviews guided by a list of indicative questions. The questions were informed by national and state government policies identified and interpreted by the researcher as relevant to multicultural service delivery in Queensland. The indicative questions addressed three themes, namely the specific objectives of agency's service delivery; economic policy reform processes and changes to multicultural service delivery. They aimed the gather the subjective meanings and interpretations of these specific themes and issues, as experienced by multicultural community workers within the practice of multicultural service delivery.

<sup>3</sup>Access: All Queenslanders enjoy equitable access to services and programs;

Participation: All Queenslanders enjoy equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities to participate in, contribute to and benefit from all aspects of life in Queensland; and

Cohesion: All Queenslanders share responsibility for the continuing development of Queensland as a cohesive and harmonious society' (Multicultural Affairs Queensland 2004: 1-2)

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# Institutional Racism within Health Care and Academic Institutions: The Experience of Overseas-Trained Registered Nurses

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## **A) Introduction and background**

Racism has been an issue in nursing since the era of Florence Nightingale, famous for her work as a nurse during the Crimean War. Nightingale's contemporary was Mary Seacole (1805-1881), a black nurse born to a Scottish naval officer and a Jamaican healer and Nightingale's rival after the war. Unlike Nightingale who came from an aristocratic family and was paid to care for wounded British soldiers, Mary Seacole paid her own way to the Crimean War. She self-funded the establishment of the British Hotel near Balaklava, near the front lines, which she used as quarters for wounded British soldiers. This initiative came after Seacole's application to the British War Office to assist in the war was rejected three times, as was a personal offer to Florence Nightingale herself. This rejection was, in Seacole's own words, due to her "somewhat dusky skin", Britain was not just ready for black nurses. Seacole went bankrupt after the war, but the public raised money to pay her debts because of her personal contribution to the Crimean war. However Seacole died a miserable woman. Until recently, Seacole's contribution in the Crimean War has been in the shadows, although straight after the war itself Seacole received honours from the governments of Britain (the Crimean Medal), France (the Legion of Honour) and Turkey, and possibly Russia too. Seacole's experiences of rejection continue to happen today in the nursing profession and nursing institutions. Does this mean the nursing profession (including Australia) is not yet ready for nurses of colour?

The nursing shortage in wealthy countries, combined with the forces of globalisation, has caused nurses from many less wealthy countries to immigrate to wealthy countries such as UK, USA and Australia (Smith et al., 2006). Nurses are often recruited to work in health institutions, usually hospitals or residential aged care facilities. Other nurses who started in similar positions have chosen to further their education and work in academic institutions, or to work in the public service. Overseas Recruited Nurses (ORN) feel different State health practices as well as forces of racism are to blame for them quitting hands-on nursing.

Racism is alive and well in our healthcare institutions despite years of cultural safety education (Grant-Mackie, 2006, Lancet, 1999, Wilson, 2007).

*Institutionalised racism “consists of the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness, and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people” (The Stephen Laurence Inquiry, London stationary office, 1999).*

Nursing is a profession based on humanitarian efforts; therefore it is hard to imagine that those within the profession can be victims of racism. However racism is very much alive and ingrained within the nursing professions (Fang et al., 2000). Racism has prevailed in nursing since the Seacole and Nightingale era, yet has gone unacknowledged. Barbee (1993) states there are 4 reasons for the ingrained racist attitudes in the nursing profession and its continuous persistence: “(1) the emphasis on empathy, leading nurses to believe that they treat all clients the same; (2) the individual orientation, which focuses attention away from social, economic, or political structures in society which impact on health; (3) a preference of faculty in nursing schools for homogenous student bodies, because nursing education to these homogenous groups is perceived as more efficient (because teachers and students come from the same Eurocentric backgrounds); and (4) the need to avoid conflict.” ORN have reportedly experienced racism in one way or another in the different health institutions. Experiences of racism may be different but there are general similarities. The reason for such negative experiences is attributed to differences in cultural, ethnic and racial background.

“Racialisation” defined as a process whereby people are defined by their skin colour or appearance, their ethnic background, or just because they look different from the majority of the population (Robb and Douglas, 2004). Does it matter if we look differently, speak differently or dress differently? Racialisation is one of the many ways in which racism is expressed and unfortunately race is not genetic but has been socially constructed by humans. Racism can take different forms; racism can be overt and blatant, or subtle (Babacan, 2005). In the nursing profession racism is mostly expressed in a subtle manner by fellow Caucasian nurses or patients and relatives of patients towards their nurses from different cultural, ethnic or racial origin. OTRN are therefore not only victims of racism but experience multidimensional racism from various people at their work.

This paper is an outcome of research into the experiences of racism of ORN and the different manifestations of racism and also looks at responses to racism by ORN in healthcare settings and institutions. The research delved into the experiences of 6 female nurses and 1 midwife, all of whom had been residing in Australia at least for 5 years. Nurses whose experiences are included in this paper include nurses from China/Germany, Zimbabwe, Maldives, India and

Zambia. All participants had worked in at least 2 countries including India, South Africa, Singapore, Zambia, Zimbabwe, China, Saudi Arabia, Germany, United Kingdom and Australia.

## **B) Themes Arising**

Some of the themes identified in this research are similar with themes identified in previous studies with ORN in the UK and USA; Wilson carried out a phenomenological study with 13 African American nurses working in the southeast of Louisiana (Wilson, 2007). The African American nurses described their lived experiences as registered nurses providing nursing care to individuals, families and the community. 2 main themes arose from the study: "(a) connecting with the patient; (b) proving yourself and 4 incidental themes: (a) fulfilling a dream; (b) being invisible and voiceless; (c) surviving and persevering; and (d) mentoring and role modelling (Wilson, 2007). Therefore one can say that racism in nursing is not an isolated problem faced by ORN in one country, but is a common experience by ORN across the globe.

### *1) Invisibility & Silence*

Nurses were not only invisible to colleagues but most often to the relatives of their patients. Nurses were treated as if they are not there. This was often very difficult to deal with as well as difficult to accept on the part of the ORN. These nurses however used silence and not complaining as a survival tactic, which worked very well though on in the short term (Smith et al., 2006). Nurses felt they had to be 'silent' other wise they would have to resign. This is what some participants had to say:

P2 Invisible... If there is a new staff member, no introduction is done for us... During the next handover, the new person is introduced to their fellow white nurses. This is when you get to know the person's name. So you feel invisible & isolated...the other staff resigned. We have to remain silent, else we will be fired.

P1 Yeah... how many examples can I give? This person [relative of a patient] has never spoken to me since their mother was admitted, then they went to someone else, a Div. 2 nurse, and wanted to make enquiries about their mother's progress. So he went to this nurse, who said Have you spoken to X about this? And the relative's response was I don't think she would understand me, I don't think she can speak English.

Silence...You know if you really have to keep your job, then you have to shut up... there is no dignity in this job sometimes.

### *2) Oppression (Multiple and simultaneous)*

ORN were treated as if their training and knowledge was substandard. These made them think they were bullied and oppressed. If this attitude was not directed directly to them it was directed towards a colleague. This is what a nurse had to say regarding feelings of isolation at work by colleagues, though not directed towards her, she witnessed it and it is quite disturbing:

P3 Hmmmm... No. I can't speak for others. I know a few people who have been. This guy does not get told everything [about the patient during handover]; therefore he does not know what is going on with the patient. Therefore he does not carry out the duties, and then the Unit Manager says he is incompetent. So after he receives handover from the Unit Manager, he will ring for example a colleague (like me) who is off duty, and ask: X, you were here yesterday, can you tell me what is happening with this patient? I think he is quite intelligent, but is scared to report this to a higher authority in the hospital as it will not mean anything.

The ORN often felt they were sometimes treated like students. This did not only leave them feeling oppressed but made them frustrated.

P1...the 3 of us black nurses were treated like students. She (unit manager) does not treat others like that, only us. She asks questions like: why are the patient's vital signs like that? Why is this that? Why are the blood sugars like that? She will be trying to twist as much but not to the other white staff. We feel that she just wants to make us feel stupid... I feel much oppressed

Sadly ethnocentrism has existed in healthcare institutions since the Hippocrates era who believed that Asians were feeble; while Down associated Trisomy 21 with the Mongolians as they were perceived to be inferior (the Lancet, 1999). This is true in nursing today, where such beliefs still exist. Such blatant acts of racism directed towards ORN were not only from colleagues but common from patients' relatives and ward staff. Prejudice in the society plays a vital role.

P2... I know this family who did not speak to anybody Indian; instead they would go to other wards to get help. I asked them why they wouldn't speak to Indian nurses and they said, how would you ask something from an Indian...?

P1...a white someone, I was wheeling my patient to the ward, then I met this other guy. He asked why I was doing nursing duties and he was sweeping. I just told him that I was qualified, that is why, while he had not had any nursing qualifications or diploma, that's why he has to sweep

### *3) Deskilled – skills & capabilities not validated – “hopeless”*

Overseas trained registered nurses felt they were limited from performing the duties that they have been trained to perform and are competent to perform. Such limitations were often imposed on the OTRN without any explanation. Nurses felt that qualifying as an RN outside Australia made your colleagues and others to assume that your training was 'inferior'. You were not given responsibilities that reflected your experience. There was the perception that you are unable to perform duties as competently as your Australian educated

counterparts; and even when you are carrying out basic nursing duties, your colleagues check on you always.. This is what a participant had to say:

P5... X has 10 years experience, 4 years in Australia... gets a graduate nurse to be in charge... They just won't give her responsibility! They counter-check everything she does, as if she is dumb. Then they find she has done it all ...they constantly ask her "Do you need help?" while their job is still pending...

P1...I feel very oppressed, I feel that I'm not being treated like a qualified someone

P4...I feel like I am in the wrong profession... I am small, so I can't have the brains, you know? Of course, this is false.

Feelings of regret and humiliation are not uncommon to ORN. In a study carried out by Smith et al. (2003), ORN from Australia and other countries were treated in like manner. In the UK, ORN have to undergo a mandatory "adaptation" period prior to obtaining a full registration. A British RN is usually assigned to mentor the OTRN regardless of their experience, though these mentors are actually trained to mentor British nursing graduates. A British mentor had this to say about mentoring OTRN:

...We basically treat them as newly qualified members of staff with no experience until we find out what their experience is...

Another British mentor: "the only difficulty I found was that the nurse I mentored had more experience than I did. And she was only having to be mentored and trained because she was coming over to Britain and practising here. And I just felt... not out of my depth but she had years and years more experience than me and yet I was having to train her almost and that was difficult for me"(Smith et al., 2006).

Most African nurses are educated to use their initiative and to be able to improvise when necessary. In Australia using your initiative is highly restricted often leaving the nurses with feelings of worthlessness. African nurses are educated to be autonomous and not to just obey orders from the doctors (Ngum Chi and Watts, 2007). ORN are faced with tolerating not only their patients and colleagues prejudices and stereotypes but that of patient's relatives too. This is how a patient reacted after realising that he had an African nurse:

... I walked into the room and the patient requested to see the team leader, and after that, she changed the assignment and I was given another patient, then after inquiries I was told that the patient was "not comfortable that I was the assigned nurse" ...The other one was an Afrikaner and he just changed in the face red...

With such experiences nurses felt humiliated but on the other hand they have to persevere. Nurse feel they had joined the nursing profession because it is a 'caring' profession; and to some it was a life long dream being fulfilled (Wilson, 2007). Nursing remains a profession that most societies hold in high esteem.

Unfortunately these people (especially relatives) are often unaware of the feelings of rejection and humiliation that most nurses have to experience. OTRN felt strongly about proving themselves as qualified registered nurses.

#### *4) Proving yourself*

Carrying out nursing duties competently was something nurses felt strongly about; proving oneself and convincing oneself that they were good nurses and not what others perceived.

P5...you have to cope with [this type of thinking] every day, that I can do it like every other person ... I just have to prove it every day. It just makes me not enjoy nursing. At the end of the day, you don't feel you have achieved anything. It is very stressful, as it is necessary to work hard to meet patients' needs...

#### *5) Support*

Support is vital for the survival of any species or individuals regardless of the environment. Nursing is team work and each member deserves to be supported and included within the team to function optimally. However the experiences of the ORN are different. This is what an ORN had to say...

I and my husband are both nurses, we were both rostered for night shift. We both requested that one person work in the morning, so that the other person can pick up the kids. None of us was able to change the shift. When I asked the unit manager to give me Annual Leave, she said she couldn't because the boss wouldn't give her a replacement. So I had to ring in sick as the only option. The problem here is that you are only allowed 5 paid Sick Leave [days] with a certificate per year. So that day I was not paid.

ORN perceived that they are victims of racism and prejudice due to the structure of the nursing system including lack of support from some senior staff members. ORN do not have the extended family support that is available in their countries of origin. These nurses therefore depend on the good will of friends. Nurses felt that their supervisors did support them when they experienced racism from patients, patient's relatives or from colleagues; instead their supervisors turned a blind eye to racism, discrimination and prejudice. Complaints were not dealt with appropriately, leaving the nurse feel helplessness.

P4...I don't know. It is so hard, you find that it is not the patient it's a colleague. These people are adults and normally they will just change the patient. From the business point of view, they won't lose business either so it's hard. People have got their own preferences. In my hospital they say "Don't talk back! Just walk away!"

This was the experience of another ORN:

P2...one of the patients told the co-ordinator that she didn't want me to look after her and her baby after she gave birth. And I think the coordinator was also racist because she encouraged it by changing the allocation.



Nurses are not supported appropriately. In a very hierarchical profession like nursing, senior management will have to act if change is to occur.

### **C. Responses to racism**

ORN responded in different ways to racism. Nurses felt discussing racist experiences was not of much importance as 'nothing is going to change'. This suggests that victims accept racism as part of their jobs. Such an attitude of acceptance of racism suggests that victims need support and encouragement to be able to speak up against racism. The common responses to racism were: (1) Denial; (2) silence, Isolation and abandonment; and (3) Resignation!

#### *1. Denial*

The denial that racism does occur explains why racism is deeply rooted in the nursing profession. Denial is not only on the part of perpetrators who do not consider themselves racist but is the case with victims of racism. Some victims of racism found it difficult to discuss freely about racism for fear of being perceived as being inferior. I contacted some nurses who were referred to me by their colleagues and their responses to me were 'I have not had any experiences of racism'. The perpetrators of racism say 'I treat everyone the same, I do not see another colour; If you are colour blind then you must be suffering from 'colour blindness' you therefore need 'treatment' (Gutierrez-Jones, 1988). Denial of the racist experiences is served as a survival mechanism for victims.

#### *2. Silence, Isolation and Abandonment*

Silence and not complaining is a survival tactic also used by ORN in UK (Smith et al., 2006). Keeping to oneself was identified as a good survival tactic. Isolation made you 'invisible', and prevents you from getting into conflict with colleagues. Nurses were also tactfully excluded by their managers by not giving them any responsibilities.

P1... We have to remain silent, else we are fired.

#### *3. Resign*

ORN chose to resigning once silence was not working or when they opt not to be silent. Other ORN waited patiently for the end of their contracts, so they could move on. One of the participants said

...Oh! I am resigning ... I have had enough; I quitting hands on nursing to go into research, leaving Australia in 2 weeks...

Nurses saw no future as RN as they felt disempowered and worthless. Some nurses choose to take another career pathway in other disciplines that they felt

will value them as individuals and their skills will be valued too. Such attitudes were not healthy and this was acknowledged by participants.

## **D. Health problems**

The degree of coping with racism and the way racism affected one was highly linked to past experiences with racism. A participant had this to say when asked if racism affected her health in any way:

Oh yes ...depression, especially if you are emotionally fragile and if you have never experienced racism ... but when you grow up in South Africa, you are immune to it... at least there are no signs that say... Whites only...Err... maybe other people will have a low self esteem. When it comes to salaries, they are not colour coded...

To other ORN racism was very agonizing as it did not only make you feel an outcast but made you begin to question yourself and try to substantiate your actions.

... It is very stressful, as it is necessary to work hard to meet patient's needs, but then you have to cope with this type of thinking everyday ...

Another ORN said:

...you get so stressed, anxious and thinking oh my god I am going back to work

## **E. Discussion**

All this begs the question: Why is nursing or perhaps the health sector in general so prone to racism?" Why is one group seen as the 'other'? These negative attitudes of otherness are based on the culturally biased judgements about others or ethnocentrism and the lack of awareness on how to manage a culturally diverse workforce (Smith et al., 2006)? Racism is a subject nursing educators and others rarely discuss. In a profession where in Australia nurses are voted as the most trusted people within the community this is hard to believe. Though the audience in point (3) (a preference of faculty in nursing schools for homogenous student bodies, because nursing education to these homogenous groups is perceived as more efficient) has changed significantly; some if not most nursing educators attitudes have yet to follow the new trend. What is lacking is the non structured part of the nursing curriculum which deals with race and ethnicity. There is the current discussion on "cultural diversity" and cultural competence in nursing, but I argue, whether cultural diversity and cultural competence are new ways of reinforcing stereotypes? This I will leave to another forum.

The effect of dehumanisation as a result of racist experiences is what ORN find difficult to deal with. Where does the dehumanisation come from in nursing / health practice? A reflection of Florence Nightingale model of nursing "military"

obeying orders without questioning needs deeper examination. This dehumanising “military model” of nursing – STILL is the predominant culture in Australian nursing, though nursing today is “evidenced based”. But it doesn’t have to be this way? Mary Seacole’s model of nursing was based on initiative and support rather than just obeying. If we are to prepare nurses to manage and tackle the future challenges in health care such as: obesity; an aging population: and the nursing shortage effectively, then issues of racism and working effectively with ORNs may have to be discussed more openly amongst nursing profession, nursing forums and nursing institutions. Having nurses in the culturally diverse workplaces of the 21<sup>st</sup> century would mean we have to get rid of the 19<sup>th</sup> century “military model of nursing”

## **F. Synthesis**

“In-your-face” racism is usually from patients & relatives; “More polite” forms of racism from colleagues; Cultural racism – it’s just not in their culture to be organised; Institutional racism – “that’s just the way things work here, and they have to fit in like everybody else”; Paternalistic racism – “it’s up to us to show them how to do it right”; “Colour-blind” racism – “we treat everybody the same – they can be just like us if they really want to”; “Denial” racism – “there’s no racism where we work – none of us are racists”;

Changing jobs is only a short term solution. Changing the current way in which nursing institutions are organised may mean a brighter future for ORN. Supporting ORN to broaden their knowledge base and having nurses of ‘colour’ in the upper echelons of the profession is but imperative and will help break down institutional barriers in the nursing profession.

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