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General Information

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Editorial

Lauren Breen
Curtin University

I am very pleased to present the first issue of *The Australian Community Psychologist* for 2011. The issue begins with two 'general' papers. First, Dave Snell, Darrin Hodgetts, and Colin McLeay offer an autoethnographic study of the Metaller sub-culture, and in particular, the tattoos of one Metaller, to investigate how membership and community maybe rendered in and by tattoos. Next, Kevin Runions, Naomi Priest, and Justine Dandy provide an exploratory study of discrimination and psychosocial functioning with children and their parents from Middle-Eastern and Asian backgrounds.

Following these two articles is a special section on innovation in undergraduate curriculum, edited by Dawn Darlaston-Jones and Sharon McCarthy. I'll leave it to Dawn and Sharon to introduce the special section and its four papers later in this issue.

Finally, three books are reviewed. First, Brian Bishop provides an essay review of two books – Johnathan Metzl's *The Protest* and *Psychosis: How Schizophrenia Became a Black Disease* and Ethan Watters' *Crazy like Us: The Globalisation of the American Psyche*. Both books deal with the social construction of mental health. These reviews are followed by my own review of Cordelia Fine's *Delusions of Gender: The Real Science behind Sex Differences*.

Address correspondence to

Lauren J. Breen, PhD, MAPS
School of Psychology and Speech Pathology
Curtin University
Email: lauren.breen@curtin.edu.au

Identity, Community and Embodiment: Chopper's Tattoo Tour

Dave Snell
Darrin Hodgetts
Colin McLeay
University of Waikato

Heavy Metal fans have a unique style of dress, music and interaction via which a sub-cultural community is formed and maintained. This article explores how this community is embodied through tattoos and the display of cultural symbols associated with the shared identity of Metallers. We employ the concept of metonym as a means of exploring the bodyscape of a particular Metaller and his interactions with others. The concept of the bodyscape is used to theorise links between community and identity as enacted at sub-cultural events.

In a dark and crowded Heavy Metal bar, surrounded by drunken bar patrons and loud music, a mutual friend introduced Dave to Chopper. It is important to note here that this is a self-selected pseudonym that is used in this article. It comes from the infamous Mark 'Chopper' Read from Australia, a murderer and violent criminal, who our participant physically resembles. Our participant has no connection to the actual Mark Read.

Chopper was aware Dave was conducting research into Heavy Metal culture. Chopper stated that when he had first heard of Dave's thesis he knew, sooner or later, he would be approached to take part. When asked how he knew this, Chopper rolled up his sleeve to reveal his heavily tattooed right arm (see Figures 1-3). Chopper is heavily tattooed with a variety of different images of Heavy Metal bands, the New Zealand flag and the Holden car logo. The tattoos depicted in Figures 1 to 3 relate to Darrell 'Dimebag' Abbott who was the guitarist for the Heavy Metal bands Pantera, Damageplan and Rebel meets Rebel. Chopper's upper right arm displays lightning bolts and a portrait of Dimebag (See Figure 1). Below this image is the logo employed by Pantera for *Cowboys from Hell* (CFH), the band's first commercially successful album (Pantera, 1990). The lower third of the tattoo features the bass line to *In this River*, a song written by the Heavy Metal band Black Label Society and later dedicated to Dimebag (Black Label Society, 2005, track 5). The arms and hands of Heavy Metal fans are seen saluting

the portrait. The tattoos comprise a tribute to Dimebag who was shot and killed by an obsessed fan on the 8th of December, 2004, while performing with the band Damageplan. Not captured in Figure 1 are the lyrics from *In This River* (Black Label Society, 2005, track 5) and three headstones depicting the other victims of the shooting, who are also tattooed onto Chopper's arm. Chopper's lower right arm contains tattoos celebrating Zakk Wylde, guitarist and lead singer for the Heavy Metal band Black Label Society, the composer of the song *In This River* (Black Label Society, 2005, track 5) (see Figure 2). The tattoos feature Zakk Wylde's face and an autograph – having got the musician to sign his arm, Chopper had it tattooed as a permanent sign of fandom. As with Zakk Wylde, Chopper's inside lower right arm displays an autographed portrait of Vinnie Paul. Along with being the brother of Dimebag, Vinnie Paul was the drummer for the three bands of which Dimebag was a member, as well as the Heavy Metal band Hellyeah. In the background of this section of the tattoo is a Confederate flag.

The current article draws upon Dave's interactions with Chopper. A core aim of the article is to develop an understanding of the ways in which tattoos and associated descriptions can render into view community assumptions, practices and relationships. Choppers tattoos are colourful and embodied statements of membership and community. By focusing on the dialectics of tattoos and their



Figure 1. Chopper's upper right arm



Figure 2. Chopper's lower right arm

metonymic relationship with a Heavy Metal community, we explore how this participant's sense of self as a member has been imprinted upon his flesh. Our analysis moves beyond the description of specific representations to broader observations about the ways in which social relationships and community are rendered meaningful through mediated and interpersonal communication featuring these tattoos.

Tattoos, identity and community

Indigenous scholars writing about tattoos have noted that people live their lives through their bodies, and in the process bodies become sites of negotiation over the meanings one has for one's self and the meanings other people have for us (Nikora, Rua & Te Awekotuku, 2007). When

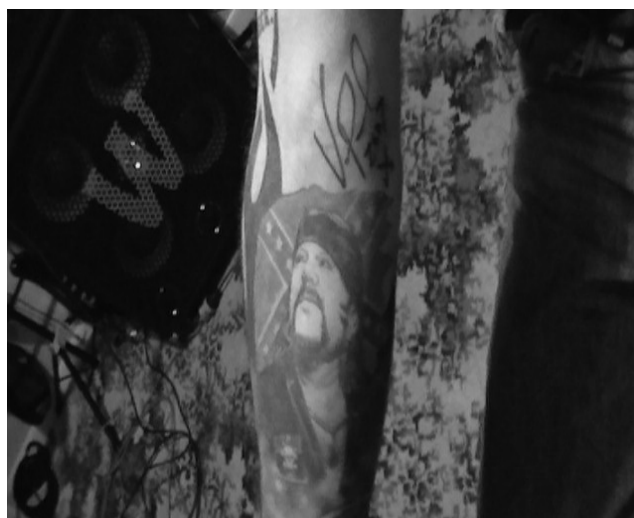


Figure 3. Chopper's lower inside right arm

transported by 'explorers' to Europe, tattoo wearers were characterised as being exotic savages. A well publicised example of this was Omai, a heavily tattooed Tahitian man who became an exotic curiosity in eighteenth century London (Back, 2004). Subsequently, for many Europeans having tattoos became "a mark of daring, masculinity and adventure" (Te Awekotuku, 2004, p. 78). During the 1960s and 1970s there was a 'Tattoo Renaissance', when tattoos were still associated by wider society with 'deviant others', such as bikers and hippies. However, tattoos began to gain more widespread acceptance as an art form (Polhemus, 2004). While there are many other forms of body art, such as piercings or brandings, tattooing has now become the most established form of body art in the West (Pitts, 2003). For example, since the 1990s white suburban females have been the fastest growing tattooed demographic (Donovan, 1997). It has also been estimated that in the United States as many as 15% of all people have tattoos (Sever, 2003).

The popularity of tattoos in Western society has not detracted from their function in indigenous societies, where tattoos remain as icons for community affiliation and identity (Nikora et al., 2007). For many indigenous societies, carving markings into one's skin comprises a powerful way of drawing together

places, people and events and of asserting one's relationship with a community (Te Awakotuku et al., 2007, p. 150). For example, in their work concerning moko, or Maori skin adornment, Te Awakotuku and colleagues (2007) discussed the use of indigenous tattooing practices to link wearers to their culture and heritage. Furthermore, wearers link themselves to broader group affiliations, with their tattoos coming to represent wider social identities, relationships and communities.

One group that has come to utilise tattoos as markers of community affiliation are Heavy Metal fans – often self-identified as Metaller (Snell & Hodgetts, 2007). Having a 'Metaller tattoo' has come to mark the wearer as loyal to the music and community (Weinstein, 2000). Heavy Metal tattoos often include symbols and images that are unsavoury to other societal groups. These 'alternative' markings, such as the Confederate flag or a human skull, represent Heavy Metal's association with expressions of rebellion and the darker side of the human condition (Weinstein, 2000). Heavy Metal tattoos may also represent relevant bands or musicians, as shown by Chopper (see Figures 1 – 3) and link the wearer to specific concerts and festivals.

Despite tattoos being described by Weinstein (2000) as "key trademarks" (p. 129) of Heavy Metal, this art form has largely been ignored by sub-cultural researchers (e.g., Kahn-Harris 2007; Walser 1993). Indeed, even Weinstein (2000) devoted only a single brief paragraph to tattoos. Tattoos and tattooing are also ignored in literature about other forms of music and identity (e.g., DeNora, 2000). Community psychologists have also only paid passing interest to tattooing and issues of embodiment in the context of community (Snell & Hodgetts, 2007). Given the permanent nature of tattoos and their relevance to identity, these absences omit key elements of many peoples' identities and experiences of community.

Contemporary ideas regarding identity, community, materiality and embodiment, which are central to our exploration of Metaller tattoos, can be traced to the eighteenth century work of social psychologist William James. James (1890)

discussed a distinction in the self between the 'I' and the 'Me'. He described the 'I' as the self-as-knower, which represents a sense of personal identity, consisting of experiences of continuity of self over time and across contexts, a sense of individuality in being distinct from others, and personal agency. The 'Me' is the self-as-known and consists of everything that the person can call their own such as their body, possessions and other people with whom they interact. This conceptualisation allows us to recognise our identities as not simply located within our minds, but also as extending into the material and social world (*cf.* Hermans, 2001).

The implication of James' (1890) and Hermans' (2001) conceptualisation of self is that there is an interactional aspect to our very being (Charon, 1979; Hodgetts et al., 2010). As Silverstone (1999) noted, what it means to be a person lies in our communing with others. Further, sharing social identities with others through common practices and the display of shared symbols can constitute community (*cf.* Charon, 1979; Ethier & Deaux, 1994; McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Wenger, 1998). Material objects, and the interactions surrounding these, can function as signs of community members' ties to a larger system in which the individual is a part (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981). In other words, identities can be viewed as ongoing cumulative projects, developed through embodied interactions with other people (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Kaufman, 2000; Mead, 1934). People often experience themselves as simultaneously individuals and as members of communities (Arnow, 1994). Such conceptualisations point to not only the individual as part of a community, but the importance of the community in the development of personal identity. In this way, communities are conceptualised as social networks offering support and a sense and means of displaying identities that are derived from social interactions within everyday life (Obst et al., 2002; Pretty et al., 2007). As an important site in the presentation of identity, the body is a site for the expression of community (DeMello,

2000; Williams & Bendelow, 1998). This is particularly pronounced in the case of tattoos. As Diprose (2005) noted, "the modified or marked body is not usually a sign of itself; it only means something through the expression and sharing of meaning and community with other bodies" (p. 384). Embodied representations of identities communicate self to others (*cf.* Edgerton & Dingman, 1963; Nikora et al., 2007).

[The body is a] surface to be mapped, a surface for inscription, as a boundary between the individual subject and that which is Other to it, as the container of individual identity, but also as a permeable boundary which leaks and bleeds and is penetrable (McDowell & Sharp 1997, p. 3).

Symbols and icons on the body such as tattoos can represent identities and relationships that tie a person to a particular community. Tattoos can also display personal and communal histories. Tattoos relating to specific events can place their wearer at a particular place or places, or can be used to evoke strong memories in others through feelings of nostalgia. As souvenirs, tattoos link self, memory and community (*cf.*, Morgan & Pritchard, 2005).

The concept of bodyscape is particularly relevant to our argument. Within art history and cultural studies the term bodyscape has been used to describe portrait paintings (Mirzoeff, 1995). Paintings of people, particularly those who are well known or famous, are described as a way of representing not only a particular person. These images also constitute signs or symbols representing affiliations to particular places, times, events and groups. A bodyscape is at once personal and communal and is an expression of individual interests, tastes and affiliations as well as being the expression of individual and collective practices, values and ways of being. The bodyscape is a mediating space between the inner world of a person, their participation in community events and the social negotiation of their identity as a member of a particular group. As a repository for social life, the bodyscape is

held within a broader life world and a communal field and has a metonymic relationship with other places and bodies.

The interactional nature of the bodyscape is a common theme throughout this article. By exploring Choppers bodyscape as a site for identity and community, we will illustrate how people such as Chopper work to refine their core sense of 'I' through the use of tattoos and their interactions with others.

The case of Chopper

For readers from a quantitative research background our research methodology may be a little unsettling. How can you 'generalise' from a single case? Do we not have to engage with groups when conducting community research? Such questions are often posed to qualitative researchers who use case study methods. The short answer to such questions is that we are not seeking generalisations in a statistical sense, and if personal identities are communally based then we can research community by focusing on an individual. "A case is, in an important sense, an exemplar, which 'goes to show' something about the class to which it and other members belong" (Radley & Chamberlain, 2001, p. 326). A case is fundamentally metonymic. We are using a case study of Chopper to investigate a particular situation in relation to the wider social forces at play and as a way of extending conceptual understandings (*cf.* Small, 2009) of the function of tattoos in the Heavy Metal community. Through the accumulation of multiple sources of empirical material in the creation of our case study, we seek to demonstrate how a myriad of events and relationships may be interconnected and embedded in the life of our participant. Findings from the fieldwork are then compared through an abductive process to existing theory and research findings and used to add depth and context to scholarly discussions regarding tattoos, identity, community and embodiment.

Our research strategy is informed by Simmel's (1903/1971) approach of looking locally in order to understand systemic elements of the socio-cultural world within which people

reside. This case study allows us to engage in more depth with Chopper over time, to witness and contextualise changes and developments in his life, and to conduct research with rather than on him (Hodgetts et al., 2010). We move with Chopper beyond rich descriptions offered by him to consider the broader societal significance of his experiences.

At the time of this study Chopper was 39-years-old and worked as a fitter/welder. He also played bass guitar for a local band. His introduction to Heavy Metal occurred when he was in his early thirties, a time when he began watching friends play Heavy Metal covers and he developed an appreciation for the technical guitar playing involved. Two weeks after our initial interaction in the bar, an interview was conducted with Chopper in his home. During the interview Dave took photographs of items Chopper thought were relevant to the study, predominantly his tattoos. Chopper also provided a photograph of him meeting Zakk Wylde. A month following the first interview, Dave twice visited a local Heavy Metal bar with Chopper (see Figure 4) and took extensive field notes. On the second visit to the bar Chopper made friends with one of the performing bands, Harvest, as three of their members also have the CFH tattoo. A week after their meeting at the bar, members of Harvest visited Dave at his house where photographs were taken. The significance of this interaction will become apparent in the second section of our analysis.

The ethnographic case study approach used in this paper is informed by recent calls in community and social psychology for context sensitive research that includes a focus on situations, places and material objects important to research participants (Foster-Fishman et al., 2005; Griffin & Bengry-Howell, 2008). More specifically, the research employs an auto-ethnographic orientation where at least one member of the research team is a member of the community under study (*cf.* Hodkinson, 2002). As well as being an academic researcher, Dave is also a Metaller. His community links and intimate knowledge of the Metaller community



Figure 4. Chopper and Dave

provided a further layer of context to this research. Rather than an outsider looking into a community, Dave's positioning shifted the research to an insider looking around (*cf.* Davis & Ellis, 2008). In this article, Dave is not another source of empirical material as this would overshadow Chopper's experiences. Instead, Dave's active community involvement and positioning provided a further layer of context and analysis when exploring Chopper's accounts, as Dave was able to place the material obtained within wider community practices and his own knowledge and experience of the community (*cf.* Berger, 2001; Ellis, 2004; *cf.* Hodkinson, 2002).

Outsider supervision and insights were provided by Darrin and Colin, who are not Metallers. These authors provided theoretical and methodological expertise from the broader social sciences and literatures on popular music, which were drawn upon in designing and conducting the study. Darrin and Colin also provided a fresh perspective for working with the empirical materials generated during the study. As such, this research represents our attempt to work with empirical materials that Dave produced through his interactions with Chopper (*cf.* Davis & Ellis, 2008). The resulting interpretation encompasses both etic and emic insights.

Our analytic task was to encourage Chopper to communicate how he conducts his life by showing and telling us about relationships, places and daily practices of importance to him. The concept of metonym was used as a core analytical device to explore how, as visual images imprinted onto bodies; tattoos carry resonances of experience and events central to a broader community to which the wearer belongs. Brown (2006) stated that "the word metonym translates from Greek to mean beyond (or after) the name" (p. 317). This concept of metonym describes a situation where one particular object or name is used to represent something to which it is closely associated culturally and/or spatially (Brown, 2006). As such, metonym defines a situation where a tattoo comes to represent a wider community. Through talk about tattoos, the practices and events associated with this group are articulated into view and rendered intelligible. Tattoos can stand for what lies beyond them (Selden & Widdowson, 1993) and our analysis traces events, relationships and practices embodied in and beyond the tattoos.

Touring the bodyscape

Tattoos are at once personal and communal icons of identity and group membership (DeMello, 2000). As such, tattoos can trace a complex history of participation and claims to belonging. Chopper takes us on a tour of his bodyscape and in doing so takes us with him through time and space. His tour is not only of his body, but also of his cultural place in the world and the events and experiences central to his social and felt identity as a Metaller. Chopper talks metonymically about, and presents himself as, a Metaller by talking about his tattoos. Thus, Chopper's tattoos render forth contiguity between himself, his body, communal events and other people. Chopper starts the tour with the portrait of Darrell Abbott, the guitarist who was performing on-stage with Damageplan on 8 December 2004 when he was murdered (see Figure 1).

Starts at the top [Figure 1], with the portrait of Darrell Abbott the guitarist from Pantera murdered on the 8th of

December 2004 on stage ... performing to a packed house. The lightning bolts around him are a reference to his most famous guitar design, the Dimebolt. Around the front there's three more crosses... that represent the other three people who were shot on that night, round the back is the CFH that is the Cowboys from Hell logo that was their first commercially successful album ... The music underneath is the bass line from a song from the Black Label Society called In this River and it's also the lyrics as well underneath from that song. It's also the song that the Black Label Society dedicated to Darrell after the event and the crowd underneath is just your standard concert mosh pit paying homage to their hero as he floats away. Down the back [Figure 2] is a portrait of Zakk Wylde who is both the author and composer of the lyrics and music up the top, which has been signed and autographed and tattooed when I met him a couple of years ago. Come round this side [Figure 3], the next portrait of Vinnie Paul who is not only Darrell's brother but is also the drummer for both Pantera and Damageplan and was obviously there on the night that he got shot... that has also been signed by him and tattooed...it's basically one big ongoing tribute to the memory of Darrell Abbott... I love it. Any opportunity to educate someone about the musician that Darrell was, the tragedy of his death, and I mean, a lot of people come up to me and go "Who is that?" and the story begins. I've got no problem at all giving twenty minutes of my time to explain who Darrell was and exactly why I have him tattooed on my arm cos the more people that are

educated about it the better.

In the above excerpt Chopper presents a life map in the form of tattoos that are landmarks on his bodyscape. The tattoos, in one sense, comprise monuments (Favro, 2006) of the Heavy Metal community. These monuments commemorate events such as Dimebag's death, as well as concerts where Chopper met with high profile band members. Such tattoos, and in particular the portrait tattoos, serve as exemplars for a larger community with its own affiliations to people, material objects, events and places (*cf.* Mirzoeff, 1995). Through sharing his experiences and insider knowledge Chopper's tour also provides an opportunity for personalising the images as icons for his own biography and links to Metaller culture. In his commentary, Chopper attempts to create a focus on the tragedy of Dimebag's death, positioning his tattoos as an ongoing tribute to a 'fallen comrade'. Through the tattoo tour, Chopper is able to communicate the perceived tragedy of the circumstances surrounding the musician's death. He sees this as a way of educating others and through doing so he experiences positive feelings of community. In participating in the tour community knowledge is passed on to the observer, with Chopper deciphering meanings and identifying the tattoos' significance as exemplars or landmarks. Given the number of Metallers who wear tribute shirts or hold tribute nights on the anniversary of his death, it is evident that Dimebag is viewed as a tragic figure. Chopper's tattoos are a way of metonymically drawing these elements together as they can be traced back to people, places, events and objects.

This tour also takes us across the boundary between public and private, from Chopper's inner thoughts and memories to public displays of identity and community (Morgan & Pritchard, 2005). A given tattoo of an event takes on meaning in the context of other tattoos; when combined, these tattoos create a history of participation in concerns and efforts to meet community leaders (band members). This is the bodyscape in action. Tattoos become central props to Chopper's identity and the



Figure 5. Zakk Wylde signing Chopper's arm

communication of his community biography.

Figure 5 shows Zakk Wylde signing Chopper's arm at a local music store. Wylde is one of Chopper's musical idols. Such is Chopper's identification with this Heavy Metal icon that the autograph is tattooed on his arm as a permanent reminder of the event.

[I thought I'd] get a portrait of Zakk done on there as well and then hopefully if I get a chance to meet him he can sign it and that's how it happened, pretty much exactly how it happened. The tattoo was finished two weeks before the concert which gave it just enough time to heal and then got up there, the band did a signing at the Real Groovy store up in Auckland and that was when he signed it and the next day I got it tattooed and basically the same thing happened with Vinnie . I thought I should really do something for Vinnie so I put Vinnie on the other side and up at the Hellyeah gig I got him to sign that and got it tattooed as well.

The tattooed autographs on his arm represent significant monuments on Chopper's bodyscape. They locate him at a particular moment in time in relation to a famous musician. Not only does it identify him as being present at the event, but the tattooed autograph

also identifies him as having met an influential community member. Chopper found the experience important and meaningful enough to permanently tattoo their autographs on his bodyscape. Anyone who is willing can have tattoos of famous musicians; however the wearer gains further status when the tattoo is signed by the person depicted, given such autographs are difficult to obtain. This signifies connection. While autographs can be forged, the ability to discuss the circumstances surrounding their procurement in detail as Chopper does, as well as supporting evidence such as photographs of the event, authenticate the autograph tattoos and confirm Chopper's status as an influential community member.

Chopper's tour locates him in relation to key landmark events depicted as visual monuments (with their own histories) on his skin. His tattoos speak metonymically to past events and add depth and meaning to his body and associated account. His tour takes us on a pilgrimage or organised journey to sites associated with ritual, faith, myth and past action (*cf.* Coleman & Elsner, 1995). In one sense, tattoos constitute a celebration of community events traced onto skin, which allows for resonances of moments in time to be carried forward. His tattoos bring past moments of time into the present as a way of remembering historical community moments while at the same time reminding others of these events. Subsequent references to the tattoo are also references to the events that then transport the speaker and listener back in time and space. The tour is co-constructed between speaker and listener when a listener draws on their own knowledge. This is even more relevant in relation to a celebrity's death as people share where they were when they heard the news, who they shared it with, and related emotions and feelings. In this way, tattoos manifest in dialogue as communicative aids and landmarks for shared history and affiliation. The tattoos constitute key embodied monuments on a metonymic Metaller landscape or bodyscape.

Insider knowledge is needed in order to

fully appreciate this significance and to ascertain meanings not visually obvious in such tattoos. The tour functions as a way of 'filling in the gaps' in the same way a guided tour of Paris may uncover the Eiffel Tower's history and deeper significance to the people who live there (Favro, 2006). In the same way that people in Paris are more likely to know the history of the Eiffel Tower, so are Metaller more likely to recognise the values and places Dimebag represents. While some tattoos may have immediate visual meaning to other Metallers, such as Dimebag's portrait or Zakk Wylde's autograph, other tattoos on Chopper's arm may not. These tattoos demand more explanation due to their specialised nature. For example, the CFH logo (see Figure 1), as mentioned by Chopper in his tour, is a reference to Pantera's first commercially successful album *Cowboys from Hell* (Pantera, 1990). To Metaller it is visually self-explanatory and does not necessarily require a verbal narrative, although such a narrative explains how the tattoo came to be imprinted. Other symbols contained within the tattoo may require further explanation to fully understand their relevance even for highly knowledgeable members of the community. For example, Dave did not at first realise that the lightning bolts were a reference to a guitar design. Despite being very familiar with Metaller culture and even with the Dimebolt guitar, Dave did not at first recognise the symbolic reference until Chopper included it as part of his tour. In this way talk in the interviews often refers to the hidden relationships, objects and places central to Metaller culture. While there are metonymic processes and relationships at play here, such representations still need to be explained in order for the viewer to fully ascertain their interconnected meanings and relationships beyond the image itself.

Tattoos provide a shared ground for the establishment of the status of interlocutors as members of the Metaller community with a shared history. The function of language and embodied displays may be witnessed in the co-

construction of meaning, identities, affinities, places and events (*cf.* Tilley, 2006).

[L]andscape becomes a locus of identity formation by virtue of how it was read about, toured through, experienced, viewed physically or in print, spoken about and painted. Here it is not the biography of the monument that provides the lure, but the historical constructs of significance of 'place' that are cultivated by people, and emotional and affective experiences that are encountered at these 'places' (Nesbitt & Tolia-Kelly, 2009, p. 382).

Such ideas have been voiced in relation to landscapes for some time (Urry, 2005). Here we have applied them to the more intimate bodyscape communicated by this participant through the display of, and talk about, tattoos.

The interactional character of the bodyscape

As stated previously, peoples' bodies are what they use to interact with the world. As such, how bodies are shaped and what they look like greatly influence the nature of these interactions. McNay (1999) stated that "As the point of overlap between the physical, the symbolic and the sociological, the body is a dynamic, mutable frontier. The body is the threshold through which the subject's lived experience of the world is incorporated and realized and, as such, is neither pure object nor pure subject" (p. 98). Chopper's bodyscape is central to his everyday interactions with other people.

Tattoos are not simply pictorial displays of identity imprinted on to bodies. If a shared social identity bonding people in a community consists of similarities in symbolism and art (*cf.* McMillan & Chavis, 1986), then feelings of community and belonging can be experienced through sharing of such art with others. In other words, it is not just about seeing someone else with a Heavy Metal tattoo and feeling like you belong. Although this can happen, feelings of belonging and social networks can be extended

through discussing and comparing tattoos directly. Social identities and associated communities manifest in these interpersonal interactions. In this way, like identity, community can be approached as a fluid process experienced through participating in shared practices (*cf.* Jovchelovitch, 2007; Snell & Hodgetts, 2007). Chopper's tattoos and associated tours are ways of performing identity and community that is acted out and felt through the body. His tattoos comprise physical objects to be interacted with, directly or indirectly, and so are not limited to the symbolic. They can not only be seen but they can also be physically touched or felt by the wearer or observers. In this way, tattoos are a way of creating and articulating attachments between the body, the self and community (Bradley, 2000).

Figure 6 depicts three members of the Rotorua band called Harvest displaying their tattoos. Of particular note is the CFH logo prominent on all three band members. This is also a tattoo Chopper has as part of his right arm (see Figure 1). While at the Heavy Metal bar with Harvest, Chopper and Dave initiated a conversation about Pantera. During this conversation Chopper turned to Dave and asked "Should I?". Chopper then handed Dave his jacket and rolled up his sleeves to show the band members his tattoos. Harvest already had knowledge of the band and associated symbols and so a detailed tour was not necessary. Each member of Harvest then rolled up their sleeves to show their own tattoos. Chopper then mentioned that a door man at the bar also had a Dimebag portrait tattoo. The door man was brought over and a large Pantera discussion and 'tattoo exhibit' ensued. Each tattooed Metaller told their own story regarding their relationship to the band and its music. Chopper held a higher status amongst this group as his tattoos contained autographs. These key landmarks held even more meaning for community members and so Chopper instead focussed on the circumstances surrounding him meeting these influential community members. This



Figure 6. Harvest members' CFH tattoos

social situation represents a performance of identity that differs from Chopper's originally stated function of the tour. Chopper is no longer educating others, but is instead sharing community affiliations and the shared admiration of community leaders, while at the same time establishing himself as a more influential and distinctive member of the group.

In this instance a community discussion, initiated by Chopper, was conducted in the middle of the bar with tattoos providing focus for engagement. Having an affinity for a particular band and its associated image, and then sharing this affinity with others and discovering they think similarly, elicits feelings of belonging and relationships between their bodies and community (*cf.* Bradley, 2000). In this way tattoos function as visual, material and embodied substitutes for the larger whole (*cf.* Favro, 2006). Such tattoos comprise claims to stature and are used to constitute the self as a dedicated fan who has a high level of community capital. They identify the wearer as not only possessing a very distinctive form of such capital, but also as being sufficiently knowledgeable in community and Heavy Metal music history and thus being 'deserving' of not only his tattoos but also community membership (*cf.* Thornton, 1995). Tattoos are a highly visual and distinctive way of presenting the wearer as an influential and dedicated community member,



Figure 7. Chopper and his Pantera inspired licence plate

as not only do they prove communal affiliations and identifies the wearer as 'worthy' of having them but they are also permanently carved into the body. They identify the wearer as loyal to the group, a loyalty they intend to maintain for life. Other community members possessing and displaying similar tattoos constitute a display of affinity, with the tattoos functioning as items for recognition and focal points for connections. In such instances, metonymic representations are used to present and position a particular social identity to others.

Figure 7 depicts Chopper with the DIME licence plate for his jeep. Chopper describes how he has connected a specific event of the anniversary of a celebrity's death with the material possession of a car license plate:

When I ordered the plates the guy said you should get them on or around the 6th of December which is two days before the anniversary of [Dimebag's] death so to have the 1 there is sorta a subliminal reference to the first anniversary when I actually got the plates so in that respect it worked out brilliantly. I mean the...response I get to those plates...there isn't a day goes by that someone doesn't drive past and point at the plates and gives me the thumbs up...Got talking to these

young fellas in a bar and [a friend] noticed a couple of them were wearing Pantera shirts... [He] comes up and he goes "Show them your arm, show em your arm" and by this stage they were all like "What's he got on his arm? What's he got on his arm?" The sleeves come up and they were all "Ohhhh my god!". We had people queuing to have photos taken of us with our tattoos and it's like I didn't spend another dollar on whiskey that night, an instant celebrity status, but again that's not what it's about but again that shows the level of feeling people have about it.

While Chopper is unclear as to which came first, his tattoos or the plate, his affiliation and identification with the deceased musician has leaked across two different objects. Having these tattoos and this licence plate has earned Chopper admiration (and free drinks!) from other community members. In considering such interactions we enter into the domain of the social life of things (Appadurai, 1988; Hodgetts et al., under review) and recognition of how tattoos and other objects render shared affinities, events and practices visible (*cf.* Garner, 2004). We also see how the consumption of Heavy Metal music and associated symbols is an active process of social engagement, which involves the negotiation of shared identities and meanings. In sharing a community event across a range of different mediums, a sense of community is established. These interactions around a shared icon provide an opportunity for the expression of affinity.

In interviews, Chopper is very careful to explain the rationale behind obtaining his tattoos as not simply attention seeking. Tattoos represent his identity whilst commemorating one of his heroes and offering a basis for engaging with others. He describes this shared affinity as relating to the depth of emotion and admiration other Metallers have for Dimebag Darrell. Morgan and Pritchard (2005) noted particular

objects can "encode a variety of functions and certain objects which acquire a secular sacred character (such as photographs that encode memories or mark personal histories) are retained and cherished because of their extraordinary status and their implications for self-definition. In short, it is well established that objects mediate human relationships" (p. 32). Through sharing tattoos and an affinity for a certain band or style of music, connections and a sense of belonging to something bigger than the individual are constructed through display and discussion (*cf.* Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Hurdley, 2006). In sharing tattoos and experiences Metallers articulate a sense of community and belonging on their skin that is carried with them as they perform identity through a variety of different places and situations (*cf.* Back, 2004; Paechter, 2003).

For Chopper his tattoos are not simply depictions of various people, places and events, as his bodyscape has been shaped as a source of community engagement and belonging. It has come to metonymically represent Heavy Metal not only through the tattoos themselves but also through the reaction to the bodyscape from others. These reactions reify and confirm his community membership and in doing so are a source of social identity and belonging. Tattooing and interactions surrounding the display and interpretation of these objects also exemplifies how the identities of others can become part of us, literally being imprinted onto one's skin through portrait tattoos. In this way the personal life world is reshaped and expanded to encompass the images and public identities of admired band members and community leaders.

Discussion

Tattoos illustrate peoples' connections within the social world (Te Awakotuku et al., 2007). As pictures imprinted on bodies, tattoos draw together both the symbolic and the physical into the creation of a bodyscape. Tattooing represents a way of making the internal visible and legible. Tattoos can also

provide a way of imprinting and picturing the external world onto the self (Back, 2004). This external environment includes the communities to which we belong and the people with whom we share affinities (*cf.* DeMello, 2000). This supports the assertion that our identities are not located purely within our heads. Our identities are also evident in display and social interactions (Jovchelovitch, 2007); we shape and alter our bodies to reflect not only inner cognition but also our external environments and interactions. While the body is a boundary between the internal and the external, this boundary is permeable (McDowell & Sharp, 1997). Our body (and the 'I' and 'Me' contained by it) not only bleeds literally, but also leaks symbolically out through our interactions with other people to be represented through the objects we possess or the way we look in order to co-construct the self (*cf.* Tilley, 2006).

The bodyscape is both a physical entity and a social practice. It is a process to be built upon, much like a geographical landscape can be conceptualised as a process with meanings constructed through our engagements with it (*cf.* Wylie, 2005). The bodyscape is dialectical, being constructed through the response of others (*cf.* Gleeson & Frith, 2006). The bodyscape is a reflection of our individual thoughts and feelings while simultaneously representing the groups to which we belong. It comprises a physical and symbolic space for community. One of the ways in which this bodyscape is altered and used in the presentation of identity and community affiliations is through tattoos. Tattoos are a way of not only picturing our identities, but provide a focal point for discussions and interactions which further shapes and are shaped by our identities. Tattoos used in this way have a metonymic relationship with other people, communities, places and objects and can be an effective way of drawing these elements together.

Tattoos represent and connect people to things larger than themselves (*cf.* Back, 2004). They have meanings requiring a shared vocabulary between wearer and observer, and as

such these meanings are constructed through interactions with other bodies (Diprose, 2005). In geographical terms, landmarks and other icons become visual substitutes for the much larger city or town they come to represent. Favro (2006) described icons as "visual substitutes for the multi-faceted whole. They must have a broad identity, readily recognized by the majority of people who share a common visual vocabulary and similar viewing skills" (p. 20). Such meanings can, however, require an explanation and for socially disruptive tattoos they can even demand explanation as they are challenged by non-tattooed people in everyday interactions. Metonym then involves the constructions and descriptions of wider meanings and associations through symbolic interactions between people in order for them to represent wider communal affiliations and memberships.

Picturing then not only involves the symbols themselves, but also the physical and symbolic interactions that construct meaning, such as the explanations we give others (Radley et al., 2010). Tattoos can represent relationships and interactions beyond what is contained within the image carved into the skin, further illustrating the need for explanation. For example, as materially and embodied objects, tattoos can act as metonyms which transport people to other times and places. When communicating such narratives the photographer, or in this case the tattooed person, is reliving moments and relationships with others (*cf.* Bourdieu, 1990). Hodgetts and colleagues (2007) discussed how images and their associated discussions are inseparable and when combined are a way for people to attempt to communicate their own histories and identities to others. Academic literature concerning the practice of walking through physical locations, such as Favro's (2006) discussion of landmarks in ancient Rome, has described it as a way in which places are made as we move through various spaces (de Certeau, 1984). Radley and colleagues (2010) discussed how walks can be verbally recalled and

communicated in order to allow people to “weave together past, present and future” (p. 43). Such verbal tours or narratives can re-create a past event in the present, linking together places and times. They also illustrate how histories, relationships and events can be linked to a landmark, or to the image of it, but may not be contained within the image itself (*cf.* Hodgetts et al., 2007). Through our discussions and co-constructions we draw together the relationships behind the tattoos. While the bodyscape can include the inscribing of histories onto the skin, through our talk and interactions with others we tie together the important places, people and events much like a tourist guide giving a walking tour of a city.

Through being the focus of the tour, tattoos provide a focal point and a practical context for discussions in order to create shared meanings (Hodgetts et al., 2007). As Hodgetts and colleagues (2007) stated: “photographs and discussions are inseparable; they are points of progression in participants’ attempts to show and tell their experiences and situations” (p. 278). Similarly, tattoos and related discussions are inseparable. Tattoos are also points of progression in a person’s life and are a way for people to share their experiences and life worlds with others. While tattoos do need a “common visual vocabulary and similar viewing skills” (Favro 2006, p. 20), the meanings of tattoos often need to be explained in order to establish a shared vocabulary. In other words, such codes need to be taught or passed on in order for them to be shared. While a picture may tell a thousand words, images often carry multiple meanings that can vary from person to person. In this instance, an image can say too much, and so viewers may need to be steered in order to garner the particular meanings that are trying to be represented.

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Address Correspondence to

Dave Snell
University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton 3240
New Zealand
Email: dms25@waikato.ac.nz

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Discrimination and Psychological Adjustment Amongst Australian Children From Middle-Eastern and Asian backgrounds

Kevin Runions

Curtin University of Technology

Child Health Promotion Research Centre, Edith Cowan University

Naomi Priest

University of Melbourne

Justine Dandy

Edith Cowan University

The present study explored prevalence of experiences of discrimination amongst Australian children from Middle-Eastern and Asian (ME-A) backgrounds and examined the relationship of such experiences to their psychosocial adjustment. Child and parent-report questionnaires were completed for 47 families from ME-A backgrounds regarding experiences of discrimination and adjustment for children aged 7-15 years. Perceived discrimination (PD) was assessed using the Everyday Discrimination Scale (EDS); and psychosocial adjustment was assessed via the Social Behaviour Questionnaire (SBQ). Over eighty-five percent of participating children reported discrimination, with 37.5% reporting five or more events. PD was linearly related to withdrawn social behaviours, greater emotional problems, and indirect aggression. This exploratory study provides strong initial evidence that experiences of discrimination are associated with impaired psychosocial functioning amongst Australian children of ME-A ethnic groups. Discussion focuses on the importance of, and lessons for, research with ME-A communities. Both moral and public health concerns point to the need for anti-racist action and support for affected children.

Social ecological models have historically led community psychologists to consider the ways in which societal processes may impinge on children's development. The impact of racial and ethnic discrimination on individual wellbeing is one clear manifestation of this trend. Discrimination is increasingly recognised as a key determinant of wellbeing and health for people from ethnic and cultural minorities throughout the Western world (Williams & Mohammed, 2009). Within this area of work, research to date has predominantly focused on perceived race-based discrimination, or perceived racism, and its role in understanding and addressing health inequalities (Paradies, 2006; Paradies, Williams, Heggenhougen, & Quah, 2008; Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2009; Williams & Mohammed, 2009). A growing body of evidence suggests perceived discrimination is an important risk factor for a range of health outcomes, acting as a key stressor influencing ethnic and cultural disparities in wellbeing and health outcomes (Pascoe & Smart Richman,

2009; Williams & Mohammed, 2009).

Internationally, reviews report associations between perceived racism and poor health outcomes through cross-sectional and longitudinal studies and for a diverse range of population groups and settings (Paradies, 2006; Williams & Mohammed, 2009). Of the poor mental health outcomes found to be associated with perceived racism, psychological distress, and depressive and anxious symptoms are most common (Paradies, 2006; Williams & Mohammed, 2009). Associations between racism and physical health, including hypertension, cardiovascular disease, and low infant birth weight have also been reported (Paradies, 2006; Williams & Mohammed, 2009). In addition, a 'dose-response' relationship is increasingly noted, with individuals who perceive more severe, frequent, or chronic discrimination more likely to show health problems (Schulz, et al., 2000).

However, while the importance of investigating the impact of perceived

discrimination, including perceived racism, on the wellbeing of children and young people has been recognised (Ahmed, Mohammed, & Williams, 2007; Ombudsman Against Ethnic Discrimination, 2007; Paradies, et al., 2009) internationally it remains an area that is largely under-researched (Patcher & Garcia Coll, 2009). Reviews have identified that of 253 studies published internationally in the field of racism and health up to 2007 only 38 (15%) focused on child populations (Paradies, 2006; Williams & Mohammed, 2009). Another review also published across this time frame identified 40 studies, 70% of which were with participants from African American backgrounds (Patcher & Garcia Coll, 2009).

As with adult populations, research conducted primarily, but not exclusively, with African-American child populations have found strong associations between racism and poor child health and wellbeing outcomes (Patcher & Garcia Coll, 2009; Sanders-Phillips, 2009). Children's experiences of racism have been linked to elevated risk of depressive symptoms (Rumbaut, 1994; Simons, et al., 2002), anger, delinquent behaviours, internalizing problems, and substance abuse (Whitbeck, Hoyt, McMorris, Chen, & Stubben, 2001). These associations remain after controlling for confounders such as stressful life events and neighbourhood disadvantage (Prelow, Danoff-Burg, Swensen, & Pulgiano, 2004) and within longitudinal studies (Brody et al., 2006; Gibbons, Gerrard, Cleveland, Wills, & Brody, 2004) after controlling for baseline symptoms.

Children as young as four years of age have been documented as being aware of racial differences and racial stereotypes and young school-aged children can accurately identify their own and others' ethnicity (Aboud, 1988; Durkin, 1995; Sanders-Phillips, 2009). Young children aged three to four years are also recognised as having great difficulty making judgments that are incongruent with racial stereotypes and more likely than older children to identify with negative stereotypes associated with their own cultural group, although by eight years of age are

more able to make judgements divergent from these stereotypes (Augoustinos & Rosewarne, 2001; Sanders-Phillips, 2009). Belonging to a stigmatised social group increases the likelihood of children perceiving discrimination (Brown & Bigler, 2005). Relatively young American children from ethnic-minority backgrounds have been found to show an understanding of discrimination at younger ages than their majority-culture peers (McKown & Weinstein, 2003).

Very little Australian research has examined the link between racism and child wellbeing and health outcomes (Paradies, Harris, & Anderson, 2008; Refugee Health Research, 2007; Zubrick et al., 2005). Studies that do exist are predominantly with Aboriginal populations (Priest, Paradies, Stevens, & Bailie, in press; Zubrick, et al., 2005) or with adolescents, particularly those from refugee or migrant backgrounds (Correa-Velez, Gifford, & Barnett, 2010; Mansouri, Jenkins, Morgan, & Taouk, 2009). Notwithstanding the critical need for more work investigating experiences of racism and outcomes for Aboriginal children and young people, and for adolescents from refugee and migrant backgrounds, research is also needed in this area specifically for younger children from a range of minority groups.

Children from Middle-Eastern and Asian (ME-A) backgrounds may represent groups who are affected by continuing racism. For example, in the wake of the Bali bombings and of the events of September 11, 2001, Muslims of both Middle-Eastern and Asian heritage within Australia have been subjected to racial vilification and intolerance (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 2004). Research indicates that 44.9% of Australians feel that some ethnic groups do not 'fit' in Australia; people from 'Muslim' or 'Middle-Eastern' backgrounds were most commonly nominated as not "fitting in," reflecting widespread 'Islamaphobia' (Dunn, Klocker, & Salabay, 2007). These processing of being 'othered' are commonly communicated in normative media (e.g., newspapers; Quayle &

Sonn, 2009). To date, no published research on racism or perceived discrimination experiences of young Australian children specifically from ME-A backgrounds is available. Such knowledge is needed to assess the extent to which experiences of racial vilification may be associated with children's adjustment and wellbeing, and inform public health policy and practice regarding the implementation of anti-racism strategies.

The Present Study

We aimed first to examine the prevalence of experiences of perceived discrimination (PD) amongst a sample of Australian children of ME-A descent, and to examine the relationship of these experiences to child adjustment. Based on previous research, we hypothesized that PD would be most strongly associated with children's internalising tendencies (e.g., depressive and anxious problems). Although other research has indicated that children's externalising problems (e.g., aggression) are linked to PD, we believe that some forms of externalising behaviour appear to arise very early in development (e.g., ADHD), and therefore are less likely to be responses to experiences of discrimination. Although some children may respond to PD with reactive outbursts of aggression, we argue that children will be more likely to retaliate with indirect forms of aggression (i.e., in which children manipulate social relationships to inflict harm on others (Bjorkqvist, Lagerspetz, & Kaukiainen, 1992) in retaliation to PD. Indirect aggression is a later-developing form of aggression (Côté, Vaillancourt, Barker, Nagin, & Tremblay, 2007) likely to arise in the face of sanctions against overt expressions of aggression (Archer & Coyne, 2005). Indirectly aggressive acts are more discrete than overt physical aggression and have a lower cost in terms of risk of retaliation (Archer & Coyne, 2005). This may make it a more readily available option to ethnically-marginalised children who may, as a group, lack power relative to their ethnic majority peers. We believe that indirect aggression may thus be a more likely to arise in the context of experiences of PD. Furthermore, as

discrimination may reflect experiences of victimisation by children, we hypothesised that children whose self-report reflects frequent and severe discrimination would be seen by parents as having been subjected to victimisation (e.g., name-calling, physical violence) at the hands of their peers as well.

Method

Recruitment, Procedures and Participants

A community organisation advisory group was established to initiate a snowball sampling method. This method provided us access to two religious schools with large proportions of ME-A students. However, this method proved inadequate to collect the minimum sample required for basic hypothesis testing. We subsequently adopted an alternative sampling strategy by identifying neighbourhoods in an Australian metropolitan area with high concentrations of ME-A nationalities, based on community profiles available through the State government. Government schools in these neighbourhoods were contacted, and recruited for involvement in the study. These schools provided estimates of numbers of students who were of ME-A heritage, and information and consent letters were sent to the schools to be distributed to identified students. In total, 202 information and consent packages were distributed in ten schools. Families who provided consent were then mailed packages including parent- and child-report questionnaires. Parents were asked to complete their own questionnaire only. The cover letter indicated that the child questionnaire was to be completed by the child, and that it was important that responses reflect the child's own thoughts. We did indicate that parents may be able to assist in clarifying anything that the child did not understand. This resulted in 47 completed parent- and child-reports, returned via reply-paid envelopes.

These families represented a very diverse range of ethnic groups, spanning national and/or ethnic heritages ranging geographically from north-east African (e.g., Somalia), through Asia to south-east and north-east Asia. Religious

affiliation was also diverse, with Muslim families representing the largest proportion of participants, with Christianity (20.8%) and Buddhism (12.5%) the other largest indicated religions. The mean child age was 10.61 years ($SD = 2.52$). Children ranged in age from seven to 15 years. Our sample was disproportionately female (64.6%).

Measures

Perceived Discrimination. For the present study, we utilised the Everyday Discrimination Scale (EDS; Williams, Yu, Jackson, & Anderson, 1997) which is the most widely used measure by recent studies in this field (Williams & Mohammed, 2009). This 10-item scale addresses “chronic, routine, and relatively minor experiences of unfair treatment” (p. 340). Sample items include experiences of having been called names or insulted, having been threatened or harassed, and having been treated with less respect than other people (all items are listed in Table 2). Responses are coded on a 4-point scale (never, once, two or three times, and four or more times).

The EDS as used in this study does not explicitly ask whether participants attribute their experiences of perceived discrimination to their race or ethnicity. However, given the cultural background of participants and the context of the study (e.g., the questions regarding perceived discrimination were immediately preceded by questions about the child’s cultural background and ethnic identity), we made the assumption that the key form of discrimination experienced by participants was racial discrimination. This assumption and use of the EDS is consistent with the wider literature where there is some ongoing debate about the extent to which race should be explicitly mentioned in measures of discrimination (Williams & Mohammed, 2009). Other studies have made similar assumptions about the racial attribution of perceived discrimination measured using the EDS (Barnes et al., 2008; Burgess, Ding, Hargreaves, Van Ryn, & Phelan, 2008; Jang, Chiriboga, & Small, 2008; Lee & Ferraro, 2009; Lewis et al., 2009).

Children's Adjustment. Children's social

adjustment was assessed through parent report using the 84-item Social Behaviour Questionnaire (SBQ; Tremblay et al., 1991). The SBQ assesses a wide range of externalising and internalising problem behaviours, as well as prosocial behaviours (e.g., “[my child] tried to help someone who had been hurt”). The SBQ assesses a wide range of externalising behaviours, including reactive aggression (i.e., use of aggression in response to perceived provocation; e.g., “when somebody accidentally hurt him/her, he/she reacted with anger and fighting”) and proactive aggression (i.e., use of aggression in order to attain a desired outcome; e.g., “scared other children to get what he/she wanted”), indirect aggression (e.g., when mad at someone, said bad things behind the other's back”), and general conduct problems (e.g., “Damaged or broke things belonging to others”). The internalising scale consists of subscales measuring anxiety (e.g., “Clung to adults or was too dependent”), emotional problems (e.g., Had trouble enjoying him/herself”), and social withdrawal (e.g., “Showed little interest in activities involving other children”). As well, three items addressed experiences of victimisation (e.g., “was made fun of by other children”). All items are measured on a 3 point scale (1 = never; 2 = sometimes; 3 = often) reflecting the caregivers sense of the frequency of specific behaviours in the previous month. Scores were derived as sums of responses to these three items (range: 3 – 9).

Results

Experiences of everyday discrimination were common amongst our participating children (see Table 1). Although the mean score was 2.1 experiences of discrimination, we noted a wide range in how many experiences children reported. Only 12.8% of the sample indicated no experiences of discrimination in their lives, while 35.9% reported experiencing five or more discriminatory events. The most common experiences of discrimination (see Table 2) were feeling that others acted as if they were better than the child, having been treated with

Table 1. *Frequencies of total number of experiences of discrimination reported*

	Frequency of total number of child self-reported PD					
	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
Frequency	6	16	7	12	4	2
Percent	12.8	34.0	14.9	25.4	8.4	2.1

less courtesy or politeness than others receive, having been called names or insulted, and being treated with less respect. The least common experiences are also the most blatant: having been followed in shops by security people, and being poorly treated in restaurants and shops. These items were likely to be uncommon given that few of the participating children would have much opportunity for unsupervised time in shops and restaurants.

The internal consistency (coefficient alpha) for the EDS was very good ($\alpha = .84$). For the SBQ, subscale-level data were available for 47 children, except for the victimisation, oppositional, and reactive aggression subscales, for which we had data for 46 children, and the proactive aggression subscale, for which we had

data for 45 children. Internal consistencies for these subscales were all adequate for research purposes, with coefficient alphas ranging from .66 (withdrawal) to .82 (anxiety). The majority of alphas ranged between .70 and .79.

Zero-order correlations between the PD measure, children's prosocial behaviour, and each of the internalising and externalising scales are presented in Table 3. As expected, the internalising scales all showed strong and positive associations with one another, as did the externalising type scales. The associations between anxiety and several of the externalising scales were particularly strong, including the indirect aggression ($r = .71, p < .001$) and conduct problems ($r = .76, p < .001$) scales.

Child-reported PD was significantly

Table 2. *Response frequencies Everyday Discrimination questions*

Item	Never	Once	2-3 times	4+ times	N
a. Less courtesy/politeness	41.7	29.2	14.6	14.6	48
b. Treated with less respect	53.2	17.0	23.4	6.4	47
c. Not treat well at restaurants and shops	75.6	11.1	4.4	8.9	45
d. People act as if they think you are not smart	76.6	14.9	6.4	2.1	47
e. People act as if they are afraid of you	76.1	10.9	8.7	4.3	46
f. People act as if they think you are dishonest	68.8	16.7	4.2	10.4	48
g. People act as if they're better than you	37.0	30.4	17.4	15.2	46
h. Been called names or insulted	53.2	19.1	17.0	10.6	47
i. Been threatened or harassed	76.6	12.8	6.4	4.3	47
j. Been followed around in shops by security people	70.2	14.9	4.3	10.6	47

Table 3. *Intercorrelations of Child-Reported Perceived Discrimination and Parent-Ratings of Child Adjustment*

Variable	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Perceived Discrimination	-.14	.20	.30*	.31*	.15	.26+	.06	.37**	.11
2. Prosocial	-	.17	.11	-.13	.18	.01	.34*	-.01	.10
3. Anxiety	-	-	.68***	.49***	.51***	.67***	.65***	.71***	.76***
4. Emotional Problems	-	-	-	.41**	.62***	.42**	.63***	.59***	.58***
5. Withdrawn	-	-	-	-	.43**	.46***	.40**	.44**	.35*
6. Victimisation	-	-	-	-	-	.38**	.57**	.45**	.30*
7. Reactive Aggression	-	-	-	-	-	-	.46**	.64***	.62***
8. Proactive Aggression	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.45**	.53***
9. Indirect Aggression	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.67***
10. Conduct Problems	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

⁺ $p \leq .10$ * $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$ *** $p < .001$

associated with a number of parent-reported child behaviours (see Table 3). As hypothesised, children who reported more PD were seen by their parents as showing more withdrawn social behaviours ($r = .31, p < .05$), and as having more emotional problems ($r = .30, p < .05$). They were also seen as showing more indirect aggression ($r = .37, p < .01$). Associations between reactive physical aggression and child-reported PD approached, but did not attain, traditional levels of statistical significance ($r = .26, p < .10$).

Discussion

This study provides the first Australian data on perceived discrimination experiences of young children specifically from Middle Eastern and Asian backgrounds. Children reported experiencing a range of discriminatory acts on a regular basis, with more than one-third reporting five or more discriminatory events in their lifetime. Whilst the majority of these experiences may sound relatively mild and/or subtle, (e.g., being treated with less politeness or courtesy), previous research has shown that experiences such as these can be deleterious to mental health, particularly when they are persistent (Simons et al., 2002).

Our research provided the first indication that PD is associated with adjustment problems amongst young Australian children from ME-A backgrounds, with significant associations with both internalising and externalising problems. These results are important as they do not reflect shared-source variance: Children's reports of PD were distinct from parent's ratings of children's adjustment. Reports from a common rater (e.g., child self-reports) may show inflated correlations; correlations obtained from different raters are likely to be more conservative. Moreover, these associations were statistically significant, despite the constraints on power due to the small sample size.

Whilst the predicted relationships with other adjustment outcomes such as emotional problems and reactive physical aggression were not statistically significant, the directions of effect were consistent with our hypotheses. Nonetheless, as a pilot study, this research was

limited by the small sample and associated lack of statistical power in the analyses. Recruiting families proved very difficult. Reliance on parent-reports of children's adjustment, although beneficial in avoiding shared-source variance that might inflate correlations between PD and adjustment, may have posed recruitment problems. Although the children recruited had generally good language skills, the English-language competence of parents was limited, as evidenced by missing data on some parent questionnaires. As well, some parents may have been unable to comprehend the recruitment packages, potentially limiting our sample size. We did provide telephone contact numbers to parents in the information letter, however we have no reason to believe that this was adequate to aid in recruiting parents whose language skills were not strong.

Matsumoto and Juang (2008) have noted a greater comfort level of majority-culture Western individuals to engage in research. For recent-immigrant parents, there may have been discomfort with the idea of providing these very personal responses to a government-body-funded project. Fears that the information could be used against their ethnic community might have deterred involvement. We were limited by our funding from taking up opportunities for cross-cultural workers to provide support to the project. Future research should heed these challenges and ensure adequate funding to overcome these shortcomings. Such research should also endeavour to examine these relationships within more specific minority communities, notwithstanding our finding of common discriminatory experiences among our diverse sample of participants. Given the challenges of recruiting families from these communities, researchers may be wise to consider potential gains in understanding that may be accrued via qualitative research. Indeed, as an area of research largely initiated by public health researchers, community psychologists may contribute valuably to this area in future by

stepping away from measurement and stepping toward a deeper understanding of the phenomenology of children's experiences, and of their reactions and responses to those experiences.

Our assumption of PD experiences measured in this study as being attributed to racial discrimination is also a potential limitation, although such an assumption is consistent with other studies in this area (Barnes et al., 2008; Burgess et al., 2008; Jang et al., 2008; Lee & Ferraro, 2009; Lewis et al., 2009). These studies, however, have not been conducted with children as young as the present study, and so further research is needed to examine the validity of this assumption with this age group. Children and adolescents—even those who are members of ethnic minorities—may feel discriminated against for reasons other than their ethnicity. For example, they may feel that their age itself brings with it discrimination from adults, and hence they may feel they are followed around in shops (e.g.) because they are teenagers, not because of their ethnicity. This is an example of an interpretive problem that may be better addressed via qualitative rather than quantitative research methods.

Overseas research has begun to examine mediators and moderators of the association between PD and adjustment, including individual-level constructs, such as ethnic identity and orientation to other ethnic groups (Lee, 2003; Umaña-Taylor & Updegraff, 2007) and family-level constructs, such as ethnic socialisation (Harris-Britt, Valrie, Kurtz-Costes, & Rowley, 2007). Our exploratory study is an important first step in identifying the potential health impact of perceived discrimination on ME-A children's psychological and social development and provides a foundation for and impetus to further research. There is clearly much more work to be done in Australia and New Zealand to understand the impact of discrimination on the wellbeing, development and health outcomes of children and young people from a range of cultural backgrounds.

More than this, intervention programming

to reduce the often-subtle forms of racism that ethnic minority members experience (e.g., Pederson, Aly, Hartley, & McGarty, 2009; Pedersen, Walker, & Wise, 2005) needs to be extended to younger populations, as these young people are already at risk. Both social justice and public health concerns indicate the clear need for a stronger societal emphasis on anti-racist education.

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Address correspondence to

Dr Kevin Runions

Email: k.runions@curtin.edu.au

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Editorial

Special Section on *Innovation in Undergraduate Curriculum*

Sharon McCarthy

Dawn Darlaston-Jones

University of Notre Dame Australia

Welcome to our special section dedicated to showcasing an initiative, developed at the University of Notre Dame Australia (UNDA), to provide final semester students with the opportunity to investigate a significant social issue and conceptualise, plan, host, and deliver an academic scholarly research conference. The papers in this special section are the result of this group exercise and illustrate not only innovation in curriculum development and assessment but that undergraduate students are ready and able to undertake any academic challenge presented to them and are eager to experience applied learning in their degree. We would like to thank the Editor, Dr Lauren Breen for her encouragement and support when we presented this idea to her. It is unusual for an editor of a peer-reviewed scholarly journal to take such a risk in devoting a special section solely to undergraduate authors. We hope you agree that her faith was well founded given the high quality of these papers.

The Bachelor of Behavioural Science degree is founded on the principles of Critical Community Psychology and although benchmarked to, and operating within the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC) Standards, is not a psychology degree per se and therefore does not come under the jurisdiction of APAC. As such there is the flexibility to provide applied learning opportunities for undergraduate students that are not possible in traditional psychology degrees. The Internship unit, which students are required to take in their final semester of study, has been developed as a capstone unit in which students have the opportunity to apply their theoretical knowledge through 150 hours of workplace based learning. This is supported by a series of seminars throughout the semester where they are able to debrief and explicitly link the experiences to the frameworks and models taught in the

degree. In addition, each cohort of students must plan and develop some form of group based workshop to which lower year students, academic staff, and external agency supervisors are invited to be the participants. This activity models the type of skill development that the second year students must aspire to and provides an additional experiential learning opportunity for the third year students as well as showcasing the students' skills and abilities to potential employers.

In 2009, the third year cohort comprised 24 students and the activity they were charged with developing was an academic research conference exploring the issue of poverty in the wake of the global economic crisis (GFC). Students were assigned to one of five groups, each tasked with a specific component of the conference; the organising committee, a round table discussion, poster presentation, workshop, and final plenary. Students were mentored throughout the process by the Internship co-ordinator and concept developer, Sharon McCarthy, but the ideas, research and final result was the work of the students. Internship agency supervisors were invited to attend the conference, as were lower year students and all academic staff of the school. One attendee said that it was one of the most professional conferences he had ever attended (Associate Professor Dylan Korczynskyj, Dean Arts & Sciences) and another was impressed by the depth of analysis undertaken (Professor Ros Walker, Telethon Institute of Child Health Research).

The idea for this special issue came from Sharon McCarthy as a way of further promoting the work of the students and encouraging them to see their success as being more than just a class exercise. After discussions with the students and Lauren, we developed a series of workshops to be offered during the inter-semester break in July

2010 to help students develop their papers. All of the students were offered the opportunity to be part of the process, but many had already commenced their post-graduation careers and time and other constraints prevented full involvement. Five students embraced the opportunity and four papers emerged. This issue represents the culmination of those workshops and a rigorous process of blind review coordinated by Lauren.

The papers are presented in a sequence that seeks to bring alive the conference as well as the processes surrounding it. The first two papers present content delivered within the first two sessions of the conference, while the final two provide personal reflections on the experience. Ashleigh Owen reflects on the interactive round table and discusses the various discourses of poverty and how these place the responsibility for poverty with the person(s) experiencing it. Whitney Darlaston-Jones' paper is drawn from the workshop that explored responses to poverty. In her paper she offers an alternate, community-based, and empowering response to poverty through community currencies. Stef Sifandos provides a reflection on his experience of the conference, including delivering the keynote address that established the framework for the day, while conducting his placement at a local faith-based agency and dealing with the real and diverse faces of poverty and homelessness. Finally, Jade Beavington offers her insights into the overall process of the internship, conference and the behavioural science degree and the tensions she experienced in trying to work within an empowering process while having to some degree internalised the dominate power structures of formal education. Together these papers provide a glimpse into the concept, structure, and purpose of the Behavioural Science degree at UNDA and we hope that you enjoy reading them as much as we enjoyed the process of their evolution.

Address Correspondence to

Ms Sharon McCarthy

Email: sharon.mccarthy@nd.edu.au

Tel: 61 8 9433 0125

Dr Dawn Darlaston-Jones

Email: dawn.darlaston-jones@nd.edu.au

Tel: +61 8 9433 0124

Making Poverty History? The Impact of the Recession on Poverty Discourses in Australia

Ashleigh Owen
University of Notre Dame, Australia

The recession affected Australia in September 2008 and saw a 0.7 percent rise in the nation's unemployment (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2009). This increase saw more Australians become financially unstable and finding themselves in a state of poverty. The pre-recession discourse surrounding what constitutes poverty and who is affected by it, was challenged during this time, with a broader conceptualisation of poverty being socially acknowledged (Archer, 2009). Such pre-recession discourses include the "deserving poor" and "undeserving poor", welfare dependency and the "dole bludger", which all serve to individualise poverty. These pre-recession discourses, which are detrimental to the wellbeing of individuals living in poverty, were challenged momentarily during the recession. However, with political and social discourse arguing that the recession is now over, Australian society has seen a return to the pre-recession way of understanding poverty and its causes, much to the psychological and psychosocial detriment of those individuals living in poverty today.

Poverty has become a term that has been contested internationally over its definition (Lynch, 2005). What is known about poverty, however, is that it is a state that can affect the social, psychological and physical condition of individuals and communities globally (Jeppesen, 2009). The Global Financial Crisis (GFC), or recession as it is commonly known, saw a reconceptualisation of poverty in Australia. Prior to the recession, a negative stigma was attached to poverty (Marston & McDonald, 2007), with individuals living in poverty facing social exclusion, social identity crises and powerlessness as a result of social discourses that existed. In this paper the effects of the discourses of poverty prior to, during and after the recession will be examined, rather than focusing on the linguistic analysis of specific discourse examples. This examination of the impact of common discourses surrounding poverty in Australia will highlight the challenges associated with societal understandings and interpretations of poverty and the impacts that these discourses can have on the wellbeing of Australians, particularly those living in poverty.

Understanding the recession

The International Labour Organization (ILO) reported that, due to the recession, by the end of 2009 approximately 51 million jobs worldwide would be eliminated from the labour

market (Castillo, 2009). This would see, by the end of 2009, 18 million more unemployed people in comparison to the end of 2007 (Castillo, 2009). The recession affected Australia in September 2008, which saw the nation's unemployment rate rise by 0.7 percent in the three months leading up to March 2009 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2009). This increase saw the Australian unemployment rate reach 5.7%, which was its highest level since 2003 (Hudson Australia, 2009). Alongside this increase in unemployment in Australia, the Wesley Mission reported that the demand for financial assistance, food hampers and financial counselling in Sydney in the three months leading up to Christmas in 2008 increased by 17 percent (Macklin, 2009). Collier (2009) reports that the recession has not just impacted the mental health of those individuals who have experienced job loss, but it affected the broader community as the recession created a sense of vulnerability for all employed persons. It is evident that the recession has had a significant influence on the financial conditions of many Australians, affecting many who, based on the previously discussed discourse, did not conform to the stereotypical impoverished individual. This stereotype implies that those individuals experiencing poverty are characterised by laziness, dependency, poor decision-making

and a lack of morals (Peck, 2007; Reid & Herbert, 2005).

Exploring the discourse

Spoken, written or symbolic language, which is known as discourse, influences social interaction and social politics (Gee, 1999). Therefore, discourse is an important component of social life (Fairclough, 2003). The study of discourse is the study of language and the creation of meaning within society (Wetherell, 2004). Discourse has become a popular area of research and societal interest; however, few authors fail to acknowledge the theoretical perspective from which they are examining and discussing the discourse that they study. Although the study of discourse is highly compatible with the epistemological approach of social constructionism, there are a variety of positions within social constructionism that an author can take. Social constructionism argues that there are multiple realities that exist within society, as each community member plays a pivotal role in the construction of meaning through their own experiences and interactions (Crotty, 1998). Consequently, both the examination of discourse and social constructionism demonstrate that reality and meaning is socially constructed (Fairclough, 2003).

I will be examining discourse from a critical psychological perspective, examining the way that societal discourses can create and reinforce social problems, particularly in the areas of discrimination, oppression and social inequality. By examining the discourses that exist within a society, particularly in areas of political and social significance, researchers, and community members, are in a better position to reflect on the role that discourse can play in the development and maintenance of social structures and power relations (Karlberg, 2007).

Poverty discourses prior to the recession

The “deserving poor” vs. the “undeserving poor”

A social perception of poverty prominent in many Western societies until the Great Depression was the classification of poverty into

two categories; the “deserving poor” and the “undeserving poor” (O’Connor, 2001). Those individuals within the “deserving poor” category are socially recognised as having legitimate reasons, such as individuals with a disability, for their inability to engage in the labour market (Jeppesen, 2009). Through the creation of this “deserving poor” discourse, a binary opposite is constructed, which is the “undeserving poor”. To fall within this category requires that an individual does not have a justifiable reason or excuse, based on the attitudes and values of the broader community, for their poverty and consequently are to blame for their own financial and social shortcomings associated with this condition (Jeppesen, 2009). Examples of social groups or individuals who were, and often are still perceived to be, classified as “undeserving” include homeless people with criminal records, single mothers and people with mental health issues (Jeppesen, 2009). These groups become classified as being “undeserving” as they are thought to have made life choices which have led them to poverty and are therefore “undeserving” of social support and infrastructure to alleviate the stresses of this predicament. The creation of these two opposing categories facilitates the moral inclusion of one group, which consists of those individuals from the “deserving poor”, and excludes those individuals from the “undeserving poor” as they are attributed as being invaluable and incompetent members of the broader community (Jeppesen, 2009; Allan Hanson, 1997).

This discourse infiltrated Australian social policy during, and after, World War II, as pensions were provided to “deserving poor” groups and individuals, such as people with disabilities and widows (Chenoweth, 2008). Prior to World War II, only two forms of social benefits existed in Australia, which were the age pension introduced by the Federal Government in 1908 and a maternity allowance introduced in 1912 (Herscovitch & Stanton, 2008). Following the war, the Federal Government introduced a variety of pension schemes including a widows’ pension (Herscovitch & Stanton, 2008).

Therefore, the Federal Government implemented an initiative that defined those individuals who were perceived to experience poverty through no “fault” of their own as “deserving”, entitling them to public assistance and support. The language used in this construction of poverty, as well as the policy that resulted from it, implies that certain people who are poor are entitled to particular rights and social acknowledgment, whereas others are not, based solely on the social desirability of the community in which they reside rather than material need (Butterworth, Fairweather, Anstey, & Windsor, 2006). Furthermore, it indicates that poverty is socially acknowledged and accepted if the poor individual is deemed worthy of their financial and social situation (Chenoweth, 2008). This categorisation and labelling of being “undeserving” is demoralising and can encourage individuals to further disengage with society (Butterworth et al., 2006). This can result in an individual becoming even more embedded in a cycle of poverty as the oppressive discourses they are exposed to may discourage them from engaging in the labour market because they have internalised these stereotypes and have developed a negative perception of self-worth (Butterworth et al., 2006).

Welfare dependency and the “dole bludger”

After the Great Depression there was an emphasis on the need to create welfare programs that assisted all individuals experiencing poverty in Australia. As a result, poverty discourse shifted away from the notion of the “deserving” and “undeserving” poor and moved towards a discourse of welfare dependency (O’Connor, 2001). This discourse suggests that there is a moral threat associated with aiding people in poverty, as such assistance will jeopardise the motivation and self-discipline of the individual (Marston, 2008; O’Connor, 2001). Not only does this discourse liken those living in poverty who need welfare to loafers, but it is also based on an assumption that these “welfare dependent” individuals, who fall into the “undeserving poor” category, are creating unfair burdens on taxpayers (Marston, 2008). As a consequence,

these individuals are considered by the rest of society as immoral and a threat to the economy (Marston, 2008). A dichotomy was therefore created whereby dependence on the state was perceived as immoral and dependence on the labour market was perceived as socially desirable and moral (Marston, 2008).

In order to reduce welfare dependency, the focus of social policy has been on how to make the unemployed or underemployed more employable (Marston, 2008). It has been argued within the context of the welfare dependency discourse that unemployed individuals are being “job snobs” and would rather rely on state assistance than be employed in a job that they do not perceive as suitable (Dunn, 2010; Marston, 2008; O’Connor, 2001). This notion of the “job snob” inflicts blame on the unemployed or underemployed individual regardless of whether an appropriate job for that individual exists. As Marston (2008) notes, the freedom of choice within the labour market is compromised when an individual receives financial assistance from the state, due to the overwhelming social criticism associated with poverty discourse.

Another extension of the welfare dependency discourse of individuals living in poverty is the label of the “dole bludger”. This term was first used in 1974 and constructs welfare recipients as being opposed to the worker (Archer, 2009). Bludgers are perceived as contributing little, if anything, to society and as surviving off the effort and hard work of the worker, essentially exploiting the employed for personal gain (Archer, 2009; Levitas, 2005; O’Connor, 2001). Thus, the relationship between workers and “dole bludgers” is tainted by the discourse, creating feelings of resentment and injustice among those who are employed (Archer, 2009). Discourse like this not only fostered, and continues to foster, social exclusion for impoverished Australians, but it also provided a

justification for limiting welfare state expansion (Archer, 2009). Discrimination based on such discourses is rampant within Australian society and often contributes further to poverty as a result of lowered self-efficacy, learned helplessness, social disengagement and psychological oppression (Butterworth et al., 2006; Lynch, 2005) as well as serving to control and discipline those who are employed through creating a climate of fear and exclusion.

The individualisation of poverty

The discourse of the “deserving poor” and “undeserving poor” as well as the discourse of the “dole bludger” reflects a fundamental theme of Australia’s conceptualisation of poverty prior to the recession that poverty was the responsibility of the individual (Allan Hanson, 1997; Marston, 2008). Both discourses therefore imply that poverty is a conscious choice made by the individual and that they are in the position to control their own financial and social position (O’Connor, 2001). These discourses show that this conceptualisation of the individual being the agent of poverty remained in the public psyche (Kerr & Savelsberg, 1999). The societal ideology that poverty is within the realm of individual control and responsibility, rather than being the result of systemic problems, legitimises the reduction and restructuring of the welfare state (Chenoweth, 2008). The onus of responsibility is removed from society and social practices, policies and interactions are not considered pivotal areas which need to be addressed in order to alleviate poverty and the psychological effects of it (Chenoweth, 2008).

The theory of the “culture of poverty”, developed by Lewis in 1969 (cited in Cassiman, 2005), discredits the discourse that constructs individuals living in poverty as the primary agents of their condition. This is because these individuals may have developed dependency and lack of self-reliance through intergenerational transmission (Lewis, 1967, as cited in Cassiman, 2005). Furthermore, Karl Marx (1967, as cited in Allan Hanson, 1997) argued that labour demand increases with the accumulation of wealth; however, the rate at which capital grows is faster

than the demand of labour. Consequently, unemployment results and the responsibility for poverty cannot be solely bound in the individual poor person, but is a symptom of the capitalistic economic system of free markets and labour as a commodity (Allan Hanson, 1997).

Despite these arguments against the individualisation of poverty, societal discourse still reflects a belief that individuals living in poverty are responsible for their social condition. Impoverished individuals are therefore likely to suffer psychological oppression, which is the internalised negative view that an individual has which causes them to believe that they are not deserving of equal access to societal resources (Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996). This internalised view is the result of oppression by other members or groups within society, which limits one’s potential for self-determination, democratic participation and distributive justice (Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996). Impoverished individuals are continually oppressed by societal discourse that constructs individuals living in poverty as responsible for their financial hardship, immoral and dependent, leading to social exclusion and isolation (Butterworth et al., 2006; Marston & McDonald, 2007). Furthermore, the social argument that individuals should be able to elevate themselves out of poverty, and the ignorance of structural causes for poverty, can encourage feelings of guilt, powerlessness, shame and inadequacy as individuals are ineffective in being an agent of change in their social condition (Butterworth et al., 2006; Evans, 2007; Lynch, 2005; Scott, Ciarrochi, & Deane, 2004).

Active citizenship discourse

Another significant area of poverty discourse is the societal belief that participation in the labour market equates to active citizenship (Marston, 2008). Discourse surrounding employment and work within most capitalist societies, including Australia, places a high moral value on work, placing work and productivity as being of higher importance than

leisure (Marston, 2008). During the 2010 Election campaign, Prime Minister Julia Gillard reinforced the importance of employment for societal participation, arguing that employment allows individuals to engage and contribute with their society in a more meaningful way (Gillard, 2010). Due to this moral value placed on work, employment is socially constructed as an important element of social inclusion (Garrett, 2002; Richardson & Le Grand, 2002).

Individuals who are living in poverty are often unemployed or underemployed and consequently cannot conform to the moral expectations of social citizenship and identity which are desired.

The discrimination that individuals living in poverty face by other members of society, based on the premise of the previously mentioned discourses, can further hinder people's citizenship. This is because they are excluded from access to goods and services, health care and adequate housing and education (Lynch, 2005; Misurelli & Heffernan, 2008).

Additionally, the discrimination has a negative impact on their engagement with society and their individual wellbeing (Butterworth et al., 2006). What develops is an inactive citizenship resulting from the ignorance of the morality of people in poverty by the rest of society and subsequent invisibility within the social setting (Chenoweth, 2008). This social exclusion and invisibility of poverty allows 'mainstream' Australians to ignore the reality that poverty exists within their developed nation and therefore removes the onus of responsibility from them (Garrett, 2002; Marston, 2008). The shame and stigma attached to poverty and welfare within Australia has also seen many unemployed people choosing to go "under the radar" as a means to avoid social discrimination and the negative psychological effects associated with it (Cassiman, 2005; Chenoweth, 2008).

Based on the discourse surrounding poverty prior to the recession, a particular conceptualisation of what characterised a poor individual existed within Australian society. The scope of justice concerns participation and addresses who is within society's moral

boundaries and who is not (Opotow, 1995). Those individuals or groups that find themselves within the moral boundaries are protected by society's norms, rules and values (Opotow & McClelland, 2007). The social construction of poverty, as evidenced through discourse, some of which has already been explored in this paper, has placed impoverished individuals and groups outside of the scope of justice. This exclusion from the scope of justice permits discrimination and injustice to be directed at the poor with little or no consideration for the impact that this marginalisation will have on their wellbeing (Opotow & McClelland, 2007).

Poverty discourse during the recession

The recession challenged the poverty discourses and therefore, the societal conceptualisation of what constitutes poverty, and as a result, broadened the scope of understanding surrounding the issue (Archer, 2009). Poverty could no longer be excused as being a result of individual choice or responsibility, as the recession saw many Australians, particularly those in professional middle management roles, becoming unemployed or underemployed, in a fashion that was outside of their control (Archer, 2009). Unemployment and financial hardship was a realistic possibility for members of society who did not conform to the pre-existing discourse of poverty (Archer, 2009). Due to the recession, the Australian Government, along with the broader community, could no longer ignore the existence of poverty in the nation, as it was now situated within the scope of justice (Chenoweth, 2008, p. 53). This, in itself, indicates the impact that the recession had in illuminating the presence of poverty within Australia.

With the recession came a reconfiguration of the classification of the "deserving poor" and "undeserving poor". As the scope of justice in regards to poverty widened, and more Australians felt susceptible to the condition that had for so

long been the victim of social criticism and stigma, the definition of “deserving poor” broadened to include those individuals within society who had become unemployed or underemployed as a direct result of the recession (Castillo, 2009). Likewise, those who experienced a significant change to their employment status did not conform to either the “dole bludger” or “job snob” stereotype, and their predicament could not be attributed to individual responsibility or control as the recession was affecting employment on a worldwide level (Castillo, 2009).

Poverty discourse after the recession

In Australia, the current political and social discourse of the recession argues that Australia has survived the Global Financial Crisis therefore diminishing the threat of high unemployment (Gruen, 2010). According to Edwards (2010), it was evident by February 2010 that Australia “had not only avoided recession after the global financial crisis which climaxed in the second half of 2008, but was doing quite well” (p. 359). Dr. Ken Henry, the Secretary to the Treasury, echoed this sentiment in a speech he presented in March, 2010 to the Count Financial Canberra Conference, stating that “the strength of our financial system, particularly the banking sector, has been an important factor in cushioning Australia from the impact of the global financial crisis” (Henry, 2010, p. 4). Later in his speech, Henry also said that “it is fair to say that the global financial crisis itself is now behind us. While there is a risk of further adverse shocks in global financial markets, the period of extreme dislocation has now passed” (Henry, 2010, p. 7). As far as Australia was concerned, according to the nation’s political leaders, the recession was no longer a significant concern politically, socially or financially.

Australia has been heralded by the current Treasurer, Wayne Swan, as economically expanding, despite the recession, as Australia had another 166,000 jobs (Edwards, 2010). In contrast, the member economies of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) had lost four million jobs

since the recession began (Edwards, 2010). Despite the substantial increase in unemployment during the recession, political commentators have reported that Australia had escaped the recession with minimal damage (Edwards, 2010). In January 2010, Australia’s unemployment rate had fallen (Edwards, 2010); however, it was still higher than the rate of unemployment prior to the recession (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2009).

Consequences of current discourse surrounding the recession

This discourse surrounding Australia’s “survival” of the recession re-establishes the scope of justice that we have as a nation in regards to poverty. As both Henry (2010) and Edwards (2010) argue that the recession is over, those individuals who continue to be underemployed, unemployed or are in jeopardy of losing their job due to the ongoing recovery from the recession, are located outside of the collective scope of the justice. This is because, according to political and social discourse, the recession no longer exists, and therefore it does not constitute a plausible reason for individuals to be experiencing poverty. As political figures and the society at large begin to ignore the existence of the recession and the ongoing consequences of it, the boundaries surrounding what constitutes as “deserving” and “undeserving” poor are reconfigured to replicate the attitudes towards poverty prior to the recession. Australians who have been, and continue to be, affected by the recession are now socially perceived as not having a legitimate reason for living in poverty, particularly as Australia managed to “avoid the recession” (Edwards, 2010).

Tajfel’s social identity theory also plays an important role in understanding the effects of the current discourse surrounding the recession on Australian society. Tajfel (1981) states that social categorisation “is a process of bringing together social objects or events in groups which are equivalent with regard to an individual’s actions, intentions and system of beliefs” (p. 254). The transmission of different

values between groups is part of the socialisation process, and also allows for the development of in-groups and out-groups. Social identity is achieved through these values and the consequences of group membership. Tajfel (1981) defines social identity as the individual's knowledge of their group membership as well as the emotional and social value attached to that membership, which is a component of the self-concept. Current discourses surrounding poverty and the recession state that those individuals who suffer unemployment, underemployment and financial hardship due to the recession no longer have a legitimate justification for their predicament because the recession is over. Therefore these individuals find themselves falling into the "undeserving poor" category determined in pre-recession poverty discourse. Consequently, individuals within this group have been allocated a negative social identity (Tajfel, 1981) constituting low social worth, lack of ability, and isolation. This negative impact on social identity is due to the disadvantaged position, characterised by invisibility and lack of social understanding of the complex nature of the impacts of the recession, which has been applied to them through the discourse.

Tajfel and Turner (1979) suggest that one way for individuals to negotiate this negative social identity is to move to another social group. However, in order for this to occur, social mobility between groups, in this case economic categories, needs to be realistic. In terms of economic mobility, many Western societies believe that economic success is achieved through individual effort (Williams, 2009). This viewpoint is a central tenet of much of the poverty discourse that existed prior to the recession and is a fundamental component of the "American Dream" (Williams, 2009); arguably a dream that is emulated in the Australian context. However, this widely held social belief ignores the structural impairments and limitations that can hinder economic mobility, such as the recession and social policy. It further encourages a negative social identity for those individuals who have experienced or are experiencing

poverty due to the recession as their economic position is perceived to be a direct consequence of their effort (Williams, 2009).

By ignoring the implications of the recession, the experiences of those individuals affected by unemployment, underemployment and the threat of poverty are delegitimised and individuals may be left to feel socially misunderstood and excluded (Cassiman, 2005; Janlert, 2009). According to Prilleltensky and Gonick (1996):

oppression entails a state of asymmetric power relations characterized by domination, subordination, and resistance, where the dominating persons or groups exercise their power by restricting access to material resources and by implanting in the subordinated persons or groups fear or self-deprecating views about themselves (pp. 129-130).

Oppression can occur both on an external level and an internal level (Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996). External forces which can cause oppression, such as the political discourse arguing that the recession is over and therefore delegitimising those individuals suffering from recession-related poverty, hinder the fulfilment of self-determination, distributive justice and democratic participation (Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996). In turn, psychological oppression occurs when the negative societal views held towards an individual and their social identity is internalised, resulting in lowered self-worth and a sense of disentitlement to societal resources and participation (Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996). As a result, individuals are faced with, and consequently internalise, the discourses that communicate they are undeserving of social resources and participation, and are lazy, immoral and exploiting the efforts of society's workers (Archer, 2009; O'Connor, 2001). They begin to believe the dominant discourse about their own self-worth, with learned helplessness, disengagement from society, pessimism and an

ignorance to the need to challenge social discrimination and their disadvantaged social position (Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996).

As social policy within Australia is beginning to shift back to the original conceptualisation of poverty, whereby poverty is seen as a social condition which affects those individuals who do not have a legitimate reason for being poor, Australians living in poverty find themselves socially excluded and ignored (Garrett, 2002). A social hierarchy is manifested and maintained, those living in poverty are placed at the bottom of the social structure due to the social perception that they do not contribute anything of worth to society and that they depend on other citizens for success and development (Karlberg, 2007). The ramifications of this on the psychological wellbeing for this group of Australians is severe due to the social disengagement they experience (Marston & McDonald, 2007). According to Chenoweth (2008), this creates a social polarisation in society, as there is a vast increase in inequality. Furthermore, this creates a national identity tainted with social exclusion rather than one of cohesion and inclusion (Karlberg, 2007).

The way in which a society understands a social issue, such as poverty, influences the manner in which the issue is addressed and reconciled (Allan Hanson, 1997; Marston, 2008; Wenden, 2008). Therefore, the way that society, and the institutions within it, address the issue of poverty and create strategies to alleviate poverty, is influenced by the way in which poverty is conceptualised (Marston, 2008; Misturelli & Heffernan, 2008; Wenden, 2008). As Australia returns to a view of poverty which individualises the cause of the condition and which ignores the long-lasting ramifications of the global recession, it leads to strategies that fail to understand and tackle the complex social aspects which contribute to poverty, thus exacerbating the situation (Bradshaw, 2007). Poverty resulting from the recession is no longer considered a viable explanation for lack of financial stability, and therefore anti-poverty strategies with an emphasis on individual and psychological causes

may ignore the needs of recession-impacted individuals.

Conclusion

Poverty discourse in Australia has had a history of individualising the condition of poverty, with public and social commentaries and opinions using terms like “undeserving” and “deserving” poor, “welfare dependency” and “dole bludger” to define what poverty is and who it effects. The recession, which first affected Australia in September 2008 (Castillo, 2009), saw a momentary shift away from this discourse. Instead, poverty, underemployment and unemployment were more readily recognised as a social predicaments that could affect any member of society and were outside the control of the individual (Archer, 2009). Despite this reframing of what constitutes poverty and who it can effect, the current discourse surrounding Australia’s “survival” of the recession indicates a reversion back to the previous way of conceptualising poverty, which essentially ignores the condition of poverty and its long lasting psychological and psychosocial effects.

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Address Correspondence to

Email: ashleighowen86@gmail.com

Endless Possibilities: Achieving Transformative Change on Poverty Using Community Currencies

Whitney Jade Darlaston-Jones
University of Notre Dame, Australia

Poverty is a dynamic concept that has multiple causes and consequences that stem from inequalities at the individual, relational, and collective levels. These construct a downward cycle of poverty where one disadvantage begets another. This cycle must be met by strategies that target the varied dimensions of poverty at multiple levels of society, which are consistent with the needs of the community and the philosophical underpinnings of the definition of poverty. For this reason, social, behavioural and health professionals require a critical understanding of cycles of poverty and must possess a repertoire of holistic strategies that can be tailored to fit the needs of different communities. Community currencies represent community focussed and driven trading networks that target poverty's cyclical nature and facilitates the distribution of goods and services through the use of a locally developed currency. Community currencies can address the individual causes and consequences of poverty as well as alleviate and potentially transform both the relational and collective causes and consequences.

Poverty is a significant issue facing our world not only in developing countries but also as a result of the inequalities that exist within developed countries. The diversity of the context of poverty impacts how it is defined and measured and the strategies implemented to address it. Responsibility for poverty lies with a combination of political, economic, individual and social factors and institutions. Therefore, poverty cannot be resolved by targeting one issue, nor resolved or alleviated by concentrating policy change at one of these levels of analysis. Due to these complexities, anti-poverty strategies need to be holistic and the goals and methods of the strategies must complement the philosophical underpinnings of the definition utilised.

Community currencies, for example, are a form of alternative economy that has been popular around the world in various forms. They are 'community-oriented trading networks' (Aldridge & Patterson, 2002, p. 370) which facilitate the distribution of goods and services through the use of a locally developed currency. This currency can take the form of either virtual 'points' or a calculation of the hours spent performing tasks. These can be earned and spent on goods and services in the community

trading network, like the national currency in the national economy. These currencies represent a community based and run system that aims to promote the human value of exchange as well as build social responsibility and support networks, thereby reinforcing social capital.

Community currencies can also operate as anti-poverty strategies, as the philosophy of empowerment is emphasised; however, they provide benefits beyond poverty alleviation and therefore represent a long term community investment rather than short term relief. In presenting this argument, I have separated this article into four main sections: the first is a discussion on the definition of poverty; second is a brief analysis of problems that exist within well intentioned anti-poverty strategies; thirdly I introduce community currencies and analyse the benefits and potential drawbacks of these systems; and lastly I identify the ways social, behavioural and health professionals can utilise community currencies as well as encouraging them to seek out different pathways to success for a community experiencing poverty.

Poverty defined

There have been many issues with the

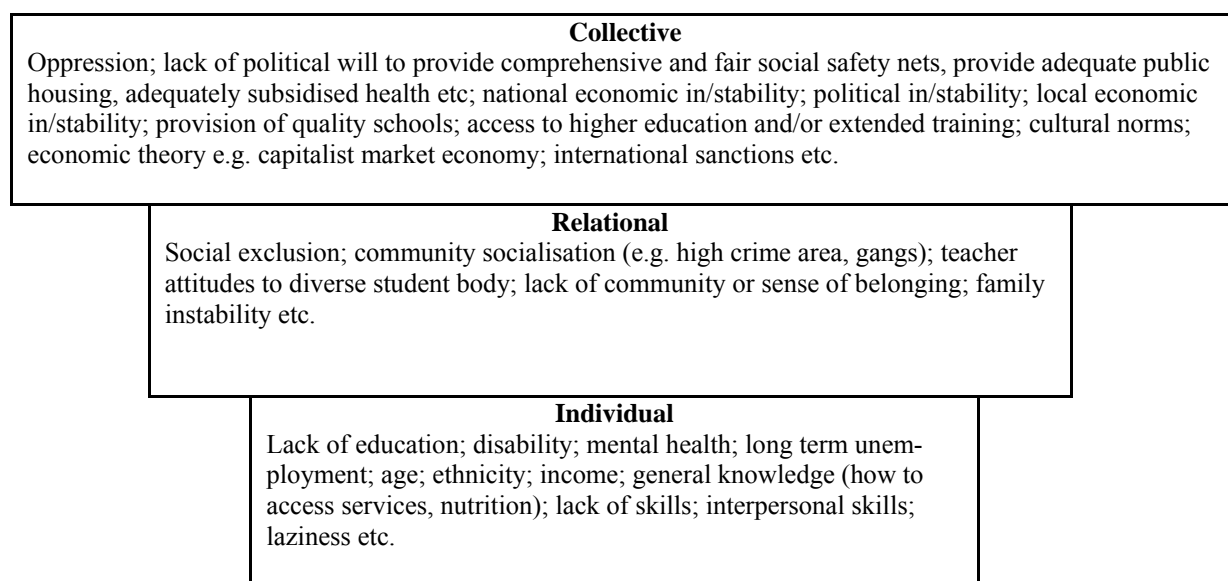


Figure 1: Multi-levelled causes of poverty

definition of poverty. Previously, it has been identified in purely economic terms (Bradshaw, 2007; Citro & Michael, 1995). However, this is far too simplistic in that money has no innate value and cannot provide the owner with anything until it is used to purchase goods and resources (MacPherson & Silburn, 2001). Difficulty also lies in determining a 'lack' of money because it requires analysts to establish a definitive economic threshold below which a person cannot afford basic resources. Similarly analysts have to ascertain the impact this inability has on an individual and their life (MacPherson & Silburn, 2001). The debate over the threshold ranges from the ability to buy essential items through to having enough income to allow an individual to participate in community events (Asselin, 2009; MacPherson & Silburn, 2001).

Additionally, identifying the causes of poverty has produced problems with establishing a definition. Individual theories, which highlight a person's in/competence, have their merit for some people. So do community/behavioural theories, which label faulty subculture attitudes and geography as sources of poverty. However, neither of these explanations fully captures the whole experience and can lead to victim blaming, pejorative interventions, and a denial of structural inequalities (Bradshaw, 2007).

Unlike the individual and community/behavioural theories, the cumulative and cyclical explanation allows for an effective multilevelled analysis of the causes and consequences of poverty. In this way the causes can be identified and categorised using Prilleltensky and Nelson's (2002) three levels of wellbeing: individual, relational, and collective (see Figure 1).

The cumulative and cyclical explanation identifies the individual components such as physical and mental ability, lack of education, and reduced self-confidence, as well as recognising the relational influences such as social exclusion and socialisation. The explanation also highlights the collective causes such as policy development, economic structures and stability, and oppression based on factors such as ethnicity, sexuality, gender, and 'status' (Bradshaw, 2007; Strier, 2009; Strier & Binyamin, 2009). Oppression based on perceived 'status' enhances the social exclusion experienced by people in poverty because many are considered to be 'undeserving poor' (Allan Hanson, 1997; Marston, 2008; O'Connor, 2001). That is, they are deemed to have no legitimate reason for their situation therefore, reducing the quality of resources and information available to them is viewed as 'just' (Opotow, 1995; Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996). Continued

exposure to this and other negative discourses can lead people to internalise self deprecating views about themselves which results in learned helplessness and a decrease in sense of self worth, pride and identity (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005; Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996). This internalisation can blind individuals and communities to the ways out of their disadvantage and to the structural inequalities that contribute to it. The cyclical explanation highlights the significance of oppression in the maintenance of disadvantage as well as the other multifaceted components thus reducing the individualisation of poverty.

This explanation also identifies inequalities that lead to poverty, which occur due to the way the market driven economy is constructed. These inequalities include the need for a reserve of unemployed people, the movement of capital away from poor areas and market crashes (Bradshaw, 2007; Strier & Binyamin, 2009). Poverty is, therefore, an inevitable by-product of the economic system on which our country functions, a structural factor out of the control of an individual or a community. This economic arrangement establishes a system of domination dependent on social, political, economic, and individual components, which constructs a cycle of disadvantage from which it is very difficult to break free as each inequality feeds the next (Bradshaw, 2007).

Asselin (2009) provides a more holistic and effective definition of poverty, which incorporates the issues identified in the cumulative and cyclical explanation:

Poverty consists of any form of inequity, which is a source of social exclusion, in the distribution of the living conditions essential to human dignity. These living conditions correspond to the capabilities of individuals, households, and communities to meet their basic needs in the following dimensions: income, education, health, food/nutrition, safe water/sanitation, labor/employment, housing (living

environment), access to productive assets, access to markets, community participation/social peace (Asselin, 2009, p.3).

Asselin's definition highlights three important points: 1) the need for a multileveled approach to poverty by identifying the importance of the individual, household and community; 2) an understanding of poverty's dynamic nature as illustrated by the list of dimensions and emphasis on the crucial role of social exclusion; and 3) the need to analyse poverty in terms of inequities and not just inequalities.

Despite the acknowledgement of the multifaceted and complex causes and consequences of poverty, Asselin's definition must be understood in terms of the context in which it is applied. Poverty is an experience of deprivation which has subjective as well as objective components (Citro & Michael, 1995; MacPherson & Silburn, 2001; Ravensbergen & VanderPlaat, 2009); therefore it is context specific. Each country (and in some areas different communities within a country) have unique cultural identities, values, and traditions, that will impact the meaning and experience of poverty for those people. On a larger scale, the economic and political (in)stability and social norms of a country will impact who is in poverty and to what extent. The diversity of the national (and community) situation alters the experience of poverty, which will then change the aspects of the definition that are relevant to a country's (or community's) circumstances.

The anti-poverty strategy context

The goals and mechanisms utilised in anti-poverty strategies are dependent on the definition of poverty and the determination of its causes, therefore some strategies are more effective than others (Bradshaw, 2007). Unless the definition looks at the multiple components which can influence poverty, the strategy will be problematic because it will not be able to deal with the complex cyclical nature of poverty. Unfortunately, an effective definition is not enough to provide a successful strategy: the

method of implementation must match the philosophical underpinning used in the definition. For example, a holistic definition based on a philosophy of empowerment will do nothing to improve a strategy that utilises a philosophy of meritocracy.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) represent a monumental step forward in defining and tackling poverty on a global scale, particularly due to the emphasis on women's rights, social inclusion, and the empowerment of local people (Bond, 2006). However, the implementation of the MDGs has had many problems due to a combination of factors such as having a neo-liberalist approach to struggling markets and a top down engagement process. They also attempt to quantify social characteristics such as empowerment which cannot be quantified and remove poverty from the political, social, and cultural context in which it exists (Bond, 2006). This type of implementation is contradictory to the aims of the strategy and disregards the unique circumstances of individual communities.

The uncritical application of either a definition or a method of community engagement will inevitably result in a complete or partial failure of any anti-poverty strategy. For this reason social, behavioural and health professionals need to have a repertoire of community development strategies that can be implemented in combination, depending on the needs and desires of the community experiencing poverty. These strategies must encourage out-of-the-community-development-box thinking, be adaptive, and based on a cyclical and context-specific understanding of poverty and its causes, as well as focusing on the need for true transformative change.

Community currencies

The requirement for a successful anti-poverty programme is a synergy between the philosophical underpinnings of the definition, the method of engagement and delivery, and the ideological intentions of the professional. Community currencies (also called complementary currencies) represent an

alternative strategy to combating poverty in that they provide a community focus on a complex collective issue. Through their construction and their aims, community currencies provide an opportunity for those in poverty to counteract the negative discourses that surround them and provide a space that challenges the hierarchies in society. Furthermore, community currencies are not solely a strategy for poverty intervention and thus have diverse benefits for the different people that utilise them.

Community currencies are a variety of local economies that are *complementary* and can operate alongside the national economy and other anti-poverty strategies (Aldridge & Patterson, 2002; North, 2000; Seyfang, 1996) or independently of the national economy (Collom, 2008; Seyfang, 2004). There are many different types of community currencies with different structures, mechanisms for functioning, and objectives; however, they all have similar overarching aims and ideologies. They are community focussed and run, providing a system of 'money' that is interest-free, non-competitive and only has value when it is traded in the local market in which it is created, thus keeping wealth local (Aldridge & Patterson, 2002; Hallgarten & Reed, 2002; Seyfang, 1996; Williams et al., 2001). Community currencies are employed for economic and social reasons as they provide protection from the inequalities and fluctuations of the national economy as well as offering social networking and support benefits (Hallgarten & Reed, 2002; Seyfang, 1996, 2001) which serve to identify and reinforce the social capital of the community. A significant advantage of these systems is that the control and the decision making is local; matters are decided by the community members for those very same members, unlike the national economic system which is wholly out of the average person's reach (Pacione, 1997).

Community currencies build and sustain social capital by encouraging people to identify the strengths, skills and knowledge they have to offer rather than focussing on their deficits (Boyle, 2003; Liesch & Birch, 2000; Perkins &

Long, 2002). Transactions are facilitated through a directory where members list goods and services they can 'sell' and also those things that they wish to 'purchase' (Collom, 2008; Williams 1997). Services can range from gardening, carpooling, cleaning, babysitting and enjoying people's company, through to accounting and home renovations. Depending on how the local currency is organised, it will be either currency based (having a hard or virtual currency with value commonly tied to the national currency) for example, the Local Exchange Trading Systems (LETS), or time based (where one hour equals one credit) for example, time banks (North, 2000). Currency based systems are utilised to create a more community friendly economy whereas time based systems have more of a social imperative, where the main goal is to construct community mutualism (Seyfang, 2003). However, economic and social benefits can be found in both systems. While LETS are monetary based systems they can still provide an opportunity to develop "human centred values" (Seyfang, 2001, p. 588) because the value is placed in the action of trading rather than the currency. The benefit of time based system over a currency based system is that each person's time is worth the same value, thus eliminating the inequalities of the national market, such as gendered pay rates.

Virtual currencies, including those used in time banks, are a record keeping of debit and credit and therefore are not subject to counterfeiting or inflation like a hard currency (van Kuik, 2009). Within the system, debit is seen as a necessary component of a healthy local economy and therefore is not stigmatised in the way that the concept of 'debt' is; it is merely a promise by the buyer of future provision of goods and services to other community members (Ozanne, 2010). Some currencies will be established so that members contact each other to organise a transaction and others, often time banks, will have a central broker. The credits that one obtains can be 'cashed in' to receive a service or can be donated to other members who might not be able to provide as many hours as

they buy, such as the elderly, single parents, or people with disabilities (North, 2000). While each system has a governing body, the degree of control over decision making that body has, or who makes up the body is (and must be) specific to the community.

Benefits of community currencies

Community currencies can have positive impacts on those experiencing poverty (and those who are not), their families and social networks as well as their community. They have the potential of providing transformative change because they can target the cyclical nature of poverty by addressing its multifaceted causes and consequences at multiple levels (see table 1). They are also adaptable to the context of different communities and their unique needs. Community currencies also have the ability to challenge the negative discourses around poverty, unemployment, and disability. There are three main areas of poverty that are addressed by the use of community currencies: 1) the practical lack of resources, 2) oppression, and 3) social exclusion.

Lack of resources. Community currencies represent a method of anti-poverty strategy that is conceptually and philosophically consistent with the need for a critical appraisal of the context and causes for poverty. They provide practical benefits such as a supplemented income and access to resources. This then frees up the national currency to fund aspects of peoples' lives that cannot be satisfied through the community currency, such as insurance. They also provide a means of protecting the community from the erratic fluctuations of the market economy, which unfairly disadvantage those already struggling (Liesch & Birch, 2000; Pacione, 1997; Williams, 1996). Protection is afforded through the community currency because it is unaffected by inflation or recession and can provide people with a form of employment and productivity during economic crises. The protection of community currencies enables individuals to fight the negative impacts of economic downturns such as long-term unemployment, poverty, and social exclusion.

Table 1: *Benefits of community currencies and the potential impacts at the individual, relational, and collective levels of wellbeing*

Level	Benefit	Impact of Benefit
Individual	Ability not disability	Empowers the individual; overcomes learned helplessness; increases feelings of value, self worth, confidence; sense of identity as a useful citizen; counteracts negative discourses; creates a positive mindset; guards against mental illness, stress and anxiety
	Increased productivity	Sense of purpose; feel positive about contributing to someone else's happiness and to one's community; overcomes the negative repercussions of long-term unemployment; integration (back) into the work force; mitigates the stigma of being unemployed; reliability and responsibility
	Protection from the national economy	Reduces the impact of national economic crisis; maintains productivity through temporary unemployment; reduces stress on social services
	Supplementary income	Reduces the impact of low income and can fill the gaps created by being on a low income; reduces stress; increases sense of control and stability
	Filling gaps in need	Allows services to be accessed that cannot be afforded or are unavailable in the conventional economy
	Giving people control	Sense of ability; increases feelings of competence; empowerment; ability to work to one's own schedule
Relational	Building relationships	Social capital; overcomes social exclusion; empowerment; counteracts negative mentality; positive and constructive relationships and community bonds; creates a community political platform
	Social responsibility	Connection to community through responsibility and accountability; pride in neighbourhood; practical arena to teach children responsibility and moral/ethical behaviour
Community	Governance and ownership	Creates a political power base; reduces learned helplessness; increases safety and security through increased community bonds; pride in community and environment; counteracting negative discourses through affirmation of collective identity;
Collective	Transformative change	Counteracting negative discourses of poverty; attitude change in non-impooverished community members; potential attitude change in broader society; policy and service delivery change

Community currencies also have the ability to target those in the community who are most disadvantaged and those who often need assistance but do not access it, such as single working parents. Time banks in particular are considered to be a form of volunteering, however, unlike traditional volunteering they consistently manage to attract those people who do not usually engage in volunteering such as ethnic minorities, the elderly, women, and people with disabilities (Ozanne, 2010; Seyfang, 2003).

Oppression. In relation to oppression, community currencies provide psychological benefits in identifying people's *abilities* rather than their disabilities and therefore identify the existing social capital within the community. By listing services in the directory, people are encouraged to look at their everyday skills such as cleaning, raising children, being a friendly person and resources such as having access to a car, computer, or books as well as more formal skills such as accounting, nursing, or teaching. Identifying *ability* allows a person to change their mindset away from deprivation and away from the need to identify their problems in order to access help, as they have to with social services (Boyle, 2003). For example, some systems have established groups where mothers can be trained to provide mutual childcare, thus freeing up time for each mother to obtain further training or employment (Boyle, 2003). Such a system empowers women as mothers and acknowledges the importance of their role and skill sets they have developed as unpaid parents, a role that is often considered to be of less importance than paid employment. The concept of ability provides individuals with a sense of worth within a national discourse that perceives them as *worthless* (Allan Hanson, 1997; Marston, 2008; O'Connor, 2001). This can help to break down the internalisation of the negative discourses such as 'undeserving poor' or others specifically focused at their ethnicity, sexuality or other defining factors.

Negative discourses can also be tackled by including schools. Some time banks in the United Kingdom (UK) were built to involve schools,

which enabled 'difficult' students to be paid in time credits to tutor younger students (Boyle, 2003). The 'difficult' students, who are often vilified in schools as 'too hard', build social responsibility and challenge negative discourses as they are not simply disciplined but treated as worthy individuals in order to re-integrate them back into a healthy relationship with the school and their peers (Macready, 2009). The programmes demonstrate that the identification of ability and challenging negative discourse reduces the impact of learned helplessness and can teach people new ways of operating within their social world. Doing so provides them with more self-esteem, efficacy, confidence, and avenues to obtain the resources they need to live and participate within their community and culture. Community currencies represent a shift in anti-poverty strategies, where people identify their strengths rather than their deficiencies. Allowing a community that is experiencing poverty the space to empower themselves and construct a community that is inclusive and socially responsible has the potential to shift the policy and social position on poverty.

Social exclusion. Community currencies mobilise those in poverty to be active participants in changing their community's circumstances thus counteracting the social exclusion of poverty. This type of communal action builds the individual and collective social capital of the community members. Putnam (1995) states that social capital "refers to features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit" (p. 67). Community currencies encourage *positive* interactions between community members and emphasise the importance of connecting with each other in order to obtain mutual benefits. LETS can be used to create market days, music events and shows, dinner parties, and many other gatherings that can be used as a means to build social relationships, community trust (Pacione, 1997) and include new members into the local economy and community (Ozanne, 2010). For

instance, a school in the UK has become a community hub since the construction of a LETS system, which operates between the students, teachers, and parents (Hallgarten & Reed, 2002; Reed, 2005). The hub encourages more parental involvement in their children's education as well as providing a strong arena to educate children on social responsibility and citizenship (Smith & Boyle, 2005). These neighbouring interactions encourage the participation in more community initiatives and build the social support, familiarity, and trust between community members (Perkins & Long, 2002).

Building social networks is an essential component of social capital and this building is the primary aim of all community currencies. It is facilitated by providing people and communities with the space to acknowledge the skills that they have as individuals and well as a larger community group. Community currencies are ideally placed to aid in the development of social capital within a disadvantaged community as they emphasise social inclusion, the development of mutualism, and the challenging of negative discourses. Increasing social capital through community currencies helps to recreate the social bonds that are destroyed through the individualisation of responsibility for poverty and disadvantage (Perkins & Long, 2002), potentially reversing the downward cycle of poverty.

Additionally, the detrimental effects of social exclusion can be mitigated as the individuals and communities construct a new collective identity to which they can belong and contribute, thus constructing a sense of community which is an essential component of social capital (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005). Community currencies provide opportunities for all community members to be involved including those who are often marginalised such as the elderly, youth, ethnic minorities, and women. Some time banks have been used to construct youth juries, where young community members participate in the

production and maintenance of good behaviour in their peers (Boyle, 2003). Utilising community currencies in this fashion provides a place where young people, along with the rest of the community, can practically apply their skills and feel an immediate sense of inclusion and social responsibility. Community currencies, and in particularly time banks, have the ability to integrate disparate sectors of a community especially when communal resources such as schools or other institutions participate.

Food for thought

While there are countless opportunities for community currencies to benefit people in poverty and to create positive repercussions for society, there are potential hurdles to be considered. However, these do not signal the defeat of community currencies but represent an essential part of the analysis process. The following is by no means an exhaustive analysis of the issues faced by community currencies in general or LETS and time banks in particular. It merely puts forward some broad issues to revitalise the debate around the utility of community currencies as an anti-poverty strategy. It will also encourage an analysis of the benefits that alternative approaches to disadvantage can have on communities and society as a whole. Therefore while some direction for possible solutions is provided, thoroughly defined solutions will not be included as the finer details of the implementation of a community currency must be determined on an individual community basis.

A major issue in the design of community currencies is the practicality gap, which is the gap that exists between the individual and their reality and the benefits they can achieve through participation. This gap exists because the success of community currencies relies on trust between members as well as an ability for individuals to be in a position to view themselves as possessing valuable skills to offer. When an individual is isolated, psychologically and socially, and has internalised the negative discourses surrounding them, it is likely they

will not participate because they view themselves as having nothing to offer (Ozanne, 2010; Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005; Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996). However, educating people through critical consciousness (Freire, 1970) could provide a solution to this problem as it will build their awareness of the valuable skills they have gained as a result of their lived experience of poverty and will help them to realise the value of their day to day activities. Advertising and education represent a significant component of the community currency project due to the psychological barriers faced by people living in poverty or experiencing disadvantage. Other issues, such as the psychological barrier to the concept of debit, could be targeted through education. People in poverty are often focused on budgeting, where debt more often than not makes problems worse (Aldridge & Patterson, 2002). In this way it is possible that the concept of debit is a factor that could lead to reduced participation.

The perceived social stigma of asking for help is another psychological barrier to community currencies and time banks in particular (Ozanne, 2010; Seyfang, 2004). By emphasising the social imperative of time banks, the economic component has been reduced. People are more likely to perceive it as volunteering as opposed to an employment arrangement, resulting in the concept of asking for help rather than purchasing a service. In this situation, people registered with time banks have been reported as being willing and eager to provide their services to someone else because of the social connections they make and the sense of lending a hand (Ozanne, 2010; Seyfang, 2004). However, people are less likely to ask for services through the system because needing help is equated with vulnerability (Ozanne, 2010). This is a significant issue to be overcome because if people do not 'purchase' services then the economy stagnates and fails to maintain itself.

Stagnation can also occur due to the diversity of goods and services in the local market (Seyfang, 2004). Services are often limited to non-essential leisure services, such as gardening or babysitting, which can lead to

stagnation if people cannot find services or goods they require (Seyfang, 2004). However, leisure services, such as baby sitting, could be used by members as an opportunity to de-stress or connect with friends or to continue their education. Alternatively, this lack of diversity may create opportunities for communities to come together to develop innovative ways to boost the service directory and access more essential items.

Governance is another key aspect of community currencies which must be addressed correctly if success is to be maximised. Governance by the people is difficult in the initial stages because they might not have the skills to initiate and develop the programme, however, implementation from an external agent could be met with resistance. This is a point where the context specific nature of poverty needs to be in the forefront of any analysis and where the solution cannot be determined at a generic level. Each community will have their own unique contexts along with histories of different interventions and it is important that this is acknowledged. However, some possibilities exist as many community currencies are established around an existing infrastructure such as an aid agency, school or local business (Ozanne, 2010; Seyfang, 2004), providing a permanent hub for the currency as well as an established inroad into the community. Many community currencies have recorded this type of governance as a key to their success. For example, in The Gorbals, a neighbourhood of Glasgow, a local charity set up and facilitated the time bank. In this situation the cooperation and the development of a reciprocal relationship rather than a charity relationship helped to reduce the community's fear of the loss of control through 'professional' interventions (Callison, 2003). The organisations that are already respected within the community often succeed in this role as the people will already have trust in the organisation's and its employees motives (van Kuik, 2009). However, despite the type of governance it is essential that any decision

making includes the people taking into account the specific context of the area. Without this the concept of local control will be lost and it is possible the community currency will become another externally implemented and operated project with no genuine commitment or connection to the people.

The role of social, behavioural and health professionals

The role of social, behavioural and health professionals is a complex issue within the development of community currencies, as with any community development project. They have a responsibility to follow empowering and ethical guidelines in their dealings with communities. Therefore professionals must engage in critical self reflexivity, put the needs of the community first as well as understand that community needs are often diverse and conflicting. They must ensure genuine consultation (Toomey, 2009) and a de-powering of self in order to allow space to empower those in poverty. Professionals should promote the development of community currencies which are adaptive and encourage the mobilisation of community members to act for themselves with support rather than be positioned as passive subjects that often are seen as not deserving (Botes & van Rensburg, 2000). In order to do this, social, behavioural and health professionals must acknowledge their position as facilitators, not as experts, as each community will implement the local currency differently based on available resources and need. It is essential considering the target audience that the co-production of the community currency is emphasised so to avoid the paternalism plagued by so many anti-poverty strategies (Botes & van Rensburg, 2000). Co-production is not only about bringing in the community, it is about bringing together a wide cross-section of the community members and ensuring that the most marginalised groups have a voice that is listened to (Botes & van Rensburg, 2000; Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005; Ravensbergen & VanderPlaat, 2009; Toomey, 2009).

Social, behavioural and health professionals have the opportunity to act as

community catalysts by examining the utility of community currencies within an Australian context. Community currencies are positioned not only as an approach that can bring practical benefits but also as a mechanism for discussions of other alternative methods to tackling the issues of poverty, social exclusion, and social (in) justice. It is not only necessary for professionals to critically engage with this topic and the benefits community currencies provide within their own development work, it is also essential that they are part of the global debate surrounding this topic. Currently, community currency research is lacking the essential diversity of opinion that can be gained from behavioural science, social justice, community psychology, and politics. Providing an Australian perspective to a body of literature dominated by UK, US, and Canadian results is useful in order to understand how our unique environment will impact community currencies and how the Australian people can benefit.

Conclusion

Local economies build the confidence and security of a community through the development of social bonds, increased protection from the deficiencies of the national economy as well as a local control of community issues. Through the fostering of social responsibility, community members have a sense of investment in the quality and future of their community. This investment has the potential for transformative change, not only in the community's attitudes towards themselves but the broader society's attitudes towards people in poverty and minority groups. Utilising LETS and time banks in ways such as those illustrated through the youth juries (or community juries) can not only aid in the alleviation of poverty but can impact diverse discipline areas from teaching to organisational structuring and local politics and lead to more effective strategies of engagement.

A critical analysis of the definition of poverty and the reasons why this is used is necessary along with the creation of a strategy where the goals, measures, implementation and

evaluation are consistent with the philosophical underpinnings of the definition of poverty, empowerment, and social transformation. Community currencies represent a strategy with philosophical underpinnings that are consistent with the empowerment of those in poverty and social inclusion. They are a long term solution that not only aid in poverty alleviation but can become a permanent fixture of the community, providing benefits to all levels of the community. It is the responsibility of social, behavioural and health professionals to think outside of the community development box and to develop new and innovative ways to target and respond to poverty, an issue which has been grappled with ineffectively for decades.

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diverse range of areas including discourse analysis, Indigenous affairs, government policy, health psychology, and community development. Whitney's main focus and interest is in research examining the political and social discourses that legitimise the oppression of disadvantaged and marginalised persons and groups and how this relates to social benefits and community health.

Address correspondence to

Whitney Darlaston-Jones

Email:wdarlastonjones@gmail.com

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Biography of Author

Whitney Darlaston-Jones is currently completing her Honours in a Bachelor of Behavioural Science and Bachelor of Arts (Politics) double degree at the University of Notre Dame, Australia. The combination of Politics and the critical approach of Behavioural Science have provided her with a deep understanding of a

Academic Teachings vs ‘Real Life’ Experience: A Journey of Understanding Academia’s Usefulness Within Society

Stefanos Sifandos

University of Notre Dame Australia

This article is a personal journey of self-reflection and exposure to working with disadvantaged people within the broader community of Perth. This took place as part of my work placement within my final year internship unit in Behavioural Science conducted at the University of Notre Dame, Fremantle, Western Australia. I will elaborate to how this placement related directly to the internship unit; the major project of the internship, which comprised of a conference on poverty in light of the global financial crisis; and finally how these combined experiences added value to the degree. Discussed in depth will be the conflict and contradiction experienced through my practical exposure to poverty and the introduction to the intellectual information presented pertaining directly to poverty. Greater issues of individualised poverty and structural poverty will also be discussed within the context of my own personal experiences.

As a student of Behavioural Science I often contemplate the gap between the theories learnt in an academic environment and the practical application of these theories within the ‘real’ world. I recently graduated from the University of Notre Dame in Fremantle (UNDA), Western Australia with a degree in Behavioural Science. The arrangement of the degree is structured in so that each student is able to complete a ‘real-life’ work placement linked directly to the degree. This combination of theory and practice opened up a deeper understanding for me to how our society functions, behaviours formed and relationships and theories constructed. The foundational philosophy of this Behavioural Science degree places itself within the realm of community psychology. It is ecological in nature, which means that there is a powerful relational underpinning to its approach to social wellbeing, the importance of cultural relativity and respecting diversity (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005). Oppression against marginalised groups is tackled not with a top-down approach but rather a bottom-up approach, where self-determination becomes the focus and the individual knows and understands what is best for themselves and their community (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005). This knowledge combined with my work placement experience allowed a deeper

exploration into social problems such as poverty. If it were not for this collaborative understanding on dealing with individuals from different social positions I feel I would have struggled to comprehend possible solutions to poverty as a greater social problem.

The focus of this paper is the final semester of my studies, which involved my internship as the final part of my degree. Our major project in the internship was to develop and run a conference on poverty and the global financial crisis. Directly linked to this experience of organising and conducting a conference, part of our curriculum was to also undertake in work placement relevant to the degree chosen at each student’s discretion. For the vast majority of students in this unit, the work placement had strong ties to the conference theme. For instance, I chose to work and learn at a homeless shelter, for I felt it would provide me with direct experience relating to poverty, which could be transferred to the conference and my academic studies. I wanted to understand the role academia played in alleviating a hugely integrated social, economic, environmental and cultural problem such as poverty. Most importantly though, I wanted to understand what poverty meant to those living it and experiencing it directly. I will critically reflect upon the role I played within the conference and the relationships I

maintained with other students and our lecturer. I will focus on how these interactions changed me, and how the dynamics of these dealings opened a pathway to greater knowledge and awareness of poverty and its implications on those who are directly affected by it (those considered poor); and those indirectly affected by it (the remainder of society). I will also explore the tensions and frustrations between working directly with homelessness and poverty and theoretical frameworks explaining poverty, how the two can be different, and how I negotiated these tensions and contradictions.

The Internship Unit

This unit was designed to articulate all that Behavioural Science at UNDA predicates itself upon and apply it to the 'real world' via our placement and the experience of creating a conference. This unit was extremely challenging, beginning with the workload itself placed upon us by our unit coordinator. My personal view pertaining to the work placement hours was that 150 hours of practical hours for our designated work placement was too long and unachievable. That coupled with the intense organisation of the conference and other task requirements I initially felt quite disorientated with the entire process, yet once immersed in my chosen organisation, it opened up a positive and direct correlation with the unit content. I found myself engulfed in the interaction of real people with real social issues, such as homelessness, drug abuse and poverty; and in fact I reached more hours than actually required. The internship consisted of four key components: individual weekly journals pertaining to our direct experiences with our internship work placement, an individual analytical and reflective report specifically based on our experiences of the internship work placement, the internship and then the conference itself.

I have been a part-time university student for six years; it is this part-time status that allowed me to lack confidence in my academic ability. My perception was that I was not equipped with the skills that the other students possessed to accomplish all of these tasks in a

professional manner; primarily due to the fact that I had been studying part-time for six years and felt detached from my peers and the 'proper' full-time student experience (Fleming, 2006). The roles I occupied at the conference included the keynote speaker and the liaison of the organising committee (which was the group I was directly involved with) and the chief liaison within all the other designated groups. Alongside this I also managed the work placement and personal employment. My exposure to university thus far had given me the perception that unless I was viewed as a full-time scholar I would not have the faith and belief of my fellow students; it was these thought processes, which initially forced me to feel quite distant from the entire unit. Having to coordinate the entire class engulfed me with feelings of nervousness, as thoughts of inadequacy would enter my mind. How would my fellow students trust me to organise an entire conference? Was my lack of full-time dedication to university a reflection of commitment? I reflect now and realise the absurdity of these thoughts, but at the time they were legitimate concerns that had the ability to negatively affect my potential and work application.

The Conference

As the liaison person my aims were to practice humility, be fair to all students and deploy empathy towards their needs. Their external circumstances were important and included their families, social lives, other studies and general commitments. It would be imperative to understand that these commitments are multifaceted and require their time and personal attention. This degree instilled in us that we ought to value and respect diversity, cultural relativity, personal and social circumstance of all individuals (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005). I would be required to organise and compile connecting ideas, timelines and distribute workloads evenly amongst the organising committee and ensure as much as possible that all other groups were load sharing equitably.

Background and foundations to the conference

The conference day beckoned and the project took shape in the form of our format and structure becoming visibly clearer. As part of the organising committee, I began to understand the importance of group cohesion being crucial to the overall success of this conference. I realised that a combination of open communication, effective task management and combining all the technical skills of all class members would enhance the quality of the conference (Seethamraju & Borman, 2009). My own confidence levels rose due to this and this further assisted me in understanding that I had contributed greatly as part of a larger collective to this project. I began to observe a connection between what the media portrayed as the definition of poverty and what social platforms are actually present. There is a powerful distinction between the physical reality of the existence of those who are considered poor and what the poor then experience; and the general social perception that is enhanced or created by the media (Jeppesen, 2009).

Audience members of the conference

The central theme of the conference was to identify how the notion of poverty related directly to the global financial crisis and how poverty affected a variety of individuals and groups. Conference delegates included local influential community members, workplace coordinators from each students work placement, resident lecturers and the Dean of Arts and Sciences at UNDA. Representatives of those affected directly by poverty and homelessness were at the time not considered as delegates. Upon reflection I feel there was great disadvantage not only for the students and their own learning experience but also for the portrayal of what poverty actually is and what the Behavioural Science degree predicates itself upon. There was no voice on behalf of poverty and homelessness to comment on the ideas presented. This potentially placed the conference at a disadvantage in terms of the effect of the message portrayed, for the physical reality of how poverty is felt and dealt with was not

present; indeed, the conference was dominated by academic ideology, philosophy and theoretical frameworks. I would argue that without the voice of direct experience the conference was somewhat hypocritical. I am not insinuating that the conference was useless or did not achieve its desired outcome of creating awareness of the reality and existence of poverty. Behavioural Science at UNDA predicates itself on equity, voice and collaborative efforts towards any social change. As students we believed this and even presented it within the paradigm of the conference, the fact that there was no physical presence representing poverty to assist in solidifying our thoughts and recommendations for social change perhaps devalued the power of the conference.

Voice: Theory, practice or both?

The homeless population experience extreme poverty and as groups and individuals are often ostracised and considered social outcasts (Cohen, 1994). Homeless people often lose their social identities, social roles within communities, families, jobs, homes and monetary earning abilities (Cohen, 1994; Magallanes-Blanco & Perez-Bermudez, 2009). Individuals and groups directly affected by poverty are constantly facing the unknown; lack of food, accelerated violence and social isolation (Magallanes-Blanco & Perez-Bermudez, 2009). It is this social exclusion that creates power imbalances amongst mainstream society and those who are poor (Hallerod & Larsson, 2008). Those considered poor or who are homeless are not respected or valued as highly by mainstream society as someone who is employed, has a home, is in possession of multiple material items and is a positively contributing and active member of the community (Turner & Lehning, 2007). Why was it that as part of the audience a homeless voice was neither present nor considered to add further depth to the structure and meaning of the conference? To answer this question, poverty's place within a mainstream social framework must be first understood. Creating

change within a social paradigm or altering systems that affect human conditions requires collaborative consultation with those affected most by those conditions (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005). It is this process of collaborative consultation and understanding that can prove to be difficult due to the social isolation the homeless community receive, therefore hindering and inhibiting the possibility of open and cooperative communication (Hallerod & Larsson, 2008). This is what I believe was the core reason that a voice directly affected by poverty was not part of the audience and representing a view point from this disadvantaged group.

Media portrayal and poverty

Working with the poor, I found a strong distinction between the media portrayal of poverty and the existence of poverty. Poverty affects far more people than the media shows (Chamberlain & Johnson, 2001). What commenced to take shape was the greater understanding of poverty and where it stems from; why it occurs and why it continues to plague individuals directly and indirectly. The issue of poverty has the ability to affect all people from all walks of life; even those who were once financially stable and secure would feel the negative impacts of a global financial crisis (Jeppesen, 2009). Social constructs create the platform for poverty to flourish and grow and it is our economic systems which base their function and vitality on scarcity, economic debt, deprivation and employment which perpetuate poverty and allow it to multiply and exist (Eissel, 2008). The role media portrays is one of perpetual reinforcement, which is ultimately detrimental to the individual or group considered poor; it does this in two possible ways. Firstly, the media maintains the status quo, by driving consumerism through advertising, hence reinforcing what the mainstream consider to be socially acceptable practices and cultural norms (Hays, 2010). The problem that the poor face is again one of exclusion. Homeless groups, individuals and those who are poor do not have the purchasing

power or expendable income to sustain lifestyles that meet the expectations of the status quo and hence further face social stratification (Freeman, 2009; Hays, 2010). Secondly; the media portrayal of what homelessness and poverty represents is misaligned, socially segregating and marginalising to the reality that is actually occurring (Buck, Toro & Ramos, 2004; Dreier, 2005; Speak & Tipple, 2006). It is not an accurate portrayal of how individuals affected by poverty live or act. Individuals struck by poverty are often associated with crime, violence, and drug abuse and are considered socially unapproachable (Dreier, 2005). By questioning these social perceptions it was an intrinsic drive to work firsthand with organisations that dedicated their time working within the homeless community to deeper understand the reality of the situation.

My Chosen Work Placement

The process of direct placement with a not-for-profit humanitarian-based organisation was personally challenging at times and the potent question of whether or not my own convictions were in line with that of mainstream society were raised regularly throughout this powerful experience. Determining the part attitudinal values and policies within mainstream society play in perpetuating the negative stigma attached to disadvantaged persons is an important one for it offers direction to a solution to the social problem of poverty (Hunter & Jordan, 2010). Through the internship unit and my work placement, previous negative stereotypes and ideologies that I once maintained pertaining specifically to poverty were slowly removed. Why was I discriminatory in the first place? Should not years of university education, which is intimately linked with awareness, remove all this? I began to realise that the perception of university is of a high regard and, although many in Western cultures have access to university, it is still considered elite. Perhaps this elitism compounded over years unconsciously provided me with a false sense of superiority, which would be reflected through

my behaviour and thought processes (Tannock, 2008).

To think that a university environment that was highly valued by the general public would provide a platform for explicit discrimination appeared contradictory in nature. It was with this recognition that I was then able to work through behavioural patterns and thought processes. Just because I had an education there was no need to assume that those who were poor and homeless did not or if they did not that I was 'better' than they were; difference at any level does not indicate 'better'. Yet, as students we partook in these types of activities regularly through examinations and assignment work. Frequently instilled educative measuring tools such as regular exams and testing which was an avenue for students to gain knowledge perhaps provided students with a false sense of supremacy and advantage over those who did not or were not able to partake in this educative process and culture (Tannock, 2008).

Structural and individual effects of poverty

My previous thoughts on homelessness revolved around individuals and groups being born into poverty, living as alcohol and drug abusers, with low or little education and strong connections to crime. These thought processes can be typical of privileged people (e.g., middle-class, Caucasian) and can be attributed to the advantages that these groups of people receive throughout society (Clark, 2007). These are individualistic explanations of poverty and whilst these elements may be consequences of poverty, there are far deeper social structures and attitudes at play which constantly perpetuate a false perception of poverty (Saunders, 2003). Was the higher education system prejudiced towards disadvantaged groups? It was not until I immersed myself in dealing directly with poverty and those who suffer directly from it that my mindset began to alter towards that of a different viewpoint. This direct experience allowed me to understand how misplaced perceptions and negative connotations associated with poverty are not always true to those considered poor and structural poverty plays a

large role in the existence and continual cycle of poverty (Saunders, 2003). If it was not for the process of community engagement I believe that I would not have come to this understanding of the multifaceted aspects of poverty.

I chose to place myself at a homeless shelter within the Perth metropolitan area as I felt that this direct experience would provide me with a greater platform of exploration to what poverty truly represents within the community. It was here that I experienced openly the real effects of poverty upon individuals. I struggled to understand how the existence of theoretical frameworks such as the importance of cultural relativity and respect for diversity designed to limit discrimination and isolation of the individual and cultural groups did not alleviate segregation and poverty at a grass roots level (Bruner, 2008). I realised that structural causes of poverty and systemic oppression must be made obvious in order to tackle poverty effectively (Carter & Barrett, 2006). I had believed that philosophical frameworks were the basis for practical solutions; I came to realise that, without instruction on practical application, theoretical and philosophical frameworks are useless. I would often leave my work place and contemplate the poverty that existed hidden from the general public. Working at the placement opened up internal discussion and dialogue pertaining to society's principles of living promoting equity and fairness amongst individuals through policy and media discourse (Turner & Lehning, 2007), yet this was not what I was witnessing nor experiencing first hand. The reality is that the provision of services and organisations to assist the already suffering are superficial attempts to fix a situation that is fuelled by systemic pressures (Opotow, Gerson & Woodside, 2008). Without attending to deeper underlying issues such as discrimination and the economic system that lends itself to social pathology, an individualistic approach to resolving poverty can only be ineffective (Li, 2010; Turner &

Lehning, 2007).

The difficulty of social integration

During the work placement, I saw that basic physical necessities of homeless people were not being met nor were their cultural or psychological needs being met in the way of feeling as part of a healthy functioning community. I realised that the greater part of our society cannot accept the distress and dysfunction that occurs and that, if it was overt, it would disrupt the way society functions as an integrated whole. This mainstream approach to how society treats disadvantaged groups is disjointed and disregards these groups as not worthy of being part of a visible society. The individuals I had direct contact with, personally felt isolated from mainstream society and this seclusion and fear of public ridicule further drove them in to the depths of poverty and hiding. This isolation created a clear barrier between homeless groups and mainstream society (Jeppesen, 2009). The longer this occurred the more difficult it became for homeless groups and individuals to integrate within a social setting and portray themselves as part of the 'in group' or mainstream society (Jeppesen, 2009).

Contradictions of theory and practice

Simultaneously engaging with the conference and work placement did not assist in alleviating the contradictions and pressures within my mind. The contradictions and pressures were presented by the conference being quite academic and somewhat abstract and the work placement feeling so real and practical. The research collected for the conference offered broad resolutions to the growing problem of poverty, yet when I engaged directly with homeless I could not make these connections, nor could I observe these 'solutions' being implemented by higher institutions who had the capability of doing so (Carter & Barrett, 2006). During the conference I was part of group of young people attempting to explain poverty and provide solutions to this issue through expression of an ideology that we believe can actually make a difference and change not only

the perceptions of poverty by those looking at poverty, but alleviate poverty itself. I would then engage in my work experience and be surrounded by poverty and a lack of a social system that is not fully inclusive but rather exclusive largely based on social status accompanied by other factors such as race and physical attributions (Hunter & Jordan, 2010). This confusion led me to have an extreme lack of faith in higher governmental structures and at that stage became apparent that no matter how deep as a society we explore the intellectuality of such a serious social issue, it still seems to be growing and worsening as time continues (Freeman, 2009). This conflict disconnected me further from believing there is hope for equity and fairness to all groups in our society. Solutions are possible towards a serious problem; yet as a collective society we are still struggling to implement these strategies and prioritise this plaguing social issue.

Issues of reflexivity

One of the areas I found difficult was the implementation of reflexivity whilst dealing with individuals who came through the homeless shelter. I found myself at a constant point of contradiction. I was aware that I was dealing with oppressed groups and I understood that the only way to assist them successfully was to approach relationships collaboratively in a relational manner. How could I relate to their circumstances of economic deprivation and social isolation? There appeared a link between poverty, economic deprivation and the negative individual and social consequences of social isolation (Gilbert & Sliep, 2009). The reality was that I felt I could learn more from the people I was interacting with than they could learn from me. The fact that I had a home to go to at night allowed feelings of discomfort to dwell within me, perhaps I even appeared 'better' than others because somehow I had either created or was born into privilege and circumstance (Suchet, 2007). I felt guilt for being who I was and the further I reflected

upon this the more I began to contemplate issues of power imbalances and how these are tied strongly to individualism and Western culture (Torelli & Shavitt, 2010). As capitalism promotes competitiveness and scarcity, a severe consequence of this is greed and power imbalances within society where there are an elite few who control most of the resources and wealth (Li, 2010). Where does justice and fairness lay within this process? Does society perpetuate its own poverty? Yes it does; through prioritising wealth and aesthetics over wellbeing, mental health and equity amongst all groups (Opotow, Gerson & Woodside, 2008).

Personal upbringing and communication

At times I found it challenging to know how to communicate with the housemates in the homeless shelter. My upbringing as a child centred on discrimination against those who were to different from me (and different was considered a negative). Coming from an individualistic culture with strong ethnic national roots, cultural pride and superiority were at the forefront of my teachings (Emcke, 2000). For example, my father demanded that I respect our culture yet he observed no value in other cultures. For me, social status, ethnicity, skin colour, how much money one had and even physical features defined 'different'. Although over the years I had eradicated much of the discriminative attitudes associated with my upbringing, when faced with the situation of working with individuals that were very 'different' to me, I struggled greatly.

I struggled to reconcile old thought patterns with what I knew intrinsically was the correct path to take in understanding each individual at face value. It was during my time within this homeless shelter that I realised how racist, how discriminatory and how closed-minded I used to be and in reality was still learning not to be. I took refuge in the fact that I had made deep changes within myself to reflect the way I acted and thought about others who were different to me. We all inhale and exhale the same air and we are all living beings sharing one global home. This realisation assisted me in being honest with

the housemates and communicating with them with less personal inner tension. It opened up my mind to their potential, their story, their history, their way of life, and that this was legitimate and important.

The value of grass roots organisations

Being part of this grass roots level experience allowed me to contemplate what changes were required to enhance a greater and deeper understanding and community perspective of homelessness. How it would be possible to create real positive changes within this community and to then translate this working framework to other communities, not only within an Australian context but also within a global context? Prior to commencing my placement, my previous ideology was that if change is not made from a 'top-down' approach at organisational and institutional levels then it is a waste of efforts and resources, as substantial and permanent change simply cannot occur at any other level. I now firmly understand via firsthand experience that an integrated grass roots approach can be extremely successful in assisting in developing positive change to other's lives both at individual and collective levels (Uvin, 1995). Creating compassion, care, empathy and greater understanding of not only another's individual circumstances but how those individual circumstances are a reflection of greater social conditions is primary to assisting individuals realise their own empowerment. This does not address the root cause of poverty; it alleviates suffering largely at an individual level (which in and of itself has great intrinsic value), and recognising this was key to accepting that minor change is still valuable and can lead to greater collective change.

Greater social institutions such as our education systems could potentially provide a platform for challenge and transformation towards our current highly individualistic and ultimately selfish social context we as a community are all part of (Fox & Meier, 2009). Structural inequity lays at the

foundation of poverty and without institutionalised and policy based change, discrimination against poverty will always exist (Fox & Meier, 2009). Initially the change may not be at a scale worthy of collective impact, but as a community if we are at least educated in identifying the root cause of social dysfunction such as poverty then as people we will be more capable, equipped and empowered in dealing with and perhaps even pre-empting the disastrous effects of long term and high amounts of poverty (Misturelli & Heffernan, 2008).

Further, by working at a grass roots level clear distinctions are recognised to how individual circumstances of poverty are influenced heavily by external social factors, which ultimately lead to a collective perception of individualised poverty (Turner & Lehning, 2007). To understand institutionalised poverty, one must understand how individuals are affected by poverty (Turner & Lehning, 2007). For me this understanding was reached by working at a grass roots level with the individuals and groups directly affected by poverty. I have now understood that making a difference to one person's life, even if it is simply for a day, or even one minute has the powerful potential to cause positive ripple effects to other community members both directly and indirectly. Examples of this could be spending an amount of time with people who feel they are a minority group and simply listening to whatever it is they want to speak about. This gesture is to be sincere and not tokenistic. By partaking in this and similar actions all parties involved were exposed to a greater knowledge base and the increase of making positive change is possible through a greater gain in awareness. Homeless institutions care workers, counsellors, not-for-profit organisations and other systems of community support seldom have the potential to assist in empowering and positively affecting people's lives.

A personal interpretation

It has become more a personal journey for me and there have been many times throughout this

process where I question my own spirituality, my own psychological processes and the social status that I hold within Western society. I have been brought to tears; I have been humbled by acts of compassion and others personal life stories and I have been taught what it is to listen. I was guided by my supervisor at the work placement that it is with intent that one must listen carefully, absorb and apply mind-fullness whole heartedly in order to truly respect the other person and to truly respect their integrated place within society. Life circumstances are not simply self-inflicted and are not necessarily a person's own fault. Media discourse and representation and social policy segregates individuals and the feeling of shame takes precedent (Misturelli & Heffernan, 2008). Perhaps this is why I have now acknowledged a greater value in working with individuals at a grass roots level; this is potentially *part of* the greater solution, for although the process may be slow, I believe a change in attitude in one person can perpetuate across to many others.

Some of the most challenging times throughout the entire experience came directly from some of the individuals dealt with directly within the parameters of my designated work placement. Some of the greatest lessons I learnt throughout this development came from the housemates and their personalities and their approach to life all supported by their life experiences. My direct supervisors at the work placement were always there to assist and provide detailed guidance; they constantly reinforced and encouraged self-expression of my feelings and the house mates feelings at deeper levels. The placement forced me to think about all factors involved on a relational grass roots level between two people and what skills are required to be effective in communicating with others; skills such as sincere listening, body language and passive verbal language with calm vocal tones. If a difficult situation were to arise between myself and the housemates and I was struggling to understand the situation or a particular social issue would invoke an emotive reaction within me, my

supervisors would always be there to provide techniques to self-soothe and understand my own psychological internal thought processes.

Fairness, equity and justice

Dealing directly with homelessness provided me with tremendous insight in to the delegitimisation of the human person by attitudinal stereotypes placed upon poverty by society and what it is like to be isolated, homeless, to have little food to eat and the need to be resourceful. I related this immediately to my Behavioural Science degree and reflected upon our social standard of living and how there are so many of us who are living in what is considered to be poverty; where distributive justice is simply not being met (Opotow, Gerson & Woodside, 2008). Basic necessities are tied to notions of procedural fairness within the environment directly associated with homelessness and poverty (Opotow, Gerson & Woodside, 2008). Within the parameters of this particular homeless shelter procedural fairness and equity strongly existed. All members were treated as equals; it is outside the homeless shelter that particular individuals were scrutinised and judged based on their living conditions, actions and history. It is known that economically and culturally marginalised groups continue to endure untold degrees of suffering (Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996). This strongly affects their opportunity to develop themselves within mainstream society and limits their chances of positive relationships (Opotow, 2001). It also segregates these individuals further from mainstream society, causing deeper personal psychological issues whilst simultaneously creating a negative stereotype of anyone considered homeless (Misturelli & Heffernan, 2008). It is not the case for all but for many, excessive substance abuse is a harsh way of life and further promotes a negative image associated with poverty. The reality is that poverty not only affects those who are economically deprived, it also affects their families, friends and the general community through the relational and human ecological principle of existence

(Lichter, Olson, Evans, Pillemer & Mathios, 2009).

Spending time with the workers and residents of this homeless shelter articulated an understanding that there is something deeply wrong with society. Judgement arises far too quickly when people interact with each other; appearance and posture are assumed far too often and allowances to grant the dignity and respect for those who reside within our communities does not exist. My experiences with homeless shelters and aid giving organisations and their face value approach forced me to think about how I was going to communicate with each person I met, regardless of appearance and social status. It taught me that judgment and assumption is not the correct path. Direct experience is something theory, textbooks and the classroom setting cannot teach and I began to appreciate the value of work placement within the undergraduate degree structure.

The importance of administration

I am learning to understand the path of non-judgment, what this means to me and how I could apply it to the people I interact with on a regular basis. One tension within an organisation, which operated at a grass roots level, was the limits of needing to adhere to the bureaucracy and politics of still being a larger scale organisation. I felt the at times unnecessary focus upon this area really took away the power and ethos of what are the foundational principles for most aid giving organisations, and that is to prioritise the disadvantaged individual and assist the community in building awareness around social conditions. If we were to solely focus on politics and the bureaucracy of running an organisation, unfortunately employees that may be involved in this process would become inefficient and not effective at executing what should be the sole purpose of any aid organisations what their foundational principals represent. Which primarily entails prioritising the social welfare, health and wellbeing of disadvantaged individuals and groups (Hancock, 1989). Becoming caught in this bureaucratic process was difficult for me as I felt it was a valuable

waste of recourses and energy, it caused rifts between employees and the attention of assisting the disadvantaged, became lost to dealing with and corresponding to hierarchy and supervisors in what I viewed as an unnecessary manner. Perhaps this was because there was no group cohesion within this organisation or there was a lack of circulating trust. Regardless, human resources were better spent on the individuals who needed it the most, the disadvantaged.

Challenging old thought processes and habits are part of the process of change. I realised here that making me available to this change created a greater awareness of the social arena I am a part of. An increase of awareness increased my capacity to communicate, as I understood that when dealing with human lives how integral it is that communication remains open and honest. Clarity and honesty was the foundation for effective communication and also provided the ability to assist others in need. Aiding that individual to achieve their goals, whatever they may be, whether it is employment, a bed to sleep in or a psychological and physical safe space to be in was all made possible to clear communication. A process such as this is multifaceted and also involves high amounts of paper work. Prior to commencement of the placement I thought this was a waste of energy and time, and that energy spent with the formalities of this process be better spent fighting for human rights. It is these technical processes such as paperwork that aid in strengthening the fight for human equity and rights. It is crucial to keeping the communication lines open and through my experience at my work placement I further realised that there is great value in effective and accurate paper work. Whether it is inputting information in a communal database or taking accurate notes, there are so many third parties involved that communication is crucial to the overall health of many individuals. It can be the key difference between a clean and safe bed to sleep in and sleeping on the street.

Conclusions

The intense and extreme feelings,

moments, trials, dilemmas and joys I experienced through working collaboratively with strangers was extremely unique to me in the sense that I was made aware of that poverty really does exist and it affects real people. The various aspects accompanying the entire internship unit are so comprehensive and character-building that I had no choice but to gain experiential knowledge from each situation, which was accompanied by doubt, intrigue and even some form of dilemma. Further, organising an entire conference and being responsible for the success of the conference and 22 other individuals involved was a tremendous and highly valued experience as it assisted me in understanding the importance of effective communication and time management. By working with individuals who were affected by the negative repercussions of poverty, I was forced to adapt to stressful situations with patience and humility, as exhibiting anger at a dysfunctional system, frustration at a stressful situation or expressed sadness towards suffering would only lead to the detriment of those I was attempting to help. I questioned academia's place and the positive role it may play amongst deep seated social issues. Whilst intellectual thought, philosophical constructs and theoretical solutions may lay the foundations for positive change, without practical solutions to a severe physical problem such as lack of food, basic needs and shelter, there is little to be done without grass roots physical assistance to those who need it immediately. The immediateness of a situation such as this is the determining factor in the usefulness of academia within a social capacity. The best academic and theoretical frameworks may offer are a catalyst for change within a paradigm of the future. In relation to fixing problems occurring *now* within a social framework, unfortunately they are not effective in practice.

Working directly with the homeless and economically poor has broadened my own personal views and altered my previous misunderstandings about poverty. These beliefs

have been replaced with a wider, comprehensive, more inclusive view that encompasses individual circumstance, a person's history and reduce generalisations and derogatory slander and blame towards those who are homeless. The realisation that homelessness and poverty can be a direct cause of broader economic and social circumstance has allowed me to understand the complex and multifaceted issues involved with identifying poverty. The greatest lesson learned through the active participation in this unit is that, if I am to place negative judgments upon another's life circumstances, I then hinder my own personal growth and full understanding of the world of which I am a part.

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Address Correspondence to

Stefanos Sifandos

Email: stef@thecellfitness.com.au

Praxis: A Student Experience of the Behavioural Science Internship Conference

Jade Beavington
University of Notre Dame Australia

In this paper I critically reflect on my experiences of contributing to the conceptualisation, development, and delivery of the Behavioural Science Internship Conference as an undergraduate student. Behavioural Science at the University of Notre Dame Australia is situated within a collaborative, strengths-based, empowering, process-focused praxis which problematises the oppression inherent within the meritocratic assumptions, imposed outcomes, and competitive discourse that underpin the dominant educational paradigm. I explore why tensions pervaded my experiences of the conference process, and conclude that Behavioural Science praxis is marginalised as a result of socialisation within the dominant educational paradigm, and because the degree and internship are embedded within the confines of the paradigm they seek to transform. My reflection provides a resource for students and 'educators' to understand and advocate for pedagogies and praxis that support social justice.

Freire (1970, 1973) argued that pedagogical processes should promote liberation by facilitating each person's in-depth awareness of how prevailing socio-political, institutional configurations oppress them. He termed the process conscientization. The process of conscientization is empowering in itself because it allows people to develop mindfulness of the insidious ways that dominant discourses become internalised, and the implications this internalisation has in encouraging people to inadvertently collude in their own oppression (Foucault, 1977; Freire, 1970, 1973). Conscientization in turn empowers people to work together in ways that resist oppression, and engage in dialogical processes to transform unjust power relations and develop socially just alternatives (Foucault, 1977; Freire, 1970, 1973).

In this paper I draw upon the work of Freire to critically reflect on my experiences contributing to the conceptualisation, development, and delivery of the Inaugural Behavioural Science Internship Conference as an undergraduate student. Behavioural Science at the University of Notre Dame Australia (UNDA) is situated within a collaborative, strengths-based, empowering, process-focused praxis. This praxis problematises the oppression inherent within the meritocratic assumptions, imposed

outcomes, and competitive discourse that underpin the dominant educational paradigm. I begin by discussing the oppression inherent within the dominant educational paradigm, and how the praxis of Behavioural Science provides an alternative socially-just framework. This provides the context for my critical reflection of the conference process. My reflection provides a resource for 'students' and 'educators'¹ to understand and advocate for pedagogies and praxis which authentically support social justice.

The Oppression of the Dominant Educational Paradigm

The paradigm of Western formal institutionalised education gained hegemony worldwide through the education policies and practices of Western societies and their export under colonialism (Marginson, 2006; Van Krieken et al., 2006). Although education is widely cited as a solution to social inequalities, the meritocratic assumptions, imposed outcomes, and competitive discourse that underpin the dominant educational paradigm are inherently oppressive (Hill, 2009). Meritocracy erroneously attributes success entirely to an individual's hard work and talent, and thus misleadingly assumes equality of opportunity, and discounts the influence of socio-historical barriers to success (Van Krieken et al., 2006). Meritocracy has been

used to legitimate the homogenous treatment of students “as fair, principled, and lacking in prejudice” (Augustinos, Tuffin & Every, 2005, p.315). Treating those in unequal positions as equal however, serves to entrench inequalities.

Studies over time have upheld the notion that the way education is structured in schools and universities inculcates a constellation of implicit understandings (Hill, 2009; Marginson, 2006; Van Krieken et al., 2006) such as acceptance of hierarchy, mindless competition, blind obedience, apathy, and motivation by contingent external rewards; these have been termed the hidden curriculum (Bergenhengouwen, 1987; Bowles & Gintis, 2002; Gatto, 2005). University students can resist the oppression of the hidden curriculum if they emphasise the value of study in terms of enriching their personal development, relationships, and opportunity to solve social problems (Bergenhengouwen, 1987). However, it is the exchange value of study; maximising results with minimum effort, such as obtaining high grades, or prestigious highly paid jobs that students have been socialised into during their compulsory schooling (Bergenhengouwen, 1987). Consequently, resisting the hidden curriculum is difficult. Moreover, according to Bourdieu’s (1986) concept of cultural capital, the hidden curriculum involves the cultural reproduction of the values and ideology of the dominant ruling classes in society, which marginalises those whose social milieu habituates them into alternate tastes, manners, modes of communicating, and aspirations (Hill, 2009; Pressler, 2009; Van Krieken et al., 2006).

A key component of the hidden curriculum is the erroneous assumption that learning involves top-down ‘transmission’ of knowledge from educator to students (Malcolm & Zukas, 2001). Problematically, students as co-constructors of knowledge are delegitimated (Freire, 1970, 1973; Tuffin, 2005). Moreover, knowledge is routinely presented as objective and universal within dominant educational discourse, which leads to widespread failure to scrutinise the values and power dynamics that are being

endorsed through this production of knowledge, and results in the dominant educational paradigm developing impunity (Elfin, 2008; Gergen, 1973). People internalise aspects of the dominant educational paradigm so that they inadvertently think and act in ways consistent with it and therefore become participants in their own oppression (Foucault, 1977; Freire, 1970, 1973). Indeed, “developing techniques that make self-disciplining an unreflexive act of the social ordering of the knowledge-power nexus” (Beilharz & Hogan, 2006, p. 457) is an important aspect of a Foucaudian understanding of governmentality in modern society (Goodwin, 1996).

The Values-based Praxis of Behavioural Science

The Behavioural Science degree at UNDA is an innovative approach in that it is dedicated to the pursuit of social justice for all persons and peoples. It is informed by a convergence of the lenses of critical psychology and community psychology. Social justice is conceptualised as consisting of liberation and holistic wellbeing. Liberation and holistic wellbeing are best supported when people have capacity for self-determination and relationships are characterised by egalitarianism, procedural fairness, and norms of mutual support (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005). Moreover, to be socially just, society must respect diversity, and be structured to promote equity and equality; facilitate opportunities for each person to have a voice in political and social processes; and provide access to health and education services that reflect their needs (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005).

Behavioural scientists from UNDA work collaboratively with communities to deconstruct the silence, invisibility, and exclusion that characterises oppression. Action to redress injustice must occur within the context of a strengths-based, participatory process which is ‘owned’ and driven by those experiencing oppression. Dominant paternalistic ‘helping’ paradigms, such as

training marginalised persons in adjustment and coping strategies, are rejected. These uphold oppressive powerful/powerless dichotomies, and can erroneously imply that there is something wrong with the person, rather than addressing the root cause by transforming the unjust context (Drew, Sonn, Bishop & Contos, 2000; Prilleltensky, 1997; Prilleltensky & Fox, 2007; Ranzijn, McConnochie, Clarke & Nolan, 2007).

Continually striving to better understand subjectivity and develop critical reflexivity is integral to the praxis of Behavioural Science, as research exploring moral exclusion suggests that a more robustly inclusive social identity is predictive of beliefs that each person is entitled to belong within the 'moral community' just behaviour is owed to (Clayton & Opatow, 2003; Opatow, 1990). Linked to this, imagining accountability for unforeseen consequences of actions or inaction stimulates more complex, in-depth reflection, making unforeseen consequences foreseeable, and catalysing more ethical praxis (O'Neill, 1989). Critically questioning how power relations operate in different contexts to transform unjust power relations, and develop alternatives that authentically support social justice, is the essence of Behavioural Science praxis.

The Behavioural Science Internship Unit and the Conference Task

The Internship unit is undertaken in the final semester of the Bachelor of Behavioural Science at UNDA. The Internship Co-ordinator structured the unit requirements to support transformative learning and social justice. There were opportunities for students enrolled in the unit, and others exposed to the unit through the internships to engage in meaningful dialogue about the values-based praxis of the course as an alternative to paradigms that support unjust power relations. Students, university staff, and the human service agencies that hosted student interns could integrate theoretical knowledge from the degree with practical experience and obtain

constructive feedback from each other about strengths and areas of both agency practice and the degree that could be improved.

During the semester, students completed a minimum of 90 hours of voluntary work (since increased to 150 hours) with an agency engaged in projects or tasks relevant to the course. The values-based praxis was enacted by assigning students the responsibility for undertaking research to identify and acquire a placement. We each negotiated a learning contract with our Agency Supervisor, and in consultation with them, we determined both the learning goals we wished to achieve and the types of activities we would be involved in to realise these goals.

The remainder of the unit supported a structured process of critical reflection about the relationship between activities undertaken during placement and aspects of the values-based praxis of Behavioural Science. We each kept a reflective journal that was emailed to the Internship Co-ordinator each week, and participated in seminars as a class each fortnight. Seminars provided workshops in generic professional skills, and a forum to share and re-evaluate experiences encountered during placement with fellow students. The Internship Co-ordinator developed meaningful tasks for us to complete that utilised skills facilitated during the workshops and she provided feedback to consolidate our learning. These tasks included preparing a job application, submitting a report to the Internship Co-ordinator and our Agency Supervisor on the learning as a result of our placement, and working collaboratively as a class to conceptualise, develop and deliver an academic conference.

The conference was themed *Living the Recession: Reconceptualising Poverty*. Our Agency Supervisors were invited to attend, and invitations were extended to the staff within the School of Arts and Sciences and to the second year Behavioural Science students. In accord with the collaborative, strengths-based, empowering, process-focused praxis of Behavioural Science, the task was structured so that we were responsible for our own learning as

individuals and as a collective. The Internship Co-ordinator determined the conference theme and set broad parameters for the task. She held us accountable for the processes that we implemented throughout. However, rather than being prescriptive, the Internship Co-ordinator deployed herself as a resource with expertise we could access and cultivated the space for us to critically evaluate and learn from our experiences.

The Internship Co-ordinator divided aspects of the conference into five groups. These were: a conference organising committee and keynote address, interactive roundtable, interactive poster session, interactive workshop, and plenary. We drew out of a hat to determine the group to which we were assigned and the five students in our group. This process was procedurally fair as no one was given preference over anyone else in selecting the tasks they were responsible for or the members in their group (Drew, Bishop & Syme, 2002). Moreover, it provided an opportunity to practice teamwork skills necessary in the workplace since most employees cannot always choose who they work with and the tasks they undertake. The Internship Co-ordinator provided a general outline and timeline of tasks each group needed to undertake. Each group developed a project proposal and budget, which outlined the rationale and structure for their session, and chose a liaison person to act as a conduit of information, questions, and feedback to ensure that the entire conference flowed.

Experience of the Conference Process

As developing critical reflexivity is integral to ethical praxis, there was a strong rationale to write a paper which critically reflected on the experience of the Internship unit and the conference task from my perspective as a student. However, I was initially uncomfortable with writing a reflective article. Personal reflection is situated outside the dominant positivist paradigm of science as objective and universal (Drew et al., 2000). Consequently I

positioned a reflective paper as ‘not academic enough’, which linked to underlying doubts that as an honours student I am not sufficiently ‘intellectual’ to belong in academia (Fleming, 2006). I harboured concern that my peers, the lecturers who have mentored me throughout my degree, and the course itself would be judged poorly if I criticised publicly my experience of the conference.

As I began to question my reluctance further I realised that I was invoking the dominant educational paradigm by constructing the personal and student voice as not legitimate and viewing critique solely in terms of negativity. Being open to constructive criticism is necessary to avoid the marginalisation inherent in dogmatic approaches. Ultimately, my reluctance was constructive because it catalysed critical exploration of how the dominant educational paradigm inculcated tensions throughout my experiences of the conference.

When the Internship Co-ordinator introduced the conference task, I remember looking around the room and seeing everyone initially hang back, pens poised, when she invited ideas for aspects of the conference theme we could potentially focus on. Our degree is situated within an epistemology of co-construction and dialogical exchange and we had previous experience developing ideas for projects and working in groups for many of our assignments. Yet, it was as if we were waiting for clues about what was *really* expected of us, which was perhaps partly because most of us were unfamiliar with an academic conference. Although our degree is structured to minimise a dichotomous knowledge-power relationship between educators and learners the fact remains that educators retain greater power through their role in developing curriculum, and grading assignments and exams. Thus, our responses were also indicative of the dominant educational epistemology in which we understood ourselves, the ‘learners’, as empty vessels who receive knowledge transmitted by ‘experts’. This response only persisted momentarily as we began to tentatively grapple with the task. However, our

hesitancy in the face of an empowering opportunity to exercise self-determination in our learning was indicative that our disempowerment as students is deeply entrenched and insidious within the dominant educational paradigm.

I was assigned to the plenary. There was strong consensus that our group should meet in person each week due to our lack of familiarity with the task, and notions that close collaboration would strengthen our session. Scheduling meetings was difficult when we were all undertaking placements across Perth and in the final semester of our degree. Logistically, we were dealing with similar time and availability constraints that would characterise most workplaces. Beyond issues associated with the practicalities of the task, our group reflected on the ethical issues of having to do the task in the first place. We recognised that the strengths-based, empowering, collaborative, process-focused praxis that the task was situated within had the potential to foster transformative learning. Yet paradoxically, our participation was compulsory, which is problematic in terms of the way self-determination is understood as central to liberation and holistic wellbeing.

An enriching dynamic evolved where our group meetings became a safe space to discuss and reflect on what we were learning through our placements and some of the challenges we were encountering. These discussions and reflections broadened to encompass other aspects of professional development. We collectively attempted to make sense of how what we were undertaking in terms of the conference, other university tasks, paid work, and other roles fitted into what it meant to be a behavioural scientist, and what we anticipated and wanted in terms of career pathways. Although we discussed these issues in the seminars, the constraints of a larger audience and being observed by the Internship Co-ordinator meant that these discussions were less open and in-depth than our peer meetings. As I reflected on our processes to write this

article I became aware of literature demonstrating the efficacy of peer meetings to provide this kind of collegial support and mentoring (Gimbert, 2001; Schaub-de Jong, Cohen-Schotanus, Dekker & Verkerk, 2009). Ironically, a group function we understood as valuable but peripheral to the conference may have been the very learning experience the Co-ordinator structured the task to foster. We remained attuned to the imposed outcome of the conference as the 'legitimate' purpose of our meetings, expressing sentiments such as "Anyway, we better discuss what we're actually supposed to".

An overarching theme in our group experiences was the importance of developing tolerance for ambiguity. As resources, not 'experts', behavioural scientists must work with communities so that disenfranchised collectives can gain empowerment when and how *they* perceive that they need it (Freire, 1970, 1973). Authentic praxis implies ambiguity as each community is unique and initiatives must be community owned and driven. Undertaking the plenary replicated some of these issues as we needed to draw on issues that had been raised across the conference to look toward the future in terms of what was most concerning people, and what needed to be done in relation to the recession and the reconceptualisation of poverty. Actively listening on the day and liaising effectively with the other groups in advance was imperative to the delivery of a plenary that was novel, absorbing, and pertinent, without digressing inappropriately or becoming overly repetitive. Literature outlining different ways to structure a plenary was only nominally useful as we wanted to implement a process which authentically embodied behavioural science praxis and empowered marginalised groups.

Drawing on notions of liberation as a collaborative process, we aimed to be multi-dimensional and multidisciplinary in our perspective, contributing to the exchange of ideas and experiences with conference attendees in a manner that provided opportunities for those whose experiences may have otherwise remained marginal or invisible to be heard. This was

reflected in our decision to bring together academic and lived experiences. We knew that conference attendees would be diverse, ranging from academic researchers and policy makers, to those working in service delivery and advocacy within the community sector, to second year behavioural science students, and we wanted the plenary to be meaningful and stimulating to those occupying these different contexts. We acknowledged that although inviting the sharing of lived experience is empowering, this does not necessarily critically engage with the issues, as lived experience can reflect dominant discourses through processes of internalised oppression (Freire, 1970, 1973). Thus, we decided to structure the plenary as a panel, with each of us taking on a different persona from which we would provide a future-oriented perspective to stimulate discussion. In choosing personas we wanted to draw on themes raised during the conference, but also speak to issues that may have received less attention, or were marginalised. We also attempted to choose personas that related to our degree majors, voluntary work we had undertaken, or roles at our internship agencies so that we could apply what we were learning. For example, it was important to have someone take on the role of a student living on a restricted income as many attendees would be experiencing this reality. Thus, one student took on the persona of an honours student who had returned to study earlier than planned after being retrenched from employment as part of widespread funding cuts to government. As an undergraduate the student lived on Youth Allowance and worked part-time, which furthered her insight into the realities of living on a low income with multiple responsibilities and roles.

Our group interactions reflected an egalitarian and organic structure. Initially we had no formally ascribed roles within our group. We had developed rapport and each of us respected each other so we largely left each person to make whatever contributions they felt they could, using Microsoft Word features such as track changes to collaborate in our preparation. I believed that a

more hierarchical group structure in the context of the ambiguity of our task would have led to social loafing as some people withdrew their contributions due to self-doubt, while others were overburdened with responsibilities (Latane, Williams & Harkins, 1979).

Halfway through semester, the Internship Co-ordinator scheduled meetings with each group to facilitate feedback on group processes and the proposals we had developed for our sessions. In retrospect, I can appreciate that the fact that we had to have this meeting, and that it was held in the Co-ordinator's office, meant that our group approached the meeting in a manner similar to a group of naughty school girls being sent to see the headmaster. Thus, when the Internship Co-ordinator said that it was advisable for us to have a project manager; someone other than the liaison, and we would not leave the room until we decided on someone, I felt trapped and antagonistic toward her. My inner cynic whispered that the participatory, empowering praxis of the course can sometimes obfuscate what remain essentially asymmetric power relations between educator and learner. In spite of everything, the Behavioural Science degree, Internship unit, and conference task operate within the confines of the dominant educational paradigm, with all of the unjust power relations that this encompasses. Even though the Internship Co-ordinator intended the meeting to facilitate student empowerment, self-determination, and power-sharing and collaboration with each other and with her, I reacted passively. I was colluding in my own oppression in this interaction because I did not communicate my perspective more openly with the Internship Co-ordinator. Thus, an opportunity for dialogue was forgone. Ironically, I have since come to understand how having a project manager, and developing more clarity about the tasks each person will be responsible for, can facilitate effective collaboration and need not imply a hierarchical dynamic.

The high level of self-determination and collaboration involved in the conference process was empowering even while it was sometimes confronting. On one hand it fostered self-efficacy, and I experienced a strong sense of community with the rest of the class, as it allowed us to realise and consolidate skills we had developed throughout our degree. However, our group sometimes felt isolated from other groups and encountered difficulty because information we needed from the other groups to plan the plenary was not always forthcoming. The slower flow of information was often due to factors beyond the other groups' control. They were also negotiating ambiguities about their roles and were still developing their sessions. In managing this isolation the mechanism of the liaison person was beneficial yet it did not always function optimally. Instead, each of us drew on informal networks of peers in other groups. This helped us feel more connected and develop a clearer picture of the orientation that the groups preceding us were taking so we could ensure that the plenary drew together themes and would complement the rest of the conference.

Another confronting issue arose from the differences in the way group members conceptualised their role. Some people took a broader view and worked to facilitate the success of the whole conference while others focused exclusively on their individual role. In contrast to the grading that is the norm in the rest of our degree, the Internship unit was to be awarded a non-graded pass. It is problematic for me to make attributions as to why some people took a more individualistic approach, as this could have been for a number of reasons. However, apathy, competitiveness, and discourses of 'doing as little as you can get away with' reflect the extrinsic learning motivation of maximum result with minimum effort which characterises the hidden curriculum of the dominant educational paradigm (Bergenhengouwen, 1987). Importantly, I have come to recognise the ways

in which I myself have internalised the dominant educational paradigm inadvertently. Moreover, I believe the non-graded pass was consistent with the heavy workload and praxis that the unit was embedded within. Thus, though I sometimes felt confronted by the individualistic approaches of some students, this served as a reminder of the importance of taking time to listen rather than working from assumptions, and of respecting the multiple perspectives which emerge from the diverse social realities people occupy.

Organising the conference while I simultaneously undertook a placement constituted experiential learning which helped prepare me for professional practice. For example, as part of our proposal we needed to develop a hypothetical budget that itemised our costs, and balanced within the amount the Internship Co-ordinator had allocated. If we exceeded this amount then we also needed to look at preparing a hypothetical grant application. Our group struggled to balance our budget. We managed it by not charging salaries for the full amount of time each member of our group spent preparing for the conference, arguing that as Behavioural Scientists we donated our time to the conference because it would raise community consciousness of the injustices surrounding poverty.

In the workplace it would be difficult to balance a budget by the idealistic means we devised. It is likely that we would be constrained by both our own need for income and by our employing organisation's unwillingness for us to spend time at work on a project that is outside the scope of our paid job (Drew, 2006). At the same time as I was confronted by this reality, I was experiencing the way that issues such as budgetary constraints can mediate a research approach through my placement. Although I was aware that research designs represent a compromise between what is optimal in terms of empowering communities and promoting social justice, and what is possible with the resources available, this had remained a distant, hypothetical consideration. These experiences became important in re-calibrating my

professional expectations by directing my attention towards research innovations that had been developed across a range of settings, including at my internship agency, to authentically support community capacity building and operate within time and budgetary constraints.

The day of the conference

On the day of the conference I was preoccupied with concerns that a chronic illness I have would impede my alertness and make it challenging to speak articulately. As part of the plenary I needed to participate in each session but at the same time observe; listening closely, making notes about what was discussed and taking account of feedback from those attending the conference. Our group was aware that it was important to project confidence and professionalism, although the structure of the plenary prevented rehearsal and required us to remain highly flexible.

Each session of the conference was insightful and rigorously argued. In my opinion everyone spoke with charisma, and responded to feedback from the audience in an articulate way that illustrated depth of critical knowledge of the implications of the discourse surrounding the recession and poverty, and ways to resist this oppression and support social justice. During morning tea people attending the conference commended me on its quality, and I could hear several similar comments being made to others. I hoped that our group would maintain this quality as I felt each of us represented the entire class due to the highly collaborative nature of the task.

Our panel moderator introduced the four of us who would speak on the plenary panel with some brief background about our personas and then segued into a short excerpt from a recently-aired *Four Corners* documentary about the new face of homelessness. The excerpt showed different Australian families talking directly to the camera about the difficulties they faced each day (ABC, 2009). We used this snapshot of people's lived experiences of the recession and

poverty as we felt it was a poignant demonstration of the relevance of key issues and arguments that had been discussed over the course of the conference, and provided a 'bridge' to link talking points we had developed with points that had been raised in earlier sessions. Moreover, the excerpt spoke to key concerns that each of us in our group honed in on because we had chosen personas that worked with or occupied marginalised positions even before the recession. Our collective message was the way that the inequalities and injustices associated with poverty will persist into the future – constituting intergenerational injustice, unless a more socially just system is implemented (Thompson, 2009). Although the new face of poverty brought about by the recession showed that poverty can affect anyone, and therefore in some ways expanded society's scope of justice to include some of those experiencing poverty, the new face often functions to make those who are already marginalised even more invisible.

It is difficult to evaluate the extent to which we achieved our aim of bringing multiple perspectives into the plenary and supporting a process where each person was encouraged to voice their perspective on the directions they would like to see taken. Since most of the conference attendees were students, the fact that the discussion progressed towards contemplation of issues raised by our group member who took on the persona of a student, regarding the way students living on a restricted income are positioned in dominant discourse as lazy, and told that they should get a 'real' job, suggests that in some respects we did promote opportunities for people to connect the research to their lived experiences critically. People questioned how this discourse positioned education as a privilege rather than a human right, and the way that all aspects of life have become commodified so that the social benefits that flow to the community from everyone having access to higher education are trivialised or dismissed. Ultimately, this led to a closing challenge from an attendee on the dual potential of education to foster inclusion and exclusion: To what extent does education still

have the potential to instil a more socially just and equitable society when the way that the education system is structured often upholds the status quo?

As the conference ended everyone in attendance seemed euphoric and filled with a sense of achievement. Our project manager emailed the plenary group to express how much she had enjoyed working with us and how proud she was of our shared achievement. The Dean of Arts and Sciences emailed all Arts and Sciences staff and students congratulating our class for the excellence and professionalism of the conference. Additionally, both our Internship Co-ordinator and the Head of Behavioural Science congratulated us in person, and then emailed us to reiterate their pride in our achievements throughout the process of the conference.

Despite the myriad congratulations I initially felt deflated as I perceived our group's 'performance' as deficient. After the conference I had the opportunity to attend what I thought of at the time as a 'real' academic conference. The term 'real' indicates the way I had positioned our conference as second-rate because we were undergraduate students, and therefore less knowledgeable than academics according to the dominant educational paradigm. I only truly believed how well executed and professional the efforts of our class were in conceptualising, developing, and delivering a conference through comparison. Ironically, engaging in comparison in this hierarchal manner reflects the competitive norms of the dominant paradigm of education.

Conscientization and Praxis: Ongoing Processes

Providing a definitive 'final' analysis of the transformative learning I experienced through the Internship unit and the conference would follow the academic convention of a conclusion. However, it would lack authenticity here because conscientization and praxis are ongoing processes (Freire, 1970, 1973). Consequently, throughout this paper I aimed to share how the collaborative, strengths-based, empowering process that the Internship unit and conference task were situated within continues to enrich my

critical awareness of the ways oppression is manifested within an education context. This growing awareness facilitates my understanding of how to engage in dialogical processes to develop socially-just alternatives which transform unjust power relations. The values-based praxis of the Behavioural Science course problematises the oppression inherent in the meritocratic assumptions, imposed outcomes, and competitive discourse that underpin the dominant educational paradigm. However, socialisation is affected by the dominant paradigm, and the Behavioural Science degree operates within the confines of the dominant educational paradigm it seeks to challenge. I cannot identify a solution for the tensions and marginalisation that this context inculcated throughout my experience of the conference. However, by critically reflecting on my experiences I hope to provide a resource for students and 'educators' to understand and advocate for pedagogies and praxis which support social justice. Power is omnipresent; yet by critically questioning power relations, and working together in ways that resist oppressive power relations, we have the potential to transform unjust power relations and develop alternatives which authentically embody the pursuit of social justice for all persons and peoples (Foucault, 1977; Freire, 1970, 1973).

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Note

¹ Quotation marks are used to signify that the binary conceptualisation of educator/student is problematic from a Freirian perspective.

Address for correspondence

Jade Beavington

Email: jade.beavington1@my.nd.edu.au

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Short biography of author

Jade is currently undertaking Honours in Behavioural Science at the University of Notre Dame Australia in Fremantle, Western Australia. She has worked as a Research Assistant at the Research Centre for Stronger Communities, Curtin University of Technology, Western Australia, where she undertook her Behavioural Science Internship.

Psychiatry in the Service of Oppression: An Essay Book Review

Metzl, J. M. (2009). *The Protest Psychosis: How Schizophrenia Became a Black Disease*. Boston: Beacon Books, 246 pages.

Watters, E. (2010). *Crazy Like Us: The Globalisation of the American Psyche*. New York: Free Press, 306 pages.

Reviewed by
Brian Bishop
School of Psychology and Speech Pathology
Curtin University
Email: b.bishop@curtin.edu.au

Psychiatry as oppression

Jonathan Metzl and Ethan Watters present arguments about the nature of mental illness from quite different arenas, yet they can be used to comment on the epistemology and ontology of psychosis and mood disorders. Metzl looks at the increase in the number of young male African-American sufferers of schizophrenia in the 1960s and 1970s. He uses archival records of inmates of the Ionia State Hospital for the Criminally Insane in Michigan to investigate the course of diagnosis, treatment and outcome of a large number of people over a period of half a century. Prior to the 1960s schizophrenia had been seen as largely as an illness affecting middle-aged people, more often women, and was characterised by passivity, and 'split personalities'. In the socially-charged environment of the 1960s the DSM was revised and DSM II was released. In DSM II the diagnosis of schizophrenia was changed to include paranoid-type schizophrenia with delusions of persecution. During this period the number of young African-Americans males diagnosed with schizophrenia increased quite dramatically. Metzl's central claim is that this rise was not produced from some organic change, nor was it from increased sophistication of psychiatric diagnosis, but was a response to the civil rights movements and the protests of against race-based discrimination in the US. He argues that this process of changing the diagnosis of schizophrenia to allow the recasting of violent or

non-violent protest as symptoms of mental illness was a not too subtle mechanism for dealing with social injustice. To deal with the sequelae of social injustice meant rather than tackling and rectifying the injustice, US society used collective denial and persecution of those who protested against it. He makes a parallel to the perversion of psychiatry in Stalinist Soviet Union where dissidents, fellow travellers and anyone who came into the paranoid purview of the KGB were sent to psychiatric hospitals and prisons; the infamous gulags in the far east. Metzl is somewhat caught in a dilemma in that while he points to the dynamics of the Stalinist approach he sees the American approach in the 60s as being more subtle and is, and although as political, not as blatant as in the Soviet Union.

He begins the story of the politicisation of psychiatry with one Samuel Cartwright who in the 1850s described a new mental illness. Cartwright argued that African-American slaves who ran away from captivity must be suffering from a form of illness. He felt that Africans were naturally suited to servitude. Cartwright also argued that they were psychologically unfit for freedom. If slaves ran away they would be at risk of mental illness, and he devised a series of 'treatments' such as whipping and bloodletting. In doing so he pathologised African-American's desire for freedom. This was an idea that really coursed through American society and psychiatry, and also resonated with American psychoanalytic thought at the turn of the 20th century. While he begins with what we now see as an absurd notion he argues that racism has affected and politicised psychiatry. Psychiatry has become an unwitting and possibly unwilling instrument of dominant oppression.

In tackling the issue of the level of complicity of psychiatry had in the mistreatment of African-Americans Metzl is somewhat ambiguous. At some levels he argues that this change was subtle and that psychiatrists were simply doing a professional task using the diagnostic tools at hand. At another level his argument is really that

psychiatry is part of the broader American Society and responds in similar ways and to the dominant values and desires of Americans. So in a sense psychiatry is caught in a dilemma between a professional approach and social justice in doing its work with the mentally ill.

Mertzl cites one case study of an African-American male, Otis, who was diagnosed as schizophrenic, but was clearly sane. He had been given a jail term of three to five years. His supportive family raised concerns with the prison officials and others about Otis' misdiagnosis, but to little avail. Otis also protested about his treatment, and he was disciplined for his 'inappropriate behaviour'. Periods of isolation in solitary confinement led to the development of mental illness and he was detained in Ionia for the rest of his life. Metzl says that this is not an isolated case and that psychiatric hospitals were manufacturing illness using procedures that are routinely used for disciplinary purposes in jails and in detention centres in Australia. One of the lessons to be learned from this book is that we are creating mental health problems, often in the very places designed to alleviate such problems.

Crazy like US

Ethan Watters, on the other hand, paints a more subtle picture, although he also uses hyperbole to make his point that America is exporting its conception of mental illness across the world and homogenising the expression of mental illness across cultures. He sees the US hegemony as a flattening of the psyche across the world.

The examples he uses tend to be relatively extreme and quite obvious. For example he talks about the way in which large pharmaceutical companies were unable or unwilling to attempt to get into the Japanese market with their highly successful antidepressants. They recognised that part of the problem with Japanese culture was that depression was attached with considerable stigma. Therefore people were very reluctant

to recognise or acknowledge that their melancholy might be pathological. The case that Watters makes in that GlaxoSmithKlein introduced the notion of *kokoro no kaze* or 'cold of the soul', to re-badge depression as metaphorically similar to influenza. Through this and some other events these major drug companies were able to form a market in Japan for antidepressants.

Another example of the Americanisation of mental health symptoms spreading into other cultures is anorexia. Anorexia was largely unknown in China in its American form of 'fat fear'. The notion that people would starve themselves because they saw themselves as fat was not part of Chinese culture. In 1994, Charlene Hsu Chi-Ying, aged 14 died of starvation on the streets of Hong Kong. Her death was highly visible, highly unusual and widely reported, but journalists did not have a logical explanation that would fit with the Chinese populous' concepts of illness. The American concept of anorexia as a 'fat disease' was borrowed as an explanation. This gave rise to anorexia as a mental health problem among the Chinese. As we will see, Watters provides an explanation of how a rare occurrence of US anorexia can become widespread.

Another example that Watters gives is, paradoxically, more blatant, yet also more subtle. It deals with the Boxing Day tsunami in 2004. An American expert on grief and trauma counselling was holidaying in Sri Lanka when the tsunami hit. She mobilised her US-based team to come in to Sri Lanka to provide counselling for the bereaved. The form of counselling was based on the assumption in American psychology that grief needs to be 'let out'; to be talked about to allow people to come to terms with a tragedy and 'move on' (e.g., Volkman, 2007). Watters makes the point that tragedy was something that the Sri Lankans were familiar with. They were in the midst of a revolution and the death of people from this turmoil was common enough for social patterns to have developed to deal with it. He points to the situation that where a person is killed or

injured, the perpetrator is likely to be known. Social regulations had been developed to stop relatives of the victim from seeking revenge and the situation degenerating into uncontrolled pay-back murders. The way Sri Lankans deal with trauma is through getting back to normal, everyday business as soon as possible. Thus over time the Sri Lankans had learned to deal with traumas in their society through a process of socially acceptable and collective denial. Obviously the impact of the tsunami and then a wave of American professionals coming in to help were quite significant. In a lot of ways the victims of the tsunami were re-traumatised by the intrusion of the American methodologies. In fact one of the counsellors reported that one child who had lost his family just wanted to go back to school. This was seen to be symptomatic of post-traumatic stress disorder by the counsellors, but as dealing with the issues by locals.

The subtlety in this example comes from the fact that there is no awareness by American professionals that in fact that their approach to dealing with the aftermath of trauma is, or could be, culturally inappropriate. There was also a failure to recognise how the local culture operated. Moreover, there was a lack of appreciation or understanding of the extent to which American concepts of the symptoms, individualistic treatment and outcomes are culturally specific to largely white America. There are issues of worldview and cultural myths that can be seen here (see Table 1). The professional worldview is that trauma requires technical responses, based on science. Incidentally, the current emphasis on evidence-based practice necessarily drives the profession towards more technical 'solutions' and away from local and folk processes of recovery. The underlying myth is that 'the West is best'. Western knowledge and treatment must be better than folkways.

Central to Watters' thesis is that is the notion that psychosis is real; it is a psychiatric phenomena that occurs in all places at all times but that is the expression of it varies from culture to culture and from time to time. He notes that

the nature of US men's experiences of war and the psychiatric sequela changed quite dramatically from the American civil war through to the World Wars, Vietnam, the Middle East and Afghanistan. What he argues is that at any particular time there is a pool of psychiatric problems and the way in which these manifest themselves is dependent upon time and place. So psychosis exists, the disturbance in brain function exists, but the interaction of that with society differs from time to time. The important thing that he emphasises is that the expression of psychosis, such as catatonia, in the early part of the 20th century is different from current forms of psychosis in there 'look and feel', but essentially it is driven by the same mechanisms. For the sufferer with a mental health problem these symptoms are very, very real. Thus in the China, the undifferentiated psychiatric problems could be expressed in anorexia and thus the spread of such an illness can be dramatic and unexpected. In a sense, the illness is not spreading, only the manifest symptoms. The pool of psychiatric problems was already there, just waiting for a focus.

At a given time and place, the disturbances in the individuals brain coalesces with fashionable notions of what mental illness is to produce new forms of diseases. The experience of the sufferers is that the new mental illness is devastatingly real, so much so that researchers and the broader community ascribe physiological and genetic causes to them. What this says is that while something can be socially constructed it is still a solid reality. Psychosis might change in its nature from time to time but for those who are experiencing it is immutable. Also for the professionals who have to deal with it is immutable. This issue raises a really important point beyond the issue of mental health across time and place. This is not to downgrade the importance of the issues of mental health but rather to use it as a vehicle for recognising that when something is socially constructed it is not less real, less solid, and less obvious than physical reality.

To summarise the themes of the books have been analysed using Causal Layered Analysis (Inayatullah, 2004; CLA). CLA is a discourse analytic tool. Discourse is coded into four layers, litany (the undisputed 'facts': what has happened?), social-causative (the why of the litany; what were the social dynamics that gave rise to the litany?), worldview (how the events are perceived?) and myth (the cultural underpinnings of the events). After this deconstruction, each layer is analysed and reconstructed into a conclusion. The value of this approach to community psychology is that it forces us to examine the deeper layers of meaning and culture that give sense to the surface observations and actions. It is relatively simply and is akin to having a Bronfenbrenner systems map in a pocket or purse at all times. CLA requires that we see things in terms of the big picture, which Sarason (1999) reminded us is the major strength of community psychology, even it is more honoured in the breach than in the observance.

A solid new reality for psychology

Part of the problem that has been facing post-modernism and social constructionism is the characterisation by critics that reality is relative, explicitly, and implicitly, reality must be less 'solid' than physical reality. Even though Einstein pointed to relativity in time and space, the physical world is seen as made of 'stiffer stuff' than the social world. This represents part of the modernist worldview. Hard science is about hard reality. Soft science must be about soft realities. The notion that there can be multiple realities clashes with the modernist view that there is only one pathway to truth and this is through positivistic science. The prevalence of this view is not simply a reflection of a debate between the physical sciences and the social sciences, but is reflective of the rise of modernism over the past centuries. The difficulty for psychological science is that its history, its reality, is embedded in the modernist period where empiricism and science were seen as the 'brave new world'. Social constructionism and post-modernism grew out of a perceived

limitation with aspects of positivism. But if we are to take a social constructionist approach, we need to accept the corollary that science is a phenomenon of modernism, and as such the social world helps form our views of reality. The recognition that science and modernism had created problems in the process of solving other problems opened the door for post-modernism and a different, but evolving science. Just as any new paradigm is rejected by the adherents of the old, post-modernism and social constructionism were seen as unscientific and reflective of 'new age' thinking. Even though many of the thinkers were advocating new approaches to psychological science (e.g., Gergen, 1973, 1992; Polkinghorne, 1983; Sampson, 1989; Sarason, 1981; Smith, Harré & van Langenhove, 1996) there was little acceptance of Pepper's (1942, 1966) notion of a multiplicity of world theories which were the bases of different approaches to science. Rather than seeing mechanism (positivism) as the only true scientific approach, Pepper argued that differing types of questions required different types of methods.

Contextualism is one of these approaches. Its root metaphor is the 'act in context' and can be aligned with post-modernism. It is a natural haven for social constructionism and post-modernism. Contextualism is also the 'natural' science for community psychology. Contextualism is a difficult science to operationalise, given that we are embedded in modernism and positivism. Positivism requires us to ask how and why questions. This assumes that social and physical entities are seen as discrete and separate. Our sense of who we are and our sense of self-efficacy also point to our agency in a world of separate entities. Contextualism denies this and we must see the world in terms of Gaia, with everything interconnected. Essentially, this means leaving all we learned in research methods behind us and embrace qualitative approaches. The inclusion of a CLA analysis above was done to be illustrative that it is possible to be rigorous and structured in our analyses (although I lay no claim to rigour in the CLA presented here).

What Metzl and Watters have done is to

Table 1. *Metzl and Watters differ in the levels of analysis.*

	Metzl	Watters
Litany	The population of inmates in mental institutions changed in the late 50s and 60s from being primarily white and female to African-American males.	The nature of the symptoms of various mental illnesses has changed as countries become more influenced by the West and in particular by the US. For example, depression was not recognised as a category of mental health problems in Japan much to the chagrin of major pharmaceutical manufacturers. There was a lack of acceptance in Japan of the notion of depression as it was seen as stigmatising.
Social causation	The rise of the civil rights movement meant a corresponding challenge to the dominant white society. In responding to this substantial change in behaviour from capacity to protest, rebellion and some violence psychiatry changed by defining criteria for schizophrenia to include symptoms of unprovoked violence and aggression. This led to an increase of African American males being defined as schizophrenic.	Watters shows how there has been subtle and not so subtle inculcation of American identification and treatment of mental health in other cultures. For example in Japan the stigma associated with depression while is sidestepped by referring to it as the "cold of the soul". In China the fat obsession of American society had not been an issue but when the young woman died from starvation the Chinese looked to the West for an explanation of what was going on and this gave rise to Western-style eating disorders.
World view	It is unlikely that psychiatrists were overtly racist, but there was a perception that things had changed and that the protests threatened to be traditional American way of life. There is also deep vestiges of colonial and slave worldviews.	Underlying each of these examples Watters gives is the fundamental problem that Westerners and Americans had of seeing their mental health science has been far more advanced and thus it was appropriate to share their knowledge and expertise with other cultures. The problem with this was the lack of recognition that in many situations local cultures had developed coping mechanisms that do not rely on talking therapy.
Myth	There are many pertinent myths about this time. Protest was seen as a challenge to the structure of society and thus dangerous. A clear example of this is the myths about the danger of African American males to white women.	Inherent in all of this is the myth of the West is best, and Western science is more sophisticated and closer to reality than be superstitions and cultural practices of third world cultures.

point out that what we know to be real, immutable and solid is socially constructed. The underpinning of psychosis to genetics and physiology creates an image that psychosis must be more like a physical reality, not something that can be changed from time to time and place to place. Both authors have made the case that what we see as solid is based in social construction. The implications of their arguments are that we need to reflect on the way we conceptualise social constructionism, and to recognise that social realities have the 'look and feel' of physical realities.

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Reviewed by
Lauren Breen
School of Psychology and Speech Pathology
Curtin University
Email: lauren.breen@curtin.edu.au

Many accounts of gender differences would have us believe that there are key differences between men and women's brains and abilities and that these differences are a result of genetic hard-wiring. These fixed differences are asserted in popular literature (e.g., John Gray's *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus*, Allan and Barbara Pease's *Why Men Don't Listen and Women Can't Read Maps*, Barbara and Allan Pease's *Why Men Don't Have a Clue and Women Always Need More Shoes*¹, Michael Gurian's *What Could He Be Thinking?* and Leonard Sax's *Why Gender Matters*) as well as reinforced by some eminent academics (e.g., Simon Baron-Cohen, Louann Brizendine). This biological explanation has gained legitimacy because of their appeal to the need for 'facts' and physical explanations. Scarily, this notion of hard-wired differences between boys and girls has infiltrated the curriculum and teaching methods in many schools. Indeed, Fine writes, "Three years ago, I discovered my son's kindergarten teacher reading a book that claimed his brain was incapable of forging the connection between emotion and language. And so I decided to write this book" (p. 274).

Fine provides a compelling and meticulously-researched argument to show that the wiring is soft – a product of culture – rather than hard. The book consists of three parts. Part 1, 'Half-changed World', Half-changed Minds, consists of eight chapters devoted to dispelling the myth that differences between male and female brains can only be the result of hard-wiring. Instead, she provides evidence for sociocultural factors that affect our brains, thoughts, emotions, and behaviours.

Part 2, Neurosexism, contains eight chapters that challenge the pseudoscience that is based upon misinterpretations and misrepresentations of brain imaging studies. Fine demonstrates how these dubious conclusions based upon knowledge gaps, assumptions, and flawed methodologies are legitimated and used to sustain sex discrimination as the status quo. After all, if gender differences are hard-wired, we have no reason to question the unequal access to education and employment, sex discrimination, or domestic inequalities; these can be legitimated by this (pseudo)science.

Part 3, Recycling Gender, comprises five chapters highlighting how children are 'gendered' even before their conception and throughout their development. Fine highlights the *increasing* saliency of gender in Western cultures and asks "how should children ignore gender when they continually watch it, hear it, see it; are clothed in it, sleep in it, eat off it?" (p. 239). Given this saliency, Fine shows that attempts to engage in gender-neutral parenting are laudable yet laughable. It is no wonder, then, that parents are quick to (wrongly) conclude that differences between their sons and daughters can only be a result of biology.

This book certainly appealed to me as a woman, psychologist, academic, and parent of two daughters. At times, Fine is refreshingly amusing in her painstaking research, such as when she describes following up on the references cited in the neuropsychiatrist-authored book *The Female Brain* (Brizendine, 2007). She writes, "I tracked down every neuroscience study cited by Brizendine as evidence for female superiority in mind reading. (No, really, no need to thank me. I do this sort of thing for pleasure)" (p. 158). However, the book is not perfect. The writing varies from conversational and accessible to unnecessarily opaque leading me to wonder about the audience the book is intended for. Presumably to appease an international readership, Fine sometimes uses North American examples (e.g., New Yorker and Hispanic-American when

describing social identities) and language (e.g., barrettes), and this is jarring to me as an Australian reader of an Australian author. Additionally, Fine declares, “Anecdotes are not data” (p. 55), yet paradoxically, intersperses the summaries of experimental findings with anecdotes of her family life and children as well as other researchers’ case studies. Finally, I think the lack of any discussion of Gender Identity Disorder and its implications is an oversight, and would have strengthened the thesis by providing another example wherein hardwiring versus sociocultural constructions of gender could be examined.

On the whole, the book is useful to community psychologists because it provides a challenge to the dominant discourse explaining gender differences and should be of particular interest to parents and teachers.

Note

¹ I am not making these up.

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