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Contents

Contents ................................................................. 1
Call for Papers .................................................... 2
General Information ............................................. 3

CHAIRPERSON EDITORIAL
Heather Gridley .................................................. 5

ARTICLES
Living in a Close Community: The Everyday Life of Somali Refugees
Bernard Guerin, Pauline Guerin, Roda Omar Diiriye, Abdirizak Abdi .................................................. 7

Pakistani-Muslim Immigrant Women in Western Australia: Perceptions of Identity and Community
Blanca M Fijac, Christopher C. Sonn ................................ 18

Reflections on White Settler Identity A follow-up process to the settler caucus at the 6th Australia-Aotearoa/New Zealand Community Psychology conference in Hamilton in 1998
Ingrid Huygens, Rose Black, Heather Hamerton, with Chris Ansley, Barbara Bennet, Lorraine Corbett, Kieren Faull, Megan Jolly, Beth Neill and Neville Robertson .................................................. 28

Voices on Adoption in Australia
Trudy Rosenwald .................................................. 37

Multicultural Learning Experiences of Students in a Community Project
V Roos, M Coetzee, J Kotze, M Claassen, A Friis, EJA de Bruin, Y Pienaar, AB Kahts .................................................. 34

Migrant Stories: Understanding the Decisions to Migrate from the United Kingdom to Western Australia
Lynne Cohen, Moira O'Connor and Lauren Breen .................................................. 41

PRACTICE ISSUES
Removing Oppression from the Teaching of Psychology Students: The Case for Critical Pedagogy
Dawn Darlaston-Jones ............................................. 51

Current Job Satisfaction among Mental Health Professionals in Australia
Edward Helmes, Paul P. W. Chang, Lynne Cohen, Lisbeth T. Pike .................................................. 55
Call for Papers

Contributions are invited for the next issue of Network on a wide range of topics. It offers researchers the opportunity to submit both qualitative and quantitative research to showcase the ways community psychology can contribute to the health and well being of society.

To achieve this we are keen to receive a variety of contributions including theoretical, empirical and reflective pieces. We are also keen to include discussions and book reviews. All papers will be reviewed. Please see instructions for authors for a summary of the review process.

Please send your contribution to the Editor Lynne Cohen and Assistant Editor Tao Jordan.

Att: Lynne Cohen  
School of Psychology  
Edith Cowan University  
Joondalup Drive  
JOONDALUP WA 6027

Email contributions are also welcome.

l.cohen@ecu.edu.au  
jacomell@iinet.net.au
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Lynne Cohen, Edith Cowan University
Assistant Editor
Tao Jordan

Editorial Board
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All inserts must be trimmed and folded to at least 5mm less than the dimensions of Network.
A single sheet or brochure equivalent to 1 A4 page $50.

All payments to be made out to:
Lynne Cohen
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Joondalup WA 6027
Chairperson Editorial

This is my first Network as National Chair of the Community College, and there are a number of matters that merit an update for College members.

The College celebrates its 21st birthday in 2004, and we are in the process of compiling a history of the college. Strong links have been established with students in WA and Victoria, in part through professional development activities. The College has also made an ongoing contribution to debate within the APS on issues of supervision, College membership, professional development and social justice. A Directorate of Social Issues paper on 'Sense of Community' is in progress, with a Working Group convened by Assoc. Prof. Grace Pretty and other community psychologists.

Plans for 2004-2005 will focus on options for keeping ‘Network’ viable and making it accessible to a wider readership, an investigation of online teaching and PD options, and the lead-up to APS Conference in Melbourne next year.

APS Conference and AGM - Sydney, September 29th-October 3rd

The College’s Annual General Meeting has been scheduled during the APS Conference, at which there is a Community Psychology theme day (Thursday 30th September). Although not all community psychology submissions were accepted, there is still a solid program, with symposia on consumer rights and participation in mental health, on managing drug-related dilemmas in community services, and on gender and culture in relation to body image concerns - all on the same day as Christina Lee’s keynote address on the Australian Longitudinal Study on Women’s Health. Our NSW Section is keen to see as many local and interstate members as possible gathering at the conference, formally or informally. Let Meg Smith know if you are planning to be there - m.smith@uws.edu.au

Development of College Competencies, based on the National Practice Standards for the Mental Health Workforce

APS is experimenting with the idea of using these standards as a stepping-off point for a review of college competencies. The need has arisen from the perceived overlap between the competency claims of the bulk of colleges (not necessarily a bad thing), and hence this attempt to define what might be generic or generalist competencies for most colleges (indeed for all graduating 6-year trained psychologists), and then what are specific to each specialisation. While the mental health workforce might sound like a strange place to start, especially for colleges like ours where direct service provision is not as central as elsewhere, the initiative has also been a catalyst for a review of our own list of competencies. The first three competencies (standards) are those where community psychologists may be strongest: (i) rights, responsibilities, safety & privacy; (ii) consumer and carer participation; (iii) awareness of diversity. However this process may unravel somewhat as the impossibility of applying any one-size-fits-all template becomes apparent, more in what’s not able to be included than in what’s there.

College Membership requirements - Supervision

The next big item, in the light of low graduate join-up figures for all colleges, is a proposal to be put to the Society’s AGM on Saturday 2nd October, to reduce the supervision requirement for full college membership from two years to one, and that D. Psych (professional doctorate) graduates be eligible for college membership on graduation. The one-year requirement would consist of 80 hours college-specified PD activity, which might include a supervision component - e.g 50 hours supervision + 30 hours PD. While I sympathised with the dismay some College chairs and Board members expressed at abandoning supervision as an early career mentoring tool, I think this is a more realistic approach and one that offers individual colleges more flexibility in tailoring the requirements to the nature of the specialist field. We also need to bed down the alternative pathway/portfolio/examination process, especially for people with a research degree as opposed to an accredited coursework fifth and sixth year.

Award of Distinction for College Members

Another proposal to be put to the Society’s AGM is for the establishment of an Award of Distinction to recognise the importance and significance of an individual’s contribution to their specialist field. The proposed criteria will be circulated with the AGM notice, but it is likely that colleges will be invited to elect/nominate one recipient per year.

Professional Development

A number of college members have either elected not to comply with Professional Development reporting requirements, or neglected to put in the paperwork for the first two cycles - in which case they will have been re-assigned to Affiliate Membership by now, or may have chosen to let their membership lapse altogether. We understand that many members have mixed feelings about PD, but we do strongly encourage you to retain your links with the College, at whatever level works best for you. The bald facts are that as one of the smallest colleges, WE NEED YOU. This Journal is already financially non-viable (and indeed wasted!) with such a limited circulation, and our two postgraduate programs (at Edith Cowan and Victoria Universities) will also be highly vulnerable if the College shrinks any further. Let us know how we can support you in developing a PD program that suits your particular needs.

The Trans-Tasman Conference in Community Psychology held in Tauranga, New Zealand, July 3-5 was a great success, with over 100 registrants, including a sizeable contingent of Australian community psychologists and students from four states.
Discussions are underway to hold the next one in Sydney in 2006, perhaps as a feeder event prior to the proposed inaugural International Conference in Puerto Rico.

**Communications**
National Secretary Anna Shadbolt has been busy updating the content on our College web page (check it out on the APS website), and we are also revising our College brochure, with a version aimed at students and another at the general public.

**Robin Winkler Award**
The recipients of the 2003 Robin Winkler Award were Helen McGrath and Toni Noble for their highly acclaimed Bounceback! program, which takes a whole-school approach to the promotion of resilience in children and adolescents.

**National Committee meetings**
The National Committee has met by audio three times this year. If you have a pressing issue you think should be on the agenda, please let one of us know. It has been refreshing to be connected to a small but committed and hard-working group who continue to balance everyday concerns of life, family, work and study with their determination to see community psychology thrive within and beyond the APS.

Heather Gridley
National Chair of the Community College
Living in a Close Community:  
The Everyday Life of Somali Refugees

Bernard Guerin  
(University of Waikato)

Pauline Guerin  
(Waikato Institute of Technology)

Roda Omar Diiriye  
(Waikato Institute of Technology and Refugee & Migrant Services)

Abdirizak Abdi  
(Ministry of Education)

Introduction: Overview of the Research Programme and Limitations

When we began joint consultation in order to carry some research projects with the Somali community, we had in mind a series of traditional studies on various topics of importance. We consulted the community about the topics they saw as important, rather than take them from our own limited ideas and preconceptions, but we still had in mind a series of conventional studies. Table 1 presents the main areas of focus, and some of the finished, underway and dreamed of studies we planned.

Table 1.  
Areas of Research and Intervention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completed</th>
<th>Underway</th>
<th>Planned</th>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Mental&quot; Health</td>
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<td>Education</td>
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<td>Health Survey publication</td>
<td>• Health research</td>
<td>• Life for kids here research</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Health Survey publication</td>
<td>Medical services</td>
<td>• Parental involvement interventions</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Discrimination research and interventions at schools</td>
<td>Maternity care &amp; birthing</td>
<td>• Survey of English ability and social networking</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Women's health research &amp; publication</td>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>• Health Seminar series</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Physical measurements research &amp; publication</td>
<td>Exercise</td>
<td>• FRST research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Gather examples of prejudice against Muslims</td>
<td>and fitness classes</td>
<td>Discrimination interventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Employment interviews and research</td>
<td>Problems</td>
<td>Issues</td>
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<td>• Meetings and Planning</td>
<td>Stakeholder interviews</td>
<td>Seasonal</td>
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<td>• Stakeholder interviews</td>
<td>Problems</td>
<td>Migration</td>
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<td>• Conceptions</td>
<td>Services needed</td>
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<td>• Competencies</td>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>Research</td>
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What became clear very quickly once we began was just how much all the areas of life impacted on each other. It was difficult to separate out one issue and study it in isolation from other issues as we had originally envisaged. Everything impacted on everything else. What is interesting from this is that with our knowledge of Maori research
methods (e.g., Smith, 1999), we realized that the real problem was not with the Somali (or Maori) communities but with the western communities. For westerners, our actions and practices can be compartmentalized and treated as distinct from other practices. What we do at the gym has only a small impact on what we do at work; what we do at home on weekends has only a little impact on our gym membership or on work. How we talk to colleagues does not much affect how we talk to family. We can also easily substitute and change our compartmentalized activities, as when we try and decide between going fishing for the weekend and driving up north to visit relatives. The two events can be substituted for one another: catching fish and making contact with kin (Guerin, 2004).

The problem for us, not for the Somali community, was the tremendous overlap in activities and the contexts for activities in such a close community. Even health research, one of the first topics to receive our attention, could not be easily compartmentalized away from family, language, religion, history, education, and employment issues. Several examples of this appear in this paper, such as gym membership and exercise classes becoming a religious issue and being subject to a rumour. To this end, we ended up separating out the different areas of research and community development for funding and practical purposes, but actually treated them all as one big whole.

This point is an important one, and certainly affects the ease with which student projects and short-term funding can be made available to study with such communities, for example. It also means that much of what we are all really learning from our studies comes from the combined, or ethnographic, research that includes our informal interactions in the community as well as the more formally collected data. This report is our first attempt to cover some of the informal material. It includes observations at Somali weddings, for example; observations that we wrote down afterwards. It includes talking with members of the community before asking them more "serious" or formal questions.

This paper gives an overview of the informal research and community development we have jointly conducted with the Somali community in Hamilton, New Zealand. In this report we will not present data from specific studies but give an ethnographic overview of what life is like for this group of refugees. We will focus most on women and children, because these are the people with whom we have spent most time.

For us, showing the challenges and successes of such a community in this way presents a very real picture of multiculturalism and how to promote cultural diversity. This way of viewing the community also suggests some theoretical considerations about the very possibility of doing traditional forms of research in these areas. In giving these observations we will also outline some of the community projects in which we have been involved and some of the problems we have found in trying to sustain activities in a multicultural society.

Somali Refugees in New Zealand

Approximately 1000 refugees come into New Zealand every year under the quota and asylum-seeker criteria. This does not include many others now arriving under the family reunification criteria. Originally, New Zealand was one of the few countries to accept from the United Nation High Commissioner of Refugees a preponderance of women-at-risk and those with disabilities. Over half of refugees in the world are women and children, and so many of the refugees coming into New Zealand are women and children. Many refugees coming into New Zealand have now gone through the difficult process of requesting family members to be allowed entry into New Zealand (they have to pay the airfares, for example), and so many men now arrive each year under this family reunification scheme.

Upon arrival, refugees get a six-week orientation course at a special centre in which they learn about the cultures and practices of New Zealand, the bureaucracies, and other topics. Refugees are taught English daily during their orientation, but after they leave the orientation centre English classes are not provided but refugees are given information about locally available English classes. One of the current problems, however, is that family reunification entrants receive none of this, as it is assumed that the family will, and can, teach them everything they need to know, even though the women and children will have different requirements from the men who often arrive.

Somali refugees have been arriving in New Zealand since 1993, and as mentioned, they have mostly been women and children until more recently. This has meant that it is not uncommon at all that a household might have one or two women looking after five children, and then be expected to house and cater for the arrival of two older men and three sons in their 20s. As can be imagined, this puts a great burden on all members of that household, but most especially the women.

All the Somali in Hamilton are Muslims, most to a very real degree, and the Islamic Mosque is a key meeting place for Somali men in particular, along with other non-Somali Islamic groups. Somali make up the largest group of current refugees in Hamilton, with at least 800 currently living in this city of 110,000 people. The term "refugee" is an abstract and sometime misleading label, and although there are many Cambodian and Vietnamese refugees in Hamilton, many do not now refer to themselves as refugees since they have been here with passports for more than 20 years. In this way, the uses of the term "refugee" need to be monitored and treated carefully.

What refugees do have in common, however, are a series of contexts or conditions that define the basis to their lives. Most of their problems arise from these "refugee" conditions. First and foremost, many do not speak good English, and this is a key factor in almost every part of their learning to live in a new country. We found, for instance, that English ability was a
key factor in health for Somali in Hamilton, despite language seeming to have little to do with physical health (Guerin, Abdi, & Guerin, 2003). But the complex connections between the ability to speak English and the accessing of health services provide ample links. Unlike migrants, who in New Zealand must show some competency in English before being allowed to migrate, refugees have no time to learn a new language before escaping their original country or from the time they learn where they are going to the time they leave.

Refugees often have also had interruptions to schooling and study. They may have had no formal education during the conflict or war from which they are escaping, and little or no education in the refugee camps in which they might have stayed for 2-3 years, some even 10 years or more. This means they arrive in a new country with little English and little education. The current school systems usually place them into schools merely based on their age, which puts them at a distinct disadvantage and adds to the stress (Kahin, 1997). For example, we have talked to a 13-year-old boy with no English, who had only been in the country for three months, placed in an intermediary level high school because of his age. He had no real idea what was going on, and was "causing some problems from not paying attention".

Another very typical pattern for refugees is for high unemployment and low incomes. This is a combination of many factors compounded, including lack of English, no recognition for qualifications gained in their country of origin, and discrimination. Once again, this influences almost everything else in their lives since opportunities are lost and compromises made to their health and well-being. It leads to living in poorer neighbourhoods with poorer housing, and all the associated risk factors and health problems.

One of the benefits of being in a close community, however, is the total amount of social support available. This is very noticeable in the Somali community, with loosely connected relatives helping out with big and small tasks. For example, when a woman has a baby other women in the community come to her house to cook and clean for 42 days, relieving her of those responsibilities and allowing her time to recover and enjoy the baby. The Somali community have also joined together to buy a van for community uses, such as transport for children to their soccer matches and picking up new family reunification arrivals from Auckland Airport.

Associated with this, refugees are typical in having absent family members. Indeed, this is one of the biggest stressors to them, and if their reports are to be believed at face value, this is the biggest worry and stress most of them have in life. Family members, most often males, are either missing or dead, although sometimes contact is made after several years from a distant part of the world with no warning (Kahin, 1997). Not only do those here have to do everything themselves, so that children take on roles that the father might have had (cf. Aye & Guerin, 2001), but they are also left with a gap of not knowing whether their relatives are alive in some other part of the world or dead.

Finally, another common condition of being a refugee is that there are subtle and not so subtle discriminations and prejudices from the resident population. This is especially so for Somali women, whose flowing and brightly coloured clothes make them stand out (Guerin, Dilaye, Corrigan & Guerin, 2003). We have found it common that people in cars yell abuse at the women, and tell them to go home. Occasionally, the Mosque is defaced with graffiti.

Getting a house rented is also a common discrimination problem although few have the English ability and assertion to make a formal complaint. The third author of this paper once went to look at a house to rent but when she arrived, the landlord told her that it had been taken. She immediately told the second author about this who then phoned the landlord and asked about the house in her U.S. American accent, and was told that the house was still available and to come around. When they both then turned up the landlord told them that he was sorry but he was just on the phone and had finalized a deal with someone else so the house was no longer available. Unfortunately, the law is that unless the landlord says something explicitly about the colour or race of the persons involved, there is no way to prosecute or even file a complaint. Our informal talks suggest that this scenario is very common for Somali in Hamilton.

In summary, all of these conditions are typically part and parcel of being a refugee, and our experience is that despite the great trauma and abuses the refugees have suffered, their main depression and stress arise from these factors all combined rather than any "unresolved" trauma issues. If any of us were to experience all these problems simultaneously, we too would almost certainly have 'severe depression' or other sorts of stress problems.

The Everyday Life of Somali Refugee Women

Life is very different for Somali women when they arrive in New Zealand compared to their lives in Somalia. These differences impact on the most fundamental ways that they have run their life previously, not only in the more obvious changes such as the clothing and language of New Zealanders. For example, at a very basic level of health, life expectancy at birth in Somalia is 47 years whereas it is about 78 years in New Zealand (Ministry of Health, 2001). The under-5 years mortality rate in Somalia is 211 per 1000 live births but only 8.5 in New Zealand (Ministry of Health, 2001). Maternal mortality rate is 1600 per 100,000 live births in Somalia but only 5.1 in New Zealand (Ministry of Health, 2001).

Of most impact, however, is the total fertility rate in Somalia of 7.2 children born per woman and only 2.0 in New Zealand (Ministry of Health, 2001). This means, for example, that life (and bureaucracy) in New Zealand is designed in such a way as to cater for women having, on average, two children, not seven. In the refugee situation, women often look after children of other family members...
who may have died or are still in Africa so that a Somali woman looking after 10-15 children is not unusual. This can make life very difficult for a woman to deal with schools, child benefit payments, and car seats.

The Major Impacts on Daily Life for Somali Women Refugees

Figure 1 presents our generalized observations of the events that impact on daily life for Somali women-events that sometimes provide benefits but often present challenges and stress. In discussing these factors, we will often draw upon our experiences in developing and establishing one of our intervention projects concerned with increasing healthy physical activity amongst the Somali women, a project initiated by the Somali women (Guerin, Direyi, Corrigan, & Guerin, 2003). A major point to emphasise is that developing this intervention (or any intervention) has required looking beyond the immediate topic (physical activity, in this case), since physical activity cannot be compartmentalized to the extent it can for westerners. That is, while there might be individual women participating in the physical activity programme, the whole community is involved in many and subtle ways.

Figure 1. How does being a Somali refugee woman impact on daily life?

Gender

Gender roles are an important consideration in the day-to-day life of Somali women. What this has meant in the development of the physical activity programmes is that the programmes required the consideration of these issues, or the programmes would have never worked. For example, it was necessary to find appropriate facilities for the women to exercise; they could not exercise anywhere, as can western women.

For the majority of the Somali women, it is inappropriate to exercise where men might see them. We first found a community centre with a gym facility in the community where many of the women lived. It was necessary to have all the windows of the gym painted over so that men could not see in and we needed to be diligent about having the doors locked so that men did not inadvertently enter the facility during our exercise sessions.

At another time, the women had requested the use of more equipment for their exercise programmes, so we arranged gym memberships at a women-only facility where the women could use more equipment and exercise without the possibility of men entering the facility (Guerin, Direyi, Corrigan, & Guerin, 2003). However, there are not many women-only exercise facilities available, and exclusively women fitness centres are very expensive. So many people suggested to us that we establish walking groups for the Somali women as this is a low cost physical activity option that can be done just about anywhere. But the women will not just go walking in public, partly because of their high visibility and partly because of their fear of harassment in such a situation. Many Somali women are harassed often in public with name-calling and things thrown at them. For these reasons, we have had walking groups, but these were held after dark, in a high school playing field with no lights so that the women could not be seen (Guerin et al., 2003).

Past Experiences Impact on Exercising

In Somalia, daily life for these women involved extensive walking. People walked long distances to visit friends and family, when looking after livestock to find pasture, and to go to the market to buy perishable foods (because most situations are such that refrigerators are not available). This is the case for most Somalis, whether they are in refugee camps or not. Refugee camps often cover a large area, requiring lots of walking to get food, supplies, and visiting family or friends in other parts of the camp. When Somali arrive in a western country such as New Zealand, this aspect of the lifestyle changes drastically. In New Zealand, people drive cars everywhere, and as a result of the harassment mentioned previously, many of the Somali women will drive short distances even when it seems like walking would be easier and healthier. We have found, however, that when the women are given a safe, appropriate opportunity to walk they will do so for long periods, enjoy it and continue to request opportunities to do it again.

Another issue of past experience that impacts on current daily life of Somali is the experiencing or witnessing of traumatic events. Women and children are more likely to have experienced traumatic events through their witnessing of brutal killings or rape of loved ones during war and civil unrest. This can cause some disturbances and adjustments to everyday life in their new country. Many, for example, are extremely apprehensive when meeting police during their first orientation period in the country, since their experiences with authorities in Somalia and in refugee camps have sometimes been traumatic.

Religious Interpretations of Exercising

Islam plays a major role in Somali daily life. For example, Islamic religion suggests praying five times each day. This practice, while accommodated in Islamic countries, is not so accommodated in western countries. For example, in setting
up the exercise programmes, it was necessary to consider this prayer time and to have adjoining rooms or facilities available for the women to pray should prayer time coincide with exercise class. Ideally, exercise classes (or any classes) would be scheduled so that they would not coincide with prayer time, but this time changes throughout the year. Either way, this prayer time is an important consideration.

Another religious issue that has impacted on exercise classes is the clothing of Somali women. Even when arrangements were made so that women could dress comfortably for exercise without fear of men seeing them, they still often felt more comfortable exercising in their long dresses and veils. This, however, proved to be a safety issue later when using exercise equipment and required the women modifying their dress for safety reasons. When explained in this way, the women were quite happy to modify their dress. As mentioned above, a Somali woman’s dress also makes them very visible in public and easy targets for discrimination.

Community
Women’s exercising affects the whole community in subtle ways. During our exercise programmes with the Somali women, a prominent religious leader had visited the local mosque and spoke with the men in the community. Following this, a rumour had spread quickly through the community that this leader had said that it was not religiously appropriate for the women to exercise outside the home. Consultation with a male leader of the community revealed that this rumour was not true at all and that the Imam had said no such thing. While only a rumour, possibly from a male in the community who was not happy with his wife going out to exercise classes, it could have led to the stopping of our programmes.

Family
As mentioned, Somali women tend to have many more children than western women. While culturally and historically this practice makes sense, it is difficult to adapt in a western culture. For any woman with many children in a western country, life can be very difficult. For example, the cost of childcare, food, clothing, can become very expensive. Transportation becomes difficult, if not impossible, when the legal requirements for car seats are considered. Often, a woman is left to care for many children on her own because other adult family are either still in Africa, have been killed in war, or work far from home (such as the case in seasonal agricultural employment).

Many of the first refugees to come to New Zealand were women and children. For many of those women, their burden is often increased when extended family arrive with little or no English or understanding of western culture. Although it is very stressful when extended family is still living in refugee camps or war-torn countries, other stresses arise when the extended family come to join their family members in western countries. For example, when a woman and her children are taken in by a country (such as New Zealand), the family that is left behind in Africa depend on that woman to send money to them back in Africa, not understanding that her income is usually very low. When extended family arrives in the host country, they depend on that woman for housing, transportation, translation services, food, clothing, and any other resettlement issues. It is not unusual for a single woman with a number of her own children living in a three bedroom house to suddenly find herself with 10 members of extended family on her doorstep.

Again, it cannot be stressed enough that having extended family arrive removes a lot of stress and anxiety, but it also creates different problems.

Cultural Practices and Organisation
The culture in Somalia is very different to that in New Zealand. As one simple example, keeping your receipt (i.e., docket) when you make a purchase from department stores is a completely new concept. Dealing with bureaucratic systems is a big challenge with all those forms to fill in by people who do not have any formal education, who cannot write their own names (Schneider, 2000). At the same time, while adults are struggling to adapt, the children seem to be adjusting to a point where they want toys, cartoons, posters of musicians, skate boards, or any item that are trendy with their western friends. The differences in adaptation of parents compared with children can often lead to creative exploitation of the children of their parent's lack of information. For example, we know of one Somali girl who told her parents that it was a school requirement to watch “The Simpsons” every evening after school.

Language
Older Somalis do not necessarily read and write the Somali language since it was only formally written in 1972. This makes living in a western country difficult as most, if not all, of the western system is based on reading and writing. So, for example, western documents, forms, pamphlets, and information cannot just be translated into Somali as a solution because many of the people cannot read it anyway. This means that health promotion information can be useless even if translated into Somali. The hope is that at least someone in a large household will read either English or Somali, but getting this done does not always eventuate.

Environment
The climate in New Zealand is very different to that in Somalia; it is particularly cold in New Zealand compared with Somalia. It is understandable therefore, that we have found some families putting their heaters on day and night during winter, without understanding the high cost of such a practice until a month or two later when a very large power bill is received. With little English, it is then very stressful for them to try and negotiate payments with power companies or to understand why the bills are so high.
Transport
One of the biggest problems for Somali women adjusting to life in a western country is transport. As mentioned, in Somalia people walked long distances and were familiar with their environments. Learning how to use bus services, route numbers, and timetables, are all very new experiences and once again require English. Learning how to drive in New Zealand is also a big challenge when all the rules are in English. Driving can be difficult for women with many children, as mentioned, due to car seat requirements and insufficient seating in the cars that are affordable. This results in women spending most of their time at home and either sending other family members to do the shopping and run errands or only going out to do shopping when help is available to look after children.

Organising Exercise Classes for Somali Women: A Community Event
Despite all these problems and set-backs, the exercise programmes for Somali women that were run were very successful (Guerin, Diiriye, Corrigan, & Guerin, 2003), and the aerobics classes are still running now except that extra time at the end is now spent on teaching Somali dancing to the younger girls. Presently there are too many women wanting to join the classes and extra sessions will be necessary.

There were many benefits that arose from these classes for both the women and the community. Not only did fitness seem to improve, but there was also added social cohesion and sense of community developed, and in the gym programme the women got some exposure to western women and the way of life. One woman recently put it well when she remarked that the men got their day at the Mosque on Fridays and so the women have their time at the exercise classes and traditional dancing on Sundays.

On the other hand, there were also many new issues that arose in the setting up and organizing of the classes. Of particular concern were the many reports of harassment the women get when they leave the home, and part of our future research will be addressing this issue. There were also difficulties in arranging and maintaining attendance at the gym centre, partly due to staff and partly due to the women’s inexperience in how gyms operate. Finally, we have mentioned the occasion that a rumour was spread about prohibiting women from exercising out of the home.

The bigger point to make from this is that even setting up relatively simple exercise and fitness classes involved community-wide changes and adaptations. There were individual women attending the classes and doing exercise, but the issues (and benefits) that arose involved the whole community including the men. The issues that arose and the benefits and changes that occurred were not restricted to the people doing the exercises. This is unusual for westerners. It became clear to us that we could not go into the community, set up exercise classes and do nothing else. With so many needs, we, as researchers, have taken the responsibility of ensuring that we contribute to solving the problems and issues that we learn about, whether casually or through our research.

The Everyday Life of Somali Refugee Children
When we start to interact with and observe Somali children there are a number of obvious differences to the way “western” children behave. Figure 2 shows our rough representation of the main influences on western children. Time is typically divided between home/family and school, with other activities being either minor or part of these two arenas. For example, peers and friends are a major influence on children but they typically are found through school networks, except perhaps for children with strong church ties. Similarly, sports are important, but they also typically function through the school with family in attendance sometimes.

Figure 2. Representations of Typical Influences over Western and Somali Children.

A. Western Children

B. Somali Children

This arrangement sets the context for the ways in which parents and others can influence children. Typically, again, options for parents and teachers include praising the children, punishments of some sort, affecting the reputation or access to peers and friends, or, more and more importantly, using the access to commodities as the way of controlling children’s behaviour.

Figure 2 also presents our rough representation of the influence on Somali children, and this is a good framework for those dealing with these children to think about the children’s lives as they observe them. Typically, there is a very strong triangle formed between the Somali community, Islam, and the family. Most issues and events revolve around these, and typically the people involved in each of these know each other. If you make changes in a family, then this impacts in the community and at the Mosque, this was the message we have already discussed from setting up exercise classes for the Somali women.

These influences are also seen in the way that parents and community leaders can influence the Somali children (Tarazi, 1995). Usually, a first approach at changing the children’s behaviour is to ask them what the impact upon Islam would be—how what they might be doing conflicts with their religion. They would also then talk to the child about what they are doing might impact on the reputation of their community in the wider society, and then on the reputation of their family within the Somali community. These sorts of influences...
tend not to work on western children, and appealing to what they do reflects badly on their neighbourhood does not lead to much in the way of change.

Somali Children and School
What can also be seen from Figure 2, that is important for understanding the Somali children at school, is that school is seen as secondary to this triangle and the links are typically one way only. That is, family, religion and the community affect the children's schooling but the school does not affect much in return (Kahin, 1997; Naidoo, 1999; Parker-Jenkins, 1991). If anything, the triangle can set up situations of conflict with the school.

There are many examples of this one-way influence with school. In Somalia, for example, parents were typically not involved in the schools, and indeed, if a parent was asked to go along to their child's school this would be seen as a negative situation—the child must have done something bad that will reflect on the family and the community. So Somali parents are very hesitant about being involved in their children's schooling here, and being asked to be on a Parents' School Board or Council will initially be viewed as being in some sort of trouble. Similarly, homework existed in Somalia but here parents might not expect that their children have to do homework and rely on the children to inform them. The example given earlier of the girl telling her parents that the "Simpsons" were part of her homework is a good illustration.

When dealing with Somali children, then, there are multiple influences that are not always apparent but can be very potent in a situation. This creates some complex situations that also contribute towards stress in settling into a new place (Naidoo, 1999). For example, schooling often comes to be seen as in conflict with teaching the Qur'an to children. This is not a necessary conflict but typically occurs through some complex paths. A typical conflict along these lines occurs when considering the time and place to have Qur'an lessons. We have found almost identical disputes occurring in the Hamilton Somali community as we read in a report of Somali teenagers and adults talk of their Somali schooling days being divided between hours spent at the dugsi and hours at school. Many teenagers remarked that it was strange to them not to have religious (Qur'anic) education incorporated into their regular school day. The idea that religion was extraneous to education, and had to be worked into extracurricular time much like sports or games, was to them a peculiar arrangement.

Adding to this the problems of English language for the children and parents, and the stresses we saw for the women earlier, a typical conflict occurs between Qur'an lessons, sports, and school. Qur'an lessons have to be put after school but this means that the Somali children cannot join in with others in sports (and often this means that they have to form their own segregated teams). But because of the nature of large Somali families and their refugee status (low income), the children also often have been caring for younger siblings or helping out with household chores after school, especially girls (Mayall, 1991). Moreover, because of a common poor ability in English, they also need after-school classes in English and other schoolwork. All these factors mix to make the time after school very complex to organize and stressful for both parents and children. Most of the children want their Qur'an lessons but are made to choose between Qur'an lessons, extra schoolwork coaching, and sports practice. This is a difficult choice for them, and we have had situations identical to those reported in McGown (1999) occurring in the Hamilton Somali community. As an Education Refugee Coordinator told us: "After-school help in Maths was offered to Somali youth during 2000-20001 but without fail they opted out and preferred to attend soccer practice".

Further problems, better known ones in general, occur in other areas of schooling-teaching fine arts, performing arts, sex education, and health and drug education. There are solutions that can find a peaceful compromise between parents, school and children, but these need to be made known in interventions so that conflict is avoided. For example, drawing the human body is in general prohibited in the Qur'an but where necessary for living, and not just for pleasure. It is permitted. Sex education is something that should be talked about between father and son, or between mother and daughter, and strategies along these lines can be worked out with teachers and community workers.

Less well known problems can occur for clothing, and the wearing of veils (hijab). These are not exclusively symbols of the oppression of women, as has been emphasized recently with the Taliban in Afghanistan, but serve many purposes that lead women to want to wear them. Up to a certain age there is much choice, and most girls exercise this choice:

Aman: I hope that I will wear the hijab [veil] sometime, but I don’t know when. That’s my dream actually. I don’t know why I don’t. I will decide someday. Most of the people I know who wear hijab, they don’t have as many problems as we do in society.

Hawa: The thing is that when you’re wearing hijab, you’re gonna act different than when you’re not, because when you’re wearing it you’re gonna refuse to go to movies and stuff like that, and you can follow the rules. But if you’re not, as we are, you’re gonna act like you’re non-Muslim and that’s gonna affect you. And other Muslims are going to say, ‘Why are you doing that and that?’ and that’s hard.

(McGown, 1999, p. 122)
Sometimes teachers also ask children to do things in class that seem quite innocent to most western children-such as girls holding hands with boys. In such cases, not wearing a veil is seen as problematic:

**Hawa:** It’s hard. You can’t go to the teacher and say, ‘I can’t hold hands.’ He’s going to ask you why, and you’ll say, ‘Because I’m Muslim.’ But you don’t have the symbol to show it, the hijab. You feel ashamed that you don’t wear hijab then. (McGown, 1999, p. 122)

Finally, there can be problems at school from discrimination and prejudice against Somali, as indeed there is in the more general community. In this regard, Somalis are at a disadvantage because they differ in so many ways from typical New Zealanders—in religion, colour, race, clothing (that stands out for the women), language, and practices.

Our research interviews with children have found that discrimination depends very much upon the social context, and some schools have almost no discrimination between children whereas others have a lot (Anderson, 2001). Somali children, in general, are quite forward and assertive, although a lack of English often makes them hesitant to say things they normally might in Somali, but we have found this in the children when confronted with prejudice.

A young Somali girl we interviewed in a lower Primary school reported that a boy once came up to her and said in a nasty way: "You’re black. Really black!" [This description refers to a complex chain of slurs involving Maori as brown and others including Afro-Americans as black.] When something like this happens the children at this school are taught to go to the teachers and tell them, but in this case the little girl stood up to the boy and said: "I happen to like that colour!"

**Somali Children Adapting to the Western World**

It is often reported that children have an easier time adapting to new things and new places than adults, and this might be true in many circumstances. However, in our observations this is often reversed for the Somali refugee community, and children can have more stresses and pressures put on them than their parents have.

One reason for this is that many of the parents, especially the mothers, do not interact as much with other members of the community as do their children. A health survey we conducted found that whereas the men went out of the house on average about 6-7 days a week, the women went out only about 4-5 times a week on average (Guerin, Abdi & Guerin, 2003). This means that many women will only get out of the house infrequently. Interaction with non-Somali community members is even worse than this, however, because the men will typically go to the Mosque and mix together and the women will go shopping together and straight back home.

So the Somali children will often have more western influences upon them than their parents, and this shows up in many of the conflicts found. These stressful conflicts are a result of influences on the children that their parents might not even experience.

**Observations of New Behaviour Patterns**

One obvious effect for children is that they get to observe a lot of the western patterns of behaviour that they might not have seen before. Gender roles are a clear example of this, with children observing females in almost all positions in society and learning through their schools that women are not to be differentiated in work or activities from men (e.g., the Prime Minister of New Zealand is female). Girls learn that they can do a lot more activities than they have been told, although the downside to these activities for the Somali community is not explained in schools. Girls see other girls in all variations of clothes, and learning all sorts of activities. While Islam does not explicitly prohibit most of these, and interpretations vary, they get firsthand experience of alternative patterns of gender roles and behaviour.

The children also directly observe the western notions of control and the autonomy of the individual. Whether misguided or not, western values and philosophy puts an overwhelming emphasis on individuals controlling their own behaviour and on individuals having the right to control their own behaviour (Guerin, 2001; Shelley, 2001). They see other children who appear to pay little attention to what their parents or community (if they even have one) want, and seem to flourish in total freedom and autonomy from others ("I don’t have to do it if I don’t want to"). They see a society that values individual freedom over the community’s freedom to cooperate and work together. In the extreme, which is quite frequent, being "cultureless" can also come to signify the highest status position, since it entails total freedom to do what you like (Perry, 2001). Once again, of course, the downside of not belonging to a close community is not mentioned since it is assumed a totally free and autonomous individual has all the money they need to buy people in and get things done that once would have been done by community members.

Somali children also soon notice the value placed on commodities, and purchasing commodities (Guerin, 2003). Having the latest toys, clothes or gadgets becomes something to value even over family and community. Parents become seen as your purchasing power and parental respect becomes a close function of parental income. The Somali children not only see variety in clothes but, moreover, they see the value placed by peers on such clothing. New realms of valuing open up and if they wish to become adapted or assimilated to their new "culture", it becomes vital to get the same purchasing power.

Finally, and related to this last point, the children see a whole new variety of social influence methods-ways of influencing parents, leaders, peers and family. Parents will not understand what is going on when these are tried out at home, however, but the children can still get away with breaking the rules.
Easier Availability of "Prohibited" Materials
Another western influence is the availability of materials and events that were not previously available. This can be through religious prohibition, cultural prohibition, or previous unavailability. At the least, this can make children aware that such events and goods are out there and that other children do those activities and come to no immediate or apparent harm. This can include alcohol and tobacco, drugs and substances of abuse, gambling, new technologies, indecent materials, dating and sexual activities, and events such as dances and nightclubs.

In the Hamilton Somali community, problems such as these are presently on the fringe, with only a few "wayward" youth doing these. All the literature suggests, however, that these will all become more prevalent in the future, so part of our research and intervention is to find ways to allow youth to do mild forms of these activities without breaking up the whole community through stubborn resistance and punishment as the only options for parents. Perhaps there will be ways found to prevent these problems altogether, but the literature suggests that it will be almost impossible. Some parents, for example, have already begun moving to Australia where there are larger Muslim communities in which their children are less likely to be exposed to such things.

Therefore, we are also conducting research into groups who have had similar problems some years ago, to find out successful ways to deal with these problems, so we can explain them to the Somali community and prevent the worst excesses if and when the time comes that these activities become more frequent among youth. For example, we are currently interviewing parents and teenage Indian girls about how their parents have dealt, successfully or not, with dating and boyfriends. We hope that some of the strategies that led to minimal conflict within Indian families and communities can be implemented in the Somali community.

Overarching Role of Money in Affecting Social Relationships
Another subtle western influence is the ubiquitous role of money and how it influences social relationships, even familial ones (Guerin, 2003, 2004). A common predicament is that children begin to earn more money than their parents and their elders, and begin to escape their control. Conflict is not necessary but frequently can occur.

Time Orientation
Another common but often unrecognised problems is the constant exposure of children to the western orientation towards time, that is, that everything is run by the clock. As mentioned earlier, parents are often not exposed to this since they mix mostly with other Somali and punctuality is not as valued as it is for westerners. But children at school have to learn the necessity of being at certain places at certain times or risk punishment.

Monopoly of English Language and Western Practices
Finally, children also learn the overall monopoly that western practices and the English language have over life in their new country. Probably more than their parents, they learn that they just have to deal with western bureaucracies and paper forms, with formal procedures for employment and housing, and that family and community influence do not count as much for anything as they did in their country of origin.

Key Areas of Conflict/Change for Somali Children and their Parents/Communities
While there seem to be many areas of conflict for refugee children, and Somali children in particular, there are some key areas of conflict identified in past research that can help us identify crisis points. The Somali community in Hamilton is only just reaching a problem point on many of these conflict issues, and our hope is that pre-emptive or early interventions can avert most of the damaging conflict that has occurred with other families and communities, in which the children become turned away from the family or community altogether.

Generational Breakdown
A key area of potential conflict is with generational breakdown, that is, where the younger people become distanced from the elders and parents. Several parameters of this are key indicators that something is wrong:

• Lack of respect for religious/community leaders
• Gender codes modified, such as Somali girls wearing western clothes
• Disinterest in things Somali, especially the language
• Religious/community influences seen as "pressuring" instead of the natural, unquestioned thing to do
• Changing parental roles, and changed parental methods of influence

With each of these, the outcome does not have to be conflict, but they are signs that conflict is likely because the young people are changing. Our goal is to do something about these before they become major issues, although this can be very difficult because the leaders and parents can see the researchers/interventionists as people meddling in their affairs and turning their children against them.

Cross-Cultural/ Religious Marriages and Intimate Relationships
Another interesting flashpoint for integration is when children from close communities begin to want to "date" or have boyfriends and girlfriends. Somali, for example, would traditionally have not allowed dating or intimate relationships, although the girls and boys would certainly have known each other and be aware of aspirations for marriage.

A major indicator comes from how parents then react to their children seeing a community member of the opposite sex on a regular basis. This is difficult for parents,
especially when the children can see each other at school on a regular basis outside of the parents' control. Some European immigrants allow their daughters, for example, to go out with a group of girl friends but accompanied by their brothers, as a compromise solution. But the really difficult indicator comes when the children wish to date or go out with friends of another race or ethnic group. This is often a point at which parents will draw a line and begin refusing to allow the practice.

Like generational breakdown, there are ways and strategies for handling these situations that can reduce conflict or exacerbate it, and if all the other influences were not acting on the children, the parents could possibly prevent such events occurring. However, with all the influences outlined above occurring, it becomes very difficult for parents to find ways to influence their children without making matters worse. They are put into a very stressful and hurtful situation.

As for the other issues, we hope our research can identify strategies used by other refugee and immigrant groups to resolve such conflicts peacefully and that we can then apply those strategies to other groups, or at least inform the people that there are other ways they can handle things. By using the multicultural groups' experiences and diversities, we can perhaps help new arrivals to overcome the predictable problems and issues more peacefully.

Emphasis on Money, Income and Commodities over Community and Religion

The final key indicator is when the children begin placing more emphasis on making money and buying clothes and commodities over spending time with their families. As mentioned above, this change in life strategy is right at the (negative) foundation of western individualism (Guerin, 2001, 2003), and with all the western influences acting on the children, it is unlikely they can escape this influence easily. Once again we can only really hope to minimize its impact when it occurs, and find ways for families and communities to survive these impacts with the best of their culture, community organization, and participation intact afterwards. Already there is some tendency for children to be more interested in television and techno-games than the community or family. In visiting Somali homes, we sometimes see children playing with playstations, video games or computer games and online chatting and the parent being quiet in a corner, oblivious to the world their children are in. In Somalia, usually after dinner children would gather around a parent or grandparent for a storytelling time. Parents were entertainers of their children. This is not the case anymore. Children are enjoying the modern (western) ways of entertainment and therefore even at home they are not socially connected to their parents. The western monopolies are leading to this disconnection between parents and children. Also, because many parents are unemployed and stay at home, their status in front of their children is not as significant as when they were the breadwinners for the family in their country and respected in the community.

In Summary

We have tried to present some overviews of life in New Zealand for Somali children and women. Both have many pressures and stressors on them that are not of their making. The women have pressures from a new way of life and drastic changes in the way the family has to run with little appreciation of the problems from western bureaucracies. The children have pressures on them from observing and being forced to take part in so many activities and practices that are new or that go against what they are told by their parents. If they do not change they have conflict with peers and if they do change they have conflict with their parents and communities.

Based on this, our experience with the Somali community is that there is a professional over-emphasis on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and its labelling. Most of the depression, anxiety and "mental" health issues we see and talk about with Somali, are directly due to the enormous list of pressures on these people-pressures, to say it again, not of their making. The immediate stresses of life are the ones we hear about that are troubling and serious. This is not to disregard the trauma that many or most have suffered, and is not to say that it has not had a major impact on their lives, but we find too many professionals willing to assign a PSTD label after an hour's interview when our informal talks with the people tell us about all the real stresses and strains they have that cause them problems.

The difficulties of life for Somali women and children come, then, from their history as refugees and arriving in a refugee state, and from sudden exposure to very non-traditional practices that seem to be blatantly exposed in public in a way they have never had to deal with before.

To finish with an example, one of the authors took an older Somali woman into the city of Hamilton very soon after she arrived from a refugee camp in Kenya. In the middle of the street she suddenly started screaming hysterically, and any professional would have been thinking about agoraphobia from war-trauma or about war-trauma from seeing a bustling city again. When questioned afterwards, however, the woman said that she had seen a young couple leaning on a street post up against one another and kissing, and that this was the shocking thing that set her screaming.

The good news from reviewing past research and our own approaches is that many of the problems and issues are well-identified and many immigrant and refugee groups have been through the same problems and their communities have remained more or less intact afterwards. This gives us hope and courage that similar strategies can be advised to the Somali community to help them through what will be a very rough period. Interventions can therefore be made before problems become too acute.
References


Authors' footnotes

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Contact Details:
Bernard Guerin
Department of Psychology
University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton
New Zealand
e-mail: bguerin@waikato.ac.nz
Pakistan-Muslim Immigrant Women in Western Australia: Perceptions of Identity and Community

Bianca M. Fijac and Christopher C. Sonn
(Edith Cowan University, Perth, Australia)

The present study explored the perceptions and experiences of impacting identity and community for Pakistani-Muslim immigrant women living in Western Australia. Ten Pakistani-Muslim immigrant women aged between 40-50 who immigrated to Australia in the 1970's were interviewed using an open response semi-structured interview schedule. Participants were interviewed about their perceptions and experiences of their community. The data analysis involved a thematic content analysis facilitated by a question-ordered matrix. The findings indicated that the role of religion was a core component in the experience of community and in the settlement process. Racism and exclusion, social support structures and gender roles were other factors impacting the development and maintenance of the identity and community of this group.

Keywords: identity, sense of community, religion, settlement process, western society

In this paper we report exploratory research aimed at understanding factors that influence identity and community construction for a group of Pakistani-Muslim women in Western Australia. Australia is one of the most culturally diverse societies in the world. Prior to the 1970's migration policies focused on maintaining a homogenous White Australia. Since that time there have been different waves of immigration from diverse regions of the world contributing to an increasingly culturally diverse community. Among the newer and emerging communities are different ethnic groups from Asia, the Middle East and the Horn of Africa. These ethnic and cultural groups are diverse in terms of their religious beliefs, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, rural and urban origin, family values and acculturation strategies (Jackson, 1997). Although many of these communities come from different countries, they often share a Muslim religion. The religious, cultural and other differences that may exist between Western host communities and immigrants who hold a different sociocultural and religious background may have strong implications for settlement, including identity and community development (Ibrahim, Ohnishi & Sandhu, 1997; Nesdale & Mak, 2000). Moreover, events in recent world history have seen increasing visibility of people of Muslim religion in the public sphere in the Australian context. Following the bombing of the World Trade Center in the United States, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, there have been broader discourses around terror and terrorism that seem to equate the threats of terror with particular ethnic communities. The broader events and discourses have contributed to scapegating and backlash against many people of and those assumed to be of Muslim origin in local communities in Western Australia. The backlash is often expressed in negative experiences, including increased levels of racism, the desecration of religious sites, the dehumanisation of groups through processes of labelling. It is within this broader context that we sought to understand the experiences and perceptions of identity from the perspective of Pakistani-Muslim Women in Australia. We were specifically interested in understanding the complex factors that influence their perceptions and experiences of identity and community.

Ancestral Heritage and Castes of Pakistani-Muslims

Hinnell (1994) noted that many immigrants from Asia have immigrated more than once in their life usually within their own continent and then to westernised countries, significantly impacting the development and maintenance of their identity and community. For example, many Indian-Muslims and Afghani-Muslims crossed over into Pakistan immediately following Partition because of the end of British Power, and the creation of Pakistan to be the first modern state set up on a religious basis (Hinnell). Since 1947, there was a big movement of South East Asians to the industrialised world particularly UK, USA, Canada and Australia in hope of greater opportunities and a better life (Hinnell). During the 1970's an influx of Pakistani-Muslim women immigrated to Australia. The general pattern of immigration from South East Asians was typically males who rarely had their families with them, setting up their life in Australia before bringing their wives and children over (Adamson & Shaw, 1981). As a result the Pakistani community, living in a westernised country, is divided into various groups referred to as castes. These are primarily Pathan-Pakistani where ancestors are from Afghanistan and 'Mahajur - Pakistani' having Indian ancestors (Adamson & Shaw, 1981). Amin, Willetts, and Hancock (1982) supported that other then ancestral background, each caste has distinct characteristics. For example, Pathans are renowned for blending the ancient with the modern whilst maintaining cultural traditions whereas other castes like Mahajurs generally have not resisted the impact of the western world in the twentieth century and their cultural identities have crumbled as a result (Amin, Willetts, & Hancock, 1982).

Therefore, Hinnell (1994) found that the immigrant individual identifies with and belongs to the Pakistani community in
terms of the Australian society, their ancestral group within the Pakistani community, and the Muslim community as about 97% of the Pakistani community are Muslims. This reinforces the notion of minority groups existing within minority groups based on ancestral heritage and immigrants identifying with and belonging to more than one minority group which influences acculturation, identity and community within the context of a western society (Hinnell). It is important to understand the settlement process and acculturation experience of this group in order to identify the factors impacting identity and community (Hinnell, 1994). However, research in the area of Pakistani and other Asian immigrants tends to ignore the role of immigrant women, especially Muslim women, in the immigration process (Whol de Wenden, 1998). Given this previous literature and the reliance on survey designs, we sought to gain an understanding of how Pakistani-Muslim immigrant women in Western Australia defined their cultural identities and the different social, political and cultural factors that impact those identities.

Understanding Settlement and Factors the Impact Immigrant Experiences

Adaptation and Acculturation

One of the predominant frameworks for understanding the responses of ethnic minorities is Berry’s (1999) framework on acculturation and adaptation. Acculturation refers to the process of cultural change that occurs when two or more cultural groups come into contact. Berry identified various acculturation strategies employed by immigrants including: 1) assimilation that involves rejecting a minority status and embracing majority status, 2) integration that means maintenance of cultural traditions whilst gaining resources valued by the majority, 3) marginalisation which means being outside both the host and the home culture and 4) separation which means holding on to the original culture and avoiding interaction with others.

Several researchers maintain that acculturation is one form of within-group diversity for Asian immigrants settling in a western society (Liu, Pope-Davis, Nevitt, & Toporek, 1999). In a study of acculturation strategies employed by Asian immigrants in a western host society, Jackson (1997) found either separation or internalisation strategies were employed by this group. Therefore, avoidance of interaction with the host society was either a choice or the result of the group feeling that there was no alternate option. Despite varying acculturation experiences, the primary issues discouraging integration and inhibiting the development and maintenance of a positive and cohesive ethnic and cultural identity for the individual and group was the tremendous diversity of the immigrants’ culture and religious beliefs compared to western society (Jackson).

Religious Affiliation

In a study of the acculturation styles of Asian adolescents living in a western society, Singh Ghuman (1997) found that religious affiliation significantly influenced the acculturation strategies employed by this group. The results indicated that Muslim families show a more negative attitude towards developing and maintaining relations in the wider society and are more likely to adopt a separation or internalisation process as opposed to assimilation or integration, compared with Hindu and Sikh families. Singh Ghuman attributed these findings to the fact that Islam tends to place significantly more stress on family solidarity and virtues than the Hindu and Sikh religion. This suggested that religious affiliation influences intercultural contact which, in turn, significantly impacts the identity and community of both the immigrant parents and their children (Singh Ghuman).

Furthermore, Erickson and Al-Timimi (2001) highlighted that many Arab and Asian Americans share the religion of Islam. Both groups are referred to as Muslims as they are followers of Islamic law and found that individuals’ interpretation of Islamic law greatly influences their identity, community, and level of integration into the western host society (Erickson & Al-Timimi). As religion is an integral part of the lives of Arab and Asian Americans, it was supported that religion is a central component of the identity and community of this group (Erickson & Al-Timimi).

Some researchers have also demonstrated that race and religion are closely intertwined (Jackson, 1997; Williams, 1988). Williams found that because Pakistanis and Indians were also Muslims or Nizari Ismailis, their religions were becoming synonymous with their ethnicity and Americans from the host culture were not distinguishing between a religion and an ethnic group. This supported how closely related religion, ethnicity and culture is for Pakistani-Muslims (Williams). It was also found that the Pakistani-Muslims’ attempts to preserve Islamic law, Urdu language and traditional culture resulted in increased discrimination and even racism because the religion was so closely associated with being Pakistani (Williams). Singh Ghuman (1997) also maintains that in several racial and ethnic groups, culture and religion is closely interconnected.

Racism

Researchers have found that Asian immigrants’ experiences with racism, intense social stigma and religious and cultural discrimination is influenced by the increased religious diversity between Asian immigrants and their western host society (Jackson, 1997). Abdalati (1980) highlighted that challenges presented to Islam by the western world involve discrimination. This threatens the heart of Islam for Muslims living in a western society are often confronted with ill-informed remarks concerning their cultural identity, made by westerners which are based on ignorant distortions about Islam (Abdalati).
Negative stereotypes held by the host society present considerable challenges to the development and maintenance of a positive ethnic and cultural identity for immigrants often creating identity crisis. In a study of Asian immigrants in a western society, Jackson (1997) found that this group is one of the most misunderstood ethnic and cultural groups in North America and are frequently misrepresented and negatively portrayed by the media to be terrorists, fanatics, oil sheiks, dangerous and anti-western. Furthermore, Abdelati (1980) found that as a response to identity confusion, decreased sense of community, racism, and exclusion from the dominant culture, immigrants tend to develop a strong affiliation with family and primary cultural and ethnic groups as these challenges bond the family unit together.

**Gender Roles**

Research shows that gender roles influence the identity and sense of community of immigrant women from Asian backgrounds (Erickson & Al-Timimi, 2001; Espin, 1995). Through interviews of immigrant women in the United States, Espin found that if the women dressed in western style clothing and became too Americanised, conflict was created within the immigrants own community. This is because women's identity, defined through their gender roles, clothing styles, and sexuality, is the central way in which many communities preserve cultural traditions (Espin). However, the larger society tended to view these immigrant women as being too traditional and 'ethnic' resulting in experiences of racism. Thus, the immigrant women found themselves between the racism and prejudices of the host society and the expectations of their own community and used clothing and sexuality as a form of resistance against the pressure from both the larger society and their own communities (Espin).

In a study of Arab American women, Erickson and Al-Timimi (2001) found that head coverings are worn out of cultural and religious pride and maintenance of their ethnic and cultural identity. Thus, the women resent the misperception of western societies that they blindly allow themselves to be dominated or controlled. They contest the assumption that a women wearing a veil is oppressed arguing it is as racist and naïve as it would be to consider women wearing mini skirts and high heeled shoes to be oppressed (Erickson & Al-Timimi). Although, the role of women in international migration has attracted attention from researchers, policy makers and service providers, immigrant women as a group are still largely understudied (Espin, 1995). According to Espin, there is also limited knowledge concerning experiences including racism and sexuality, specifically concerning women who have immigrated from the Middle East.

**Method**

**Participants**

Ten Pakistani women aged 40-50 who immigrated to Australia from Pakistan during the 1970’s participated in the study. The participants who met the initial selection criteria that included being a 40-50 year old woman, born in Pakistan and belonging to the Pathan or Mahajur caste, having immigrated to Australia in the 1970’s, and being a Muslim actively practicing Islamic law. Five participants were “Pathan-Pakistani” whose ancestors are from Afghanistan and five participants were “Mahajur - Pakistani” having Indian ancestry. All participants were recruited with the assistance of the President of the Pakistani Association. No rewards or payments were offered, as participation was voluntary.

**Instrument**

An open response, semi-structured interview schedule was developed on the literature and informal discussions with Pakistani women. The questions were trialled with two people in order to clarify questions and establish face validity and efficient ordering. Examples of the questions that were used to guide the interviews included: How would you define your cultural identity; what is your ethnic or cultural community membership; what makes you feel like you belong to your community(s); what are some of the negative experiences of living in Australia; how are the roles of women valued in your community; when you experience difficulty, who are you most likely to seek support from?

**Procedure**

An open response interview schedule was employed to collect the data through semi-structured, face-to-face interviews that were tape recorded with the participants' written consent. All participants were assured that there were no right or wrong answers to the questions and were informed about the confidentiality and anonymity of the study and their prerogative to refrain from responding to any questions that they did not feel comfortable answering. The participants were also informed that as their participation was voluntary, they were free to leave at any time throughout the interview. Each interview was approximately 30-40 minutes in duration and was conducted in English. All recorded interviews were transcribed.

**Data Analysis**

Data were analysed for unique and recurring themes. Data were recorded in a question-ordered matrix similar to the process adopted by Sonn and Fisher (1996, 2003). The first column of the matrix represented specific questions asked of the participants and the subsequent columns represented the individual participants. The cells of the matrix were used to record participant quotations, keywords and responses to interview questions. By employing this matrix the researcher was able to view participant responses to specific questions and examine them for consistencies across questions that reflect recurring themes emerging from the data independent of which question the data originally belonged to. In addition, by reviewing the data the researcher can determine if there are counter themes or ideas that assist in the understanding of the findings.
Findings and Interpretation

Data analysis revealed different core themes that are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Features</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religious Affiliation</td>
<td>Core aspect of group identity</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strength of religious affiliation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Caste differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acculturation styles and level of resistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Religion interconnected with race and ethnicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racism and Exclusion</td>
<td>Increased since September 11th</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Based on being Muslim rather than being Pakistani</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negative stereotypes challenge identity and settlement</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In-betweenity status</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Excluded from western society Resistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sources of Support</td>
<td>Family unit</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Church</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Older people within own community</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Like minded people in the same situation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender Roles</td>
<td>Cultural traditions maintained through women's roles</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Differences between male and female roles</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Resentment of pressure from own community and host society</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Western misperceptions of women's roles based on dress and ignorant</td>
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<td></td>
<td>distortions of Islam</td>
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The central theme to emerge was the role of religion in cultural identification. Other themes related to the impact of racism and exclusion on identity, the role of primary sources of social support and the challenges of gender roles in adaptation.

Religious Affiliation, Diversity and Identities

Religious affiliation was central to the perceptions of community and identity of the participants. The participants identified themselves as Muslim, their primary community (Fisher & Sonn, 1999), before being Pakistani, Australian or a woman. For example a participant stated: "First and foremost I would classify myself as a Muslim". Another said; "Muslim is my main identity" and another stated; "Muslim woman trying to live in a western world". Participants also expressed their sense of belonging to the Muslim community. The following quotations illustrate this; "I fully belong to Muslim community. I'm on the borderline of Pakistani and Australian Muslim community above all, not always Pakistani or Australian" and "I am always a member if the Muslim community, Pakistani and Australian sometimes" and "I am Muslim, Australian and then Pakistani is my priority."

Based on the findings, it was inferred that Islamic law provided the participants with a map of how they should develop and maintain their identity and community. Yet, this Islamic life map is subject to individual interpretation. For example, one participant stated, "I'm living in a western world according to Islam as I understand it". This is consistent with Nasr (1988) who suggests that the individuals' interpretation of Islamic law significantly influenced the identity and community of this group in the context of a western host society.

In addition, the findings highlighted differences in religious affiliation, reflected in the settlement process of this group. For example, the Pathan-Pakistanis seem to have embraced and maintained their ancestral heritage and culture and tend to avoid influences from the western world much like their Afghani ancestors. In essence, it seems they seek to be separate and maintain their own space in their host country. This is reflected in Berry's (1999) notion of separation. For example, a participant stated: "I don't want to be associated with Australians or identified as an Australian", while another stated, "We do not wish to befriend white people". Others commented that; "Any interference from western world be it UK, US or Australia, don't accept" and "Western influences (we keep to a minimum". Lastly, a participant commented that "Pakistanis trying to be white. At a distance... never be influenced by...followers of western ideology".

The Pathan-Pakistani participants seemed to enjoy the benefits of living in a western society including financial security, safety, higher education, and "more opportunities". However, findings also indicate that they do not want to compromise their beliefs, identity, cultural heritage and traditions, resisting integration into the Australian society as a participant suggested, "don't like compromising... accepting western ideas". Another participant stated, "I don't want to be seen as western, but it's happened". Other participants reinforced this suggestion; limit western influence... pull back... resist temptations.

Furthermore, not only did these participants resist integration, but also condemned other members of the Pakistani and Muslim communities for attempting any level of integration into the host society. One person described attempts at integration as "trying to be white". Another participant indicated that you can be "looked down upon by other castes... especially Pathans for being too westernised... milo or coconut -- black on the outside, white on the inside". Other participants stated, "we aren't strict about who we mix with like Pathans" and "Pathans see us as ... wannabe's but never will be's". The participants indicated that accepting western influence is not adhering to Islam as the Pathans' interpret it. For example, one Pathan-Pakistani participant stated; "Living in Australia, the Islamic way of life is challenged daily, we must be stronger". These comments are consistent with Espin's (1995) observation that perceptions of becoming too "westernised" can be sufficient grounds for conflict within the immigrants'
own community. These comments may be construed as resistant responses to oppression by a dominant western culture that threatens to undermine the Islamic way of life. In contrast, the Mahajur-Pakistanis employed different strategies of adaptation, more consistent with Berry’s (1999) notion of integration. Participants wish to maintain their cultural heritage and traditions, but were more open to western influence enjoying the freedom of choosing some aspects of the western culture and rejecting others. At the same time they still adhere to Islamic law as they interpret it. One participant suggested; “most ethnic groups accept aspects of Aussie life and discard others depending on home traditions and religious beliefs”. Other participants stated, “have our own areas... join Aussie society when we want”, “I like aspects of Australian culture and don’t think all white people are corrupt” and “can learn about Islam, Pakistani and Australian way of life”.

The Mahajur-Pakistani participants seem to believe that it's "possible to keep Pakistani and Muslim values as long as you know what parts of Australian culture can be accepted... according to Islamic law". However, some level of resistance was displayed by the Mahajur participants even though it was not as intense as the resistance displayed by the Pathan-Pakistanis. For example, one Mahajur–Pakistani participant indicated that "Muslim and Pakistani communities... allows us not to be too westernised" and another stated; "we aren’t compromising... adapting to western society".

All of the participants indicated that they were aware that western influence of their cultural traditions would be inevitable to a certain extent due to their Australian environment; however, the level of resistance and acculturation styles varied considerably between the two castes. These findings are consistent with Amin, Willetts, and Hancock (1982) who suggested that Pathans are renowned for maintaining traditions whereas Mahajurs generally have not resisted the influence of the western world. This may be the result of the differences in interpretation of Islam between the two castes. The results indicated that this diversity within the community and varying levels of religious affiliation with the Muslim community were potentially more pronounced following the events of September 11th. This may be due to the conflicting viewpoints of members within the community concerning the terrorist attacks. For example, the Pathan-Pakistanis tended to support Osama Bin Laden maintaining that if it wasn’t for western corruption and racism then networks like al-Qaida would not exist. For example, one participant suggested “If USA had left Muslim world alone, there would be no Bin Laden or al-Qaida network”. Other participants also supported this view stating that “it was about time America was bought to their knees”, and “it is good to see blood shed on American soil for a change”, and “people were driven to do the things they did, needed to be heard.”

The Mahajur-Pakistani participants tend to blame terrorist groups for giving all Muslims a bad name amongst western society and encouraging further violence and racism. One participant suggested, “terrorists are giving us good guys a bad name” and other participants said; “do not support the Taliban because they give us Muslims a bad name... amongst the western world”. Other participants stated; “we are not like that” and “that is not Islam”. These findings suggest that individuals’ interpretation of Islam may influence their viewpoint concerning the September 11th attacks.

Racism and Exclusion
September 11th. The tragic events of September 11th have had a significant impact on the daily functioning of individuals within this community. The results suggested that this group in the Australian society has always experienced some level of racism and discrimination. However, since the September 11th racism is no longer "hidden", but more overt in the form of violent threats and attacks. Participants stated that; “Racism, threats, discrimination increased dramatically since September 11th, “Since September 11th people have become even more violent than before”, “there are more incidences of racism because of negative stuff on T.V.”, and “People were always racist... now they are more violent and aggressive about it racism, stereotypes, discrimination, all increased since media reports on holy war”.

These findings suggest racism experienced by participants and other Muslims are primarily based on the fact that they are Muslim rather than being Pakistani. One participant stated that “racist attacks against Muslims in Australia has gotten much worse since September 11th” and “Attacks since September 11th are on Muslims; “bashed, property vandalised because... we are Muslim”. Since September 11th, western society now has a “reason or justification to display hatred against Muslims”. Other participants indicated that, “terrorist, potential threat to security because we are Muslims” and “Since September 11th... target Muslims”.

These findings are consistent with Jackson (1997) in that the negative stereotypes presented impacts identity and community wellbeing. Participants felt they were primarily associated with a religious group that is misunderstood by the western society and misrepresented in the media. These findings are consistent Louise (2001) suggestion that negative stereotypes portrayed by the "western media" increased the racism, discrimination and ignorance within perceptions of the host society.

Stereotypes and in-group diversity
Participants indicated that being Pakistani or ethnic, dark complexion, dress, lifestyle and culture highlighted them as Muslims as "westerners think it's all the same thing". In the participants' view westerners confuse the Pakistani and Muslim cultures perceiving Muslim identity as a race and not a religion and are racist based on their religion (Birman, Trickett, & Vinokurov, 2002). Their ethnicity, dress attire and lifestyle of a Pakistani is what westerners associate with being a Muslim, however "not all Muslims are Pakistanis and not all Pakistanis
are Muslims." Participants suggested people "attack Pakistanis because it is assumed we are Muslims" and "white people think Pakistani and Muslim is the same thing." The findings are consistent with Abdalati's (1980) in that the racism and discrimination experienced by this group was considered as challenges presented to Islam by the western world based on ignorant distortions about Islam.

There was tension that emerged for participants living in Australia between being Muslim and Australian. This tension reflected the notion of an "in-between" status and the crossing of borders (Bulhan, 1985; Sonn & Fisher, 1996). In their communities in Pakistan and sometimes within their ethnic communities in Australia, the participants feel they are perceived as "too white" or "too western" and to the Australian society they are "too black" or "too Asian", leaving them feeling confused about where they fit in or feeling like they have "one foot in, one foot out" with their communities (Espin, 1995). For example one participant stated; "I'm not white but I'm not black... locked between two cultures" and similarly, other participants suggested: "we are never Australians, we are considered Asian... we are westernised back home... in-between... no one feels like they belong" and "Australians think we're too Asian... black and Pakistanis back home... think we are too westernised".

To some extent the participants feel like they have compromised their cultural heritage, traditions and identity for a western culture that will never accept them and constantly excludes them because they are so different. The religious diversity and Islamic lifestyle was the major issue. As one participant suggested that they are not accepted and are excluded by western society, and experience racism and discrimination because; "looks, dress, act, accents, language... strict in our religious beliefs... culture is too different". This was reinforced by other participants who stated: "we have different thoughts, way of life, culture, complexion, head scarfs, are perceived as terrorist and Muslim fighters" and we are "different looking, customs, dress, religious beliefs, values and attitudes."

These results reflect the complexity of intergroup relations that is compounded when there are strong cultural differences between communities. In this case the challenges are exacerbated by global events that have major implications at local levels. For these participants, there is strong marginalisation because of their primary community identities, being Muslim. There is also a sense that they are seen as a homogenous and incompatible 'other'. These challenges and diverse understandings of the community impact the group as is reflected in the differential adaptations of group members.

**Skin colour, racism and identity**

The results suggest that skin colour is an issue as it assists in making Pakistani-Muslim women an obvious minority, and this strongly influences their identity and community (Nesdale & Mak, 2002). However, the results indicated that it is not the essential ingredient in how this group of people define a "white" person or a "black" person. The results demonstrated that "white" people did not necessarily have to have white skin but rather dress, think, speak, behave, and look "white", socialise and fit in with the western society, have western beliefs and be heavily influenced by the western culture. Pathans generally avoided this type of influence including Pakistanis and other ethnic groups that have been "influenced by white people" or are "chocolate coated westerners" reinforcing that being considered "white" or "black" runs much deeper than skin colour. Furthermore, the participants indicated that the key factor at the core of cultural diversity between western communities and "black" or ethnic communities is religious beliefs as westerners have "white thoughts" and are "infidels or non-believers", which was the central concern for the participants as they believe that all other differences such as dress, behaviour, culture, and family values, stems from diversity in religious beliefs as western thinking and "western world media" stands to "corrupt our way of life".

The findings suggest that the diversity between the beliefs, values, culture and lifestyle of Muslims and non-Muslims and the conflict existing between the Islamic and western way of life significantly impacts identity and community for this group. This diversity between the immigrant and the host society, and the diversity evident within the community, impacts the settlement of this group and plays a role in acculturation. This is consistent with Erickson and Al-Timimi (2001) in that religion plays a central role in the experience of identity and community for ethnic and cultural immigrant groups in a western host society.

**Sources of Social Support**

All participants indicated that the family unit was the primary source of support, when they experience rejection, racism and violent threats from the host society or when the Pakistani and Muslim communities do not accept their views. The family provided a safe haven from harsh external forces and affirms identities. For example one participant stated; family and friends ... in same position ... feel the same about living in a western world according to Islam" and another participant suggested; "My own family... understands Islamic law". Other participants also emphasised family as a central source of support stating; "family just as confused as I am about my identity, but they understand racism", "the family, no matter what, but they understand me and my identity. Pakistani and Muslim community for unity and spiritual guidance."

Abuddbebeh (1996) stated that by establishing extensive family networks, the Pathan-Pakistanis could limit their need for interaction with individuals from outside their social networks and resist integration into the dominant society. Furthermore, "older people within the community" and "spiritual guidance" is where the participants also seek support and this may be because participants seem to interact with people who have been influenced by the white culture to a similar degree or who are in the "same situation"
and so they feel like they are understood and truly belong. Discrimination and racism from the outside society unite the family and the ethnic community, as "It's a place where no one will discriminate against me or call me black bitch, Osama Bin Laden's sister or terrorist because they are like me". Therefore, the findings suggest that this group primarily turns to like-minded people or institutions that support the same way of life when they experience difficulty. So, the family unit and the church are essential sources of support for this group.

Gender Roles
The findings indicated that gender roles are fairly prescribed for this group and that preservation of cultural traditions for this community are essentially through the role of women. For example, the participants indicated that their role as a woman is very valuable in "keeping traditions going" and is central in maintaining the cultural identity of the individual, family and community. One participant stated; "women play an important role teaching culture, religion... passing down traditions", and another participant indicated that women are responsible for "teaching Islamic way of life" to the family and community.

The results suggested that women are the "pride of a family" and are therefore "pressured to do the right thing". This is consistent with Espin's (1995) suggestion that the fulfillment of traditional gender roles of immigrant women is a central way in which many communities preserve cultural traditions. Furthermore, the participants emphasised the importance of the role of women in the context of a western society. One participant stated; "western corruption to a Muslim community begins from the women's side because role is so important".

In addition, the participants highlighted the differences in the role of women and men in their community living in a western society. One participant stated; "more acceptable for men to act western... women are expected to uphold traditions" and another participant suggested; "man acts westernised not seen as a big deal like if a woman was acting westernised... seen as teaching children corruption". Other participants have also provided responses highlighting gender differences; "men have become very westernised... having wives traditional keeps them in touch with cultural heritage" and "men... get away with more, woman would be alienated".

Overall, women seemed to accept the differences in gender roles assigned to men and women in their community and were quite happy to fulfil their role as a woman. Participants indicated; "we want roles assigned to us" and "we accept our role as a woman". One participant stated; "Muslim women don't want same rights as men... god given special rights". Another participant indicated; "Men and women who believe in their faith...know gender roles... carry them out with pride". This is consistent with Talbani and Hasanali (2000) as specific gender roles and religion were primary cultural and ethnic traditions that the participants wished to perpetuate and maintain as a means of resisting cultural change.

However, despite the acceptance of their role as women the participants resented the pressure put on them to uphold traditions as the results indicated that because women are the "pride of a family", they are "pressured to do the right thing" whereas men, in contrast, act as "western" as they want. One participant stated; "we're happy to have these roles but don't like the pressure to keep family on track". This is consistent with Espin (1995) in that the fulfillment of traditional gender roles for women is functional in the maintenance of cultural traditions, however, this can lead to isolation living in the host society and alienation from the community as the women's behaviour is scrutinised especially if they are seen to be heavily influenced by western culture as being "westernised" is associated with the prescribed male role.

The results also highlighted the participants' experiences with the dominant group and members of their own community as Pakistani-Muslim women. One participant suggested; "don't want to be westerners but don't want to be judged", and another participant stated; "women are quite happy but don't like being under the microscope". It has been argued that living in a western society there is an expectation of the host society that immigrants will assimilate and there is also a level of expectation from the immigrants' own cultural, ethnic or religious community that particular cultural traditions will be upheld (Espin, 1995). Thus, the participants experienced considerable pressure from their community and host society as women play a vital role in maintaining cultural traditions for this community.

In addition, the participants believed that perceptions of them as Muslim women held by the western host society are severely distorted and unfounded, perhaps encouraged by misinformed western media. They stated that: "westerners believe Asian women... are incapable" and "we are frustrated with white society, they perceive us to be brain dead, brainwashed -- outside people so ignorant". Others said: "we aren't restricted, that's what westerners get wrong", and "despite what white people think, we are valued". The participants suggested that western misperceptions concerning gender roles and restrictions of Muslim women are primarily based on the fact that they wear the traditional hijab covering. One participant stated; "can't stand how white people perceive us... brainless, submissive... we choose to dress like this, to be like this" Other participants also stated; "Westerners think we're restricted because of head scarf... it's our choice, westerners ignorant" and "covering is a choice & white people don't get that"

These women expressed resentment that the western world presumes they are oppressed and submissive to domineering men, when women choose to fulfill these roles and are respected and valued in their community for doing so because the "Qur'an holds women are as vital as man". One participant stated that Muslim women "choose to teach families and guide them away from western influence". This emphasis on choice rather than restriction is consistent with...
Erickson and Al-Timimi (2001) in that the participants do not want westerners to feel sorry for them as their dress, lifestyle and fulfilment of prescribed gender roles is a choice, and are angered by the misperception of westerners that they are "second rate citizens" without a say, not only in the context of the Australian society but also in their own Pakistani and Muslim communities, based on the fact that they are wearing the traditional hijab covering. This is consistent with Ghruman (1991) as the participants perceived that a common, ignorant assumption made by the western society is that the Asian-Muslim culture is restrictive.

Discussion
The aim of the study was to identify factors that impact identity from the perspective of Pakistani-Muslim immigrant women living in Western Australia. Several core themes were identified as influencing perceptions and experiences of identity and community from the participants. These included strength of religious affiliation, racism and exclusion, sources of support, and gender roles. The findings highlighted the various ways in which individuals within this community deal with the impact of particular contextual variables and contemporary events (Birman, 1994).

Strength of religious affiliation and interpretation of Islam varied considerably between the two castes, influencing identity and the adaptation of this group (Nasr, 1988). This internal diversity was also evident in the groups' varying levels of resistance against the western influences of the dominant society. The differences between the two castes, concerning acculturation styles and level of resistance, were consistent with that of their ancestors (Hinnell, 1994). Therefore, a historical connection to previous generations was highlighted and must be explored in understanding the factors that impact the settlement process of this group (Hays, 1995).

Participants reported feeling in-between (Buhan, 1985; Sonn & Fisher, in press). In the Australian society they were perceived as an ethnic minority and in Pakistan they were perceived as having submitted to western influence. This reinforces that this group has been influenced by western culture to some extent despite any level of resistance. This group has different cultural traditions and values compared with the dominant society of Australia and Pakistan, and members within their own community. Therefore, they find themselves caught between different cultures and values, creating confusion to some extent in defining exactly who they are and where they fit in.

In response to this tension and experiences with racism and exclusion, participants suggested they turn to the family unit and the church as their primary source of support. The family and fellow Muslims are people who are in the same position, have a similar interpretation of Islam and strength of religious affiliation, have resisted or integrated to a similar extent, and are faced with adverse experiences from the host society, and pressure from their own community (Abuddbeh, 1996; Arredondo, 1984).

The response of the community and larger society to the terrorist attacks on America on September 11th, increased this groups' experiences with racism and exclusion, impacting identity and community. Contemporary issues have inflamed these adverse experiences, bringing racism and exclusion to the forefront for this group. This has potentially changed the nature of the intercultural contact between this group and members of the dominant society. It has also changed the relationship between members within the groups' own community, across castes, increasing within group diversity. In light of contemporary world events, the replication of this study would be valuable as this study was conducted in the wake of September 11th and future research would be conducted in the wake of the Bali explosions that had direct repercussions for the Australian host society.

From the perspective of this group, the racism and exclusion was potentially fuelled by the negative, western media portrayal of this group, based on ignorant distortions of Islam (Jackson, 1997, Louise, 2001). The media coverage of September 11th, presented in Australia, was predominately from a western viewpoint. Racism and exclusion based on western misperceptions challenge and hinder the development and maintenance of identity and community for this group (Jackson). From the perspective of this group, racism runs much deeper than skin colour and is based on religious beliefs and lifestyle rather than ethnicity (Jackson; Schmitz, 1995). Further research aiming to pinpoint the factors that motivate the dominant society to be racist and exclude this particular group would be valuable. Future research also would benefit from exploring the western perceptions of Islamic law and Muslim communities as a means of understanding western ignorance and common distortions of Islam and its followers. The implications of this is that we need to educate the dominant society about this group rather then simply acknowledging that this is a misunderstood minority group, aiming to protect it. Education may also bridge the gap between 'ethnic' people and 'white' people or Muslims and non-Muslims, as ignorance concerning cultural diversity facilitates separatism, hostility, and ill-informed generalisations.

Another view held by this group was that western society has ignorant distortions concerning gender roles. In this groups' view, the dominant society has a misperception of women to be oppressed and restricted (Erickson & Al-Timimi, 2001; Espin, 1995; Ghruman, 1991). This can be frustrating for the women in this community as they choose to fulfil these roles as an act of religious pride and protection, and are just as valued by the community as men. This issue of gender equity is largely subject to perception (Ghruman). For example, from the vantage point of a member from the dominant society, the gender roles within this community may appear to be
restrictive by western society's standards. Alternatively, a member within this community may view the gender roles fulfilled by members of the dominant society to be "corrupt", unsafe and not rigid enough. In effect, this represents a value dilemma, for it is difficult to determine the precise nature of gender roles when cultural systems are incompatible.

The exploration of gender roles was necessary in understanding the settlement process of this group, as the role of women in this community is very valuable in maintaining cultural traditions for the family and community (Espin, 1995). However, this group provided conflicting responses concerning gender role fulfilment. The participants indicated that they accept their prescribed gender roles and enjoy fulfilling them. However, they also indicated that they resent the fact that they are pressured to fulfil these roles and are under the microscope comparatively more so then the men in their community and larger society. The women don't want male roles however they resent the fact that male roles are more liberal or 'western', even though they don't want to be more 'western' themselves. This creates confusion as the responses reflect a dichotomy in the views of individuals concerning gender role fulfilment within their community. Future research into the conflicting views within the individual concerning gender roles would be beneficial as gender roles significantly impact the development and maintenance of identity and community of this group.

In summary, the issues of settlement and oppression for this particular group are complex, as there are various social, cultural and political factors impacting the development and maintenance of identity and community. The within group diversity of acculturation and level of resistance against western influence and ideology, is significant. Therefore, this group should not be viewed as homogenous. The core component influencing the in-group and out-group diversity, in the context of the community and larger society, was the strength of religious affiliation and interpretation. In light of contemporary issues, it is plausible to suggest that there is a need for the education of the dominant society about this minority group and Islamic law, so that it is possible to co-exist successfully in a multicultural western society.

References


Reflections on White Settler Identity

A follow-up process to the settler caucus at the 6th Australia-Aotearoa/New Zealand Community Psychology conference in Hamilton in 1998.

Ingrid Huygens, Rose Black and Heather Hamerton with Chris Ansley, Barbara Bennet, Lorraine Corbett, Kieren Faull, Megan Jolly, Beth Neill and Neville Robertson

What do you feel, as a descendant of white settlers in a colony, when indigenous people express their anger at your role in colonisation? During the 1998 Australia-Aotearoa/New Zealand community psychology conference a group of Pakeha community psychologists acknowledged that our primary response to indigenous anger was grief about our Pakeha identity. Ten of us spent the following six weeks exploring how our cultural identity was shaped during our lifetimes in Aotearoa New Zealand. We hope that our halting steps of exploration will inspire further journeys of reflection on coloniser identities, and how these can be turned toward non-racist relationships with indigenous peoples.

Background

During the settler caucus (for all non-indigenous participants) at the 1998 Australia-Aotearoa/New Zealand Community Psychology conference, a small group had identified that their main response to indigenous anger was grief, coupled with guilt. Discussion revealed that the sources of these feelings were our questions about our identity as Pakeha (non-indigenous) members of New Zealand society. We decided to meet after the conference to explore these issues of grief, responsibility and identity. We wanted to take some practical steps to share tentative beginnings of decolonisation work with other non-indigenous psychologists.

Group and Process

In August 1998, an invitation was sent to all non-indigenous participants who had attended the conference to join a discussion group in Hamilton, New Zealand, to explore Pakeha identity. Seven to ten participants attended six meetings with shared lunch in the home of one of the participants (Rose). Community psychology staff, students and practitioners were represented from Auckland, Tauranga and Hamilton. All members except one came from families with more than one generation of settler history in Aotearoa New Zealand. One member was a New Zealand born child of Dutch immigrants.

We agreed that we would set a topic to think about each week, but would be open to any other reflections on the general theme of Pakeha identity as they arose for individuals. Two of the group members (Ingrid and Rose) recorded the discussion from memory in the fifth week. The authors presented the material as a poster at the 2002 Trans-Tasman Community Psychology conference in Perth, including an update of current reflections by the authors.

Our Explorations

Even though we chose topics for the week ahead, an unexpected process emerged - we found ourselves sharing experiences initially from our childhoods, then our teenage years and finally our adult lives. As we looked back over our discussions, there was a sense of unfolding layers of identity throughout our lifespans. The core seemed to be our early experiences of family and childhood. From there we moved to stories of school days, family life and interactions with community and church. Then we talked about leaving our home bases, and finding our way in the world. For many of us it was not until we travelled overseas or moved into adult status in our families that we began to reflect on what it meant to be Pakeha and the questions this raised about our place and role in Aotearoa New Zealand. Our discussions finished at the point of reflecting on our Pakeha identity and considering questions of responsibilities and actions. We considered the question "where to from here?" for how a coloniser group can reflect on their cultural identity. We closed with our desire to claim being Pakeha as a definite (and, in time, positive) identity.

In keeping with the lifespan pattern which emerged as we discussed identity, we have created relevant headings for the record of each meeting. The first part of each heading indicates our previously agreed topic, while the second part describes the discussion which emerged.

MEETING 1:

**Individualism versus collectivism - our early childhood learnings.**

Intending to discuss Pakeha values, we found ourselves speaking about our early childhoods, and the values our families displayed or taught in dealing with difference. Many participants described how they had felt different within their families, which we saw as a way that Pakeha Families teach individualism. There was also the experience that the whole family had been seen as different (as immigrants). In this situation there was a strong sense of collectivism within the family and the minority culture, with less emphasis on individualism.
MEETING 2:
Our first awareness of 'culture' or 'group identities' - moving outside the family to schools, neighbourhoods and communities.
Most of us spoke of early school days or experiences in our neighbourhoods, with church groups, immigrant communities, gender-favoured activities, and so on. For all of us it was at this stage that we began to notice some aspects of social groupings. However, gender, social class and religion were more prominent than culture or ethnicity for all except the child of immigrants. For some, there were the early signs that we might be considered 'bright' and educable; for others, early signs that we would be given second chance access to resources, especially as girls. We each had stories of how we learned about these group identities and assignments, and how these have shaped our personalities and life directions. For several of us, it was at this point that we came into contact with Maori people. The child of Dutch migrants noticed the prejudice against both Maori and Dutch people in her rural area.
At this age, a number of us vividly remembered playing a game as children called "bullrush". The game of bullrush involved running across a space and trying to get to the other side without being caught by a line of catchers. We remembered it as both thrilling and frightening. For the girls, this game had some risks - there was always the danger of being tackled and caught very roughly, which often resulted in the boys handling our bodies, seeing our underwear, and so on. One person recalled that this was one of the few games she had played physically with boys.

MEETING 3:
How did we learn that we were not Maori? Being teenagers, leaving home.
As we considered this topic, most of us talked about our first years away from home, in our late teens or early 20's. For many of us going to university and participating in social action brought us face to face with the fact that we were white and had access to more privilege and opportunities than Maori because of this. We were also seeing for the first time the societal structure in Aotearoa, and the place of Maori in that society. Those of us with Maori members of the extended family spoke of our learnings about family dynamics in these situations.

MEETING 4:
What does it mean to be Pakeha? Being adults, leaving Aotearoa/New Zealand.
By now, most of us were talking about our present identity, shaped in a complex way through realising how New Zealand's social structures worked, and our efforts to create a comfortable (or uncomfortable!) place within it. Some of us were made aware of ourselves as uniquely colonial (non-indigenous) New Zealanders when overseas. An experience shared by several members was the strong emotion, sometimes tears, sometimes joy, felt at meeting a Maori person overseas and realising that we had a relationship with them as Maori, whether we knew them personally or not. A similar experience was finding ourselves presenting or teaching waiata or haka when asked to share New Zealand culture. It was at this moment that we became aware of the vacuum of specifically Pakeha forms of entertainment, for example, stories, poems, songs and dances. Others spoke of the racially mixed networks that had developed around their siblings, children and in-laws as a key factor in presenting to them their identity as uniquely related to Maori in this country. Others again found that their social awareness was at odds with bigoted families, and that this highlighted to them their own progress towards an identity built on non-racist ideals for Aotearoa.

MEETING 5:
Action steps
It was difficult to develop clear action steps around issues of Pakeha identity, and instead the group discussed current issues concerning the kaupapa Maori position in the Psychology Department - about the community psychology programme, the department and institutional constraints. At this point, we agreed to write down reflections on our group discussion (but only two people did), and to reconvene to finalise our next steps.

MEETING 6:
Reflections about Pakeha identity
We discussed our overall reflections about Pakeha identity, and our difficulty with acknowledging that we share an identity. The discussion ranged around present realities and experiences and the need to locate current understandings of cultural identity in historical perspectives. We asked questions such as:
• Who have been the colonisers?
• What is the role of violence in colonisation in the past and today?
• What bits of Pakeha identity do we accept or choose to take on board?
We considered how identities can be stereotyped and used in judgmental ways. This led on to conceding that stereotypes are nevertheless summaries of reality (minus the moral judgements) and that 'not owning our own group stereotype' was probably a privilege known only to members of a dominant group. Members of a non-dominant group generally have no choice but to own all ascribed aspects of their identity. It was suggested that up to 80% of our Pakeha identity might consist of commonalities that we could not see, due to our 'cultural blindness' as members of a culture-defining group (see Tyler, 1992).
So we explored what might be the commonalities of Pakeha identity across individuals, or in other words the common aspects of Pakeha culture, and came up with Individualism! Back where we had started 6 weeks ago! Brilliant - we decided we must be on the right track. But we agreed it was important not to see Individualism as necessarily a bad thing, so we had a burst of creative thought on how our present habits of thinking were formed about status, position and possessions, as well as patriarchal hierarchies, power and control. We came up with

- Duality and dualism, and the notion that someone must always win in a dyad or dialogue, something must always be right, or there must be a certain solution. We contrasted this with the older notions of holism, triangularity and cyclic positions in life and thought, and the certainty of eternal change from old European cultures and spiritualities
- Scientific thought vs. spiritual forms of knowledge, and the historical process whereby the spiritual was downgraded in European culture.
- Finally, we discussed the role of Christianity and later the Renaissance and Reformation in suppressing these habits of thinking.

Reflections

Looking back four years later

When the authors met four years later to prepare our poster, we became aware that our reflections had been ongoing since those meetings. We enjoyed some stimulating further discussions and decided to record our present reflections below. We have also provided references to further personal writing about exploring Pakeha identity and culture.

By Heather

For me, the process of reflecting on my identity as a Pakeha New Zealander began in early adulthood and is ongoing. The series of meetings described above has been an important part of that ongoing process.

A big issue for me has been the lack of "belongingness" I feel when in groups of Pakeha. Some of this no doubt comes from a reluctance to accept a dominant group identity, and resistance to being stereotyped. Learning more about my place within my own family has helped me to deal with my feelings of grief, and some of the feeling of not belonging. This learning has included actively seeking information from family members about family stories, learning more about my family tree and visiting several places in Scotland where my family had lived before emigrating to New Zealand.

This was the first group of Pakeha people in which I felt entirely comfortable talking about Pakeha identity and owning that I am Pakeha. As I have continued to struggle with what it means to be a Pakeha New Zealander in the 21st century, I have been constantly reminded of the privilege associated with being white, as this privilege is often invisible to me. I have considered this alongside of my concern about the ways in which I have been at times disadvantaged as a girl. The stories told in the group, for example the discussion about the bullrush game, described experiences of disadvantage. I think that we were learning about the restrictions that came from being girls at the same time as we were blind to privileges we had from being white. I remember thinking at the time we were meeting how many of the group's stories included both privilege and oppression, and how important our various social contexts and particular experiences were in shaping our ideas about ourselves and others.

My process of developing a Pakeha identity continues. My motivation to engage in continued social action to eliminate racism and support Maori initiatives towards self determination comes from a strong sense of the importance of social justice. I believe that a "positive" Pakeha identity will only be possible when such goals have been achieved, and when we are able to "own" and make visible our common Pakeha culture.

By Ingrid

As a child of immigrants, I reflected that our community was marginalised by English-speaking white New Zealanders and that we were not in the cultural "in" group. I remember learning to present myself as strong and outgoing to avoid being isolated or victimised. It was very sad for me to hear during our discussions that some of the in-group members had felt isolated and as though they didn't belong. I wonder now whether the games of bullrush at my rural primary school were teaching all of us about fear, violence and victimisation. Reflecting upon isolation within Pakeha families, together with prejudice towards difference and these games of fear and violence, I now believe that as well as teaching individualism Pakeha culture also teaches victimisation. So our grief about our identity may stem from quite personal memories of being isolated, marginalised or victimised within or by Pakeha culture.

In relation to our feelings of guilt and responsibility, I wonder whether we take steps (consciously or unconsciously) in our teenage years to move away from isolating, marginalising or victimising aspects of our lives, and choose new social settings. Continuing into our adult lives, we try to move on by creating a life, a family and a community to which we are happy to belong. However, our problem is that as Pakeha (with values of individual responsibility and autonomy) we view this as a personal task rather than a collective one. The Pakeha focus on individual responsibility masks the collective responsibility for cultural learning. We are blind to the pervasive cultural elements that continue through generations. We do not see that our personal experiences of isolation, marginalisation or victimisation indicate a need for cultural change. When we receive responses such as anger from indigenous people, we have a sense of helpless guilt and bewilderment about who, how and what to change.
For me, the process of reflecting together on our identity and cultural values has been a groping step in a collective task of beginning to name, claim as our own and change those aspects of our colonial culture which continue to dispossess indigenous peoples.

By Rose

As I look back on the experience of coming together over six weeks, probably in the manner of the consciousness raising groups of the 1970's and 80's, to explore and share our understandings of "Being Pakeha" I realise that the time we spent together did shift some of the burden of both individual and collective guilt that I carry.

Another aspect of the group process was the growing awareness of a shared identity - we did have things in common! This sense of shared identity flies in the face of a strong feeling experienced by myself and many other Pakeha of having no sense of belonging to a cultural group, or at times any group or even family. We relocate in order to 'exonerate' ourselves from our own groups - we leave home and family to leave behind the responsibility for change together with our group. We refer to this process as gaining independence and autonomy.

We also consider indigenous people separately from their group and hold them temporarily in our group while they are useful to us. I acknowledge that these ideas are entirely contradictory, because I know full well that, for example, Maori certainly see us a unified cultural group, drawing on an enormous body of shared assumptions, norms, processes, etc. We are in the habit of naming who is not in our group, but leave unnamed who the members of the group are - they are just there, part of the invisible fabric of the society we have created.

The challenge is to be able to value and honour the relationships, based on justice and equity, we have with tangata whenua (people of this land) and to name ourselves as Pakeha so that we can take part in singing the songs and telling the stories of this land along with those our forebears have brought from their places of origin.

Tentative Conclusions from a work in progress

There were commonalities in the process of bringing to awareness our identity as white settlers in a colonised land, so we present them a tentative themes, e.g.

- Our childhood experiences in our families have a major influence on what we are able to see about society.
- Our personal experiences of marginalisation and discrimination (e.g. as girls or as immigrants) create various pathways to awareness of our culture and social structures.
- Going into 'society', and overseas can create definite shifts in awareness of our cultural identity.
- We may not see our culture until we are away from it - by moving outside the home or outside the country. Alternatively, we may not see our Pakeha cultural identity until there are Maori members in our families.
- Trying to bring our culture up to consciousness, we learned...

IT WAS VERY HARD WORK, LIKE PULLING TEETH.
WE REALLY STRUGGLED,
WE FELT THAT WE WERE SWIMMING UNDERWATER AT NIGHT.
IT IS INCREDIBLY DIFFICULT FOR US AS PAKEHA TO 'SEE' OR 'FEEL' OUR CULTURE AT ALL.

Nevertheless, we believe that continuing to work on describing our non-indigenous identities and naming our culture is an important task. We are also convinced that it is a legitimate task within an agenda for social justice. Each of us, in the intervening years, has experienced requests from Maori to describe our culture and name our identity, and have understood that these are important contributions to a more just relationship with them as indigenous peoples. So we encourage other community psychologists in colonial settings to explore questions of culture and identity in a context of acknowledging the injustice of suppressing indigenous cultures and world views.

Further reading


Voices on Adoption in Australia

Trudy Rosenwald
(Adoption Consultant and Counselor)

The 8th Australian Adoption Conference was held in Adelaide from 19-21 April. These adoption conferences are held about every three years and are convened by the brave state that puts its hands up. The non-government sector usually takes the initiative, with the government providing funding. This year's conference however, was largely organized and funded by the South Australian Government.

The topic of adoption attracts a wide variety of personal, professional and academic speakers, each including the four parties to adoption: birth parents, adoptees, adoptive parents and adoption agencies or state authorities. In addition to adoption, associated topics such as foster and institutional care, children's rights and protection, trauma an mental health, infertility and reproductive technologies, culture and ethnicity, migration and identity, not to mention all levels of politics, are all inevitable parts of the same broad picture. I always say that "adoption is: life and adoption". You can thus understand that a wide range of disciplines touch on adoption one way or another and this conference can attest to that diversity.

For me personally, a major highlight of the conference was the presence of so many international visitors from countries where children are adopted from and adopted into, generally before they are placed for adoption. Most importantly, they of the International Adoption Clinic at the University of Minnesota and Developmental Neuropsychologist Dr Ronald Federici, gave insightful presentations about the effects of institutionalisation, and other trauma children are subjected to before they are placed for adoption. Most importantly, they offered proven strategies on how to help the affected children and families (www.peds.umn.edu/jac/sitemap & www.dr federici.com). From a regional perspective, Wendy Hawke from Intercountry Adoption New Zealand (ICANZ) presented her findings on outcomes in growth patterns, particularly head circumference, of over 550 Russian children adopted in NZ over the last decade.

The conference had five keynote addresses. Dr. Carmela Cavallo, President of the Italian Central Adoption Authority, described the dynamic approach Italy takes to intercountry adoption. It includes visits to the many institutionalised and other needy children around the world, establishing preventive programs in the children's countries, and media campaigns in Italy to promote the intercountry adoption of children who remain in need of a family. Mrs. Andal Damodaran, head of the Indian Council for Child welfare and Indian Central Adoption Resource Agency, gave a clear outline of the past, present and future of local and intercountry adoption in India. She predicted a surge in the number of children identified as needing a permanent family when all states in India enact adoption laws, but expressed doubt whether foster care was the best alternative to institutionalization, based on what she had learned from sessions on outcomes of foster care presented by Australian and international researchers.

I was grateful for the speech by Mr. William Brian Butler, Aranda Man from Central Australia and life member of the National Secretariat Aboriginal Islander Child Care Inc. Not so much for what he said, but for what he did not say. Unlike his speeches at previous adoption conferences, he no longer blamed adoption for the ongoing disadvantages experienced by so many of Australia's indigenous people. Instead he referred largely to forced removals, institutionalisation, foster care and politics, acknowledging that very few of the removed children were ever placed for adoption.

Dr. Pal Ahluwalia provided a challenging examination of the identity of intercountry adoptees from post-colonial and cultural studies perspectives, complimenting the poster presentation by PhD Candidate Kim Gray from NSW, and several presentations by adult local and intercountry adoptees. The adoptees personal, professional and academic voices were loud, clear and appreciated by all who listened.

Dr. Ann Sved-Williams, Director Perinatal Infant Mental Health Service in South Australia, provided an insight into her work of several decades with mentally ill mothers and their children, increasingly those affected by drug and alcohol abuse. From the premise of attachment theory and the growing knowledge of the importance of the early months and years for human development, Dr. Sved-Williams advocated for the children's need and right to a safe, secure base, acknowledging at the same the difficulty in balancing the rights and wishes of the mothers to parent their children. She expressed concern about the changes in adoption law and practice that have largely removed the option of permanent placement for infants in need of a "new secure base", and urged for an immediate re-examination of how to better meet the needs of this vulnerable group of children and parents.

In regards to the non-government sector representatives at the conference, the vast majority of whom all work as volunteers, my admiration goes in particular to InterCountry Adoption Resource Network (ICARN), a small adoption NGO from Victoria. It undertook a massive fundraising drive to sponsor five pre- and post- adoption service providers from Korea, India, and the Philippines, some of whom presented a paper or workshop.
I do need to mention some negatives: I hate concurrent sessions! It makes me miss out on many great presentations. I was also appalled by the poor quality of the one and only newspaper article on the conference that appeared in The Australian. In the article by DiGirolamo, with headline "Professionals adopt to foster careers", keynote speaker Dr. Kahn was purportedly to have said that "professional couples who spent much of their child-bearing years working hard to further their careers, were avoiding natural conception for an instant family through adoption". Dr. Kahn has strongly objected to the misinterpretation of his comments about infertility, but was denied the right to set the record straight. DiGirolamo also repeated the ongoing mix-up between adoption and foster care, saying that adoption was to blame for cultural genocide in Aboriginal children placed in non-indigenous foster homes. Here is hoping that one day soon we will all get it right and the energy will shift to addressing and preventing trauma caused by racist laws, policies and practices instead of abolishing the option of adoption for children in need of a permanent family.

In conclusion I would like to mention the successful meeting of representatives from various Australian adoption NGOs, for furthering the development of the Australian Council for Adoption as a national voice for adoption. For those interested, copies of the presentations, including the two I presented, and the one by our colleague from Queensland, Nola Passmore, are made available through the conference website for a period of 12 months (www.plevin.com.au/adoption2004).

Contact Details
Trudy Rosenwald
Registered Psychologist
Adoption Consultant and Counsellor
PhD Candidate Edith Cowan University
Email trosenwald@iinet.net.au
Cultural diversity is a reality for counsellors in South Africa. The need to train a diverse student population to do basic interventions in multicultural settings has emphasised the importance of providing education experiences that will generate sensitivity and an appreciation for the different needs of people. It has been suggested that training curricula be designed to stimulate an awareness of the effects of political, social and economic forces on people from different cultures. This should include information on the cognitive skills of people, an awareness of their subjective perceptions and also an understanding of affective experiences that might include feelings of helplessness and powerlessness. An experiential learning programme was introduced to a group of students in a hospital setting with children who were from different cultures. The programme aimed to promote self-care activities for the children during their stay in the hospital and prepare children for discharge. The students' self-reflective descriptions were used to understand their cultural experiences. The research method chosen was an ethnographic approach as it is particularly useful for work in a multicultural context. The experiential learning process challenged the perceptions that the students had about themselves and others. They learned that human diversity is not only found in cultural differences, but in people as individuals; they obtained insight about how they have integrated their own cultural identity; that culture is more than race and ethnicity; and that there are more similarities between people from different cultures than differences.

Introduction
In recent years an emphasis has been placed on the need for psychologists and other mental health workers to take the influence of cultural issues into account when working with people from diverse backgrounds (Sue & Sue, 1990; Duffy & Wong, 2000; Dalton, Elias & Wandersman, 2001). The majority of research and theory that exists in modern psychology is based on Western culture and this calls into question the applicability of many theories to people who belong to different cultural groups (Gardiner, Mutter & Kosmitzki, 1998).

The history of South Africa has been characterised by oppression, discrimination, and racism and has resulted in the fact that mental health professionals from a Western culture are mostly counselling African clients, or perhaps that the majority of African people are left without the necessary professional help. According to the CIA World Fact Book 2001, the South African population (43,586,097 people) consists of 75.2% Black, 13.6% White, 8.6% Coloured and 2.6% Indian people. Considering the sociopolitical history of South Africa, it is not surprising that there are only four out of 223 counsellors listed in the directory of psychologists in private practice in South Africa who list an African language as a language of preference. Despite this fact, creative and innovative counselling strategies should be developed to provide resources to facilitate the mental health of the people in South Africa.

Background for Research
Sue and Sue (1990) suggest that training curricula should be designed to stimulate an awareness of the effects of political, social and economic forces on people from different cultures. This should include information about the cognitive skills of people, an awareness of their subjective perceptions and also an understanding of their affective experiences. Trainees should become aware of cultural differences that affect relationships and that relationships affect culture (Baron & Byrne, 2000; Duffy & Wong, 2000). These reciprocal relationships are characterised by mutual exchanges of information and insights, which are very valuable to both parties (Heller, Price, Reinhaz, Riger & Wandersman, 1984). Duffy and Wong (2000) state that in order to implement interventions within different cultural groups, the counsellor should have an awareness and appreciation of intragroup and intergroup differences.

Hartzenberg (2001) defines culture as "a dynamic..., autonomous product of human nature, which can vary in intensity [membership to certain cultures is of greater importance to an individual] and is characterised by a perceived common identity that influences behaviour" (p.9). Culture can be defined as:

"The shared patterns of behaviours and interactions, cognitive constructs, behavioural norms, expectations and affective understanding that are learned through a process of socialization. These shared patterns identify the members of a culture group while also distinguishing those of another group" (http://carta.acad.umn.edu/culture.html).

In recent years the focus of multicultural interaction has started moving away from knowledge about specific populations towards individual racial identity development as a vehicle for understanding ethnic minorities (Helms, 1994; Parker, Moore & Neimeyer, 1998; Ponterotto, 1995). The current multicultural movement emphasises an awareness of one's own cultural assumptions, values and biases as well as cross cultural
communication skills (Robinson & Bradley, 1997). Cross-cultural interaction therefore impacts on the way one understands one's environment, one's own role and responsibility within it, and one's interpretation of the role of other groups within the same environment.

In the South African context, the assumption is that not all of the students consider themselves as racial beings, and have given little thought to their role in society. Parker et al. (1998) found that training programmes that exposed students to multicultural learning experiences resulted in increased racial consciousness, increased interracial comfort and increased multicultural awareness. Despite the recent emphasis on multicultural training programmes, there are no guidelines outlining the components of effective training programmes (Robinson & Bradley, 1997).

The aim of this research is to study the experiences of students that engaged in a multicultural context with children in a hospital setting and to provide recommendations for training curricula.

**Research Methodology**

The research method in this research is ethnographic in nature. "Ethnography is concerned with experience as it is lived, felt or undergone" (Taylor, 1994, p.34). In recognition of this, an ethnographic approach is often utilised when working in a multicultural context. Researchers using the ethnographic approach should remember that they are members of a culture of their own. According to Spradley (in Heller et al., 1984), the first step in an ethnographic study is to set aside assumptions of what another person's world is like, and to rather focus on the meanings that people of a specific culture attach to their own world.

**The Research Context**

The participants consisted of seven students who were registered for a directed undergraduate programme in counselling and were only white students, with non-African languages as their first languages. The context in which the students engaged was with a paediatric ward. The children who were hospitalised for extensive periods of time ranging from two to ten months (and longer), and who had access to very few economic resources. Some children had been hospitalised on and off for as long as thirteen years. Most of the children did not receive regular visits from family or caregivers, as the latter lived too far from the hospital. A few children had their mothers stay with them in the hospital. The children came from various places in the country for specialised medical attention. All of the children were strangers to each other, although most of them could communicate with each other through one or more African languages. Although the size of the group changed continuously, the group generally numbered between eight and twelve children.

The participants became involved in the research process as experiential learners. They were asked to involve themselves in a community project in a practical manner, meaning that they had to exercise the skills that were taught in their academic curricula, for example, entering a community, doing a needs assessment, applying their knowledge of developmental psychology, developing and implementing a programme, assessing the impact of the interventions, assessing the impact of the context on the self and being aware of their own involvement in the process.

An agreement was reached between the training institution and the hospital that students could have access to the paediatric wards of the hospital. The students needed to do a needs assessment, develop a programme accordingly and implement the programme over a period of six to ten weeks. Informed consent was obtained from the Head of Paediatrics of the hospital to become involved in the children's ward, as most of the parents were not accessible. The respondents observed the children's responses, listened to what was said, asked questions and collected data. "In every society people make constant use of (these) complex meaning systems to organise their behaviour, to understand themselves and others, and to make sense out of the world in which they live" (Spradley in Punch, 1995, p.188). The following needs of the hospitalised children were identified:

- The children were exposed to certain medical procedures without being prepared for them.
- The children were mostly discharged without any preparatory programmes.
- Most of the interventions were not culturally sensitive to the children.
- The children struggled to cope in the ward with the routine, language, food, environment, clothes and the different culture.

The aim of the involvement of the participants was to address these needs in a culturally sensitive manner.

**Data Gathering**

The participants kept journals in which they planned for each interaction and wrote reflective notes after each session. They did not receive any marks for academic purposes for these journals. In accordance with Tindall's (1994) recommendations, these diaries reflected their personal interests in the process but also what they did, when and in what context. Only after their involvement in the project were terminated they engaged in the formal process of writing up the research process as participant researchers.

**Data Analysis**

The guidelines described by Taylor (1994) and Janesick (2000) were followed, whereby various sources of information and different layers of information are utilised.

- The sources from which the data was gathered included an analysis of the students' diaries.
- The research was conducted in the context of a hospital setting and not under experimental conditions.
An unstructured approach was used to gather the data to allow key concepts to emerge from the data.

The research focused only on experiences from a cultural perspective.

The written material was studied according to both the illustrative method and content analysis. "If... an appropriate cluster of methods is used ... then we can have some confidence that the material is more than a product of the method (Tindall, 1994, p.147). The illustrative method as described by Neuman (1997) implies the application of theory to a concrete historical situation. The theory provides "empty boxes" which the researcher tries to fill with the data. In this study, a literature survey was undertaken, and the experiential learning process in which the students engaged provided an opportunity to adopt different roles and to reflect on multiple viewpoints.

Content analysis is described as a research technique for making replicable and systematic inferences from text identifying specified characteristics of messages (Krippendorff, 1980). The descriptions of the participants were coded, with the understanding that "codes are tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.56).

In this research data triangulation involved the collection of descriptions from different participants at different stages in the process (Tindall, 1994). The final analysis was given to the students who participated in the research to determine if the report reflected an accurate account of their experiences. In order to protect the identity of the students, they are simply referred to as the participants.

**Data Description and Triangulation**

The most prominent themes that emerged from the different sources of data are organised into the following categories:

- Nonverbal communication
- Application of developmental psychology in a cultural context
- Appreciation of human diversity

**Nonverbal Communication**

Language was regarded as a challenge that the participants needed to address. Culture becomes visible firstly through a shared culture of ...language (Victor, 1992). In a multicultural country language is both the basis for and the means through which cultural transmission occurs. Language can be said to shape the reality of the speaker, and for many it would appear that language and culture are inseparable. One participant expressed her concern about language differences as follows:

"As someone from a white culture I knew that language would be a problem, but that it was also a chance to try out other means of communication." Another wrote: "I expected that it would be very difficult for me to communicate effectively with them."

Participants developed creative alternatives in dealing with this challenge and learned that verbal communication is not the only way of interacting with people. This is emphasised in the research of Hartzenberg (2001) which states that counsellors should be flexible in their selection and application of intervention techniques. The intervention techniques that the participants relied on instead of verbal communication included drawings, playing games and singing. One respondent noted: *We had to rely on nonverbal communication on many occasions.*

**Drawings and play as avenues for nonverbal communication**

The participants used drawings as a way of developing communication in a multicultural setting. The following case study is an example of the use of drawings with a child we shall call Dora, in preparation for the amputation of her leg.

Dora had a very large tumour on her left leg. The cancer had destroyed the bone and her leg had to be amputated. She had been in and out of school and had not been able to walk or stand for several months. Dora was involved in a game to play out an operation on a doll called Poppy on the day prior to her amputation. Dora identified the medical procedures that were going to be applied to her and projected these onto the doll. She put on the heart monitor stickers and told Poppy to breathe deeply. During the play situation Poppy's leg was removed and she was dressed with one new shoe (a "takkie" or sneaker) when she "woke up" after the operation. Dora even explained to the doll that she would receive the other new shoe (a "takkie" or sneaker) when she "woke up" after the operation. Dora even explained to the doll that she would receive the other new shoe when she received her prosthetic leg. The literature reports that play activities help children to work through sensitive and difficult situations (Schoeman & Van der Merwe, 1996) and supports the view that verbal communication is less effective with children, especially if they have problems (Van Staabs, 1991; Schoeman & Van der Merwe, 1996; Niewoudt, Wagner & Roos, 2002).

Dora made the following drawings during the process:

**Drawing 1**

**Drawing 2**

**Drawing 3**

The first drawing that Dora made was the day after she had been admitted to hospital. In drawing 1, Dora is lying in bed with a nurse standing next to her. There is 1 trolley and 2 tables next to her bed. It is interesting to note how small she drew the person in the bed compared to the rest of the drawing. The drawing gives the impression that Dora does not
have an integrated sense of herself in the world. She drew very little detail on the person in the bed and focused more on the surrounding environment.

The second drawing was done 6 weeks after the first. Dora was in the orthopedic clinic and was being examined by 2 white, male doctors to see if her stump was ready for prosthesis. The top figure in the drawing is of a girl whom she called Rachel. The girl in the drawing is 10 years old and she is very happy because she has just bought new black boots. The second figure in the drawing is Dora in a standing position. It was interesting to note that Dora drew herself standing and without any hair. Before the operation Dora identified the inability to stand and walk as the biggest effect that the tumour had on her life. She had lost all of her hair from chemotherapy.

Drawing 3 was done a week later during a group activity in the hospital school, which is taught in the ward by a schoolteacher. The experiences that Dora projects in her drawing are possibly a reflection of her ability to interact again on a physical and emotional level with people in the outside world.

A child learns through play. Playing with children is a universal language, based on the premise that living communities of culture possess some shared basis of play rituals, although the kind of play might differ somewhat between cultures (Roopnarine & Johnson in Hyun, 1998; Johnson, Christie, Yawkey, 1999). For these reasons, the children were engaged in play specifically related to their cultural experiences (Johnson et al., 1999, Dalton et al., 2001). Recreational and expressive play amongst children tends to be culturally specific. Although culture influences the themes and content of play in children, the level of performance or 'quality of play' is not affected (Johnson et al., 1999). The participants that used clay and beads to play with the children. Their comments include the following:

- It was so spot on. It was exactly what children enjoy doing, getting dirty.
- In African culture children are familiar with mud, they play with mud all the time and it's very enjoyable to them.
- Although children are coming from different cultures, their way of playing is the same.
- We played for 45 minutes non-stop without language having the faintest inhibiting effect.

Children's play has been recognised as the major agent in young children's development and learning. Play serves as an enculturative mechanism, whereby children learn societal roles, norms, and values (Hyun, 1998). Despite the fact that there is limited literature on children's play in different cultures, the consensus is generally that children's play differs across cultures, and that socioeconomic status also influences play (Roopnarine & Johnson in Hyun, 1998; Johnson et al., 1999). As a fundamental concept for culturally and developmentally appropriate practice, we need to understand the dynamics of child development and the influence of culture on children's play, specially in the contexts of the families culture (Hyun, 1998).

**Singing**

Biko (1998) states that children of the African culture never played any game without using music and rhythm as its basis. Music and rhythm, according to him, are part and parcel of their way of communicating. Singing in the African culture is a very appropriate communication avenue. In traditional Africa, music forms an integral part of life. It is linked to the world view of the society in which it is produced. It has ritual, ceremonial and social functions as well as some purely recreational purposes (www.motsworld.com/rw/villagepulse/outpost.html). One respondent reported that singing was fine because black people love making noise.

African music making is a group activity. It would seem that some of the most important events in daily life happen with music. Some examples of this are the following:

- There is a habit of singing songs while working.
- The Ashanti (Ubuntu) children sing songs to cure bedwetting.
- The Hausas people (in Nigeria) pay musicians to compose songs to court lovers and insult rivals: http://www.anthro.markato.msus.edu/cultural/music/africanmusic.html.

Performance cultures are invariably societies of sound. To this limited extent, these cultures' frequent characterisation as 'oral' cultures seems appropriate. Outsiders from a writing culture (eg Western) might consider people from 'oral' cultures as noisy or loud (this may also be noted in the previous respondent's comment: black people love making noise). Such a judgement, however, fails to consider the fundamental role of aural communication in cultures which have little or no access to the written word (www.law.pitt.edu/hibbritts/ctos_iz.htm).

**Perceptions in Multicultural Interaction**

The history of an oppressive sociopolitical atmosphere, such as in the previous South African context, may result in white counsellors being perceived as symbols of the establishment. All negative feelings towards oppression may thus be associated with a white person (Seedat, Duncan & Lazarus, 2001). Hartzenberg's (2001) rationale for using art and sand therapy includes that it effectively addresses the issue of transference and counter-transference. These are critical issues in cross-cultural counselling and are addressed in that interaction takes place between the child and the medium and not the child and therapist.

The research with children in a multicultural setting also revealed that children are drawn to face-like stimuli. This inborn interest in faces is the start of social development (Campbell & Tuck, 1995). Adults tend to use inner features (eyes, nose, mouth) to recognise familiar faces, while children tend to use outer features (hair, hairline, jaw, ears) to
recognise people they know (Campbell & Tuck, 1995; Campbell, Walker & Baron-Cohen, 1995). During their development, each person creates a catalogue of familiar faces and stores these as templates for familiar/safe people (www.childtraumaacademy.com/terms.html). Children are significantly more likely to put their trust in partial look-alikes, while elementary school-aged children recognise cultural and social differences among people (Whitfield, 2002). This knowledge from developmental psychology was used in planning the interventions. "The dolls that we played with were black and obviously that showed/pointed out to the kids that they were taken into consideration. They were happy, and felt understood. The kids are black so are the dolls. Already there is an established relationship of trust. The kids felt the doll and were not afraid to play with it. Unlike the white doll we brought along, the kids made fun of it when they saw it and made comments such as "its so ugly, where did you get it from?"

Appreciation of Human Diversity
Culture functions as the lenses of perceptions. It was interesting to note that 2 of the participants who started their self-reflective notes ended with an appreciation for people of different cultures. One participant began her journal with: "I am a white, middle-class, English South African female", and ended her description with: "Multicultural interaction encompasses more than skin colour and language, it also includes socioeconomic status, environment, education, religion and gender. My existing assumptions about people of other cultures were challenged and changed."

Another participant ended her description with: "I have learned that it is not good to judge a book by its cover because I remember the first time I meet with them. I made my own judgement on each of them. I have learned a lot about myself and all those I worked with. Thank you."

Stereotypes are cognitive frameworks that suggest that all people from a specific group are assigned the same characteristics. Relying on stereotypes leads to assumptions being made about the group members, often without any direct contact with the member. It is often easier to rely on stereotypes of others rather than to learn about their cultures, and information that does not fit in with the stereotypical image is usually ignored or overlooked (Baron & Byrne, 2000). One participant commented on the insight she gained from the interaction between the different culture groups: "Culture is more than being able to communicate in a shared language and skin colour."

Students who enter into community contexts that are culturally and socially divergent are usually instructed on cultural assumptions. Students who enter into community contexts that are culturally and socially divergent are usually instructed on cultural assumptions. Students who enter into community contexts that are culturally and socially divergent are usually instructed on cultural assumptions. Students who enter into community contexts that are culturally and socially divergent are usually instructed on cultural assumptions. Students who enter into community contexts that are culturally and socially divergent are usually instructed on cultural assumptions.

- I learnt that if you want to work cross-culturally, you have to accept that person in front of you, without any assumptions and perceptions.
- I have noticed that there are a lot more similarities than differences between our cultures. The majority of the children in the ward were Zulu speakers and they looked beyond the status of my culture.
- There is a shared connectedness with someone you do not know.

Discussion
Cross-cultural counselling relies on an understanding of the concepts of ethnic identity, which refers to an individual's sense of belonging to an ethnic group and the part of his or her personality that is attributable to ethnic group membership. It also assumes an awareness of the world view of both the counsellor and client. This world view is ultimately linked to historical and current experiences (Sue & Sue, 1990). Counsellors also need to acknowledge that counselling does not occur in isolation from the larger events in the society. Cross-cultural sensitivity encompasses more than skin colour and language; it also includes respect, understanding and sensitivity for socioeconomic status, environment, education, religion and gender. Consequently, basic counselling skills are also relevant to cross-cultural counselling. In South Africa, the changes in sociopolitical spheres of life should be recognized as having a major impact on people.

Students greatly benefit from multicultural experiences as such exposure provides them with new concepts and perceptions for cross-cultural counselling. In this research project, the students discovered that human diversity is not only found in cultural differences, but in individuals, and that how people integrate their own cultural identity plays an important role in relating to others. They also discovered that culture is more than race and ethnicity; and that there are more similarities than differences between people from different cultures.

Recommendations
It is recommended that training institutions provide experiential learning opportunities with a good support network. The latter is important, given the following respondent's statement that "she (the lecturer) rescued us when we were a bit on the edge and about to fall off. She saw ideas in us, took them out, put them on the table and made us aware of them, and that it was in our hands to tackle them."

Experiential learning opportunities should challenge existing assumptions about people of other cultures. Students should be exposed to situations in which they will come to realise that multicultural interactions are very complex and cannot be met simply or easily. Students should be given an opportunity to learn that there are several avenues of nonverbal communication, and that language as a barrier may be overcome by exploring these avenues. Having said this, however, prescribing an African language as a supporting module might be useful in providing students with additional...
skills to be able to work more easily in cross-cultural settings. It is important that students working in cross-cultural settings with children are able to obtain new understandings of child’s play. Developing multi-ethnic and contemporarily relevant frames of reference to create a better understanding of child’s play, and deconstructing the old conventional orientation to child’s play are urgent tasks for early childhood practitioners and families (Hyun, 1998). In order to work multiculturally and nonverbally with children, an understanding of their way of playing is necessary. A reflection journal should be kept by students and monitored by their lecturers throughout the year. Submission of the journal may contribute towards the final year mark of the students. The reflection process may be supported with discussion groups, lead by lecturers or tutors. The journal would take the form of a book or diary in which the students make entries after each relevant learning experience. Their thoughts, feelings and perceptions of the experiences should be noted. Supervisors may provide questions to guide the students in the beginning. Examples of questions include: What did you expect from the interaction? How were your expectations met or challenged? What do you think the client expected from you? Students should be encouraged to regularly read through their journal entries, and to comment on any changes or differences in opinion. Practical learning experiences may form part of community projects that the students are involved with. As many students do get multicultural exposure during practical sessions, they should be encouraged to reflect on these experiences, even if they do not form a “formal” part of the training programme curriculum but are included other subjects.

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Migrant Stories: Understanding the Decisions to Migrate from the United Kingdom to Western Australia

Lynne Cohen
Moira O'Connor
Lauren Breen
(Edith Cowan University - School of Psychology)

Voluntary international migration has assumed a new importance during the last few decades due to the volume and increase of population movement. The narrative was chosen as the methodological vehicle to enhance the practical knowledge of decision-making in the domain of migration. Ten British immigrants to Australia were asked to tell their stories of their migration to Australia. These stories provided details of the decision making processes and identified nine relational themes in their decision to migrate: language, climate, politics, children, social networks, knowledge of the community, the environment, economic factors and open spaces.

Australia's population growth has mainly been a result of immigration, which has continued alongside a variety of shifts in policy and changes in government focus (Jayasuriya, 1997). Interest in immigration issues can be seen in the proliferation of literature on migration and the establishment of major international journals concerned with migration. Examples include The International Migration Review, International Migration, and the Pacific Migration Journal. The public debate on immigration and associated policies has also heightened in recent years. Generally immigration will increase the number of people living in a country. All these people will need homes to live in, jobs to provide for themselves and their families, education for their children, health care and welfare assistance if required, and the influx of migrants will affect many areas of social and public life (Kabala, 1993). The existing society may be threatened by these structural changes, creating a basis to question the immigration policy (Rimmer, 1992). Immigration policy may reflect certain concerns such as a shortage of labour or it may be controlled by the attitudes, values and prejudices held by the community (Kabala). Historically, Australia has had carefully planned immigration policies and an analysis of these will help to understand the changes and developments of the past and the future.

Historical Background
There is some speculation as to whether Australia's indigenous people migrated from SE Asia some 40,000 years ago (Rickard, 2000). It is generally assumed that the original settlers in Australia consisted largely of convicts transported from the United Kingdom and Ireland (Freeman & Jupp, 1992; Nicholas & Shergold, 1988). Prior to 1940 the majority of settlers who came to Australia were born in the United Kingdom. Although there has been a significant shift in the composition of the Australian population in recent years, migrants from the United Kingdom still represent the largest migrant group in Australia (BIMPR, 1994; Jayasuriya, 1997; Shergold, 1984; Wooden, Holton, Hugo, & Sloan, 1994).

The process of adjustment
Migrant settlement and adjustment are important for individual migrants and families and also for the host community in terms of economic impact of maladjustment on the use of health services (Kabala, 1993) and long term commitment of migrants (Wooden, Holton, Hugo, & Sloan, 1994). Adjustment depends on a variety of factors including reasons for moving (Newbold, 1999). For example, forced migration inevitably results in poor adaptation, and moving for prearranged employment usually leads to better adjustment than migrating for family reunification (Cobbs-Clark, 2000). Given these findings on adjustment it would be useful to examine peoples' reasons and motivation for moving to a particular place.

Research has suggested that economic and employment requirements are the main reasons for migration (Bretschger, 2000; Shaklee, 1989; Wolfson, 1999). These explanations propose that individuals migrate because the demand for labour at the place of destination is greater than at the place of origin (Kanaiaupuni, 2000; Massey, 1993). However, other explanations have been posited including having family and friends in the new country for the provision of support (Adhikari, 1999; De Jong, Root, Gardner, Fawcett, & Abad, 1986; Goldscheider, 1971; Haasman & Reed, 1991; Kanaiaupuni, 2000; Price & Sikes, 1975; Roseman, 1983; Winters, de Janvry, & Sadoulet, 2001; Zeigler, 1980) and for political, climactic, and environmental considerations (Greenwood, 1985; Mueser, 1989; Peters, 1989; Sell, 1983; Suhrke, 1994). Individuals are also likely to choose a destination where the language in the new country is similar to their own (Feldman, 1996). Further, a number of studies have linked migration to a concern by migrant parents for the future of their children (Ebbeck & Glover, 1998; Carlisle-Frank, 1992; Cushing, 1993; De Jong et al., 1986; Winchle & Carement, 1989; Zeigler, 1980).

Approaches for Studying Decision Making about Immigration
Many of these studies propose a simplistic approach to decision-making however, research on decision making and judgement analysis in a variety of areas suggests that it is multi-faceted and frequently multilayered (Cooksey, 1996). It is important that researchers and policymakers understand fully the variety of factors that may impact on such a major life decision as migrating and the need to examine the context in which individuals and families come to their final decision. It is only in this way that we can begin to clarify and articulate the decision making process. Methodologically, research has
mainly focussed on quantitative data, with implications for individual migrants inferred through this statistical information rather than through asking people directly. Much of the research has also addressed a single aspect of migration, such as the number of people who move in a specific period of time (Chen, 1990; McHugh, 1984), the adjustment of migrants to a new country (Newton & Bell, 1996), and the effects of demographic characteristics on migration (Hertz, 1993; Rogler, 1994). Little research to date has focussed on the question, Why do some people stay in their land of origin and others leave? (Brehmer, 1988, Harbison, 1981). Different theoretical models of choice have been suggested (Keeney & Raiffa, 1976; Montgomery & Svenson, 1976) yet there has been no empirical support that these models adequately reflect the decision making process. Given the argument that people are active decisions-makers (Gofferdson & Gofferdson, 1988) and make specific choices from a range of options, it would seem sensible to ask people directly. In particular, there has been little research into why people migrate to Australia, especially at the level of the individual. Yet, Australia is an ideal context for studying the decision-making processes involved in migration because of the magnitude and relevance of voluntary international migration to the country.

Methodology

Telling stories is an important way that we construct and express meaning (Mishler, 1991). The way individuals make sense of their experiences is through shaping and telling the events in narrative form. Narratives offer a way for researchers to understand the "personal meanings, intentions, and interpretations of community situations" (Dokecki, 1992, p.33). In contrast to other interviewing techniques where participants are required to answer specific questions or confine their answers within a relevant framework, story telling offers a more natural conversational mode of communicating (Mishler). Story tellers provide a wealth of information within the context of their experience, as so aptly described by Hecht, Ribeau and Sedano (1990):

Within these stories are embedded the relational themes that are meaningful in the lives of individuals and which emerge out of human experience to guide interpersonal interaction. The themes capture the 'actor's view of 'how things operate', identifying what is important versus unimportant, acceptable versus unacceptable, etc. (p. 34)

Arguably, narratives empower storytellers by allowing them to tell their stories, and have their stories listened to and valued (Limerick & Limerick, 1998, Rappaport, 1995). For example, one benefit for people of support and self-help groups, religious communities, and neighbourhood arts programs is being able to express and tell their own stories (Mankowski & Rappaport, 1995). Participants in an interview situation are not isolated from the process but are "equal and collaborative partners" (Kelly, 1990, p. 785).

The narratives facilitate finding meaning (Bruner, 1993), aid memory (Schank, 1990) and help sustain identity (Mankowski & Rappaport, 1995). This is particularly the case in telling about life transitions where the life history is halted and there is a new start (Reissman, 1993), which renders the approach particularly useful in this research. As with any approach, there are disadvantages with using narratives. For example, the method is very personal, with a very narrow perspective, participants generally have not been trained and sometimes the descriptions may not be precise and concise (Hecht, Ribeau & Sedano, 1990). However, this approach provides a more integrated and holistic view to studying the area of migration.

This study is one of four studies conducted by the authors; the others were a set of semistructured interviews, implementation of a questionnaire to potential and existing migrants, and an experimental design to judge the desirability of moving to hypothetical locations. These studies provided the "thick description" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 10) of migrant decision-making in order to understand the different factors which may contribute to the decision to migrate (Cohen, 1999). This use of multiple and varied methods to gather information has a long history in the social and behavioural sciences (Campbell & Fiske, 1959; Denzin, 1978; Dreher & Hayes, 1993) and allows researchers to combine different sources of data collection and compare the results obtained from each. Results from the other three studies are reported elsewhere (Cohen, 1999).

Method

Design

An in-depth qualitative study using a narrative approach which addressed why people decided to migrate and in particular to Western Australia.

Participants

The participants in this study were 10 (5 female, 5 male) migrants from the United Kingdom who had been in Western Australia less than five years. They were not known personally to the researcher. The mean age of participants was 35.8 years (SD = 6.3).

Materials

The interviewer read the following paragraph to each participant:

Tell me in your own words the story of why you decided to leave the United Kingdom. I have no set questions to ask you. I just want you to tell me about why you decided to leave and how you came to choose Australia as your place of destination. Just tell it to me as if it were a story with a beginning, middle and how you ended up in Australia. There are no right or wrong ways to tell your story. Just tell me in any way that is most comfortable for you.

Guidelines for studying personal narratives were developed by Reissman (1993). The above paragraph was adapted
from her examples and sets the scene to gather information from the participants through "reflecting, remembering and recollecting" (p.9).

To facilitate recall, the interviewer presented a storyboard to the person:

To help you think of your story, this describes most people’s storyline. You see that a storyline for immigration may include some of these parts: when you decided to move; why you decided to move; what factors led to the decision to move; was there a specific incident that triggered the decision to move; how did you come to choose Australia; did you consider other places before making a decision; what factors were important when deciding on a country to which you might immigrate; what factors were unimportant in your decision to migrate; how satisfied are you with the move to Australia; would you ever return to live in the United Kingdom; now let's hear the story of your migration experience. How did it all begin?

The rationale for presenting the storyboard is to learn about the experience of the participant, which is a narrative or story about the migration experience. Sometimes by presenting the storyboard it helps participants to retell their story (Reissman, 1993).

**Procedure**

Participants were recruited via convenience sampling and snowballing whereby participants were asked to recommend potential participants. After an introductory contact, arrangements were made to meet the new participants in their homes. All participants agreed to have the accounts of their stories recorded on audiotape.

The first author read the initial paragraph as well as the storyboard as indicated in the Materials section. Participants were asked to provide a detailed narrative describing their migration experience and the factors that contributed to that decision. Respondents were free to express their thoughts in their own words to provide an effective record of their migration experience.

**Method of Analysis**

Guided by Creswell’s process for analysing qualitative data (1998) the interviews were transcribed verbatim. Transcripts were then read individually during which the first author noted her biases and reactions in a separate log. Together with a journal in which memos and notes were recorded, these documents formed part of the audit trail (Nagy & Viney, 1994). Significant statements in the transcripts were underlined. From these statements a list of categories was developed from each interpreter’s version of the data; the categories were intended to reflect the issues raised by the participants. Significant statements were written on separate index cards that were then sorted into these relational categories (Collier, Ribeau, & Hecht, 1986; Hecht, & Ribeau, 1987). Common categories were then grouped together to represent a theme (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). These categories were conceptually similar regarding the experience of migration.

Each interview was analysed according to the above plan. An independent content analysis was conducted by one other author, and the results were discussed, combined and, where necessary, modified with the agreement of both researchers (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). A third researcher also checked the final results. Finally, the participants in this study were shown the analysis and asked for further comments and whether they thought the results were accurate reflections of their migration decision making experience (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Nagy & Viney, 1994). Rigor was maintained using Creswell’s (1998) process of qualitative data analysis that ensured the data was authentic, credible, dependable, confirmable, and transferable.

The narrative framework highlighted the need for prolonged engagement with each participant; therefore the researchers needed to invest considerable time into the research. A further validity check was peer debriefing whereby the researcher disclosed as much information as possible about the inquiry to a peer group. These sessions served to keep the principal researcher cognisant of her actions and enhanced the overall quality of the study. Finally, member checking was used as a process to examine and review the information collected by the researchers (Drew, 1997). This was accomplished by asking two other university researchers toanalyse the transcripts. Their method of analysis was similar to the above description. The participants’ stories were presented as themes and vignettes to ensure that confidentiality and anonymity were maintained. Each vignette represents a variety of migration experiences as described by the migrants. The vignettes are not stories of specific migrants, but are composites that were structured so that the reader was able to obtain a more accurate picture of the factors that contributed to the decision-making processes of the migrant. The stories contain different factors that may have contributed to the decision to move in an attempt to provide an overview of all the themes mentioned by the migrants.

**Factors Affecting the Decision to Move**

The analysis produced nine relational themes in the narratives that may influence the decision to migrate: language, climate, politics, children, social networks, knowledge of the community, the environment, economic factors and open spaces. In order to demonstrate and explain these themes, examples are quoted from respondents’ descriptions.

**Language**

Language emerged as a central category because it is associated with locating information, general health, ensuring employment, acts as a buffer against stress, and enables the successful navigation of daily social and living tasks (Aroian, 1990; Delgado-Gaitan, 1994; Nicassio, Solomon, Guest, &
The perception of migrants emigrating from the United Kingdom to Australia was of the latter being a more democratic, less racist society. It is possible this perception may be as a result of being unhappy about a current situation in the United Kingdom and the search for better opportunities elsewhere (Gertsen, 1990). Political reasons were not suggested as the main variable in migration decision-making, but nevertheless, emerged a salient theme.

One day my husband was in Oxford Street and the police cordoned off and evacuated a whole area because of a car bomb which had just gone off. Thankfully no one was killed, but to be honest he was really shaken when he came home. It is all very well reading about these things in the newspapers and seeing it on television but when you come face to face with it, it really brings home just how fragile life really is and what can happen to you in a split second. So that really started a discussion on the politics and democracy of the area. You don't have that sort of political trouble in Australia.

There were so many problems with the Conservative government and the things they were doing. They were creating so many problems for everyone. Granted had we stayed we would just have lived with it, but it really became very annoying. I suppose they thought they were doing the best for the country, but really the place was going only one way.

Children

Respondents describing events in this category felt that issues relating to children were crucial to their decision to migrate. The explanation provided by the respondents was embedded in a concern for the future of the children. These findings are consistent with a number of studies (De Jong, Root, Gardner, Fawcett, & Abad, 1986; Winchie & Carment, 1989; Cushing, 1993). Factors relating to the safety of their children and educational prospects were potential contributors to the decision to migrate (Carlisle Frank, 1992). This concept is illustrated by the following comments:

It was getting to be really unsafe living in London and we were very afraid for the two boys. We both felt that it was time to move for the sake of the children. We wanted them to grow up in an environment that was safe and stable and not be afraid if they wanted to play in the garden. The education is fantastic for the children and it is so much freer here for them. The education is far broader over here with more subjects to choose from.

We had no children when we moved here but really we were thinking of the future. Things are much better here for children. It is the most wonderful country to grow up in. We have two small children now and we wouldn't move back to the U.K. for the world.

The children are so lucky here. They have the most wonderful life. There are so many opportunities for them. You just have to take advantage of what is available. For example, the community recreation centres offer so many activities for the kids. They can learn so much. You don't get that everywhere you know.

Social networks

Social networks were perceived as a source of support as well as information for the migrants. The decision to move to Australia from the United Kingdom was based on the fact that some of the migrants had family or friends already living in Australia who were seen as a potential support system in the new community (Hausman & Reed, 1991). Family ties at the place of origin tended to deter migration as people did not want to leave the family unit (Mincer, 1978; Veiga, 1983). In the present study, family ties at the chosen destination place appears to have played a role in the decision to migrate. This supports findings from a number of studies which suggest that the possibility of movement may be chosen on the basis of connections established through friends and relatives (Goldscheider, 1971; Price & Skes, 1975; Ziegler, 1980; Roseman, 1983; De Jong et al. 1986). Some researchers have found that the most significant attribute for a chosen destination place was the presence of relatives and friends in that place (Williams & Sofranko, 1979). It appears that the existence of family and friends underlies much of the migration to Western countries (Boyd, 1989).

We came to Perth because we had very good friends there and we didn't know anyone in Melbourne or Sydney. It makes such a difference to know people when you get off the plane. They have been fantastic to us. I don't know what we would have done without them.

One mitigating factor seems to be that there was a benefit for migrants to move to countries where they had friends or relations, provided this network was well established prior to the migration (Choldin, 1973). These networks provided...
advantages such as offering different forms of assistance to the migrant, helping them establish new social networks and finding employment. These factors were expressed by the migrants interviewed, as well as their desire to be near relatives and friends:

The main reason I migrated here was because of my sister, she lived here. She had left England when I was quite young and I always wanted to visit. I got one opportunity, but missed out and I had always wanted to come on holiday. The main reason for coming to Perth was when she came back for my birthday she talked so much about where she lived. I know it was a big move, but I knew I wanted more than I was going to have in England if I stayed there. With my sister and her family here I couldn’t go wrong. I had somewhere to stay when I arrived, and had so many contacts that it was easy finding a job as well.

I think my family being in Australia was a contributing factor for us actually arriving in Australia. Australia won out because of my family. They introduced us to so many people that it was overwhelming and we have never looked back. It is sad to leave your good friends behind that you’ve had all your lives, but we had no trouble meeting others through the family.

Social support was also mediated by knowledge of the community. Immigration from the United Kingdom to Australia is unique in that there is a large expatriate population living in the country. The interaction between people from the same country or area persisted in a new country after migration (Litwak, 1960) and community networks at the destination place are relevant in the decision-making process to migrate (Boyd, 1989). Some participants who were interviewed suggested that the knowledge of an expatriate community aided the decision to migrate, although this was never suggested as the primary reason for moving:

We knew there were lots of people from Britain living here and we thought that was a good thing because there would always be someone who we could turn to and they would understand what we were saying. It has sort of worked out that way. A lot of our friends are from Britain.

The first thing we did was join the British Club. That put us in contact with so many people from the U.K., and made us feel right at home.

Much of the knowledge about Western Australia appeared to come from the migrant’s family and friends that were already living in Australia. Corresponding with previous research (Kutz-Costes & Pungello, 2000; Ono & Becerra, 2000; Phillips, 1998), social support was a buffer to stress as it provided comfort, reduced isolation, and supported cultural identity.

Environment

Many of the participants had not been to Australia before and the knowledge that they possessed regarding attributes of the environment was gained through other media, family or friends. Participants made the following comments:

Firstly the traffic. It is a pleasure to drive over here as the roads are not nearly as busy as in London. Secondly, the centre of the city where it is a pleasure to be able to walk in the town without getting bumped and to have some space to yourself. London, especially Oxford Street, is like having wall to wall people... also from where I live now it takes me no more than 15 minutes into the city and that’s when it is very busy. Oh and you can actually park in the city. That was quite a novel experience the first time and it’s not even expensive.

...the cleanliness of the city was marvellous here, and you could really notice the difference between Perth and London.

Environments rich in amenities are also likely to be significant in international migration (Graves, 1979; Hoggart & Buller, 1995). For example, the presence of recreational spaces, bicycle paths, and recreational centres for citizens added to the quality of life of many respondents.

I love the outdoor life over here. We both enjoy playing sport and we get out as much as possible over here. Back in England you didn’t get much of a chance to enjoy that sort of thing.

You know what really appeals to us here is that every few blocks there is a park where the kids can go play and we can go for a walk. Yes, we have enormous parks in London, but you have to get there. It’s not very convenient. Maybe once a month or so but not on your doorstep like here. Here our local reserve even has a cycle path where we go and ride with the children.

The children love going to the beach especially during summer and we have picnics on the grassed areas even in winter when it doesn’t rain. We felt so hemmed in London, and wherever you went it was almost always indoors. There had to be something better and we’ve found it.

Climate

Prevailing climate in the United Kingdom was of concern to nine of the participants. Consistent with Sell (1983) and Peters (1989), the participants cited better climate as a common reason for moving.

One day we just decided when our son was about two, the weather was miserable, it was cold and you would get up in the morning and it was black, you’d get home at night and it was black and we thought, ‘What are we living here for?’

One winter I was desperate to see the sun. Can you imagine that?

In choosing a destination place, participants elected Australia where the temperatures were much higher than where they were from:
We had been married three years when my partner decided that he was going to live in Australia. He had had enough of the English winters. It was after one of our particularly bad winters when we had been inside all the time and it had not stopped snowing for days. Nobody went out. The streets were treacherous.

We came to Perth in the summer so we left behind the freezing cold, rain and snow and came to all this glorious sunshine.

As suggested in the above comments, Australia has a climate that is especially attractive to those migrants coming from the United Kingdom. Other migrant groups may not consider this factor significant (Kincaid & Yum, 1987). The most salient issues in selecting a destination place appeared to be climate, language and better opportunities for children. Once people have made the decision to move, the destination place may be chosen on the basis of a combination of a few attributes such as ties to the place through family and friends or the weather (Goldscheider, 1971; Price & Sikes, 1975).

**Economic factors**

Consistent with Bretschger (2000), Shaklee (1989), and Wolfson (1999), respondents commented that economic issues were important. The economic explanation of migration emphasises that migrants tended to move in order to improve their economic position and choose a destination where they are likely to find jobs.

*My husband and I first came to have a look and... economically things were not so good in London. It was getting very expensive. We found the same items cheaper here and my husband could earn more money here as well. So we were going to be far better off here than in London.*

*I felt that Australia was a land of growing opportunities... as long as you were prepared to work you could make a go of it. It’s not that we weren’t doing financially well, but conditions were much better over here and we could both get excellent jobs here with no problems.*

A subset of economic factors is housing which has also been considered an important issue. Researchers have outlined that, in a migration context, housing was one of the attributes of a destination place considered in the decision to move (Gustavus & Brown, 1977; Kontuly, Smith & Heaton, 1995).

*...everything was small in London. The houses were small, the rooms were small... you always had somewhere to live because if necessary you could get a council house, but you had to be really rich to get a home like the one we live in over here.*

*I can’t believe that we could afford to buy such a wonderful house over here. We lived in this small flat with the two children in London. We were going to move and try and get a house, but it meant moving to one of the outer suburbs, which we would have had to do as we didn’t have a choice. It was just getting too small for us. Yes there was a park nearby, but it’s not the same as having your own garden. You can just see how marvellous this is for us.*

**Adjustment**

The potential issue of being satisfied after the move for all participants appeared to be prominent. All participants reported being extremely pleased with the move to Australia and none commented that they regretted the decision to migrate, although most had left families behind in the United Kingdom.

*...we decided that we had to make the move for our sake and the future of the children. We were both leaving behind parents and brothers and sisters, but what could we do? We thought that if we settled well, then perhaps some of them would come out and join us. The hardest thing was leaving behind our parents. They were all getting on; my dad had had a heart attack, but he actually encouraged us to go...* The best thing we ever did. Never regretted it for a moment. Just look how we live here... never dreamt it could be this good...

The issue of leaving behind families was a source of anguish for them, but they were still happy to be living in Australia and had successfully adjusted to their new environment.

**Complexity**

The participants indicated that a combination of factors were important in deciding to migrate to Western Australia. This is new information. Previous research examined single factors but findings of the current study indicate that a combination is important.

*...we considered Australia not only because our good friends lived there, but also because of the wonderful sunshine and the weather in general... English was very important because neither of us spoke another language and we just couldn’t face learning a new language... we decided that the opportunities for the children were not as good in the U.K. as they were in Australia.*

In order to elucidate this complexity and to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants, vignettes are presented. Each vignette represents a variety of migration experiences as described by the migrants. The vignettes are not stories of specific migrants but were structured so that the researcher was able to obtain an ideal - typical picture of the factors that contributed to the decision-making processes of the migrant.

**Vignette 1**

Cheryl is 35 years of age and has been living in Australia for 4 years. She is a nurse and is married to an engineer. They have 3 children between the ages of 2 and 10. They considered that leaving the United Kingdom was an adventure with both positive and negative aspects to the experience. They wanted a
better quality of life, because in the United Kingdom life was difficult and they both had to "...work very hard for our standard of living and what we earned didn't seem to go all that far in giving us a reasonable quality of life". They were only prepared to consider English speaking countries. She commented that the climate was not ideal in the United Kingdom especially if one has small children and are unable to get out very often. Australia seemed a good compromise. She was very confident about all the positive aspects of Australia such as the climate, parks for the children to enjoy and less pollution in the cities. She was very positive about the success she and her husband had made in their careers and the opportunities that were available to them in Australia as compared to the United Kingdom. The education for their children was very good in Australia and they felt that "...looking back on our decision to emigrate, we could never have given our children these opportunities." Also she felt that "Australia was a country largely made up of migrants especially British ones, so there is a lot of support in that respect once you get here".

**Vignette 2**

Allan is 36 and has been living in Australia for 3 years with his wife but no children. He is a tradesman and has worked in the building industry for most of his working life. He and his wife considered migrating to America, France and Japan. He always came back to thinking about Australia because it was an English speaking country and he felt that he could make a living there. They chose Australia because of the good climate, the language, and the opportunities to make a successful life and economic reasons. He also commented that "...the racism in the United Kingdom was getting worse and was very marked. I wanted somewhere more stable, less crime, no racism". Neither he nor his wife had friends or relations in Australia, but both were aware of a large expatriate community, which they hoped would provide support if necessary. His wife is expecting their first child and they felt that the opportunities for children were better in Australia. In Australia, he can afford a comfortable home with all the amenities, close to schools, parks and the beach. He suggested that they wouldn't have done so well in the United Kingdom.

Very often the reasons for moving and reasons for destination selection were related. Collectively, the categories and themes that emerged from this study represent a profile of the factors that contribute to the migration decision within the context of migrants coming from the United Kingdom.

**Conclusion**

When considering the factors that contribute to the decision to move, the authors reached the conclusion that a combination of factors play a part in the decision to migrate from the United Kingdom to Western Australia. The data has added to a better understanding of the decision-making process, the individuals, and their experiences prior to migration. This has previously not received much attention (Greenwood, 1985).

The significance of personal contact through friends or relatives was emphasised as part of the migration decision. Many of the migrants saw politics and the environment as important, together with a perceived better quality of life in Australia as opposed to remaining in the United Kingdom. Although there were not many factors that were mentioned as being significant in choosing a destination, the selection of a place depended on a combination of them. Family and friends living in Australia and a large expatriate community contributed to their successful adjustment in Australia. This is a bounded sample of people with at least some common features i.e., they were selected by 'convenience' sampling and 'snowballing' whereby participants were asked to recommend potential participants. Therefore, it seems appropriate to generalise the findings only within this bounded case.

One also needs to take into account the unique characteristics of the participants in generalising from these results. Migrants in this study were not required or forced to migrate but did so because they perceived better opportunities or characteristics of the destination place.

It is the authors' belief that these stories represented the migrant's point of view. Embedded in the stories are themes on their migration decision-making that are meaningful to them personally. They disclose what is important and unimportant, what factors contributed to the decision-making process and which were irrelevant, and as such are a valuable resource.

A main goal of this research was to discover how the steps leading to a migration decision are made, by whom they are made, and to understand the parameters that guide the decision. If researchers understand this process and take into account the social and historical context, their results can be resourceful for policy making. Service providers and policy makers need to be aware of the connections migrants have both with the local community and with the homeland. Policy intervention programs that provide basic infrastructure and economic and social systems, may be more readily directed if decision making is better understood. For example agencies could be funded to provide social support groups to help the migrant establish new social support networks. Migrant flows and future population growth will be better understood if the roles the different factors play in the migrant decision are taken into account. This will also help to project the net migration in the future as well as the breakdown for different age groups. Linked to this factor would be the ability to predict future demand for public services relative to the future tax base.

It is also important to understand how perceptions change and a refinement of connections to the homeland occur over
time. An understanding of the different factors that contribute to the decision to migrate will greatly facilitate the development of programs and determine the level of help that the different migrants will require. By understanding these issues, human service professionals can help recently arrived migrants adapt to new social conditions and provide more appropriate interventions. For example, if people are moving because of opportunities for their children, then distress could result if these are not available. Migrants need to cope with differences between their old and new environment with respect to the physical and social aspects. With respect to employment, it would be fruitful for employers to investigate the kinds of communities that employees find desirable, especially if they are looking to recruit specific personnel from overseas.

This research has further practical implications in that it could inform the adjustment of migrants and programs that are geared towards the needs of particular ethnic groups, rather than generic programs.

The results of this research have highlighted the role of the environment, such as pollution, traffic congestion in cities and distances to the central business districts (CBD). Social factors emphasised the significance of friends and family in the new country and economic issues included employment opportunities and the availability of better housing. It is important to note that the environment, social issues and economic factors all contributed to the decision to migrate.

References


Removing Oppression from the Teaching of Psychology Students: The Case for Critical Pedagogy

Dawn Darlaston-Jones
(Edith Cowan University)

This paper argues for the adoption of a critical pedagogical approach to teaching psychology, where the values and ideology of educators and students take centre stage. Students are thus encouraged to examine their position, and the role of psychology, in terms of the impact of power, oppression and isolation on marginalised groups. Readers are invited to critique the dominance of the logical-positivist scientist-practitioner model and the way our adherence to this framework privileges certain types of knowledge over others and consequently has the potential to marginalise groups and individuals within psychology.

This paper is adapted from a forum presented at the 38th APS Annual Conference, Perth, Western Australia, October 1-5 2003

It has been argued that education plays an important and integral role in the socialisation process (Leistyna, 1999), and as such is able to shape the values, beliefs and attitudes that underpin society. This is particularly pertinent in the context of training psychology students in that psychology as a science is the study of human behaviour and interaction. Based on the premise that the way we educate students can influence their political knowledge and values, one needs to ask ‘whose values’ and ‘whose beliefs’ do we the educators adopt? Those who advocate from the Right argue for an education based on values’ and ‘whose beliefs’ and consequently has the potential to marginalise groups and individuals within psychology.

This paper is adapted from a forum presented at the 38th APS Annual Conference, Perth, Western Australia, October 1-5 2003

The debate over the role of values in education is not new; indeed, John Dewey wrote on the issue in the early 1900s and Paulo Freire continued with it through the 1960s and 1970s. However, much of the current discussion is tied to the conceptual shift occurring in Western nations from an “industrial to a knowledge economy” (Blackmore, 2001, p.353). The marketing of higher education as a ‘must have’ commodity has resulted in the sector creating a demand and then servicing it with one eye geared to the job market and the other firmly on the stock market (Aronowitz, 2000). This is demonstrated by the increased globalisation of higher education, with students being reframed as consumers and universities competing for the lucrative full-fee paying international student as well as the use of technology to provide access to on-line learning. In embracing the shift to a consumer ideology in higher education, we restate the Western ideology of consumerism, individualism and meritocracy. It is these values that underpin our educational processes and by definition, due to the socialisation process, the bedrock of the broader community. In the process we reinforce the inequality in society with individuals and groups being marginalised and disadvantaged by policies and procedures that support a status quo that values individual achievement over community responsibility, citizenship, and wellbeing. This is demonstrated most clearly by the notion that all students are regarded equally once they enter the education system. Failure to recognise that social and economic disadvantage impacts on a student’s performance at university reinforces the marginalisation of that student (Darlaston-Jones, 2002; Darlaston-Jones & Breen, 2003).

For example, consider this topic for a first year laboratory report assignment

"It is thought that the parenting behaviour between mothers and fathers may differ. Many parent-child interactions occur in the context of play and physical contact during social outings in public places. In this observational study, you will examine whether or not there is a difference in how mothers and fathers interact with their children."
There are a number of assumptions inherent in this piece of assessment; first that a family unit is comprised of father, mother and child(ren). For a student in the class who is a single parent this assessment is a further instance of his/her social role being made invisible and therefore insignificant. In addition it reinforces gender role stereotypical patterns by implication have the ability to dehumanize the individual. If the individual does not fit the stereotype it is most likely that he/she will internalising this lack of fit as a personal deficit rather than an inaccurate and sexist generalisation.

Furthermore this example ignores the many same sex couples raising children and by doing so marginalises these families to the fringe of society.

Or alternatively take for example two school leavers entering university: One student from a privileged private school with classrooms resourced with the latest technology and access to skilled and committed staff and every educational tool necessary to succeed; the second student comes from a low income area where the staff have to fight for every resource they can - they don't have computer labs filled with the latest computers and regardless of the dedication of the staff and the commitment of the students and their families few students consider the possibility of university.

The first student is well prepped for university, her whole high school experience has been geared to providing her with the best foundation, her family has a wealth of experience for her to draw on regarding the social norms that exist in higher education and the financial resources to support her. The second student however is the first in her family to attend university. She does not have access to generations of acquired knowledge regarding the norms and roles within the university context, nor does she have the background knowledge or experience of technology, or the resources to acquire that knowledge and as such she enters the domain at a distinct disadvantage to her colleague.

Unless our Universities recognise and accept the role they play in creating society we will never be in a position to address these inequities. Therefore, universities must provide the resources to assist students from non-traditional groups to gain the skills required to achieve their goal of a degree. In adopting the stance of equality by assuming homogeneity they would be entering a domain that valued the ideals of empathy and compassion, where they would be taught a range of skills that could be translated into the development of a well society. Instead they discovered the reality of an arena with a focus on competition and individual needs.

Prilleltensky extends this to include the concept of 'Wellbeing' and defines it as a multidimensional hierarchical concept characterised by the satisfaction of personal, relational and collective needs (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2002).

Recent research within the School of Psychology at Edith Cowan University in Western Australia (Darlaston-Jones, Cohen, Pike, & Drew, 2003) identified systemic oppression within the university in terms of the content and delivery of material, policies and processes. This reinforced earlier work in the same school exploring student expectations and experiences within the university (Darlaston-Jones, Cohen, Haunold, Pike, Young, & Drew, 2003; Darlaston-Jones, Pike, Cohen, Drew, Young, & Haunold, 2003). The results of which indicated that the gap between student expectations and their experiences of university was so great that it could lead to students transferring or discontinuing. The current research (Darlaston-Jones, et al. 2003) however, does more than identify a mismatch in expectations; it demonstrates that university processes, including teaching practice, perpetuate disadvantage and marginalisation at a systemic level.

While the early research within the School of Psychology was initially motivated by economic rather than philosophical reasons with a focus on understanding student attrition it served to identify the mismatch between what students expected to learn and what psychology courses provided to them. It also talks to the value base that underpins the profession in that students are presented with a form of human behaviour as science that is so removed from the human context as to render it meaningless. Students thought they would be entering a domain that valued the ideals of empathy and compassion, where they would be taught a range of skills that could be translated into the development of a well society. Instead they discovered the reality of an arena with a focus on competition and individual needs.

In its drive to be viewed as a legitimate form of science, psychology has emphasised a way of working that Freire (1998) described as scientific or mechanised. By this I mean that the human factor is often lost in the process. This applies equally to our theory, practice and teaching. In seeking universal theories of behaviour and research methods we reduce the complexity of human interaction to the lowest common denominator. The richness that is found in the diversity of our actions is often lost in the reductionist methodologies we utilise (Sheehan, 1996).
The scientist practitioner model of psychology espoused in Australia and most of the western world forces us to hide our ideology and values behind a facade of scientific rigour. In seeking to remove bias from our processes we remove the very essence of what makes us human and worthy of investigation. It also pretends that our methods are value free, objective and accurate.

This is not to argue against scientific rigour but it is to question whether our interpretation of what constitutes science is accurate: is it in fact simply our power to determine what constitutes truth rather than the identification of truth itself? It is also to question our methods of teaching in that it is here in our universities that we train and socialise the new generation of practitioners. And it is here that we can potentially effect the most change.

In his last book Pedagogy of Freedom Paulo Freire argues that "teaching requires a recognition that education is ideological; that it always involves ethics; it requires a capacity to be critical and to recognise our conditioning; teaching requires humility; and above all it requires critical reflection." Aronowitz (2000) goes further and characterises true higher learning as "...the process by which a student is motivated to participate in, even challenge, established intellectual authority" (p.143). Prilleltensky and Nelson (2002) have called for the creation of "subversive teachers" such that we train our students to become critical, reflective thinkers; we promote the role of values in the educational process in order to encourage students to think about what psychology is about and who it is for.

We need to encourage critical analysis of the direction our political leaders move us in and reflect on who is advantaged and disadvantaged by these decisions. We have to acknowledge that psychology as a discipline does not operate in the vacuum that is the controlled experiment but in a real world populated by real people who are driven and motivated by bias and values. And this includes the psychologists running the laboratories! For example, why do we research the topics and domain we do - what decision making process is in operation? It is likely to be something we are intrigued or curious about and this curiosity is a function of who we are - therefore it is the result of our world view, bias and value system.

Critical pedagogy provides the vehicle to achieve the critical reflective practice called for by theorists such as Freire, Aronowitz and Prilleltensky, both within the educator and the learner. It calls for recognition that our personal worldview or value base is integrally connected to who we are as individuals and we cannot divorce ourselves from it - every action and interaction is imbued with bias because it occurs as a result of who we are and what we believe in (Wink, 1997). Each move is motivated in part by a value choice and each decision we make contains an ethical component and a power differential - our values permeate our practice and our learning. Therefore, we need to ask ourselves what is being promoted by our teaching practices? Who is potentially disadvantaged or marginalised by our content and the examples we provide to illustrate it? What values are we reinforcing in adopting a particular stance? What process of oppression are we contributing to in conducting our classes in a didactic rather than inclusive participatory manner?

Critical pedagogy forces us to name the fundamental issues of power and privilege and their relationship to society (Wink, 1997). It asks how and why knowledge is constructed and valued and what type of knowledge we reproduce and who is benefited by that knowledge. Valuing one form over another is oppression of diversity and marginalisation of difference and failure to accept these truths is failure to acknowledge our role in constituting society. In ignoring the knowledge and experience our students bring to their learning and the social, political and historical context in which it takes place we remove the opportunity to place psychological theory and practice into an appropriate framework to facilitate learning and effect change.

The need for students to be viewed as active participants in the learning process is espoused by many eminent educators and researchers including Prilleltensky, Giroux and Freire and all emphasise the importance of recognising the role played by personal and collective value positions in the learning process. Based on the premise that the way we educate students can influence their political knowledge and values, it behoves educators to recognise and articulate the political context in which all learning occurs.

With this perspective in mind it is incumbent upon the educator to articulate good citizenship within the educational setting whilst recognising and valuing that each person is a unique individual and has the right to adopt and express an alternate position. Critical pedagogy provides a framework for educators to address both the needs of students in terms of the educational experience as well as providing a forum for social commentary and the development of personal ideology. In essence the learning environment needs to provide a place of support and safety in which students can be challenged academically and personally. The ability to critically evaluate oneself and by extension ones profession is not to be seen as a "rupture" or disturbance (Freire, 1998, p. 37) but rather a continuation or development of professional exactitude designed to promote individual and collective conscience raising and challenge.

As an example of the effectiveness of this approach I cite the work of Bishop, Sonn, Drew & Contos (2002) who argue that in WA, community psychology has developed into a uniquely different type of community psychology than the North American model on which it was originally based. This development is characterised by an incremental shift in ideology as a result of the application of a reflective-generative model that integrates theory and practice. Community psychology in WA is concerned more with social justice and empowerment of marginalised groups and individuals and in
many respects is more critical and self reflective than its North American counterpart. However, while the benefits of this reflection have been demonstrated in terms of our research, it is not so clearly articulated in our teaching methods. I would go further, and argue that whilst this reflective-generative model has impacted on community psychology its benefits should also be applied to other areas of the profession and that our teaching practices should incorporate the critical reflection necessary to transform our society into one that is more conducive to collective wellbeing.

Psychology cannot abrogate its responsibility to society by concealing it behind a language of objectivity - we exist within a social, political, cultural and historical context, as do our students, and it is within this context that our educational practices take place. To deny the existence of values and bias in education is to deny it within ourselves which by definition denies our humanity.

To this end I call on psychology as a discipline to acknowledge that:

- scientific endeavour is value laden;
- we are ethically and morally bound to resist the status quo that privileges one type of knowledge over another;
- we must reject the policies and processes of an education system that builds discrimination into its practice;
- psychology has a responsibility to contribute to collective wellbeing for all peoples not just the privileged majority.

References


Mental health professionals are subject to the same types of job-related stress as are other workers. This report contrasts the perceived stress levels of three groups of mental health professionals: clinical and counselling psychologists and social workers. An anonymous mail survey of 400 members of each group resulted in a response rate of 34%. The results indicated that social workers were significantly less satisfied with their job, experienced more work-related stress, and were more likely to be seeking alternative employment than were either group of psychologists. Further analysis suggested the importance of work setting in that a higher proportion of psychologists were self-employed than was the case for social workers, who largely worked within the public sector. The results highlight the importance of organisational factors contributing to the stress of mental health workers.

Evidence suggests that those in the mental health professions suffer from the same types of work-related issues that result in high stress as do other workers (Jamal, Baba, & Rivelere, 1998; Rees & Cooper, 1992). Thus, it appears that working in the mental health field does not seem to provide any immunity from the effects of work related stress (Beck, 1987; Ross, Altmeier, & Russell, 1989). For example, increased amounts of shift work among mental health professionals such as telephone counsellors can lead to symptoms such as fatigue, nervous problems, and digestive tract disturbances (Vredenburgh, Carozi, & Stein, 1999) which are commonly reported amongst other types of shift workers (Harma, 1993).

Stress has been defined as a negative mental state arising from discrepancies between the practitioner and the environment, or as a consequence of the practitioner’s perceptions of excessive demands upon them (Heim, 1991; Mills & Huetner, 1998). Evidence suggests that excessive stress may be a risk factor for several health conditions, including acute respiratory infections, high blood pressure, ulcers, thyroid disorders, and heart disease (Peter & Siegrist, 1999; Robbins, Waters-March, Cacioppo, & Millet, 1994; von Onciul, 1996), as well as the exacerbation of conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis, migraine, ulcerative colitis, and diabetes (Meusz, 1995). Many of these effects may arise as a result of the link between the physiological effects of chronic stress and the resulting feelings of tension, anxiety, fatigue and depression (Cox & Ferguson, 1991), perhaps as mediated through the effects of stress upon the immune system (Kicolt-Glaser, Malarey, Cacioppo, & Glaser, 1994; Stein & Miller, 1993). Other effects may be manifested by an increased incidence of sleep disorders (Kryger, Roth, & Dement, 1993).

While not all sources of stress arise from work, such evidence as that provided by the 1990 United Kingdom Labor Force survey suggests that workplace-related stress is the major cause of stress-related depressive illness (Groot & Maasen van den Brink, 1999). Increasing work hours, threats of redundancy and increased job insecurity, and reduced opportunities for recreation are current employment factors that act to increase stress levels generally. The escalating incidence of physical illness may result in increased absenteeism and lower productivity (Cox & Ferguson, 1991). In addition, higher occupational stress can be expressed more directly in psychological terms in the form of higher levels of depressed mood, lower job satisfaction, reduced productivity and efficiency, decreased interpersonal relationships, and increased absenteeism (Arnold, Cooper, & Robertson, 1995; Friedman, 2000; Kalimo, 1999; Schnall & Lundsberg, 1994). Many of the sources of stress for mental health professionals are shared with many modern workers, including so-called “white collar workers”. Such factors as the use of technology to increase the pace of work, a lack of understanding and leadership by managers, conflict with colleagues, inflexible and demanding work schedules, and poor communication between management and workers are factors often cited for increased levels of stress in both mental health workers and workers in general (Alexander & Hegarty, 2000; Arnold et al., 1995, Robbins et al., 1994). For example, Ackerley, Burnell, Holder, and Kurdek (1988) reported that up to 40% of doctoral-level clinical psychologists in private practice experienced high levels of emotional exhaustion. Similarly, a recent study by Winefield (as cited in Alport, 2002) which used an index of psychological strain in the workplace found that 50% of academic staff in Australian universities were at risk of developing psychological illness, a figure significantly higher than 19% of workers from the general population who were at risk.

Previous investigations of Australian mental health professionals have provided demographic data about the proportion of clinical and counselling psychologists (Garton & Symons, 2001). In addition, researchers in the UK have investigated other groups of mental health professionals such as psychiatrists and clinical psychologists working in organisational contexts (Reid et al., 1999), while others have examined levels of satisfaction among mental health workers in private practice settings (Dupree & Day, 1995). In the present study, we investigated levels of job satisfaction, levels of perceived stress, and desire to change employment in three groups of mental health professionals: clinical and counselling psychologists and social workers. These groups deal with individuals who experience a broad range of mental health disorders and interpersonal difficulties. Therefore, by gauging their degree of job satisfaction, we may better understand the management of work-related stress in the mental health professions.
Method

Procedure

Participants were selected randomly from the membership lists of the Australian Psychological Society for the Colleges of Clinical Psychologists and Counselling Psychologists and from the membership list of the Australian Association of Social Workers. A packet comprising a cover letter and questionnaire and reply-paid envelope was mailed to 400 members of each of the above groups. Completion of the survey was anonymous.

One section of the questionnaire asked respondents to rate their reactions to their work in five areas. These asked: 1) overall, how satisfied are you in your current job? 2) overall, how much stress do you experience in your current job? 3) how likely is it that you will seek a new job in the next year? 4) how likely is it that you will seek to work in an area not related to your present type of work in the next year? and 5) how much does your current work have a negative impact on your private (i.e., non-work related) life? Ratings were made on a 5-point rating scale from 0 (not at all) to 4 (very high).

Participants

A total of 432 questionnaires were returned, of which 403 were usable, representing a response rate of 34%. One hundred thirty clinical psychologists, 120 counselling psychologists, and 153 social workers responded. The mean age of respondents was 44.7 years (SD = 10.5), with 71% of the sample being female.

Results

Table 1 reports the work pattern (part-time or full-time), highest level of pre-employment education, and work setting for the three groups. Clinical psychologists had worked an average of 14.8 years (SD = 9.0), counselling psychologists for a mean of 16.0 years (SD = 10.5), and social workers for a mean of 13.3 years (SD = 8.7). The years of experience did not differ significantly across the three groups (F(2, 367) = 1.99, p > .10). The average proportion of time spent in direct contact with clients was 62.8% (SD = 24.2) for clinical psychologists, 60.7% (SD = 22.6) for counselling psychologists, and 55.4% (SD = 26.2) for the social workers. Analysis of variance on the proportion of time spent in direct contact with clients was statistically significant across the three professional groups (F(2, 367) = 3.64, p < .05). Post-hoc testing indicated that clinical psychologists spent more time in direct contact with clients than did social workers (Tukey HSD, p < .05), with the counselling psychologists intermediate and not significantly different from either other group.

Table 2 reports the results for the five rating scales for satisfaction with current job, stress experienced in the current job, likelihood of seeking a new job in the next year, likelihood of seeking a job in an unrelated area of work in the next year, and negative impact of current work on private life.

Table 1
Demographic Information about the Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work:</th>
<th>Clinical psychologists</th>
<th>Counselling psychologists</th>
<th>Social workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work:</td>
<td>61.8</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>72.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest Degree:</td>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>Social workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>65.8</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Certificate / diploma / other</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Setting:</td>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private sector</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public sector</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>80.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note: All figures are percentages that omit missing data.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2
Mean Ratings on Job Stress Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Clinical psychologists</th>
<th>Counselling psychologists</th>
<th>Social workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied with current job</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress experienced in current job</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood of seeking a new job</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking work in unrelated area</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative impact on private life</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A multivariate analysis of variance was used across the five questions to determine if the three professional groups differed. The overall test was significant (Pillai's trace = .074, $F(10, 756) = 2.89$, $p < .001$). Four of the subsequent univariate tests were also statistically significant. The effect for satisfaction with the current job was significant ($F(2, 286) = 8.81$, $p < .001$), with pair wise comparisons indicating that the level of satisfaction was significantly lower for social workers than for both clinical and counselling psychologists (Tukey's HSD, $p < .05$ in both cases). The modal response category for all three groups was "high" satisfaction, but there were almost as many social workers who had "moderate" job satisfaction. Stress in the current job was also significantly different across the three groups ($F(2, 285) = 3.83$, $p < .05$). Pair wise comparisons indicated that the stress experienced by social workers was higher than for counselling psychologists (Tukey's HSD, $p < .05$), with the clinical psychologists not differing significantly from the other two groups. The modal response category for both groups of psychologists was "moderate" levels of stress, whereas for social workers, the modal category was "high" stress levels. The overall univariate test for the question on the likelihood of seeking a new job in the next year was also significantly across the three professional groups ($F(2, 283) = 8.35$, $p < .001$). Follow-up pair wise comparisons showed social workers significantly more likely to seek a new job as compared to both clinical and counselling psychologists (Tukey's HSD, $p < .05$ in both cases). Both clinical and counselling psychologists most commonly replied that they had no intention of searching for a new job. The distribution of responses for social workers was bimodal, with more not intending to seek alternative employment, but with almost as many reporting a "very high" likelihood of doing so. The final significant effect was for the question on the likelihood of seeking a job in an unrelated area of work ($F(2, 285) = 3.53$, $p < .05$). Pair wise comparisons showed that social workers were significantly more likely to seek a new job in an unrelated area of work when compared to the counselling psychologists (Tukey's HSD, $p < .05$). The most common response in all three groups was to report no likelihood of seeking work in another area. However, social workers reported higher levels of intention to seek work in other areas at all levels of the response continuum. There were no significant differences in the ratings of the impact of current work on workers private lives ($F(2, 286) = 1.60$, $p > .2$). Approximately 35% to 45% of each group reported some impact upon their private life, with 5% to 10% of each group reporting "very high" impacts upon their private life.

In order to explore the influence of factors such as proportion of time spent in contact with clients and hours worked, a supplementary analysis was conducted to contrast the three groups on the five questions, using hours worked, proportion of time spent in direct contact with clients, and the work setting as covariates. The multivariate effect for professional groups was not significant with covariates in place (Pillai's trace = .022, $F(10, 714) = 8.1$, $p = .61$). The covariate effects for hours per week that were worked and for percentage of time in direct client contact were both not statistically significant. The covariate effect for work setting was significant (Pillai's trace = .091, $F(5, 356) = 7.11$, $p < .001$). As can be seen in Table 1, the striking difference in work setting is the much higher proportion of social workers in the public sector than for either group of psychologists.

### Discussion

The response rate of 34% obtained here is higher than Bechtoldt, Norcross, Wyckoff, Pokrywa, and Campbell (2001) obtained in their survey of American clinical and counselling psychologists. Our response rate is also, however, notably lower than the 56% return rate reported by Garton and Symons (2001) in their survey of psychologists in private practice. The distribution of gender, age, and educational level reported here for psychologists are similar to those reported by Garton and Symons, and are likely to be representative of those practicing psychologists who belong to the Australian Psychological Society. Sampling from lists maintained by state registration boards would have led to a sample more closely representative of all professional psychologists, but such lists were not accessible for this study. We are not aware of published figures for the Australian social work professions that would allow a determination of the representativeness of our sample.

Our results suggest that mental health professionals experience significant levels of stress in their work, and that these stresses are particularly high among social workers. The supplementary analysis suggests that one possible factor that underlies these differences is the different work settings for the three groups. Many more psychologists work for themselves in private practice than do social workers. The majority of social workers who responded to the survey are in public sector organisations and are therefore more likely to experience the forms of work pressures that arise from management factors found in modern organisations. Many social workers have heavy case loads of clients and also experience little control over their workloads. The self-employed psychologists would not experience such pressures. One implication of these results is that although psychologists who work in private settings may suffer from physical isolation, caseload uncertainty and tending to the business aspects of their profession (Nash, Norcross, & Prochaska, 1984), perhaps being part of a public sector organisational structure is a worse consequence.

The present results are consistent with reports from other countries that indicate a high level of dissatisfaction amongst social workers. For example, in a recent study conducted in the U.K., social workers reported the lowest levels of job satisfaction and higher levels of burnout compared to consultant psychiatrists, community psychiatric nurses, ward nurses, clinical psychologists, and occupational therapists (Reid et al., 1999).
The differences in levels of satisfaction amongst mental health workers who work in public compared to private practice settings are consistent with results from several previous studies. Ackerley et al. (1988) found that psychologists who worked in public settings experienced higher levels of burnout than those in private practice. Dupree and Day (1995) also reported that psychotherapists who worked primarily in private practice reported higher levels of job satisfaction and lower levels of burnout than psychotherapists who worked in the public sector. Similarly, Vredenburg et al. (1999) reported that counselling psychologists in private practice reported the lowest levels of burnout as compared to those who worked in the public sector.

The present results are interpreted as evidence of the importance of focussing on the issue of stress at an organisational level of analysis, rather than upon factors related to the individual practitioner, or even factors related to the client group. (For a full discussion of relevant organisational factors, the reader is referred to Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001.) Indeed, past research which has examined professional fulfillment and exhaustion in mental health workers indicates that organisational factors are more important than individual characteristics when it comes to predicting exhaustion and professional fulfillment (Thomsen, Soares, Nolan, Dallender, & Arnetz, 1999). Improving areas of the organisation, such as efficiency, personal development and identifying specific goals within the context of the organisation may improve the well-being of mental health workers in those settings.

Our findings are consistent with previous research that suggests that work for health care professionals in large organisations has higher than average stress levels. Future research might explore the sources of such stress in more detail, and provide further information on the management or organisational procedures that may be implicated.

References


Author Note
Edward Helmes, Paul P. W. Chang, Lynne Cohen, and Lisbeth T. Pike, School of Psychology, Edith Cowan University, Joondalup, Western Australia, Australia.

Edward Helmes is now at the School of Psychology, James Cook University, Townsville, Queensland, Australia.

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Contact Details
Paul P. W. Chang,
School of Psychology,
Edith Cowan University,
100 Joondalup Drive, Joondalup,
Western Australia, 6027.
Electronic mail may be sent to p.chang@cowan.edu.au.
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