RACISM AND PREJUDICE

Psychological Perspectives

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Position Paper is written in the context of current social and political debates about native title, reconciliation with Aboriginal people, multiculturalism and immigration, and is intended to achieve several ends. By summarising psychological theory, research and practice in relation to racism and prejudice, we hope it will increase understanding of these phenomena among psychologists, policy makers and the public. We have spelled out some of the policy and practical implications of this review in a series of recommendations (see below). The current context also makes it timely for psychology to examine critically its contributions to this potentially very divisive social issue, and the pervasive effects of institutionalised racism within institutions, disciplines and professions. We hope the Paper will contribute to increased awareness of these issues and to repositioning psychology to work collaboratively with minority groups.

The Paper notes that biological concepts of 'race' have dubious validity, but that socially constructed notions of 'race' are promoted and used in various ways to support current inequitable relationships among groups. The expression of racism and prejudice has changed over recent decades from overt to more covert and subtle forms, but research reveals that they are still prevalent in Australia and other Western countries. Victim-blaming and scapegoating are common responses to attempts to make sense of social problems such as high unemployment levels. The media often reinforce negative stereotypes of minority groups.

The Paper identifies contributions to racism and prejudice which arise at societal, intergroup, interpersonal, and intraindividual levels. The role of government policy and legislation in either promoting or decreasing racism is explored. Social psychological research on the development of stereotypes about one's own and other cultural groups from relatively automatic cognitive categorisation processes is reviewed. It is noted that prejudiced attitudes and behaviours follow from these stereotypes only if beliefs are consonant with the stereotypes. It is thus not necessary to view prejudice as an 'inevitable' phenomenon. Child-rearing practices and education can have an impact on the beliefs which children develop concerning their own and other cultural groups. Members of minority groups sometimes adopt the prejudiced views of the dominant group, resulting in psychological consequences such as low self-esteem.

Evidence of how racism is being expressed and experienced in the current Australian context is then reviewed. The research documents that most minority group members report having experienced racism and prejudice, in forms including verbal abuse, physical attacks and discrimination. Direct quotes from members of minority groups, included throughout the paper, also document the multiple forms of disadvantage and difficulty they face.

Institutionalised racism is often invisible. It occurs when an institution or system takes the dominant group as the 'normal' and the 'standard', against which minority groups are seen as inferior or abnormal. We use the example of the mental health system to demonstrate how the structures and processes designed to serve the rights and needs of the dominant group fail to meet adequately those of minority groups. Minority groups face particular stresses and problems (associated, for example, with migration, dispossession, and enforced separations) which result in a clear need for mental health services. Yet the Paper documents that the system is not set up to serve these needs; for instance, few clinicians can conduct therapy in languages other than English, few are trained in specific cultural issues relevant to mental health, and there is a lack of culturally appropriate assessment instruments and treatments. Thus, even where there is no

evidence of active discrimination against minority groups, it can be argued that institutionalised racism is evident.

Various programs have been conducted in workplaces, schools and other settings to reduce racism and prejudice and enhance cross-cultural understanding. The Paper lists the set of conditions which have been shown to maximise changes in stereotyped and prejudiced thinking, and which include: the repeated presentation of information which disconfirms the stereotype; cooperative work towards superordinate goals by members of different groups; and sharing of personal information between members of different groups. Encouraging perspective taking and interest-based conflict resolution in children also reduces prejudice. A variety of other community-based programs also offers potential for promoting cross-cultural understanding. However, the long-term success of any isolated intervention will be limited if it is eroded by day-to-day experiences, organisational culture and government responses. There is evidence that legislation against discrimination and racism is an important component in changing community attitudes and social norms in the long term.

The Paper recognises the need for psychology, along with other disciplines, to examine its own role in relation to racism and prejudice. There are various ways in which the profession and discipline of psychology in the past can be seen to have contributed to racism. These include an emphasis on the 'deficits' and 'problems' of minority group members, rather than their competencies. By focusing on individualistic explanations for problems, the contributions of structural and systemic inequities are ignored. Some psychologists have engaged in the 'race-IQ debate', propounding biological deterministic views which support racism and victim-blaming. There are some encouraging recent trends to suggest that these problems are being acknowledged and addressed. The Paper suggests some principles and processes through which psychology can contribute to processes of reconciliation, respect and inclusiveness within a multicultural society.

The recommendations summarised below are offered as a beginning, not an end, of a process towards establishing a fair and just multicultural society. We hope that governments, institutions, groups and individuals will take the process further and develop their own applications of the broad recommendations offered here.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

We <u>recommend</u> that:

Macro level

1   Governments provide leadership in the form of public statements which acknowledge that racism is still prevalent in Australia (even if blatant expressions of it are now less common); rebutting statements which reinforce attribution biases, victim-blaming and scapegoating, such as laying blame for unemployment onto minority groups; and making clear the lack of scientific basis for statements asserting racial superiority or inferiority;

2   Governments work in partnership with representative organisations and individuals from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and migrant groups to develop legislation, policy, funding and other forms of sponsorship to reduce the incidence of racism at all levels;

3   Long-running or continuous government-sponsored campaigns to reduce racism and prejudice are established;

4   Existing legislation and government institutions and programs which assist in ensuring social justice, e.g., the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, are maintained, properly resourced and continually evaluated for effectiveness;

5   All new policy initiatives and legislation are examined to ensure that they promote and maintain the ideals of social justice;

6   All Members of Parliament in Australia and all people involved in the media receive anti-racism and cultural awareness training, conducted by members of minority groups;

7   Media organisations follow the example provided by SBS in providing education about cultures other than Anglo-Australian culture, in entertaining and diverse forms. The media take responsibility for representing ethnic groups, ethnic differences, and conflict between ethnic groups, in ways which highlight the diversity within groups and similarities across groups, thereby discouraging stereotyping; and

8   Media coverage of successful non-violent resolution of ethnic conflicts at local and international levels is increased.

Institutional

1   All institutions, professions, and organisations examine their own policies and practices to identify and address instances of institutionalised racism within them;

2   Education for intercultural understanding, antiracism training and effective conflict resolution, in age appropriate forms, become integral parts of school and preschool curricula;

3   Training for intercultural understanding and antiracism, conducted by members of minority groups, is made widely available to people working in schools, local councils, and community organisations;

4   Community programs are developed which involve cooperation among people from different backgrounds, with the aim of breaking down stereotypes and increasing understanding, and developing an awareness that different groups often have the same, not conflicting, interests;

5   All parents are given access to parenting programs which encourage them to use alternatives to punitive, power-assertive strategies for guiding and controlling their children's behaviour, and to help them develop skills in using inductive reasoning;

6   Incentives in the form of prizes, scholarships and grants are made available for people to produce books, video games, CD-ROMs, films, etc., which present counter-instances of racial and other stereotypes, encourage open-minded attitudes and respect for those different from oneself, and model interest-based conflict resolution; and

7   Institutions support inclusive language and inclusive policies, and resist attempts to derogate such initiatives as 'mere' political correctness.

Psychology

1   The APS make public statements of rebuttal to statements which reinforce attribution biases, victim-blaming and scapegoating, such as laying blame for unemployment onto minority groups; and make clear the lack of scientific basis for statements asserting racial superiority or inferiority on intelligence or any other psychological attribute;

2   Courses on cross-cultural (including Aboriginal) issues, awareness, and research, developed in partnership with representatives of indigenous and migrant groups, are integrated into undergraduate psychology courses;

3   (a) The APS encourage compliance with the Guidelines for the Provision of Psychological Services for and the Conduct of Psychological Research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People of Australia, and, in partnership with representatives of the groups involved, formulate guidelines on professional work and research with other minority groups;
      (b) The APS support and encourage professional development in the application of such guidelines;

4   Cross-cultural research skills amongst Australian psychologists are updated;

5   The APS give encouragement to minority group members to train as clinicians;

6   Psychological measures used in clinical practice are translated, tested and adjusted across a variety of cultural groups to ensure cross-cultural validity and accurate diagnosis;

7   Clinicians engage in appropriate training to ensure that they can provide culturally appropriate services;

8   Individual psychologists and the APS use their influence to lobby for reform of the mental health system so that it can adequately meet the needs of minority group members;

9   In research and practice, psychologists attempt to correct the historical overemphasis on 'deficits' in minority groups, and focus more on competency based models;

10   The APS support the broad implementation of successful programs for reducing racism and prejudice in schools and other organisations;

11   Community education within ethnic minority groups on the advantages of professional psychological treatment from a position of cultural understanding accompany improvements in the services themselves;

12   Minority groups are appropriately represented at the annual APS Conference.

Individual

1   Individuals consider making a contribution to breaking down racism and prejudice by:
(i) becoming active members of groups which are attempting to encourage tolerance and reduce prejudice and violence,
(ii) committing a certain amount of time (per week or per month) to work on these issues;

2   Individuals remain alert to the subtle and covert ways in which racism can be manifested at all levels of society, as well as in their own behaviour and attitudes;

3   Individuals who are members of a cultural group which is not subject to racial abuse or oppression educate themselves and others about the psychological impact of oppression;

4   Individuals remain alert to evidence of overt and subtle racism in current social and political debates concerning native title and immigration, and in forming their own views on these issues;

5   Parents and teachers stay alert to ways in which they can protect children from developing prejudiced attitudes and behaviours;

6   Individuals encourage the examination of their own organisational and institutional settings for institutionalised racism; and

7   Individuals form friendships and alliances with people from a different ethnic group to themselves as a step towards overcoming racism.

1   INTRODUCTION

1.1   Motives and goals

There were several reasons for writing this paper. The first was that, in the context of current debates about native title, reconciliation with Aboriginal people, and immigration, we perceived a need for a paper documenting and summarising the psychological theory, research and applied practice involved in the development, expression and experience of racism and prejudice. We hope this review may not only lead to increased understanding among psychologists, but also help the public and policy makers to understand these phenomena better.

Secondly, we were concerned to draw out some of the policy implications of our analysis, so as to provide empirically and theoretically well based recommendations to policy makers in government, industry and organisations (including our own), and to individuals. This is particularly salient at the time of writing in the context of the so-called 'Hanson phenomenon'.

It is clearly timely for psychology to examine its contributions to this significant and potentially very divisive social issue. In order to make a meaningful contribution to the understanding of racism and prejudice, the profession of psychology needs to acknowledge its own place within the social and political structures and systems that give rise to, and perpetuate, racism. Psychologists belong to a profession that is historically conservative and seen to identify with the dominant cultural tradition of Australia, that is, Anglo-based and Western European. Nevertheless, as psychologists, we are also in a position to provide direct evidence of the real effects racism has on people's lives, in particular, how a racially hostile environment diminishes psychological and emotional wellbeing and inhibits the development and maintenance of healthy self-esteem. Because some clients who seek our services suffer from the stigma associated with racial prejudice, a strong and unambiguous stand against racism is necessary to avoid the risk of identifying the profession of psychology with the bigotry of racism.

We therefore hope that this paper contributes to a process by which psychology as a profession and as a discipline can position itself better to 'work with' rather than 'work on' minority groups within Australia. We hope it demonstrates both the necessity and the possibility of entering into a collaborative relationship with these groups rather than unintentionally perpetuating the patronising and pathologising attitudes and practices that have characterised much of the past.

1.2   Structure of the paper

To achieve these ends, the paper first outlines the various meanings of the key terms in the area. The following section discusses how racism is reflected in, and reinforced by, our use of language; the nature of everyday understandings of racism; and the role of the media in attitude formation and attitude change. We then review psychological research on the development of racism at societal, group and individual levels. We go on to identify dimensions of the experience

of racism and prejudice among minority and dominant group members within present-day Australian society; and to examine the operation of institutionalised racism in our society. We then review the types of interventions which have been shown to be effective in reducing and counteracting racism, and the principles which govern them.

Following this, we look at the place of psychological theory and research in relation to other disciplinary approaches to understanding these phenomena, and, taking a self-critical stance, give a brief analysis of the past roles of psychology in relation to racism and its current position. We then outline some possible future directions for the discipline and profession in the context of psychology's social responsibilities. We end by presenting a series of recommendations for policy changes at societal, institutional, organisational and individual levels.

In speaking of the experiences of minority groups, we are sensitive of our inability to 'speak for' and 'theorise about' these groups. We have therefore included throughout this paper direct quotes from members of those groups to illustrate their experiences, and also quotes from members of the dominant group about their understandings and interactions with minority group cultures. We believe such stories have an immediacy and credibility which provide an insight into the operation of racism at macro, institutional and personal levels, as it is experienced by individuals.

The importance of stories as a means of understanding is well-expressed by Sir Ronald Wilson in the Foreword to 'Being Whitefella' (1994, p15):
"I believe that an important way to promote understanding, probably the best way, is to encourage the telling of stories. In the case of many Aboriginal people the stories are of a recent history largely concerned with suffering, humiliation and disadvantage. Yet there are also stories of joy and hope.
We non-indigenous Australians, we whitefellas, also have our own stories drawn from our relationships with the former owners of our country. They may be stories of sorrow, of shame and embarrassment, but also of the joy of adventure shared together, of shared struggle and achievements, of pride in indigenous art, music and writing which now forms part of our culture."

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2 CONSTRUCTIONS OF RACE, RACISM AND PREJUDICE

Constructions of race

Constructions of racism

Constructions of prejudice

Other concepts related to racism

2.1 Constructions of race

The justification for ranking groups by 'inborn worth', 'differential genetic capacity', or 'cultural development' has varied with the tides of Western history (Gould, 1984). For the past two centuries, biological determinists have invoked the traditional prestige of scientific knowledge to argue that the behavioural, social and economic differences between human groups - races, classes, and sexes - arise from inherited, inborn distinctions. Society, the argument continues, is an accurate reflection of biology (Gould, 1984).

Theories of race that emerged in the mid-nineteenth century coincided with the establishment of modern science as the arbiter of truth, and lent intellectual justification to imperial expansions, first via 'natural selection' theories of Herbert Spencer and Charles Darwin, and later by the supposed science of eugenics (Hannaford, 1997). Psychology's emergence as a new branch of science was also located within the context of the rise of imperial powers such as Germany and Britain. Pioneers in the new science of human measurement, such as Louis Agassiz, Samuel Morton and Francis Galton, contributed much to theories which relied on skull measurements as 'proof' of the superiority of the European (male) brain.

More recent developments in the study of the genetic basis of human diversity lead to the conclusion that the concept of race has no basis in fundamental biology, and thus should be abandoned by scientists. With the precise tools of molecular biology, the old racial categories appear increasingly arbitrary. There is more genetic variance observable within racial groupings than between them, and much greater overlap in the genetic inheritance shared by all human beings. Because within-group variation is greater than variation between groups, ethnic/racial membership alone cannot predict behaviours or attitudes in any psychologically meaningful way (Phinney, 1996). Nevertheless, the nineteenth century notions have proved to be very resilient among some sectors of society.

While the validity of the biological concept of race is questionable, it remains a highly salient political and social construct (Gould, 1984; Hernstein & Murray, 1994; Jacoby & Glauberman, 1995; Fraser, 1995). A social definition of 'race', based on externally visible physical features such as skin colour, only gains importance when society loads it with cultural significance and differential social value. Hostility towards new waves of migrant groups in Australia has seen shifting definitions of 'non-Australian' characteristics over time, but the power to decide the criteria for 'Australian' and 'non-Australian' always lies with the dominant group.

Psychology has been involved in the 'race debate' on a number of fronts (e.g., nature versus nurture, cognitive differences versus deficits, stereotyping and prejudice), but more recently has tended to avoid using 'race' as a variable in research, given the problems outlined above (e.g., Betancourt & Lopez, 1993; Phinney, 1996; Yee, Fairchild, Weizmann, & Wyatt, 1993). We cannot do full justice to this debate in this paper, but we emphasise that the tendency to loosely equate biogenetic designations of 'race' with social categorisations and popular understandings creates considerable confusion. Most popular discussions about 'race' are really about social categories and lay understandings of group differences. Such confusion has made objective discussion and communication concerning the nature and meaning of alleged 'racial' differences very difficult. In the present paper we focus on racism and prejudice.

2.2   Constructions of racism

Racism refers to pervasive and systematic assumptions of the inherent superiority of certain groups, and inferiority of others, based on cultural differences in values, norms and behaviours.

Those who are assumed to be inferior are treated differently and less favourably in multiple ways. Racism reflects and is perpetuated by deeply rooted historical, social, cultural and power inequalities in society. Racism is oppressive, because it involves the systematic use of power or authority to treat others unjustly. It creates an atmosphere in which a group finds itself in a devalued position.

The expression of racism in contemporary times is more covert than in the past. Historically, racism as expressed in Australia and most other Western countries used to involve a straightforward rejection of, and hostility toward, a minority group. This kind of racism, sometimes called 'old-fashioned' racism (Sears, 1988), was segregationist, and overtly accepted and advocated white supremacy. It was once the dominant, acceptable and normative view of race.

> *"As for racism that's an everyday thing for Aboriginal People. It can be overt or it can be institutionalised. When I was young Aboriginal children who spoke traditional language at school would get a hiding. Why did they do that to us? It was called 'integration' - the old integration. In order to help Aboriginal people they had to be exactly like white people."*
> *(Lorraine Liddle, in <u>Local Heroes</u>, 1993, p116)*

In much of the Western world including Australia, the typical expression of racism has changed markedly in recent times. It is now less socially acceptable to believe in racial superiority, or to express racist views overtly. There is at least a public acceptance that negative judgements about groups based on perceived racial or ethnic background are neither useful nor 'fair'. The norm of egalitarianism is now much stronger. This is not to say that racism has disappeared. Rather, the form of racism has changed. Old-fashioned racism has been replaced with a more subtle variant, known as 'modern' or 'symbolic' racism (Kinder & Sears, 1981; McConahay, 1986). Pettigrew and Meertens (1995) and Nesdale (1997) refer to these two types as 'blatant' and 'subtle' racism. It should be noted that both types work at, and find expression in, individual, interpersonal, intergroup, institutional and cultural levels.

> *"Picture the scene. It wasn't that long ago - an Alice Springs classroom in the 1960s. A teacher listened as her pupils discussed what they were going to become on leaving school. 'A teacher', 'a nurse' and then - 'a lawyer'. The teacher looked shocked and then she started laughing. The teacher's reaction was one of uncontrollable mirth - she almost fell off her chair laughing ... why? because the very idea of an Aboriginal girl becoming a lawyer was a preposterous idea at the time."*
> *(Lorraine Liddle, in <u>Local Heroes</u>, 1993, p115)*

From the point of view of oppressed people, even though the goal-posts may have been moved, the game is still the same. Modern racism, like old-fashioned (blatant) racism, still involves a rejection of minority groups and their recent gains, based on erroneous assumptions of inferiority. It still involves discrimination which continues to limit the quantity of, and access to, resources available to a particular group. However, this is now framed in terms of values and ideology rather than a straightforward dislike. In the United States, symbolic racism represents a resentment of minority groups which is embedded within wider moralistic values, and is expressed as a resistance to change in the racial status quo (Kinder & Sears, 1981). Traditional

American values of individualism, self-reliance and the work ethic are called on by whites to justify opposition to political issues such as welfare ("welfare cheats could find work if they tried") and affirmative action and racial quotas ("blacks should not be given a status they have not earned"). Recent criticism that accounts of Australian history which acknowledge oppression and genocide are a 'black arm band view of history' similarly exemplify this variant of racism which involves a dismissal or ignoring of a history of oppression and its effects.

Research by Katz and Haas (1988) has demonstrated that ambivalence is a pervasive feature of racial attitudes in the USA. Pro- and anti-black attitudes often co-exist within the same individual. Furthermore, they found that these sentiments are correlated to two independent core American values. Pro-black attitudes reflect humanitarian and egalitarian values which emphasise the ideals of equality and social justice, while anti-black attitudes are strongly linked to values embodied within the Protestant ethic, such as hard work, individual achievement and self-discipline. Thus, while majority individuals may increasingly support the principles of racial or ethnic equality, they still maintain a set of beliefs and attitudes about how minorities should think and act. Voting against minority candidates or opposing affirmative action are now rationalised on a nonracial basis but still operate to maintain the status quo.

Studies in Australia (Augoustinos, Ahrens, & Innes, 1994; Locke, MacLeod, & Walker, 1994; Pederson, Walker, Contos & Bishop 1997; Walker, 1994), Western Europe (Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995) and South Africa (Duckitt, 1992) have shown that 'modern' or 'subtle' racist views are prevalent in these parts of the world also. Although many people in Australia today still express 'old-fashioned' blatant racist beliefs, in general they are less willing to do so (Walker, 1994). It is also important to note that modern racism is not restricted to any particular socio-economic, intellectual, age, or gender groups (Nesdale, 1997).

Some have argued that modern racism is less invidious and less odious than its old-fashioned blatant form. However, research on racism has demonstrated that the modern variant is more insidious, entrenched, resilient and difficult to counteract, whether at individual or societal levels. This is explored in more detail in later sections (in particular see Section 3.1).

2.3   Constructions of prejudice

At an individual level, racism is expressed as prejudice, either in overt or subtle forms. Prejudice is based on biases in information processing and perception which lead to individuals and groups being perceived and pre-judged on the basis of group membership, along with typically unfavourable assumptions and beliefs about those groups. It is thus characterised by the automatic attribution of certain (often pejorative) characteristics to a person regardless of whether or not they actually possess them. While some authors describe prejudice simply as negative attitudes and beliefs (McKnight & Sutton, 1994), others feel that prejudice is a more fundamental and universal characteristic of the processes of human social perception, social comparison and social judgement, and/or that it reflects internalised societal judgements or personality dynamics. Either way, it is clear that attitudes and beliefs can become self-fulfilling prophecies in that beliefs become expectations and we selectively find 'evidence' to support our views and validate our judgements. Even when evidence is presented that a specific attribute is not applicable to a member of a particular group, a prejudiced person is likely to view this simply as an exception to the rule.

2.4   Other concepts related to racism

There are a variety of other terms which are used in the psychological literature in the discussion of racism. For example, ethnicity refers to cultural distinctness in values and norms deriving mostly from national origin, language, religion or a combination of these. Ethnocentrism refers to a privileging of one's own cultural assumptions, values and perspectives at the expense of alternative perspectives when making value judgements or making sense out of situations or events. Discrimination is a manifestation of prejudice which can be both individual and systemic, and overt or subtle. It finds expression in failures to act, tokenism, aversion and exclusion. It limits the quantity of resources available to a particular group and limits their access to resources (Garcia Coll, Lambarty, Jenkins, McAdoo, Crnic, Wasik, & Vazquez Garcia, 1996). Segregation can also be a manifestation of racism. Although it is no longer by law or de jure, it continues to be pervasive de facto, in residential, economic, and social and psychological forms (Garcia Coll et al., 1996). Oppression is the systematic use of power or authority to treat others unjustly. Psychological internalisation of the devalued status and feelings of oppression (internalised oppression) can lead to the adoption of denigrating views and judgements about both themselves and others in their racial or ethnic group, a process which is actively encouraged by the dominant group. All of these processes are outcomes of the dominance of one particular group over others.

3 LANGUAGE, SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS AND THE MEDIA

Racist language and discourse

Political correctness

Lay understandings and sense-making processes

The media

The ways in which racism and prejudice work at various levels of society can be seen in our use of language, in everyday understandings of the sources of social problems, and in the media.

3.1 Racist language and discourse

The insidiousness and resilience of modern subtle racism lies in part in the fact that it is embedded in language and rhetoric that is egalitarian and liberal in nature, as shown by qualitative language-based research. Considerable such research has been conducted in the Netherlands and Western Europe by van Dijk (1987). Wetherell and Potter (1992) have conducted similar work in New Zealand, a country comparable to Australia in its British colonial past. They investigated the way in which Pakeha (white) New Zealanders talk about Maori-Pakeha relations. They found that the overwhelming majority of their middle-class respondents talked in ways that legitimated the existing social order of inequality and Maori disadvantage in New Zealand. Their respondents strategically organised what they said in order to avoid being evaluated and labelled as racist. Indeed, all of the respondents were proficient at using a range of liberal and egalitarian principles such as freedom, fairness and equal opportunity to argue for outcomes which justified and sustained the existing inequitable social relations in New Zealand society. People used arguments such as "everybody should be treated equally", "present generations cannot be blamed for the mistakes of past generations", and "minority opinion should not carry more weight than majority opinion". They used these arguments in flexible and contradictory ways to do certain things, most notable of which were to avoid a 'racist' identity at the same time as justifying existing unequal Maori-Pakeha relations.

Research in Australia has identified similar common argumentative and rhetorical resources that white majority respondents use when talking about Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal relations (Augoustinos & Sale, 1997). First year university students who, overall, scored low in levels of old-fashioned and modern racism, acknowledged that as a group, Australian Aborigines were socially and economically disadvantaged. However, most respondents expressed significant concerns about government spending on Aboriginal programs. Many respondents believed that too much money was being spent and moreover, that this money was not being spent productively. Students also expressed firm objections to existing affirmative action policies for Aboriginal candidates in universities, arguing that these policies were unfair, inequitable and actually advantaged Aboriginal students. Individual merit was invoked as the only legitimate pathway to university education. Objections to affirmative action were therefore premised on the egalitarian principle of "treating everyone the same" regardless of any background disadvantage and inequities (Augoustinos & Sale, 1997).

Such qualitative and language-based research supports the view that contemporary racist attitudes are subtle, flexible, ambivalent, and embedded in wider social values which, in effect, support and legitimise existing racial inequalities. This is the case even among populations that have been traditionally viewed as non-racist or at least low in racism. Current political and economic emphases on 'competition' and 'economic rationalism' which assume a 'level playing field' help support such attitudes.

3.2   Political correctness

Policies and initiatives to combat sexism, racism and other forms of discrimination are characterised by some members of the community as attacks on the rights and freedoms of individuals to say, feel and behave as they please. Such objections have typically been framed within the rhetoric of 'political correctness'. While genuine political correctness can be a strong force in encouraging more acceptable and reasonable behaviour, it is represented by opponents as undermining free speech in the service of minority group interests. Such attacks have been viewed as a 'backlash' to the gains that some minority groups have made over the last two decades in countries like Australia (Cameron, 1995; Wilson, 1996). Dismissals of genuine and effective antiracism initiatives as 'merely' or 'cynically' politically correct thus legitimates racial intolerance by appealing to concerns about 'freedom of speech'. On the other hand, concerns about political correctness can result in important but difficult questions (such as 'race') being avoided and under-researched.

3.3   Lay understandings and sense-making processes

Important considerations in any discussion of racism are the popular or lay understandings, both of the nature of prejudice and racism, and of the more immediate experience of difference (e.g., Semin & Gergen, 1990; Fletcher, 1995). Lay understandings are important because they are really shared cultural understandings (e.g., Shweder, 1991; Bruner, 1990) of, in this case, culture and cultural difference. Lay understandings are also a particularly salient current issue in view of such phenomena as the public support for and identification with Pauline Hanson, who is represented as speaking for the 'silent majority', the 'ordinary battlers' who are looking for and understand 'a fair go' and equal treatment (e.g., Rothwell, 1997).

At the heart of lay understandings are individual and collective attempts to 'make sense' of events. They are adopted in response to questions such as "Why are there such high levels of unemployment?" and "Why do things seem so unfair?". The more disturbing the issue, the greater the need for explanation. Prejudice finds its roots in particular kinds of sense-making explanations (e.g., Antaki, 1994; Hewstone, 1989) that are supported by reference to in-groups and out-groups (see Section 4.2), racial and cultural difference, and perceived injustice. For example, unemployment is 'explained' by tying together immigration, visible ethnic groups that appear to be getting jobs, and 'ingroup outgroup' demarcations.

Lerner (1980) argued that our need for a coherent and 'accountable' world leads us to the illusion of a 'just world'. Perceived injustices and unfairness are thus particularly disturbing phenomena that require explanation. Both an illusion of justice and a satisfying causal account are provided by 'explanations' that blame groups that are different. It is easier to blame a group which is less powerful and influential than one's own, and it appears easier to seek solutions to injustices by blaming victims than by tackling issues of power and privilege. This is the essence of 'victim-blaming' and 'scape-goating'.

3.4   The media

Other examples of where prejudice and racism are found and how they work relate to media images and debates. These are examples of cultural or social representations of ingroup-outgroup differences. The media are cultural products which are central to the construction of social realities and to communication between groups and across cultures. There are many reasons why

differences between groups of people are salient and newsworthy. Social comparison with others, including other groups, is normal, necessary and validating. However, media coverage of such group differences, and often group conflicts, tend to highlight and exaggerate, oversimplify and caricaturise such differences. A classic and well-researched example of such a phenomenon is the work on cross-national images of the 'enemy', which showed that the images that the United States citizens had of Russia were virtually identical, or the 'mirror image', of the views that Russians had of the United States (Bronfenbrenner, 1961).

The power of the media, and in particular television, to both create and reinforce attitudes has been extensively documented (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Oskamp, 1988). Media representations of other nations, cultures and minority groups are used to 'manage' public opinion and public understandings of events. The media are also used to construct and re-invent cultures and cultural identities, e.g., what it is to be Aboriginal or Irish (e.g., Gillespie, 1995; Muecke, 1992)

Media images are very powerful vehicles for prejudice and racism. Television, film, and magazine images and lifestyles become the touchstone for what is reasonable, desirable, normative, and 'good'. Noone questions that such media play a powerful role in the social construction and representation of 'reality', in which issues of group identity, membership and difference are central. Prejudice and racism at the level of media images and coverage are subtle and far-reaching in part because they are an integral part of such constructed realities.

Language and the media constitute and reflect 'social representations' (Augoustinos & Walker, 1995), which can be thought of as collective, concretised ways of thinking about and representing the world, or the shared content of everyday thinking. These cultural products not only capture and express culturally shared understandings, beliefs and values, but also validate, legitimise and perpetuate value judgements and understandings about how men and women, and different groups and cultures differ from one another. These social representations play a powerful role in mediating and transforming individual and societal ways of understanding and valuing oneself and others.

4 THE BASES OF RACISM

Macro-level bases of racism

Intergroup and interpersonal bases of racism and prejudice

Intraindividual bases of racism

Racism and prejudice can be regarded as both societal and individual phenomena, developed and manifested at all levels of society, from government policy through organisational structures and intergroup and interpersonal interactions to intrapersonal attitudes and feelings. These levels interact. Official policy statements on immigration can affect an individual's reactions to migrants. Governments can encourage or discourage blame for unemployment and economic insecurity onto target minority groups. Legislation can endorse or outlaw particular organisational practices such as affirmative action. Intergroup conflict can spur government action. And governments and the media can both respond to and attempt to shape the attitudes and feelings of voters as

individuals. It is therefore necessary to understand how racism occurs at all these levels, and for all to be addressed in attempts to counteract racism. Traditionally, psychology as a discipline has focused most on intergroup and intraindividual levels of analysis, but its contributions are not limited solely to these domains. Some psychological aspects of racism at all these levels are summarised below.

4.1   Macro-level bases of racism

> *When tourists see drunken Aboriginal People in the streets and in the Todd River bed [in Alice Springs] they never stop to ask themselves why? ... They react with disgust and what they don't realise is that this is a manifestation of a society in trouble. Aboriginal people have come headfirst into contact with white society and yet they are not fully part of that society. You cannot say that racism doesn't exist when there is no employment for Aboriginal people."*
> *(Lorraine Liddle, in* Local Heroes, *1993, p128)*

Racism has typically reflected structural inequalities rooted in history and perpetuated over time. The belief that one group was inferior to another was essential during colonisation, in order to justify the process of dispossessing groups of their land.

The overarching institutions of a nation (governments, the law, the media, religion) can both create and inhibit racism. They can institute and maintain differentials between different ethnic and cultural groups, in terms of access to education, employment, residential areas, rights before the law, and medical care. These then serve to perpetuate and strengthen power differences between groups, emphasise difference rather than similarity, and reinforce stereotypes of superiority and inferiority. The policies and practices of these institutions can reflect a belief that the dominant culture is the 'normal' one and the standard by which all else is judged. They can ignore existing power differentials, under the banner of equal treatment for all, thus also maintaining the status quo. However, a society's institutions can also adopt more inclusive attitudes and policies which recognise and value cultural difference, while working to minimise differences in terms of power and access.

Just as the expression of racism by individuals has generally moved from a blatant to a more subtle form, so government policy in Australia, as in other Western countries, has shifted. In terms of immigration policies, Australian government policy and legislation has moved from blatant discrimination against those of non-Anglo background, exemplified in the 'White Australia policy', to an apparently more even-handed approach. Since the late 1960s, the official government policy moved from assimilation of migrants to multiculturalism (Wilton, 1994). However, whilst multiculturalism has now been in place for over 20 years, migrants are nonetheless periodically reminded of the reality of racism at macro levels. For instance, the 1984 'Blainey debate' brought out attacks on Asian migrants and on multiculturalism, and even now there is little government assistance given to migrants to pursue their own culturally distinct version of living (Vasta, 1993).

> *"I often used to say how they [Australian children] made us seem so bad that you were ashamed to be Chinese. Really. I was ashamed to be a Chinese kid when I was going to school. What we suffered from the Australian kids!" (Woman recalling her childhood in North Queensland in the 1920s; quoted in Wilton, 1994)*

In policy regarding indigenous people, there has been a move from (at best) paternalistic assimilation policies and (at worst) genocidal policies. Arguably, some attempt has been made at granting some autonomy, e.g., through the formation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, government recognition of the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, and some legislative recognition of native title in response to the 1992 'Mabo' High Court decision. However, 1997 has seen significant threats to these advances, with government proposals to water down native title entitlements.

The decrease in overt racism at macro levels exemplified by shifts over recent decades does not preclude the existence of subtle and institutionalised racism (see Section 6). Underrepresentation of minority group members on the media, the reinforcement of negative stereotypes in the reporting of conflicts involving minority groups, continuing restrictive immigration policies, and limitations in access to education and employment for minority group members can all be symptoms of such racism. What is more, the exclusion of many indigenous people from access to adequate standards of health, education, employment, housing, and basic infrastructure may be seen as a more blatant than subtle form of racism at the macro level.

4.2   Intergroup and interpersonal bases of racism and prejudice

Contemporary social psychology sees the categorisation of persons into their respective social groups and stereotyping them on the basis of this group membership as central and fundamental to human cognitive processing. Social categorisation is primarily based on salient and identifiable features of a person such as their age, gender, race, ethnicity, and social status. Stereotypes, as generalised descriptions of a group and its members, emerge inevitably from this categorisation process. It has been argued that both categorisation and stereotyping are adaptive in that they simplify the complexity of the social world (Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Hamilton & Sherman, 1994) and help to orient us to the 'realities' associated with intergroup life (Leyens, Yzerbyt, & Schadron, 1994; Oakes, Haslam & Turner, 1994).

Together, the dual processes of social categorisation and stereotyping can lead to prejudice, in the form of favouring one's own group (ingroup) and discriminating against groups to which one does not belong (outgroups). Many laboratory and field studies have shown that the mere act of categorising individuals into distinct groups is sufficient to trigger ingroup favouritism and outgroup discrimination (Tajfel, 1981; Mullen, Brown, & Smith, 1991). Other cognitive consequences linked to social categorisation include the exaggeration of differences between groups; the accentuation of similarities between self and other ingroup members (Doise, Deschamps & Meyer, 1978); and the tendency to perceive an outgroup and its members as more homogeneous ('they are all the same') than ingroup members (Linville & Jones, 1980).

The centrality of social categorisation and stereotyping to human cognition has led many social psychologists to conclude that prejudice is a natural and inevitable consequence of these normal cognitive processes. This view has been reinforced recently by empirical research demonstrating that stereotypes can be activated automatically without conscious awareness, even among people who embrace egalitarian beliefs (Devine, 1989). This paints a rather bleak picture for inter-group relations implying that prejudice has a fundamental and universal cognitive base.

While prejudice may have an inherent cognitive component, many social psychologists have argued that affective and motivational factors are of equal or more importance in the manifestation of prejudice. For example, social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and self-categorisation theory (Oakes et al., 1994) emphasise the motivational need of individuals to differentiate the groups to which they belong from others on positive attributes. Individuals and groups can enhance their self-esteem and group-esteem through this process of differentiation and social comparison. While cognitive factors alone (the simple act of categorisation) can lead to inter-group bias, social and political factors such as periods of economic hardship and competition for scarce resources can further fuel inter-group competition and hostilities.

Devine (1989) has argued that, because racial prejudice and tolerance are located in the content of beliefs rather than in the content of stereotypes, prejudice is not inevitable. Stereotypes are shared knowledge about social groups learned early in childhood, whilst beliefs may be either consistent or inconsistent with these stereotypes. Studies have found consistent differences between high and low-prejudiced people in their endorsement of negative outgroup stereotypes (Augoustinos et al., 1994; Devine, 1989). Low-prejudiced people have personal beliefs which are inconsistent with the stereotype, and inhibit and control the activation of the stereotype through conscious cognitive processes. Highly prejudiced people, on the other hand, do not need to control or inhibit the stereotype since it is consistent with their personal beliefs about members of the stereotyped group. Thus, for example, at the collective or societal level, the content of stereotypes about men and women may be extensively shared, but at the inter-group and individual levels, the endorsement of these stereotypes varies considerably. Essentially, this research suggests that people can reject ingrained and well-learned stereotypes and avoid prejudiced attitudes and behaviours.

> *"Incidentally, no sooner had we dealt with the reffo in the playground than the same jeering, ugly circle formed around a kid with Down Syndrome we'd found sitting quietly on a playground swing. Kids like that were called Mongoloids, and the name was almost enough. Despite his bewildered smile and obvious wish to be friendly, we bullied and terrified him. I felt shame then, and shame now 50 years later. Yet when planning the campaign for the International Year of the Disabled Person in the early 1980s I still felt, deep inside me, a primitive response to disability. These days I know how to repress such feelings in a nanosecond. And that's what self-styled progressives do with vestigial prejudice - we censor it savagely, instantly, overlaying it with our more sophisticated, considered response. But we are liars if we deny that old terrors no longer exist." (Phillip Adams, 1997, p27)*

Stereotypes, as representations and constructions of groups, are used ideologically, often to justify and legitimate existing power and social relations within a society (Jost & Banaji, 1994). For example, stereotypes of women as the 'weaker', 'less dominant' and 'more nurturing' sex are used to explain and justify their under-representation in positions of power. People use stereotypical representations to explain the actions and behaviour of ingroup and outgroup members. For example, studies have found that people are more likely to make dispositional attributions for outgroup members performing socially undesirable acts, but external attributions for ingroup members performing the same undesirable behaviour (Hewstone, 1990; Hunter, Stringer & Watson, 1991). For example, Hunter et al. (1991) investigated how real instances of violence are explained by Protestant and Catholic students in Northern Ireland. They found that Catholic students made predominantly external attributions (e.g., retaliation and fear of attack) for their own group's violence, and dispositional attributions (e.g., aggressiveness, psychopathy) for Protestant violence. Similarly, Protestant students attributed their own group's violence to external factors and Catholic violence to dispositional factors. Overall, social explanations for behaviour tend to be supportive and self-serving of the ingroup and derogating to outgroups (Pettigrew, 1979). Furthermore, stereotypes can generate self-fulfilling prophecies whereby outgroup members come to act in ways consistent with ingroup expectations (Jussim, 1986).

4.3   Intraindividual bases of racism

As noted in Section 4.2, the process of categorisation is a normal and adaptive aspect of human cognitive processing. Children by three years of age have adopted categories on such obvious dimensions as gender (boy/girl) and skin colour (white/black). The adoption of the society's stereotypes (e.g., the perceived characteristics of 'boy' and 'girl', 'blacks' and 'whites') also follows relatively automatically. Thus even at preschool age, children make judgements about people based on ethnic, racial and social categories, and also identify themselves as members of particular groups (Aboud, 1988; Garcia Coll et al., 1996; Black-Gutman & Hickson, 1996). However, the particular content and emotional valences that are attached to these stereotypes will differ from culture to culture.

Developmental psychology and social learning theory would suggest that there are various mechanisms by which children acquire the particular stereotypes of their culture. For example, they may receive direct instruction (e.g., that particular racial groups are 'dirty' or 'can't be trusted'). They are also likely to make unconscious inferences from the behaviour and attitudes they see exhibited by people around them; in early childhood, this particularly means parents, but

as the child grows includes teachers, peers and the media. If, however, ingroup/outgroup distinctions are de-emphasised in the child's social world, positive models are provided and the social distance between the child's group and other groups is reduced, the development of prejudicial attitudes can be reduced (Garcia Coll et al., 1996). If parents discipline their child predominantly through the use of punitive and power assertive techniques, the child is more likely to come to see the world as a threatening place where others can't be trusted and one needs to maintain control and power over others for self-protection. Such a view of the world may increase the tendency for children to adopt pejorative stereotypes about other groups. On the other hand, parenting which includes listening to the child's point of view and explaining reasons for rules and consequences of behaviour, helps children to develop a sense of trust, and encourages them to learn to take others' perspectives into account and to empathise with them. Through such parenting, children are more likely to question, challenge and reject the dominant negative racial stereotypes.

In discussing the intraindividual level of analysis regarding racism, it is necessary to consider how internalised oppression and internalised domination (Dudgeon & Oxenham, 1989; Pheterson, 1990) can affect the wellbeing of people who are vilified and oppressed. Internalised oppression has been defined as the incorporation and acceptance, by individuals within an oppressed group, of the prejudices against them within a dominant society. Internalisation of the devalued status and feelings of oppression can lead to the adoption of denigrating views and judgements both about themselves and about others in their racial or ethnic group. This process is actively encouraged and reinforced by the dominant group's own process of internalised domination: the incorporation and acceptance by individuals within a dominant group of prejudices against others.

> *"I love the country where I was born and brought up, even though by the time I arrived many changes had overtaken the land. Its original aspect had long been lost, as mobs of sheep and cattle took the place of kangaroos and wallabies, and new grasses and crops, roads and fences altered it under the land laws and customs introduced by three or four generations of white people. The removal of the original owners had been so thorough that they seemed scarcely to exist in the world I lived in, except as a few stockmen and women sometimes employed in kitchen or laundry work, and a few silent people in the streets of Armidale, whom few people looked at, or recognised. Certainly not as owners of the land.*
>
> *Yet, as I later discovered from an old manuscript preserved in the New England University library, it was not much more than 50 years before my birth that the station I had lived on was in Aboriginal possession and that white men had been in terror of their resistance." (Judith Wright, "Being White Woman" in Being Whitefella, 1994, p178)*

Pheterson (1990) used the concepts of internalised oppression and internalised domination to explore relationships between black and white women in the Netherlands and discovered that the feelings that most clearly emerged were anger from the blacks and guilt from the whites. Angry, isolated and defiant feelings were identified as reactions to oppression. Guilty, dull and confused feelings were identified as reactions to the social position of dominance. Those white women who acknowledged feeling guilty expressed a fear of revenge and a need for reassurance from the blacks. These latter feelings can result in members of the dominant culture blaming, wanting protection, reassurance and approval, and excluding members of other groups.

Pheterson (1990) observed that internalised oppression and internalised dominance interact not only between different persons but intrapsychically within one person. Thus a woman of the dominant Anglo-Australian culture might feel angry and powerless about the disadvantages she faces as a woman but at the same time feel guilty and fearful of revenge from Aboriginal people and believe they might lay claim to her backyard. Pheterson also noted that, although the political consequences of oppression are opposite to those of domination (e.g., powerlessness vs power), the psychological consequences are surprisingly alike. The fear of violence one feels as a victim of oppression reinforces the fear of revenge one feels as an agent of oppression (or as someone who benefits from oppression).

> *Mandawuy Yunupingu gives us an example of his own resistance to internalised oppression amongst his people:*
>
> *"I was born in 1956 and life as a kid was pretty full on. There were all sorts of changes happening, the transition from traditional to contemporary life. .... My greatest achievement [as principal of Yirrkala school] was bringing about a firm political stand within the school structure itself. .... You come in Yolnga and you go out as Yolnga. You don't come an Aboriginal and go out a Balanda, non-Aboriginal. In practical terms you've got to be able to sustain your society and you need the mental capacity to do that."*
> *(Mandawuy Yunupingu, in Local Heroes, 1993, p255)*
> *(Despite his achievements Mandawuy Yunupingu was refused access to a St Kilda night club in the mid-1990s on supposed dress code rules. He took the proprietors to the Equal Opportunity Commission and secured an apology.)*

It should be noted that feelings of internalised oppression are not inevitable. Despite long-standing experiences of racism, many indigenous peoples and migrant groups have a strong sense of their own identify which derives from their own world view. This sense of identity is neither entirely inherited, nor formed only in opposition to the dominant culture.

A final aspect of racism as an individual phenomenon is the question of whether racism and prejudice are more common in some personality types than in others. These questions have driven an extensive research program on 'the authoritarian personality' (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950; Altmeyer, 1988). This work was premised on the Freudian notion that individuals employ a variety of defence mechanisms to protect themselves from unacceptable internal impulses and threatening environmental circumstances. In a cultural context of negative stereotypes and visible minority groups, negative internal impulses and personal conflicts and inadequacies would be projected onto such groups (e.g., the belief that African Americans are violent and sexually unrestrained) (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Similarly external societal conflicts and problems would be attributed in an uncritical and simplistic way to minority groups which were categorised as different, threatening, and inferior. In an attempt to measure and describe those individuals who tended to be prejudiced, scales were developed for measuring economic and political conservatism, and ultimately the 'F' scale (for Fascism), an instrument for measuring right wing, totalitarian personality tendencies.

The 'authoritarian personality' has not been widely accepted as a wholly credible account of the origins of prejudice, because of both theoretical and methodological concerns. The more recent work of Altmeyer (1988) overcomes many of the methodological problems and reports findings supportive of underlying individual predispositions for authoritarianism. A contemporary and consensual view would be that personality factors undoubtedly play a role in prejudice, but that the roots of prejudice also involve processes of social learning and social categorisation, and more encompassing societal and structural levels of analysis.

5 RACISM IN THE CONTEMPORARY AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT

In looking at racism in the current Australian context, there are several dimensions to consider. One is historical - as noted earlier, recent decades have seen a shift from blatantly racist government policies towards an overt acceptance of multiculturalism, accompanied by a relatively high intake of migrants from many parts of the world (Section 4.1). Aboriginal people were included in the census from 1967 and subsequently received citizenship and voting rights, and the 'Mabo' High Court decision in 1992 overturned the fiction of 'terra nullius' (Rowse, 1993). At the time of writing, there is a high level of unemployment and, among the employed, insecurity about their work situation; social services of many kinds have been cut; and there have been massive changes in work and social conditions overall. Such changes create feelings of threat, insecurity and fear. People are therefore vulnerable to misattributions of blame, as discussed earlier, as they attempt to make sense of these changes and fears (see Section 3.3). By blaming some person or group, people can perceive some sense and order in an otherwise chaotic world.

There are similarities and differences in the experiences of the various minority groups in Australia. Australian indigenous people have experienced colonisation, loss of sovereignty and dispossession from the land, and this dispossession has often been to the direct or indirect benefit of the rest of the population. On most indices (education, employment, health, incarceration, etc.), they are clearly the most disadvantaged group with Australian society (APS, 1996). An especial vulnerability is also sometimes ascribed to Aboriginal people in contrast to migrants in that they are now the 'sole keepers' of their culture, without a 'home' culture overseas to fall back on. While there is some truth to this view, there are also some caveats. Firstly, it feeds into the belief that 'real' or 'authentic' Aboriginal culture is unchanging (Dudgeon & Oxenham, 1989). Often, to the extent that Aboriginal culture is respected, it is only if it is so-called 'traditional' culture, as existed 200 years ago, pre-invasion. The fact that modern forms of indigenous culture have evolved and been created in the intervening years is mistakenly equated with 'having lost their identity/roots' or 'being assimilated'. Likewise, the view that migrants have a 'home' culture to fall back on ignores two facts: that the 'home' culture has also changed in the years since migration; and that the migrant community (of whichever culture or nationality) has created its own unique culture which is deserving of respect and recognition in its own right. Further, some migrants, especially refugees, have come from situations where their own cultural/racial group has experienced dispossession, discrimination and injustice.

While acknowledging both the similarities and differences in the situation of indigenous people and migrants, and the substantial differences between different migrant groups, here we give an overview of recent research documenting how racism is being expressed towards and experienced by minority groups today.

Some government and organisational policies continue to pose obstacles to migrants in Australia (including refugees), and represent subtle ways of obstructing their settlement. Such obstacles are much greater for migrants from non-English speaking countries, and include the refusal to recognise overseas qualifications which often entails access only to low paid and low status jobs. Within educational contexts, highly Westernised curricula which lack the flexibility to incorporate curricula from other cultures, and assessment strategies which leave non-English speaking background (NESB) and international students at a disadvantage are among subtle forms of racism directed towards migrants.

> *"For a while wherever I turned, I was being convinced that Australia is hungry for skilled professionals of different ethnic origin, especially in the helping professions. After six years of settling, mastering the language, further training, with good understanding of the services and organisations, with the awareness of huge problems people of NESB face, and of their needs, with the first-hand knowledge of 'multicultural issues' coming from the wealth of my own experience, I am still looking for a job." (Petrovic, 1994, p1)*

The pervasive experience of racism in present-day Australia is illustrated by the findings from a series of consultations with young people of non-English speaking backgrounds and youth workers conducted in Western Sydney during 1992. When asked what was the major problem they faced, the NESB youth chose racism and discrimination. Interestingly, the youth workers and other service providers who worked with minority young people but who may have been of an English speaking background chose racism seventh on a list of eight major problems. This highlights that racism is not a problem to those who don't experience its effects, that is, the dominant group, yet it is often this group that set the political and cultural agenda (Zelinka, 1995). Similarly, in a study of 200 young people (aged 13 to 20) from Non-English speaking backgrounds (Brandich, 1989), it was found that 90% of participants reported experiences of racism. This racism was experienced as direct verbal and physical abuse in the workforce (where NESB worked both in favour and against the young person), in the media and the education system.

A nation-wide survey of 2031 international university students (Nesdale, Simkin, Sang, Burke & Fraser, 1995) assessed the extent to which the respondents had experienced instances of prejudice and discrimination. A total of 73% of respondents reported that they had experienced difficulty with prejudice and discrimination while studying in Australia, and these experiences affected whether they would choose to migrate to this country. Similarly, Kee and Hsieh (1997) found that approximately 50% of Taiwanese students in Australia had experienced racial discrimination, most commonly verbal abuse, but 15% had experienced physical attack. Further, while 24% had encountered racism on the streets, fully 42% had been the recipient of discrimination at their educational institution.

> *"A friend of mine had something wrong with her leg so we took her to the hospital. The treatment there was terrible from some of the nurses ... they tend to become impatient with you if you can't speak the language". (Egyptian-Australian young person).*
>
> *"A friend of mine was walking through the university and one of the Aussies spat on her because she was Asian. She felt really bad because she couldn't do anything." (Malaysian-Australian student). (Quotes from Act Against Racism, 1993)*

A further nation-wide study (Cahill, 1996) focused on Year 5 and Year 8 students and their teachers. It revealed that racism has a persistent presence in most schools and that there has been a discernible rise in racism in recent years. In Queensland, 30% of the ESL teachers assessed indicated that instances of racism occurred frequently in their schools. Interestingly, 25% of teachers surveyed indicated that they thought Australia was becoming 'Asianised' too quickly.

There are also less obvious impacts of racism. For instance, in relation to children, rather than having legal barriers such as lack of access to educational institutions, minority children now face more subtle forms of racism such as low teacher expectations and attitudes, biased curricula, and being socialised into lower educational and occupational expectations (Garcia Coll et al., 1996). Parents face constant stress when they attempt to socialise their children and simultaneously protect them from the negative effects of racism and discrimination. Parents have to try to teach their children how to cope with the demands of a society that devalues their heritage, race and culture, while ensuring they maintain a positive view of their ethnic and racial group. They need to decide what aspects of the parenting practices of their culture they wish to retain and those they wish to relinquish in favour of the dominant culture's values, attitudes and practices.

"The yardstick that Aboriginal people have been taught to use is the white example. White Australians have set up the determinants of what is good and encouraged the internalisation by Aboriginal people of these good white standards and bad Aboriginal standards - the process of assimilation." (Dudgeon & Oxenham, 1989, p27)

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6   INSTITUTIONALISED RACISM

Institutionalised racism refers to the sometimes unconscious and unintentional embedding of discriminatory policies and practices within the institutions of a nation. It follows from the assumption that the dominant group represents the normative and superior culture, with minority groups representing aberrations in some form or other. Institutionalised racism often involves assimilationist goals of incorporating minority groups within the dominant group, and pathologising of minority groups, so that their valid needs do not receive full recognition. It could be argued that institutionalised racism is actually the predominant form of racism, with significant effects on groups as well as individuals. Since it is complex, deeply entrenched and largely invisible, it is a particularly worrisome manifestation of racism.

"Not knowing anything, not knowing what to do, waiting for someone to tell you what to do, and you never ask why, and never ask direct questions. It takes a long time, years before you learn to say: "It's my right!" (Samia Baho, 1994)

6.1   The mental health system

Institutionalised racism can be manifested in any of the bureaucratic structures of a society, e.g., education, the law, medicine, social welfare (Jones, 1972). Here we take mental health services as an exemplar, since it is of special relevance to psychologists. However, similar analyses could be undertaken of other contexts such as the educational, medical and legal systems.

Although multicultural Western democratic societies such as Australia claim to provide services which ensure the welfare of all citizens, in reality such services tend to be aimed at a very generalised view of the dominant majority, and as such frequently fail to provide adequately for minority groups. Thus a superficial egalitarianism coexists with a subtle form of institutionalised

racism. This is particularly problematic in the area of mental health services, given that ethnic minority groups in a society are likely to be under stress, and thus more likely to need such services.

It is well recognised that migration is associated with multiple forms of stress and that this can lead to mental health problems. Additional factors associated with poor mental health for both indigenous and migrant groups include poor physical health, poor socioeconomic circumstances, social isolation and high numbers of stressful life events. For indigenous people, a history of dispossession and oppression, enforced separations from family and institutionalisation pose significant risks for mental ill-health (Swan & Raphael, 1995). Acculturative stress, depression, substance abuse, self-injury and suicide have been identified as significant mental health problems among Aboriginal people today (the report on the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (1991). For migrants, the experience of trauma in one's country of origin, poor language proficiency in one's chosen country, cultural distance and loss of roles in the wider community are additional stressors (Minas, 1990). As discussed in Section 5, minority group members report feelings of alienation and experiences of prejudice from majority group members. Given these factors, it is not surprising that minority groups have generally been found to exhibit higher rates of mental health problems than the majority group (National Health Survey, 1989-90).

Despite the clear need for mental health services for minority group members, clients from these groups are often forced to use services which are not necessarily cognisant of their particular needs or of culturally appropriate or effective interventions. In a survey of 991 mental health professionals in Victoria (Minas, Stuart, & Klimidis, 1994), clinicians regarded services for non-English speaking clients to be inferior to those for English-speaking clients, and reported many difficulties relating to language and culture. Although there were many bilingual clinicians working in mental health, they seldom came in contact with clients of their own background and language, resulting in many clinicians working with ethnic and immigrant clients without an understanding of relevant cultural issues, and having to work through an inadequate supply of interpreters. For example, although there are around 28,000 Greek speakers in Victoria who described themselves as speaking English "not well" or "not at all", there are only eight clinical mental health staff in the State who claim to be proficient for delivery of services in the Greek language. This is particularly alarming given that minority groups show a marked preference for clinicians who speak their native language and use of interpreters is considered inadequate for psychological therapy (Kyrios & Thomas, 1995). Encouragingly, despite these difficulties in dealing with immigrant and ethnic minority clients, clinicians still predominantly expressed enthusiasm for learning about cultural issues.

Further problems for the provision of mental health services relate to psychological assessment and treatment approaches. The vast majority of psychology tests have been constructed by and for people who are members of Western individualistic cultures, and have questionable validity in assessment of people from other backgrounds. In terms of treatment, a recent National Health Survey (1989-90) found that immigrants had a comparatively high rate of psychotropic medication use. This may partly relate to the fact that medical and psychiatric treatment, but not psychological treatment, attracts government rebates. However, medication may not always be the best form of treatment. Many forms of psychological treatment approach therapy from very individualistic assumptions, which are often inappropriate with the more collectivist Southern European and Asian cultures that form the largest minorities in Australia. Many forms of psychological treatment also require much verbal fluency and therefore effectively exclude

minority members without near-native competence in English if they are being treated by an English speaking therapist (Kyrios & Thomas, 1995).

For reasons such as these, the existing mental health system is inadequate for the needs of minority group members. Although it could be argued that existing services are technically available to all and do not actively discriminate against minority groups, the failure to provide services which can actually be used effectively by specific sections of the community constitutes a form of institutionalised racism. The case for delivering adequate services to deal with the adaptational needs of minority group members can be mounted on moral as well as social and economic grounds, with a failure to do so amounting to a condoning of institutionalised racism.

7 STRATEGIES TO REDUCE RACISM AND PREJUDICE

Changing stereotypes

Cross-cultural awareness education

Parenting in early childhood

Other approaches

"I've been involved in mass media campaigns that have had, at least in the short term, a strong impact on prejudices towards Aborigines in particular and immigrants in general, I've seen them work. They've proved to me that apart from the extremes at either end of the bell curve, public opinion is like a large blob of jelly that wobbles this way or that, depending on the direction of prevailing winds. If actively encouraged, the jelly will wobble to one side. If those views are countered, it will wobble to the other." (Phillip Adams, 1997, p35)

Having explored the nature, development, and expressions of racism, we now turn to approaches which can be adopted to counteract racism. Given that racism occurs on all levels from macro to intraindividual, interventions also need to be focused at all these levels. Psychological research, which has tended to focus on the intergroup and intraindividual levels, is briefly reviewed here. We also discuss community attitudes, media campaigns and government legislation as examples of structural interventions which have the potential to combat racism.

7.1 Changing stereotypes

It is often thought that mere contact between groups should be sufficient to break down negative stereotypes and prejudiced attitudes and behaviours, but this has been found not to be the case. Contact, even when it presents contradictory evidence, may not undermine the stereotype but may in fact promote 'stereotype defence mechanisms', wherein the disconfirming evidence is 'explained away' by viewing the individual as an 'exception to the rule'; as an atypical member of the group (Allport, 1954; Brislin, 1993). In some cases, contact can and does exacerbate existing prejudices. The process of subtyping persons who do not confirm to a stereotype helps

explain the pessimistic view that, despite interventions, social stereotypes are extremely resilient and continue to persist even in the face of contradictory evidence.

Despite their remarkable resilience, however, there are some conditions under which stereotypes have been found to change:

1. Through repeated or widespread instances of encounters or examples which do not confirm the stereotype (Johnston & Hewstone, 1992; Weber & Crocker, 1983).

2. If disconfirming evidence is provided by a representative of a group who is, in every other way, regarded as a typical group member (Rothbart & John, 1985).

3. Cooperative rather than competitive contact, which encourages viewing outgroup members as individuals, and recognising the diversity within groups, thus undermining stereotypic expectations and generalisations (Desforges; Lord, Ramsey, et al., 1991

4. At an individual level, people themselves can overcome their automatic stereotypic expectations. As discussed in Section 4.2, those low in prejudice have been found to consciously overcome their stereotypes, to choose not to rely on them when making judgements (Devine, 1989; Fiske & Neuberg, 1990).

5. Changing the classification system used to categorise self and others. For example, instead of using race or ethnicity as the basis for categorisation, we can adopt the superordinate category of 'human being'. Rather than identifying as a member of one 'ingroup' versus various 'outgroups', we can identify as an individual within one large group within which differences exist and can be respected.

7.2   Cross-cultural awareness education

<u>Work-place programs</u>
Brislin (1993) details the conditions and guidelines under which intergroup contact should occur in intervention programs if they are to help reduce prejudice and racism and to improve intergroup cultural awareness more generally. First, participants from the respective groups must be of equal status and power, and must have the same access to program resources and rewards. Program administrators must treat participants from each group equally. However, in intergroup contexts where one group (e.g., American Whites) has historically always had more power and status than another group (e.g., American Blacks), intervention programs should try to ensure that outgroup members have higher status and power than the majority group members. Second, tasks should be set for participants which require intergroup cooperation and desegregation. These tasks should be oriented towards superordinate goals - goals which are equally valued by members of both groups. Third, the sharing of personal and intimate information between ingroup and outgroup members encourages people to view each other more as individuals than as members of particular groups. It can also encourage individuals to categorise themselves and others as members of a superordinate category, like 'human being', with similar hopes, fears, life problems and challenges.

A variety of intervention programs have been designed and implemented which fulfil at least some of these criteria. Most intervention programs are designed to challenge people's beliefs and attitudes (cognitions), feelings and emotional reactions (affect), and actual behaviour towards

outgroup members. Trainers (who are often minority outgroup members) use a variety of methods to bring about these changes, including the provision of information via lectures, video and film, small group discussions, role plays, the presentation of case studies and critical incidents to encourage cross-cultural awareness, and intergroup interaction in the completion of tasks.

One such intervention program which has been used in Australia to promote the awareness of Aboriginal history and culture, and to reduce racism and prejudice towards Aboriginal Australians in the workplace, is the Cross Cultural Awareness Program. This three day program is based on the intervention approaches developed by Katz (1978) in the United States, and Chambers & Pettman (1986) in Australia. One study which was designed to evaluate both the short-term and long-term effectiveness of the Cross Cultural Awareness Program among government employees in South Australia, found mixed results (Hill, Barlow, Augoustinos, Clark & Sarris, 1995). Immediately following the workshop, participants demonstrated a significant increase in their knowledge of Aboriginal history and culture, a decrease in their endorsement of negative Aboriginal stereotypes, and significant decreases in both old-fashioned and modern racism. At three month follow-up, although prejudice levels had increased from post-course levels, they still remained significantly lower than at pre-course. Thus, while some of the significant benefits of the course were eroded over time, overall the program was quite effective in increasing cultural knowledge and challenging negative stereotypes.

This research points to a need for continuous interventions at all levels. If the benefits are eroded by day-to-day experiences, organisational culture, media portrayals and by government action and lack of action, we cannot expect even the best designed but time-limited and localised programs to have a strong, lasting impact.

Some concerns have been expressed about anti-racism education programs which are not accountable to the minority groups they propose to assist (Simmons, 1994). Huygens (1996) suggests that genuine anti-racism education involves processes whereby members or groups of the dominant culture take responsibility for working in partnership with indigenous groups to: tell the true history of colonisation; address structural change in institutions; embed policies of cultural safety in programs and intervention strategies; and share power and resources in ways which require the dominant culture to transform itself.

School programs

A large variety of 'in-school' treatments have been implemented throughout the world by educators in efforts to enhance cross-cultural awareness and improve intergroup relations within schools. In a review of this literature, Cotton (1993) concluded that such programs are most effective when: they are integrated into the overall school curriculum on an on-going long-term basis; when cross-cultural or multicultural issues are taught comprehensively and handled sensitively; when all children throughout the school are involved and receive such education as early as possible; and when teachers have the necessary skills, training and resources to implement programs of high-quality.

As with work-place interventions with adults, cooperative learning tasks in mixed racial and/ or ethnic groups in which children experience collective success is identified as one of the most effective means of improving intergroup relations and reducing prejudice (Cotton, 1993; Nesdale, 1997; Slavin, 1985). Teaching practices which encourage the development of critical thinking skills among children have also proven effective, especially in challenging aspects of prejudiced thinking. Consistent with the motivational basis to prejudice, a further factor which

has consistently shown to be related to intergroup hostilities among children is self-esteem. Pate (1988, p.288) argues that "Probably the most effective approach schools can take to combat prejudice is to improve students' self-concept".

It is important to note that children (like adults) are resistant to isolated, superficial, 'one-off' anti-prejudice lessons. Indeed such short-term and poorly resourced interventions are not only ineffective but can increase prejudice among children (Cotton, 1993; Pate, 1988).

Given that early childhood is the time when stereotypes and attitudes are first being formed, there is an emphasis in the literature on early childhood interventions. However, the importance of cross-cultural awareness and education for adolescents and young adults should not be underestimated. Some young adults, especially those who attended predominantly monocultural schools in their formative years, may have had little contact with people of different backgrounds. Moreover, there is some research indicating that intergroup rivalry and racial/ethnic segregation in friendship groups is a significant problem in high schools (Parrenas & Parrenas, 1990). Nesdale and Todd (in press) recently evaluated an intervention study in a university residential college in Australia. The program encouraged intercultural contact among students over a seven month period in an environment which explicitly recognised and acknowledged ethnic group differences (Hewstone & Brown, 1986; Brewer & Miller, 1984). In comparing students exposed to the intervention with students from non-participating colleges, the program was found to be significantly effective in promoting intercultural knowledge, contact and acceptance, especially among majority group (Australian) students; a group which in previous studies, had demonstrated less willingness to engage in intercultural contact (Nesdale & Todd, in press).

7.3   Parenting in early childhood

Research in developmental psychology suggests that parenting and educational practices can have a major impact on children's development, attitudes and behaviours towards outgroup members, in particular through teaching perspective-taking, empathy and non-violent conflict resolution techniques.

As noted above (Section 4.3), a key contributor to tolerance and acceptance is perspective-taking ability - being able to see another's point of view, rather than seeing others as foreign, unknown and unknowable. While the cognitive capacity to perspective-take, and its emotional counterpart, empathic responses, develop in early childhood, there is wide variation in the extent to which children develop these attributes. Parenting practices are one determinant of their development. The child-rearing practices which have been shown to promote perspective-taking and empathy are classed together as inductive reasoning. These include parents and other caregivers listening to the child's point of view; explaining how others are affected by the child's behaviour; explaining reasons for rules to the child; and negotiating rules and agreements where possible. Parents and teachers using inductive reasoning techniques can thus, through modelling, support, and provision of opportunities for cognitive growth, encourage their children's capacity to see others' points of view and therefore increase the likelihood that they will adopt tolerant and non-prejudiced attitudes and behaviours (Eisenberg & Miller, 1990; Hart, DeWolf & Burts, 1993).

Parents and teachers can also encourage tolerance and acceptance through explicitly teaching nonviolent conflict resolution which is based upon respect for the other person's needs, fears, wants, and concerns, which are seen to be as legitimate as your own (Wertheim, Love, Littlefield & Peck, 1992). Exposing children to interest-based conflict resolution techniques encourages perspective-taking and discourages stereotyping. The notion of 'win-win' solutions encompasses the idea that achieving your own goals does not have to be at the expense of others, thus implicitly questioning 'scape-goating' responses to social problems.

7.4   Other approaches

<u>Working with Youth</u>

Another intervention approach is to work with young people to challenge racism. Some ways to do this are:

- to conduct workshops for young people focusing on creating an Australian identity which incorporates all Australians - migrant, indigenous and non-indigenous;
- to develop youth committees to be involved in the decision making processes for anti-racist policies and practices;
- to work with youth to develop publicity campaigns to challenge racism; and
- to implement a peer education system where young people are trained to act as facilitators or co-facilitators in workshops for other young people, to be conducted in schools and community organisations, which challenge racist attitudes.

Using the arts

The arts can be a medium for advocacy and social commentary, providing opportunities for communicating both anti-racist sentiments and the experiences of minority groups to the wider community. Music was found to be effective in combating racism in Britain during the 1970s when an organisation called Rock Against Racism sought to communicate anti-racist themes through popular music. It was hoped that by raising awareness of racism in a culturally accessible manner, a change in behaviour would follow. Evaluations showed that Rock Against Racism was particularly successful (Giddens, 1989; Zelinka, 1995). In Australia many local councils have local concerts organised by youth for youth, which could be used to promote anti-racism (e.g., hold concerts where local performers make explicit their opposition to racism).

Another way to challenge racism is to use high profile individuals as role models of anti-racist behaviours. In Australia during the early 1990s, the "Different Colours, One People" campaign used role models from the sporting and entertainment arena to encourage people to take a stand against racism, and was judged to be quite successful (Zelinka, 1995).

Media interventions

Compared to health issues which have been associated with numerous media advertising campaigns over the last two decades, media advertising has been under-utilised in marketing regarding social issues such as racism. Furthermore, there is little published research on the effectiveness of media advertising campaigns which are specifically designed to combat racism in the community. One such study, however, is reported by Donovan and Leivers (1993) who, together with government agencies and local Aboriginal groups, designed a two-week media campaign challenging negative stereotypical beliefs about Aboriginal people in employment. These included the beliefs that few Aboriginal people were in paid employment and that those who were, did not stay in jobs for very long. These beliefs were linked to stereotypes that Aboriginal people were lazy, irresponsible and unreliable. Conducted in a country town with a population of 20,000, the study found that the campaign had significantly shifted community perceptions about the proportion of employed Aboriginal people and their length of time in employment.

Government legislation

Perhaps more than any other form of intervention, legislating against expressions of prejudice and discrimination is likely to invoke controversy and disapproval among some sectors of society. Nesdale (1980), however, makes a strong case for discouraging prejudice and racism in the community by applying legal sanctions under the 1975 Race Discrimination Act. There are not only strong moral grounds for prosecuting those who display blatant forms of prejudice and discrimination in our community, but also sound theoretical and empirical grounds for doing so. Both attitude theory and empirical work in health psychology, for example, have demonstrated that attitude change often follows behavioural compliance. In Australia we have witnessed considerable shifts in community attitudes regarding drink-driving and the wearing of seat belts following the introduction of legislation and associated penalties. Today, driving while 'under the influence' or failing to 'buckle up' are generally regarded as socially unacceptable behaviours. Despite the controversy that legislating against racism and discrimination may trigger, there is considerable evidence to suggest that such legislation would be quite effective in changing community attitudes and social norms in the long-run. Indeed, social psychologists have argued that the most critical factor in the declining levels of blatant forms of prejudice and racism in the United States is the civil rights legislation of the 1960s (Aronson, 1992; Nesdale, 1997).

In light of the potential of legislation to change community attitudes in the long term, historic legislation such as The Native Title Act (1993) may in future be viewed as a milestone in shaping Australian race relations. The symbolic significance of abandoning the doctrine of 'terra nullius', which had for 200 years been embodied in Australian law, cannot be over-estimated. The official recognition that Australia was already a possessed land before colonisation has been a major step towards Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal reconciliation.

8   THE ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGISTS

Other disciplinary perspectives on racism and its effects

Psychology's past failings

The present situation

Future directions

Institutionalised racism in any organisation is almost by definition invisible. To be detected and therefore counteracted, it is necessary for the institution or profession to carefully examine its own practices, both in the past and in the present. Each profession and organisation, then, needs to examine and acknowledge its own place within the social and political structures and systems that give rise to, and perpetuate, racism. Here we examine psychology's place in the past and present, as an example of such a process, and to help formulate a more inclusive way forward.

8.1   Other disciplinary perspectives on racism and its effects

"Experts can neither abandon their perspective nor assume it has primacy. In either case they lose the opportunity for a genuine dialogue between partners." (Sampson, 1993, p1227)

A variety of other disciplines have contributed to the understanding of racism and prejudice, and to related sociopolitical and academic debates. These perspectives, like psychology, tend to focus on particular levels of analysis and theoretical perspectives. Two with particular relevance to psychological concerns are anthropology and sociology. It is useful to compare and contrast these with psychology's perspectives in order to clarify psychology's contribution.

A starting premise for anthropology is that 'judgements' about other cultures must be made cautiously, if at all, and must be informed by the possibly very different assumptions, understandings, values and lifeways of that other culture. This acknowledgement of cultural relativism and reflexivity when discussing the nature and meaning systems of other cultures and groups has made prejudice a less salient issue for anthropology. However, it is frequently noted that most cultures of the world are ethnocentric and that this often finds expression in a tendency to devalue and disparage the 'alien', 'foreign' and 'strange'. As well, anthropologists' theoretical perspectives involve 'encountering the other'. Importantly, the level of analysis is that of society and culture, and cultural meaning systems, as distinct from individual level sense-making.

Fundamental contributions of anthropology to discussions of racism and prejudice have included the decentering of Eurocentric biases, both in the social sciences and in popular consciousness, a more critical cultural awareness, and the overthrow of evolutionist notions of cultural difference (Bromley, 1987; Turner, 1991). There is also an understanding that representations of 'culture', cultural identity, and cultural difference are continually negotiated. An additional concern of anthropologists has been to point out the differences between ethnocentrism and prejudice, and the need for other social scientists to understand cultural relativity (Kraus, 1989). Contemporary Australian anthropology frames the issues of prejudice and racism in historical and societal terms (e.g., Cowlishaw, 1988, Rowse, 1993). However, this discourse only rarely connects directly with the Australian psychological discourse.

Sociology shares with anthropology more common reference to societal and systems levels of analysis. It has an interest in social categories and categorisation, and in the interacting roles of group membership, identification, and labelling in the formation of intergroup dynamics. Sociologists have a long tradition of studying ethnicity, and have explored the nature and consequences of 'racial'/ethnic categories and membership. Sociologists also have a long history of studying institutionalised racism and prejudice, and have contributed to the understanding of how ethnicity and ethnocentrism operate at the level of societal structures, systems and ideologies (e.g., Donald & Rattansi, 1992). There is a strong tradition of such studies in Australia (Hollingsworth, McConnochie & Pettman, 1988; Vasta & Castles, 1996. Sociologists have also addressed issues of how prejudice and racism operate in the context of ongoing societal processes such as immigration, social movements, the justice system, education, and political ideologies and conflicts.

> *"Most of us have been trained not to encounter others' unique specificity but to reduce them to one of our discipline's categories, while ignoring the social, historical, and political roots of those very categories. Because the task set for us is political, and because our traditional science has taught us that the psychological must be separated from the political, we will need to reconsider a separation that sustains the privilege of some at the expense of the many." (Sampson, 1993, p1228)*

8.2   Psychology's past failings

Section 6 has documented how institutionalised racism has affected professional psychology's capacity to deliver high quality services in the mental health arena. Issues of culturally appropriate assessment and treatment are central here, with implications too for equity of access to psychological training and the cultural appropriateness of psychology curricula. There are other areas, too, where psychology can be viewed as part of the problem rather than part of the solution to racism. Psychology, by uncritically accepting its place as part of the dominant culture, has often failed to understand and serve minority groups. As a discipline and profession, it has tended to take exceptionalistic approaches (focusing on individuals) to problems, rather than universalistic approaches (involving systemic analyses) (Ryan, 1971). This has had various consequences for how the discipline has dealt with problems such as racism and prejudice.

It was noted earlier (Section 3.3) that scape-goating and victim-blaming are a feature of lay explanations for disturbing phenomena. Victim-blaming has also been a pervasive feature of many

theoretical approaches within psychology. In reviewing all the articles which appeared over a six month period on the life experiences of African Americans, Caplan and Nelson (1973) noted that 82% of these articles attributed African Americans' social problems to the 'personal shortcomings' of this group of people (see Gregg, Preston, Geist, & Caplan, 1979). Such individualistic and person-centred explanations suggest that the site of change and 'therapy' becomes that of the individual or group, rather than the social, cultural, economic and political structures of society.

A recent review by Garcia Coll et al. (1996) reinforces this point, noting that psychology has not seriously considered the processes of cognitive, affective and social development among children from minority cultural backgrounds. The developmental literature on these children and their families concentrates on explaining developmental 'deviations' in comparison to white middle class populations. Two 'deficiency' models have guided the conceptual and empirical literature.. The 'genetically deficient' model posits innate differences in physical, intellectual and psychological capacities between races. The 'culturally deficient' model conceives of the 'culturally deprived' as those without access to the advantages of middle class whites. Most research on African American and Latino school-age children, for example, has focused on aggression, delinquency, attention deficits and hyperactivity, but it has not informed areas such as emotional development or resiliency (Barbarin, 1993).

White middle class child-rearing patterns have been accepted by developmental psychologists as the standard for normal development, not only obscuring cultural differences in child-rearing, but carrying the assumption that anything other than these are inferior. As a result, minority group parents get blamed for not transmitting the 'right' values. Different attitudes to discipline and to sharing of parenting responsibilities among extended family members have been, and may continue to be, used to justify removal of indigenous children from their families. Again, important developmental competencies of minority children that differ from those of the dominant culture, such as bicultural adaptation and coping with racism, are not assessed by traditional assessment tools, and therefore these children's competence can be underestimated. A focus on the effects of racism, prejudice, discrimination and oppression on children's development is clearly needed (Garcia Coll et al., 1996).

Psychologists have been very involved in the 'race debate' with respect to IQ and intellectual capacity. This research has been based on the biological notion of race which, as noted in Section 2.1, has dubious validity. Jensen (1972), Hernstein and Murray (1994) and Rushton (1995) are among the psychologists who have supported a biological determinist view with respect to the genetic underpinnings of 'intelligence'. Butler (in press) argues that 'The Bell Curve' (Hernstein & Murray, 1994) is an example of "highly technical, statistically sophisticated, psychological research being used to support a sociopolitical agenda transparently geared toward victim blame" (p.5). He points out the long history of biopsychological explanations being used to give scientific legitimacy to dominant social values. Both the general public and psychologists themselves tend to accept biological explanations as being scientifically objective. This has resulted in a 'psychological determinism' which has supported those espousing a racist agenda. Insufficient attention has been paid to the ways in which psychological explanations and constructions of social problems support victim blaming explanations for cultural differences (e.g., Gregg et al., 1979). Within Australia, the intelligence testing movement pioneered by Porteus has supported educational, vocational and social policies that have oppressed indigenous people (Davidson, 1995, in press). Issues such as differences in how 'intelligence' is constructed and expressed in different cultural settings, cultural biases in assessment instruments, developed and

normed in Western societies, and the different health, educational, community and cultural contexts of the groups involved, have also received too little attention in much of this debate.

Some social psychological theorising has also helped support racism. On the one hand, by presenting prejudice as a 'natural', 'universal' and 'inevitable' process, social psychology has contributed to a defeatist and/or laissez-faire response to conflict between ethnic groups. On the other hand, by locating prejudice within the individual rather than in society, some social psychological theories have conceptualised prejudice as an individual pathology, constructing the categories of the 'prejudiced individual' and the 'tolerant individual'. Wetherell and Potter argue that as a result, psychology has contributed to the view that prejudice is "a personal pathology, a failure of inner-directed empathy and intellect, rather than a social pathology, shaped by power relations and the conflicting vested interests of groups" (1992, p208). Politically this has the effect of deflecting attention from the necessity for societal and structural change.

8.3   The present situation

A more encouraging picture emerges from examining some trends within psychology over the last decade. There has been growing recognition of past failings such as those documented above, and serious attempts to correct them. There has been a vigorous debate on the limitations of the concept of race (e.g., Betancourt & Lopez, 1993) and an endorsement of multiculturalism (Fowers & Richardson, 1996). Both cultural psychology and cross-cultural psychology have acknowledged cultural difference while avoiding better/worse ascriptions. The growth of community psychology, political psychology and peace psychology has helped move the discipline from predominantly individualistic treatments of social problems. In the latest round of the 'race-IQ' debate (Hernstein & Murray, 1994), many psychologists spoke out against the biological determinist argument that was being made. The potential for cultural bias in assessment and the need for culturally appropriate treatments are increasingly recognised. Thus there are signs of a promising start in realigning the discipline and profession.

In the Australian context, in recent years the APS has taken significant steps towards recognising its past and acting to increase equity and access for members of minority groups. The recent formation of the Interest Group on Aboriginal People, Aboriginal Issues and Psychology, and the Interest Group on Cultures and Psychology, is evidence of the increasing attention and support being given to groups who have traditionally received scant attention. Other indicators include the provision of funding to support Aboriginal students of psychology to attend the national APS conference and to form support networks. Keynote speakers from the Aboriginal community have addressed the annual conference. Guidelines for the Provision of Psychological Services for and the Conduct of Psychological Research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People of Australia (APS, 1996) have been endorsed by the Society, and incorporate acknowledgement of the deep disadvantage suffered by indigenous people because of European settlement, the need for restoration of their human rights and privileges, and the need for participative and co-ownership models of research and practice with indigenous people. The Code of Ethics now includes a new General Principle that mentions the need to consider cultural factors in research and clinical settings. Moves have been made to translate APS brochures into other languages to facilitate access to psychological services by NESB people. The creation of the Directorate of Social Issues itself entails a recognition of the responsibility of the profession and discipline to engage with social issues in a way which enhances community well-being. While there is undoubtedly a long way to go, for example in ensuring equitable access to training and treatment,

and the cultural appropriateness of curricula and of intervention strategies, these moves are encouraging and deserve recognition.

8.4 Future directions

In considering how to relocate the profession and discipline of psychology in the future, Huygens (1988, 1996) speaks of the need to locate psychology and psychologists on a power continuum. As a predominantly white affluent profession, psychologists are privileged by the status quo and are beneficiaries of institutionalised discrimination. Huygens argues that it is incumbent on the more powerful group to work harder to understand minority or less powerful groups. This leads to a variety of questions for the profession to ask itself: How user-friendly are our services to non-Western cultures or to people from non-English speaking backgrounds? What would a culturally diverse profession look like? How would a truly multicultural psychology be taught? How would Australian psychology differ from American/ European psychology if indigenous perspectives were respected and privileged?

> *"Failure to speak about, or engage in social action against, social practices when evidence is available to psychologists that these infringe against rights and discriminate against persons may be construed as condoning these practices." (Davidson & Sanson, 1995, p3)*

In monitoring our own profession and making our practices accountable to non-dominant groups, psychologists can contribute to the processes of reconciliation with Aboriginal people and inclusiveness within a multicultural community. South Africa's Truth Commission and the New Zealand Psychological Society's Remit based on the Treaty of Waitangi offer practical examples of such processes.

Psychologists need to consider seriously the nature of their role when working with indigenous or migrant groups in either research or professional contexts (see APS, 1996). The most appropriate role can vary enormously, from substantial to non-existent. The assumption that psychologists should have a fixed or definite amount of involvement needs to be challenged. Often, the most appropriate role for a psychologist is as a resource to be called upon, which then leaves the power more firmly with the community which directs the psychologist as a consultant (Garvey, 1994; Collard & Garvey, 1994)

We offer this analysis as a self-critical reflection on the discipline and profession of psychology. We hope it may also be useful for other disciplines, professions and organisations engaged in examining the existence and nature of institutionalised racism in their contexts.

9 RECOMMENDATIONS

Macro

Institutional

Psychology and the APS

Individual

The recommendations of this paper are aimed at several levels. All these levels interact with one another and should be seen as complementary. They are:

- the **macro** level, which relates to Federal and State Government legislation, policy, funding and activities. This level also includes society-wide agents of social change such as the media and 'popular opinion'.
- the **institutional** level; recommendations at this level are aimed at the entire range of institutions, professions and community groups, including schools.
- **Psychology:** given the focus of this paper we have included a separate series of recommendations targeted directly at psychology as a profession and as a discipline.
- **Individual** recommendations are directed towards identifying the ways in which individuals can contribute to the reduction of levels of racism and prejudice in Australian society. This level draws on the inter- and intra-personal levels of research.

9.1 Macro

Governments

1. Governments are elected not only to reflect public opinion but also to provide leadership towards a just and fair society. It has been shown that proactive legislation (e.g., that regarding seat belts and drink driving) has resulted in attitude and behaviour change (see Section 7.4). Therefore we recommend that Federal and State governments provide leadership in the form of public statements condemning racism, and legislation, policy, funding and other forms of sponsorship to reduce the incidence of racism at all levels.

2. Members of minority groups need to be involved in the development of legislation and policy, since it is they who experience the effects of racism and prejudice. Therefore we recommend that governments and national media organisations work in partnership with representative organisations and individuals from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and migrant groups to address the problems of racism and prejudice.

3. We recommend that governments publicly acknowledge that racism is still prevalent in Australia even if less often in a blatant form. To pretend that this is not so avoids the possibility of identifying manifestations of racism and taking action to remove them.

4. The research literature on localised school- and organisation-based interventions to reduce racism, shows that they cannot be effective in the long-term unless their efforts are supported by government actions and policies. Therefore we recommend that long-running or continuous government-sponsored campaigns to reduce racism and prejudice are established. These need to be developed, implemented and evaluated in partnership with minority groups.

5. Governments and the media have responsibility for identifying and rejecting common misattributions of blame for economic and social problems such as unemployment onto migrants and indigenous groups. Therefore we recommend that governments and the

media make public statements of rebuttal to statements which reinforce attribution biases, victim-blaming and scapegoating, such as laying blame for unemployment onto minority groups, and make clear the lack of scientific basis for statements asserting racial superiority or inferiority.

6   One powerful way in which institutionalised racism operates is through the denial of access, rights and opportunities to minority group members. Therefore we recommend that existing legislation and government institutions and programs which assist in ensuring social justice, e.g., the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, are maintained, properly resourced and continually evaluated for effectiveness.

7   We recommend that all new policy initiatives and legislation be examined to ensure that they promote and maintain the ideals of social justice; in particular, that they decrease rather than increase the disadvantage experienced by already disadvantaged groups. Again, such an evaluation needs to be undertaken in partnership with representative bodies of minority groups.

8   To alert them to the processes of overt and subtle (institutionalised) racism, we recommend that all Members of Parliament in Australia receive anti-racism training, conducted by members of minority groups, as soon as possible after being elected.

Media

9   Media campaigns have been shown to be effective in encouraging attitude and behaviour change (e.g., the 'slip-slop-slap' sun protection campaign). The media have an important role in providing education about cultures other than Anglo-Australian culture, in entertaining and diverse forms. We recommend that other media organisations follow the excellent example provided by SBS in fulfilling this role.

10   We <u>recommend</u> that the media take responsibility for representing ethnic groups, ethnic differences, and conflict between ethnic groups, in ways which highlight the diversity within groups and similarities across groups, thereby discouraging negative stereotyping.

11   We <u>recommend</u> that cultural awareness training be made available for all people involved in the media.

12   We <u>recommend</u> that there be increased media coverage of successful non-violent resolution of ethnic conflicts at local and international levels.

9.2   Institutional

1   We <u>recommend</u> that all institutions, professions, and organisations examine their own policies and practices to identify and address instances of institutionalised racism within them.

2   We <u>recommend</u> that education for intercultural understanding, antiracism training and effective conflict resolution, in age appropriate forms, be integral parts of school and preschool curricula. Schools and other organisations should make use of the research literature (Section 7) to ensure such programs are as effective as possible. One aspect of this education should be an examination of history which illustrates the changing boundaries between groups. Members of minority groups should be involved in the development and teaching of these programs.

3   We <u>recommend</u> that training for intercultural understanding and antiracism, conducted by members of minority groups, be widely available to people working in schools, local councils, and community organisations.

4   We <u>recommend</u> that community programs be developed in partnership with representatives of minority groups, which involve cooperation among people from different backgrounds, with the aim of breaking down stereotypes and increasing understanding, and developing an awareness that different groups often have the same, not conflicting, interests. Multicultural festivals held in public places (e.g., local shopping strips) and conducted by local councils or community organisations are one example.

5   We <u>recommend</u> that all parents be given access to parenting programs which encourage them to use alternatives to punitive, power-assertive strategies for guiding and controlling their children's behaviour, and to help them develop skills in using inductive reasoning. Encouraging parents to use age appropriate ways to help children to take others' perspectives and to use interest-based conflict resolution need to be central goals.

6   We <u>recommend</u> that incentives in the form of prizes, scholarships and grants be available for people to produce books, video games, CD-ROMs, films, etc., which present counter-instances of racial and other stereotypes, and encourage open-minded attitudes and respect for those different from oneself.

7   We <u>recommend</u> that institutions support inclusive language and inclusive politics, and resist attempts to derogate such initiatives as 'mere' political correctness.

9.3   Psychology and the APS

We here make cross-reference to some of the Recommendations of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's Report on the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children, as summarised in 'Bringing Them Home' (HREOC, 1997), where they are of especial relevance to psychologists.

1   We <u>recommend</u> that the APS make public statements of rebuttal to assertions which reinforce attribution biases, victim-blaming and scapegoating, such as laying blame for unemployment onto minority groups. Similarly, APS should make clear the lack of scientific basis for statements asserting racial superiority or inferiority on intelligence or any other psychological attribute.

2   We <u>recommend</u> that courses on cross-cultural (including Aboriginal) issues, awareness, and research, developed in consultation with indigenous and migrant groups, be integrated into undergraduate psychology courses. Accreditation of courses should be partly dependent on the quality of such teaching. However, given that there are unresolved questions about the nature and content of such education about other cultures, an APS-sponsored investigation of the pedagogy of psychological training of cross-cultural issues is recommended (See HREOC, 1997, Recommendations 9b and 34b): again involving representatives of indigenous and migrant groups.

3 (a)   We <u>recommend</u> that the APS encourage compliance with the Guidelines for the Provision of Psychological Services for and the Conduct of Psychological Research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People of Australia (APS, 1996), and, in partnership with representatives of the groups involved, formulate guidelines on professional work and research with other minority groups, including guidelines regarding what constitutes socially responsible psychological research on issues of culture and race.

(b)   We <u>recommend</u> that the APS support and encourage professional development in the application of such guidelines - such training to be available and accessible to all, but mandatory for psychologists working with the relevant groups (see HREOC, 1997, Recommendations 9a and 34a).

4   We <u>recommend</u> that Colleges, Branches and Interest Groups of the APS dedicate a proportion of their Professional Development activities to indigenous and cross-cultural psychology, in consultation with local communites and organisations..

5   We <u>recommend</u> that the APS give encouragement to minority group members to train as clinicians. Bicultural clinicians should be given incentives to work with people from their own culture of origin, to help ensure culturally sensitive treatment. Bicultural clinicians and culturally appropriate clinical skills should be afforded the professional status they deserve.

6   We <u>recommend</u> that psychological assessment measures be translated, tested and adjusted across a variety of cultural groups to ensure cross-cultural validity and accurate diagnosis. In doing so, the appropriateness of the measure for the underlying psychology of other groups must be carefully considered. The APS should establish a library of validated psychological tests in various languages and for various cultural groups.

7   We <u>recommend</u> that clinicians engage in appropriate training to ensure that they can provide culturally appropriate services which are empirically validated using culturally appropriate processes and outcomes. Existing therapies and treatments need to be re-assessed in terms of their appropriateness for different cultural groups.

8   In view of the current failings of the mental health system to adequately cater to the needs of minority group members, we <u>recommend</u> that individual psychologists and the APS lobby for adequate government funding and reform of the system. It should be emphasised that improved mental health status among minority groups requires self-management and self-determination.

9   We <u>recommend</u> that in research and practice, psychologists attempt to correct the historical overemphasis on 'deficits' in minority groups, and focus more on competency based models. They should attempt to work in partnership with communities to identify and build upon the strengths and powerful adaptive mechanisms that already exist within particular groups. (See HREOC, 1997, Recommendations 33a, 33b, 33c.)

10   Intervention studies have identified many guidelines for successful programs for reducing racism and prejudice in schools and other organisations. We <u>recommend</u> that the APS support the implementation of these as widely as possible. The APS should be involved in the development, dissemination and evaluation of parenting programs, and school-, organisation- and community-based programs. (See HREOC, 1997, Recommendation 36.)

11   We <u>recommend</u> that community education within ethnic minority groups on the advantages of professional psychological treatment from a position of cultural understanding accompany improvements in the services themselves with regard to language and cultural issues described in Section 7.1.

9.4 Individual

"We are living in interesting times. We are now engaged in the next stage of our struggle for land and cultural equity. We are faced with the prospect of having our recently recognised but long-held traditional rights eroded. We do not want to have to fight on and on, but we will if we have to. We do not want to use the language of conflict. We want to be able to walk in our country free of the anxiety that our native title rights will again be taken from us. ...
As members of the wider community, each of you has a responsibility to work with us to do this. We welcome your efforts in the spirit of reconciliation." (Margaret Gardiner, Wurundjeri Spokeswoman, "The Age", 18/8/97)

1   We <u>recommend</u> that individuals consider making a contribution to breaking down racism and prejudice by:
(i) becoming active members of groups which are attempting to encourage tolerance and reduce prejudice and racism;
(ii) committing a certain amount of time (per week or per month) to work on these issues.

2   We <u>recommend</u> that individuals remain alert to the subtle and covert ways in which racism can be manifested at all levels of society, as well as in their own behaviour and attitudes. Pervasive negative stereotypes about minority groups are likely to affect our own behaviour unless we consciously and deliberately choose to reject them.

3   We <u>recommend</u> that individuals who are members of a cultural group which is not subject to racial abuse or oppression educate themselves and others about the psychological impact of oppression. They should be aware that it is easy to dismiss the difficulties that others face if you do not face them yourself. Education and understanding about one's own culture in relation to others is a major factor in overcoming internalised domination. Reflecting on the fact that most of us as individuals are the product and embodiment of multiculturalism can also help break down the notion of 'them' and 'us'.

4   We <u>recommend</u> that individuals remain alert to evidence of overt and subtle racism in current social and political debates concerning native title and immigration, and in forming their own views on these issues.

5   We <u>recommend</u> that parents and teachers consider the ways in which they can protect children from developing prejudiced attitudes and behaviours.

6   We <u>recommend</u> that individuals encourage the examination of their own organisational and institutional settings for institutionalised racism. One starting point is the equal opportunities policies and practices of the organisation.

7   We <u>recommend</u> that individuals try to form friendships and alliances with people from a different ethnic group to themselves as a step towards overcoming racism.

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