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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
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Email contributions are also welcome.

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General Information

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Happy New Year to you all - well, as happy as it can be under the dramatic circumstances facing the global community right now. For the Community College, this issue of Network is good news in itself – it consists entirely of student contributions, all of which have been through the normal review process. Congratulations to all those who submitted papers. You are the future of community psychology, and it looks remarkably healthy.

Congratulations are also due to three College members who were elected to APS Fellowship in 2004. Meg Smith, Grace Pretty and Lyn Littlefield have all been active, innovative and generous contributors to the College and to the CP field, and it’s great to see them recognised in this way.

I am taking this opportunity to bring you up to date with Community College and APS developments. First of all, the 2004 Annual General Meeting of the College, held in Sydney at the APS Conference, was short of a quorum, so that meeting was reconvened on Thursday 9th December. The minutes will be circulated separately. This was not a college election year, so the National Committee remains as follows:

- **Chair:** Heather Gridley (Vic): [heather.gridley@vu.edu.au](mailto:heather.gridley@vu.edu.au)
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- **Student Representatives:** Emma Sampson (Vic Uni) & Lauren Breen (ECU) (New student representatives will be co-opted from the 2005 postgraduate cohorts at both universities, since Emma has now completed her course and Lauren has set up a competition between her PhD thesis and her expected new baby to see which one sees daylight first!)

**National Committee meetings**

The National Committee met by audio or face-to-face four times in 2004. Thanks to this small but committed group, we can claim several achievements over the past year. In the College’s annual report, we noted how our email discussion list COMMPSYCH has continued to provide College members, international colleagues and others with the opportunity to post notices and initiate/participate in discussion on topics related to Community Psychology. Strong links have been established with students in WA and Victoria, and the College has maintained its contribution to debate within the APS.

As Chair, I represent the Community College on the APS Directorate of Professional Practice Advisory Group (DPPAG). I often feel like a Tasmanian senator, having equal input alongside the chairs of much larger colleges despite my tiny constituency. I guess one’s assessment of my role there depends on which Tasmanian senator comes to mind in the comparison, but you can be sure that I have my say. I’ve actually been pleasantly surprised by the degree of cooperation and consensus that is evident much of the time between the current group of chairs.

Plans for 2005 include options for making ‘Network’ more viable and accessible to a wider readership, an investigation of online teaching and PD options, and the lead-up to APS Conference in Melbourne.

**History of the College**

The College celebrated its 21st birthday in 2004, with a ‘History Dinner’ in Melbourne, where some of the founding members exchanged stories with students and recent graduates about their involvement in the field. Since we were interested in tracing some of the key developments in the field, we pressed those who attended the dinner to complete a brief survey. The questions are listed below, in case any of you would like to contribute your recollections and insights on any or all of them. Although this is not a formal research project, I may use some of the responses as part of a chapter I am writing for a textbook on the history of community psychology worldwide, so I will assume that any responses emailed to me on [heather.gridley@vu.edu.au](mailto:heather.gridley@vu.edu.au) include permission to be quoted without personal attribution, (or attributed if you prefer), unless otherwise stated.

- What was the main area of your professional training? What informal community psychology training have you had?
- How/where have you applied your training?
- How did you first come into contact with community psychology – as a field, and/or via the board-college?
• What are your understandings or recollections of the origins of community psychology in Australia?
• Are you or have you ever been a member of the APS Community College (and/or Board)? If so, what about aspects stand out for you? What roles have you played in the formal structure and when?
• For you personally, why was it/is it important to have a specialisation in community psychology?
• What do you see as the major contributions of community psychology in Australia?
• What major contributions could community psychology make to psychology in the future?
• What else would you like to tell us about the history and development (and your hopes for the future) of community psychology from your perspective?

Network: The Journal of the APS College of Community Psychologists
Two issues have been produced in 2004, including this one. This was a significant achievement for this small College, thanks to editors Lynne Cohen, Tao Jordan and Dawn Darlaston-Jones, and guest editor Christopher Sonn. It was produced to a very high standard and fully refereed, and the College will be addressing the issue of wider circulation in the coming year. Discussions have taken place with several major publishers, with a view to bringing the journal online, to enable a wider circulation as well as reduced costs. Look for some exciting developments in 2005-6.

Conferences
Several conferences are on the horizon in Australia and abroad, featuring or specialising in community psychology content. They are a great way to freshen up your knowledge base, pick up PD points, network with like-minded colleagues, and increase the profile of community psychology within the discipline.

APS Victorian Branch Conference - Melbourne, May 6-7th 2005
Catherine D’Arcy is our representative on the organising group for this event at Caulfield Racecourse, for which the theme is ‘The Power of Compassion.’ The Victorian Section of the Community College, together with the Women & Psychology Interest Group, will host a forum entitled ‘Mobilising compassion as catalyst for social action: Australian psychologists’ responses to asylum seekers’. The abstract invites a critical examination of the concept of compassion. ‘Isaac Prilleltensky’s position on compassion is that it leads us to operate only at the individual level, without encouraging communal and political responses to issues (where the broader social change really occurs). On the other hand, looking at the current responses of psychologists to refugee issues in Australia, it seems that compassion can be a very important element for people in motivating and sustaining their activism and drive towards social and political change, particularly when connected to a perception of injustices. In this forum a number of these psychologists will discuss their involvement in refugee issues, their motivations and personal experiences, and the challenges within this work. They will look at .... individual and broader socio-political responses to issues, in the context of “scientist-practitioner” models vis-a-vis “compassionate” practice.’ The forum will encourage discussion and debate among audience as well as presenters, so we encourage Victorian members to attend the conference.

SCRA Biennial - Illinois, June 9th -12th 2005
Alternating (more or less) with the Trans-Tasman conferences are the Biennial Conferences of APA Division 27 - the Society for Community Research and Action (SCRA), at which Australia is always well represented. This one is at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. You can find out more about the conference at http://www.conferences.uiuc.edu/scra.

International Critical Psychology Conference 2005 - Durban, South Africa 28 June - 1 July 2005
Beyond the pale - "outside the boundaries of the acceptable" - this is a defining feature of Critical Psychology. A psychology of the excluded and marginalised, both those who are socially displaced and those whose work and thought remain unacceptable to mainstream psychology. Of course the phrase hints at another mischievous meaning: beyond the white world - the overdeveloped West with its intellectual imperialism and monopoly on academic resources. Perhaps the task of the day should then be to stimulate a broader engagement, to draw out issues and voices that might not be part of the business-as-usual of Critical Psychology in its traditional Western academic format. This is the challenge of the 2005 International Critical Psychology Conference, hosted by the Psychology and Society Programme of the University of KwaZulu-Natal: http://www.ukzn.ac.za/cripsy

APS Conference - Melbourne, September 28th - October 2nd 2005
The 2005 APS Conference will be held in Melbourne at the Crown Promenade Hotel, Southbank. The Conference theme will be ‘Past Reflections and Future Directions’. Once again we have an opportunity for a Community Psychology 'themed' day or stream, and submissions for these are due at APS on 15 March 2005. But in order to ensure that there are sufficient quality CP offerings, I suggest that anyone interested in organising a symposium or other activity contact one of the College committee members ASAP, or perhaps post a notice on COMMPSYCH in early February, so that we can collaborate prior to the deadline. Given the conference theme, there is scope to look at our own history, and to cast a critical eye over local and global future scenarios.
10th Trans-Tasman - ? Sydney, June 2006
Following the very successful ninth Trans-Tasman Community Psychology Conference in Aotearoa New Zealand in July, it is our turn to host the next one, hopefully in Sydney in 2006, perhaps as a feeder event prior to the proposed inaugural International Conference in Puerto Rico. NSW members, do let Meg Smith know if you would like to assist with the conference planning and organisation - a rare chance to get involved in Community Psychology in your home state.

First International Conference on Community Psychology - Puerto Rico, June 8-10 2006
The main goal of this Conference is to facilitate an exchange between community psychologists and professional/academic/community-based groups around the world. The Conference structure will allow for the incorporation of formats that will run throughout the day concurrently with all other activities such as community fairs and visits to NGO’s and other community relevant settings.

APS/NZPsS - Auckland, September-October 2006
Given the ongoing connections between community psychologists on both sides of the Tasman, it is exciting to note that the respective professional bodies in both countries are planning a joint conference in NZ in 2006, with a joint edition of the Australian Psychologist to mark the occasion.

Communication
National Secretary Arina Shadbolt has updated the content on our College web page (check it out on the APS website www.psychology.org.au), and we have now revised our College brochure, with a version aimed at students and another at the general public (copy enclosed). APS has now adopted a more streamlined approach to advertising PD and other activities across the society, via its fortnightly APS Matters email to all members, with links to a ‘one stop shop’ events calendar on the APS homepage and from there, to the respective unit webpages.

Professional Development
A number of college members have not complied with Professional Development reporting requirements for the first two cycles - in which case they have been re-assigned to Affiliate Membership, or may have chosen to let their membership lapse altogether. We understand that many members have mixed feelings about PD, but we do urge you to retain your links with the College, at whatever level works best for you. We are committed to a flexible system that supports you as the best judge of your current PD needs. The College’s PD representatives, Di Clark and Meg Smith, have offered to consult personally with any member having difficulty in accumulating sufficient points, or in working their way through the documentation process. Email or call them before the third cycle expires in May 2005.

Membership
We continue to lose more members than we gain each year, with a further drop in College membership from 96 in May to 77 in December 2004. The AGM minutes document a number of steps we plan to take to arrest this slide, which is affecting all APS Colleges - unfortunately, as one of the smallest colleges, we could be the first to fold altogether if the trend continues.

College Membership Requirements
The proposal for changes to the two year supervision requirement was approved by the 2004 APS AGM, reducing the requirement for full college membership from two years to one, with D. Psych (professional doctorate) graduates eligible for college membership on graduation. The one-year requirement consists of 80 hours college-specified PD activity, which might include a supervision component.

We are now revising the College’s supervision information package accordingly. We are defining ‘college related activity’ as activities addressing one or more College specific competencies. This may include attendance at conferences, seminars or workshops that qualify for specialist PD points. Applicants are encouraged to complete practitioner hours with appropriate supervision. A proposal should be submitted at the beginning of the year so applicants can be sure that what they are doing will be accepted. However credit for up to 40 hours can be awarded retrospectively. The proposed program of activities should demonstrate how perceived gaps in the applicant’s college-specific expertise will be addressed. Each proposal will be judged on its individual merits.

Review of College Competencies
APS National Office has almost completed its review of all college competencies. As part of this process, we have extensively revised our Community College competencies following detailed discussion and consideration of examples from ECU and NZ. The final version will be circulated within the full APS list of core and specialist college competencies as soon as it is approved.

Student involvement
Community psychology postgraduate students have continued their active involvement in the field, with this issue of Network the outstanding example. In 2004, the second one-day symposium in Perth involved student research presentations from all five WA
universities, and there was solid Australian student representation at the Trans Tasman conference in July (see article this issue). Having active student representation formalised on the national committee has also been a step forward in the past year.

**Robin Winkler Award**

The Robin Winkler Prize is awarded annually, with calls for nominations appearing in February’s InPsych and also in this issue of Network. Nominations close at the end of May. No award was made in 2004.

On Saturday 12th February, Victorian members will have an opportunity to participate in a half-day workshop run by the 2003 Award recipient, Helen McGrath, entitled Bounce Back! Promoting resilience in young people at school and community levels (see notice this issue).

With best wishes to all Community College members and Network readers for a peace-filled, creative and fulfilling year ahead.

Heather Gridley
National Chair
Natural resource management (NRM) is being seen increasingly as a human issue. Early it was seen as a technical hard science arena, but with the recognition that sustainability required community participation, this is changing. Community participation was initially seen in terms of consultation. Gradually, the importance of the community involvement in developing and implementing Natural Resource Management (NRM) has been recognised. This haphazard development has resulted in little understanding of the roles and functions the community needs to play. Community psychology is well placed to have input, given the centrality of the concepts of participation and empowerment, yet little input has been offered or sought. In this paper we argue that community psychology has the principles and practices required to make a valuable contribution to NRM. We give an example of a regional NRM project that was to involve public education and participation. It was less than successful, but can offer insights into how public involvement can be better managed. We argue that many problems have stemmed from the different understandings of what participation involves. We then suggest that a complex, process understanding may help better monitor and manage community participation in NRM.

Keywords: Natural Resource Management, Community Psychology, Ecologically Sustainable Development, Participatory Research and Development, Integrated and Collaborative Research.

The potential contributions of community psychological theory and practice to the management of environmental issues have been slow to be recognised. While a number of community psychologists have addressed natural environmental issues, these have not reflected the considerable possibilities for the discipline. For example, Bachrach and Zautra (1985) looked at coping strategies in the face of environment threats. Rich, Edelstein, Hallman and Wandersman (1995) examined how community participation could be mobilised in dealing with local environmental hazards. Wandersman and Hallman (1993), Hallman and Wandersman (1993), and, Unger, Wandersman and Hallman (1992) examined the basis for community fears of, and coping with, the impact of environmental disasters. Peck (1989) edited a book examining the psychological impacts of hazardous waste disposal. By and large, these approaches have been individualistic in the focus on fears and coping strategies. Others (e.g., Kaplan, 2000; Milbrath, 1995; Oskamp, 2000; Syme & Bishop, 1993; Winter, 2000) have argued for a broad approach to NRM and planning.

In 2004 a special edition of the Journal for Applied Social and Community Psychology was published on community psychology and NRM. However many of the community psychologists and other like-minded people working in NRM tend to publish in environmental journals, rather than community psychology journals. The nature of community psychology's focus on NRM is often limited as it addresses NRM issues individualistically and in isolation from multidisciplinary discourses.

There have been a number of calls for community psychology to recognise the work in other fields where parallel theoretical developments have occurred without mutual recognition or benefit. Shenassa and Earls (2001) lamented the failure of community psychology to address issues and objectives paralleled in public health. Syme and Bishop (1993) pointed to the failure of psychology to address planning issues. While community psychology is ideally placed to benefit from an exchange with these other disciplines, both practically and theoretically, it has largely remained isolated. In this article, we examine the broadening role community psychologists have taken in NRM focusing particularly on Western Australia (W.A.). We further argue that the time is right for a considerable expansion of our involvement in NRM and the social contexts in which it is embedded. Environmental laws and impact assessors have recognised that NRM is a human activity and requires expert input from those trained to deal with people, especially at a community level.

Definitions of Commonly Used Terms

There are a number of commonly used terms in the field of planning and managing environmental issues. NRM involves the management of the impacts of people, both potential and
Community participation has been a central aspect of integrated approaches to NRM research (Aitken, 2001). It has also been a means of community psychologists shaping a niche for the discipline within the 'hard' NRM sciences. The conceptualisations of the nature and function of 'participation' since the emergent recognition of the importance of the social aspects of NRM have been many and varied. Given how ubiquitously the concept 'participation' has moved across disciplines over the past few decades, the variety in conceptualisations is not surprising. Although community psychology may have a role within this setting, we need to understand the broader structures that have influenced these instrumental changes in the approach to NRM.

Community Participation in NRM

There has been a move over the past few decades to the use of regional, collaborative, participatory and integrated approaches to policy and research in many disciplines, including those mentioned previously. The move to participatory approaches in natural resource planning, management and development has been a feature of policy (that is, legislation, funding, and decision making) both nationally and internationally over the last few decades (Allen, 1997, 2001; Allen, Bosch, Gibson, & Jopp, 1998; Altman, 2001; Bellamy, McDonald, Syme, & Butterworth, 1999; Bellamy, Ross, Ewing, & Meppem, 2002; Blahna & Yonts-Shepard, 1999; Buchy & Race, 2001; Commonwealth of Australia, 1992; Connick & Innes, 2003; Finger-Stich & Finger, 2003; Johnson, Cowell, Dew, Loneragan, & Poine, 1999; Moote, McClaran, & Chickerling, 1997; Scrase & Sheate, 2002).

These policy changes have been spurred on at the international level by, for example, the United Nations (UN) Conference on the Human Environment (1972), the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED, 1992), frameworks which emerged out of the UNCED namely Agenda 21 and Local Agenda 21 (Gram-Hansson, 2000), and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO 14000 and 14001). One of the main outcomes of these international frameworks is the increased recognition of the need to include local and indigenous people in development and research, and therefore the use of integrative, collaborative and participatory methodologies. Within an Australian context the flow of response to this has been the development of Australian policy (e.g., AFFA, 1999).

There has been a devolution of responsibility for social, environmental resource (including R&D), and economic management and service delivery from the government to the community level (Herbert-Cheshire, 2000) witnessed internationally and nationally. This devolution, and resultant participation of local stakeholders in resource management, is seen as a way to improve effectiveness of NRM, but also is embedded in the wider context of empowering citizens and lay people to influence goals and direction of development (Ashby, 2003; Blamey, 2001). An example of this was the Ord-Bonaparte Program (OBP), in which local culture and

realised, on the environment (Synapse Consulting, 2000) to achieve ecologically sustainable development (ESD). Research and Development (R&D) "is creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including the knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of that stock of knowledge to devise new applications" (OEDC, 1994, in Synapse Consulting, 2000, p. 1).

ESD is a term that emerged in the 1980s. Sustainability focuses on development that is equitable for both present and future generations (Bridger & Luloff, 1999). In Australia, ESD is defined as "using, conserving and enhancing community's resources so that ecological processes, on which life depends, are maintained, and the total quality of life, now and in the future, can be increased" (Commonwealth of Australia, 1992, para. 2). ESD could be considered to be the modern definition of sustainability as it is not just about environment but of integrating social, ecological, policy and economic agendas (Dovers, n.d.).

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**Putting the 'Social' into NRM**

Social input into NRM has been recognised at the political and planning level. Policy formulation and planning now involves the 'triple bottom line' of economic, environmental and social considerations (e.g., Government of Western Australia, 2004). Community involvement in land care and integrated catchment management has been central in governmental policy processes. Changes to local government acts have required councils to consult with their constituents and this has encouraged public involvement programs, which can involve community psychologists. For example, the Water Corporation (formally the Western Australian Water Authority) had developed a comprehensive public involvement procedure. CSIRO's (Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation) social science unit, the Australian Research Centre for Water in Society (ARCWIS), headed by a community psychologist, was responsible for conducting many public involvement programs (as well as other research and consultancies) for the Water Corporation (e.g., Beckwith & Casella, 1992; Casella, McCredlin, Syme, & Nancarrow, 1994; Nancarrow, Casella, & McCredlin, 1994; Porter, Nancarrow, Syme, & Po, 2002; Porter, Nancarrow, & Syme, 2004). Another example of community psychologists involvement in NRM was the Federal Governments' Regional Forestry Agreement process (RFA). The RFA was an integrated natural resource evaluation of alternative strategies for preserving and managing Australia's old growth forests. Government policy was to preserve approximately 14% of the old growth forest that remained since the British invasion of Australia. Social impact assessment (SIA) was an essential aspect of the RFA. Sheridan Coakes, a community psychologist, developed a SIA methodology to use in the WA RFA process. James Butterworth and Frances Casella, also community psychologists, were employed in the WA RFA process. Geoff Syme and Brian Bishop were involved in a committee overseeing the implementation of the WA RFA SIA.
community aspirations were to be integrated into a large scale NRM project.

**A Case Study: The Ord Bonaparte Program**

The commercial development of northern W.A. regions, particularly natural resource based commercial development, has received much interest over the past few decades (Greiner, 2002). It was seen as essential to learn from the mistakes of the south when undertaking sustainable development in the north of W.A. (Greiner, 2004; Johnson et al., 1999). Natural resource based development in the southern states of Australia, (e.g., Victoria, South Australia, New South Wales), and the south of W.A., have had large scale negative consequences. Development occurred without regulation, and with little scientific data or understanding on which to base development decisions (Greiner, 2004).

The former heads of CSIRO and LWRRDC (Land and Water Resources Research and Development Corporation now known as Land & Water Australia - LWA) recognised the need for informed development of the north. They commissioned a scoping study in partnership with FRDC (Fisheries Research and Development Corporation), and CSIRO departments of Tropical Agriculture, Land and Water, and Marine/Fisheries Divisions to examine the potential for the development of research proposal(s) in tropical Australia aimed at the sustainable development of land, water and marine resources (Johnson et al., 1999). This scoping study highlighted the lack of scientific data and systems approaches to understanding that are necessary for ecologically sustainable development (ESD) across northern Australia, as well as the need to incorporate Indigenous values and rights (Johnson et al.).

Northern Australia is experiencing significant change, with increasing pressure from a variety of land and sea uses in a unique but poorly understood biophysical and socio-economic environment. The pressure to develop is coming mainly from new industries such as irrigated agriculture, tourism and aquaculture. Counterbalancing this pressure is the greater recognition of Aboriginal rights in resource management, requiring research and development agencies to acknowledge and incorporate Indigenous peoples’ perspectives, aspirations and science.

Conservation goals are also increasingly vigorously pursued (Johnson et al., 1999, p. 1).

The Ord-Bonaparte (OB) region in the East Kimberley was chosen as the case study region for an integrated, multi-disciplinary, participatory research program on sustainable natural resource management (Greiner, 2002; Ord Bonaparte Program, n.d.). The program was supported by Commonwealth and W.A. state government, CSIRO, and numerous regional and community based agencies ("Collaborative research agreement for the Ord-Bonaparte Program," 25th October 2000). The research was to be conducted over 5 years, commencing in 2000 and the initial financial commitment to the program from the research funders and providers was anticipated to be in the $30M range (Bellamy, Bishop, & Browne, 2004). Greiner and Johnson (2000) highlighted that

> [The objective of the Ord-Bonaparte Program (OBP) was] to empower the people and institutions in this large, sparsely populated, natural resource rich region to manage their natural resources into the future in a manner that generates economic wealth, addresses issues of inter- and intra-generational equity and guarantees ecological sustainability (p. 9-10).

It was considered important for the OBP to develop strategies and approaches to science and research that complemented, utilised and built upon existing knowledge and resources in the community, particularly in terms of the involvement of Indigenous people in the program (Bellamy et al., 2004; Johnson et al., 1999). In doing so it was hoped that effective tools, processes, methods, structures and strategies could be developed to inform policy, planning and management in the catchment and the region (Bellamy, 2002, p. 2). It was identified that the OBP was to achieve this by

- providing better data and integrated understanding of biophysical, socio-economic, cultural and institutional aspects of natural resource management; integrating across multiple natural resource based industries including agriculture, aquaculture, fishing, grazing, and tourism as well as Indigenous [sic] and non-market uses of the resources;
- combining the capability of all relevant local, regional, state and federal stakeholders; and providing processes that involve a broad community base with specific emphasis on Aboriginal participation (Greiner, 2002, p. 5).

Initially, the OBP offered great promise to the East Kimberley specifically, and to the strategic understandings of NRM and ESD, generally. However, a major impediment to the whole process was a substantial reduction of funding as support for the project waned, especially, at the state agency and state government level (Bellamy, 2001; Bellamy et al., 2004). A project that was designed and sold to the community and scientists with a budget of $30M was reduced to $7 Million at inception (Bellamy et al., 2004). This resulted in the consequential reduction of research projects within each subprogram. Participatory aspects were generally placed as secondary to more "scientific" aspects of the program (except the Aboriginal Subprogram though there is little room to discuss this now). The OBP Board approved specific, fragmented aspects of the original program, and so therefore the integrity of the initial integrated plan was compromised (Bellamy et al.). Although now only a project of $7 million, contrasted to $30 million, the governance structure was not changed and maintained the structure that had been developed for the larger, integrated program. The program did not ‘recover’ from this loss of funds. Community sentiments towards the project were generally cautious over what they thought the OBP could deliver, although they did see the benefit in the general approach that the program (initially) was adopting.
OBP Reflections

An issue that emerged from the evaluation was that there were fundamental differences in worldviews and expectations of the different stakeholder groups, to do with the nature of the 'science' and 'participation' that was to characterise the OBP (Bellamy et al., 2004). For example, the community stakeholders (recognising that this also includes a diverse range of 'groups') generally had an expectation that science through the OBP would provide tangible, on-the-ground outcomes that were relevant to their community, and that they would have greater access to the research process and results. Some sectors of the community (e.g., community agencies, regional groups etc) were 'put out' that they did not have the opportunity to participate in, or have more control over the research process. The research providers had the expectation that the program initiated within the OBP would be innovative. Part of this innovation was to incorporate community, particularly Indigenous (although this was a contentious issue throughout the life of the program with many research and non-research stakeholders), perspectives into the research frameworks.

Our thinking regarding these issues of participation and NRM, and community psychology's role, has been shaped by our involvement in the evaluation project of the Ord Bonaparte Program (Bishop & Browne, 2003; Bellamy, Bishop, & Browne, 2003; Bellamy et al., 2004). The OBP example shows the difficulty that can be encountered when attempting participatory style research, but approaching it from a 'top-down' perspective, that fails to translate into a bottom-up process. To understand the deeper significance of the OBP story, the emergence of participatory perspectives within NRM policy and research will be discussed in the next section.

It has been a slow process in trying to obtain recognition and acceptance of the need to place science and research within a community and social context. However, as previously discussed, the rhetoric of participation has become a familiar concept within scientific research organizations and policy arenas (Atkens, 2001; Moote et al., 1997; Parkes & Panelli, 2001). The issue now becomes how this rhetoric is played out in practice, and for what purpose 'participation' is used (White, 1996).

Understanding Participatory R&D

The Emergence of 'Participation' in Science and Research

With an increasing recognition of the failure of traditional approaches to science to create 'significant' social and environmental change, the importance of the social context of research, science, and 'knowledge' is being recognised (Allen, Kilvington, & Horn, 2002; Johnson & Walker, 2000; McDougall & Braun, 2003; Shulman & Price, 2000; Vancilay, 1995). Researchers and scientists have begun to realise that they "are only one group of stakeholders among many with different values and objectives for the resources in question" (Ashby, 2003, p. 5). Traditional forms of research and science created the impression that 'lay' people were passive recipients and objects of knowledge (Nelson & Wright, 1995). Ideas of participatory research emerged from the recognition of science and research as a human activity and therefore the need for research to view people as active objects and holders of knowledge, with the ability to define themselves, the right to seek new knowledge, and the right to use the knowledge in the way they see best (Nelson & Wright).

As well as recent theoretical developments regarding participatory democracy, civic engagement, civil society and other such governance concepts within NRM (Lane, 2003; Rangan & Lane, 2001), [the new popularity of participation has several origins: recognition of the many development failures originate in attempts to impose standard top-down programmes and projects on diverse local realities where they do not fit or meet needs; concerns for cost-effectiveness, recognising that the more local people do the less capital costs are likely to be; preoccupation with sustainability, and the insight that if local people themselves design a construct they are more likely to meet running costs and undertake maintenance; and ideologically for some development professionals, the belief that it is right that poor people should be empowered and should have more command over their lives (Nelson & Wright, 1995, pp. 30-32).

Concerns With the Use of 'Participation' in NRM R&D

As discussed, the rhetoric of participation is now a familiar concept within both the research and policy arenas into NRM (Parkes & Panelli, 2001). For example, it is very common to use consultation with community and other non-research providers within NRM R&D, and 'sound' consultation and communication with the community is considered to be an essential element of successful participatory processes (Kingma & Beynon, 2000, 2001). However, in terms of Arnein's (1969) ladder of citizen participation, consultation is considered to be a tokenistic participatory gesture, similar to placation and informing (we include information 'sharing' here as well). This is opposed to participatory processes such as partnerships, delegated power and citizen control which are designed to increase degrees of citizen power (Arnein).

Participation is often lead by pragmatic issues e.g., funding etc, rather than being driven by the carefully explored intersection between local and more strategic needs. It may be because of this and because it appears there is little clarity about the different forms of participatory processes, that there is perhaps an unfounded assumption that all participatory processes are beneficial to the community. Our evaluation of the OBP has shown us that (i) different stakeholders hold different views about the nature of participatory research and for what purpose it is to be used, and, (ii) there are potential long- and short-term 'negative' impacts from 'participatory
Processes’ that emerge as a function of the differences in worldview and expectations of process and level of involvement (Bellamy et al., 2004).

**Participation: An ‘End’ or a Tool for Social Change?**

The issue that we are faced with is that now participatory approaches are an accepted concept within NRM, how can we deal with the potential impacts of incorporating such approaches. Initially it is important to develop an understanding of the types of participatory processes that exist, and the ‘outcome’ that these approaches have, particularly in regards to the community. White (1996) described four major types of participation and their characteristics, as displayed in Table 1. Participation in research can be used for all these purposes. Describing participatory research in terms such as functionality versus empowerment has also been discussed by other authors (Vernocy & McDougall, 2003).

The most commonly talked about description is participation for instrumental or transformational purposes (Buchy, Ross, & Proctor, 2000; Nelson & Wright, 1995). This distinguishes participatory research as being either a tool for a specific end (instrumental participation) or a tool for social change (transformative participation) (Buchy & Race, 2001). There are two distinct forms of participation, one as an ideological approach for community development, and the second views participation as a set of guidelines for methods and practices for getting communities and the general public involved (Buchy & Hoverman, 1999). The distinction is essentially between whether participation is considered to be a means to an end or an end in itself (Buchy & Hoverman; Nelson & Wright, 1995). When participation is being used to achieve a specific (possibly non-community directed) end, concerns can be raised regarding the impact of such an approach on communities.

**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types and characteristics of participation</th>
<th>Based on White (1996)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Form</td>
<td>Top-Down Interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominal</td>
<td>Legitimation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>Efficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representative</td>
<td>Sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformative</td>
<td>Empowerment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The importance of the distinction between these approaches can be seen through the following comment:

*This distinction (between participation as a means to an end or an end in itself) has profound implications for the type of participatory process chosen, the resources needed to support the process (in terms of finance and social capital), the expected outcomes and the role of the communities or stakeholder groups. In short, there has been a tendency for communities to come to the process with expectations of change, while the professionals may not have a mandate to foster social change but instead employ the process as a tool for information gathering and dissemination (Buchy & Race, 2001, p. 294).*

This question of participation as a means to an end or an end itself, has been raised as an issue for those involved in natural resource management, such as managers and policy makers (Moore, Jennings, & Tacey, 2001). There are increasing concerns within these groups “that stakeholder involvement and participation are being pursued as endpoints themselves, with more tangible outcomes being neglected” (p. 91). Whether this statement is valid could be contended. There are no references cited to back up their comment, and it would seem important to reflect upon where such a comment would have emerged from, considering the proficiency of debates regarding the definition and nature of outcomes themselves, particularly within the evaluation literature regarding participatory/collaborative approaches to NRM policy and research (e.g., AACM International, 1997; Allen, 1997; Bellamy, McDonald, Syme, & Batterworth, 1999; Chudleigh, 2000; Connick & Innes, 2003; Syme & Nancarrow, 2002). Six years earlier, Nelson and Wright (1995) had concluded, "most of the participatory approaches used...at the moment are 'participation as means' " (p. 17).

Recognizing the possibly outdated nature of the comments it could be considered crucial to conduct a more systematic inquiry as to the nature of the current participatory approaches to NRM policy and research, to establish set criteria by which to evaluate the status of the current approaches and to determine, other than by hearsay, which form of participation characterises the NRM domain. Such an inquiry into the nature of participatory approaches to NRM could be essential to determining future paths and approaches towards research and policy making for the multiple disciplines and stakeholders involved with NRM. This needs to be conducted with an awareness that it is not just the singular use of a participatory approach for all contexts but adopting and adjusting participatory strategies depending on the context. For example, considering the concept of volunteerism in, and level of demand of, participation, there may be times when people and community are happy to be consulted, however, at other times and with other issues they may wish more of a direct involvement. Given that NRM involves multi-actors and multi-stakeholders a large range of approaches needs to be considered. Although a range of approaches has been discussed, the predominate focus has been on consultation.

**Exploring the Links: Participation, Community Psychology and NRM**

**Confusion of Definitions in NRM and Community Psychology**

Community psychology has investigated the issues of participation. Florin and Wandersman (1990) edited a special edition of the American Journal of Community Psychology dealing with aspects of participation. In the previous year,
Seligman and Syme edited an edition of the Journal of Social Issues on environmental management, with a strong participation focus (e.g., Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989, Syme & Eaton, 1989). While there has been a continued interest in participation in other disciplines, such as risk analysis and public policy, it has received less attention in community psychology. In general terms participation can be conceptualised as a means of dealing with civic policy and management, or in terms of the psychological impacts participation has on those involved. The issue of the psychological impacts of participation has been muted by the rise of interest in empowerment, which, although suffering from a lack of definitional clarity (Riger, 1993), is more easily understood and operationalised.

Similarly to the confusion regarding the definitions of participation and empowerment within community psychology, there is a lack of clarity with a number of definitions in NRM research and policy, and a lack of understanding of how these definitions influence practice and theory. These definitions include participatory, integrated and collaborative research, and the notions of sustainability (ESD) itself.

There is little clarity within the NRM domain as to the difference between integrated, participatory and collaborative approaches to research, despite the possibility of some fundamental differences between the approaches. As it would be assumed that the research process and methodologies adopted are dependent upon definition, it is concerning that the definitions are so unclear (Buchy & Race, 2001).

There are also difficulties within planning and policy arenas regarding vague definitions of ‘integrated’ natural resource management (Aslin, Mazur, & Curtis, 2002). This lack of clarity about the differences between these approaches in research exists at an institutional level (McDougall & Braun, 2003), both through the interchangeable uses of the terms at a program or project level (White, 1996), and at an institutional policy level. Clarity is also missing throughout the literature, as words are used fairly interchangeably, and little space is given to the subtle differences between the concepts. This may be due to the difficulty of constantly updating definitions, understandings and approaches, concepts and theories with the changing nature of science and its interaction with society and the environment over time (Probst, Hagmann, Fernandez, & Ashby, 2003). This lack of clarity may also occur because of the number of different disciplines which have incorporated these understandings (Janssen & Goldsworthy, 1996), and the difficulty in finding consistency of definitions between the myriad of disciplines.

**Snorkelling Through Mud: Students Striving for Clarity**

This area is beginning to be explored. Lorrae vanKerkhoff (2002a, b), a social scientist at the Australian National University (ANU), explored the perspectives of those professionals embedded in the structures that control integrated research (universities, governments research institutions, state and federal governments) regarding the nature of integrated NRM and environmental management research, and the implications that these different definitions have for practice.

Alison Browne’s PhD research is exploring the nature of community involvement in NRM, and the immediate and long-term impacts of participatory/integrated/collaborative research on the formal/informal institutional and organisational structures of regional impacts. Implicit within this research is the exploration of the different perspectives/definitions of (research and non-research) stakeholder groups towards the types of participatory (and integrated/collaborative) approaches to research that exist within NRM in Australia.

The different definitions of sustainability and the function of these definitions within the environmental and natural resource field were explored by Peta Dzidic in 2004 as part of her honours project at Curtin University. It has been suggested that there may be some benefit derived from a lack of clarity of definitions as it allows people to explore the topic and the meanings regarding the definition in a way that would not be possible with a static definition (Pezzoli, 1997).

The current authors (Browne, Dzidic) are addressing the lack of clarity of only a few concepts within NRM, namely, (i) participatory, integrated and collaborative approaches, and (ii) sustainability. The conceptual lack of clarity regarding these definitions may exist for many different reasons. One may be, because a lack of clarity over precise definitions enables a fluid definition of concepts that enables a discipline to grow and change as practical and theoretical understandings of the area develop. The nature of NRM, in the natural inclusion of a diverse range of stakeholders and disciplines, itself begets a myriad of different understandings of the same concepts due to the diverse range of frameworks and worldviews. This is not so much a lack of clarity in understanding the concepts, rather an absence of singular definitions of concepts.

However it is described, either as a lack of clarity in concepts or an absence of singular definitions, it may allow for practical and theoretical fluidity of the interpretations of these concepts for individual disciplines. As participation and sustainability are not defined by only one discipline, the meaning of these concepts are explored by the multiple disciplines and stakeholders involved in NRM policy and research. This may have implications for the nature of multi-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder ‘work’ within NRM, as each group undertakes a practice that is consistent with their own interpretation of the concepts, but perhaps may be theoretically or practically inconsistent with other stakeholder interpretations.

For example, participatory and integrated research approaches are characteristic of many disciplines (ranging from non-NRM related community psychology to NRM generally), and each discipline has a different understanding and interpretation of the concepts. The difficulty in working
with this diverse range of interpretations of what participation and integration 'means' is evidenced in the OBP example described earlier. As discussed there were fundamental differences in worldviews and expectations of the different stakeholder groups, to do with the nature of the 'science' and 'participation' that was to characterise the OBP. The differences in definitions of these approaches within each of these disciplines/stakeholder groups, and the constantly changing definitions of these approaches even within a discipline are potential sources of frustration and confusion for those involved in NRM policy and research.

Managing Complexity

These difficulties signal the science of complexity, and a need to adopt new understandings of systems to augment general systems theory (e.g., Berkes et al., 2003; Functowicz & Ravetz, 1990; Gunderson & Holling, 2002). A complex system is characterised by nonlinearity, uncertainty, emergence, scale and self-organisation. From a complex systems approach, 'wicked' problems in NRM are seen to be embedded in systems that are characterised by complexity, fragmentation, and uncertainty, and in which learning, feedback, and adaptation take place through highly linked self-organised networks (e.g., Berkes et al., 2003; Gunderson et al., 1995; Lee, 1993). Scale is important as NRM problems tend to be neither small nor large-scale but cross-scale in both time and space (Folke et al., 1998; Gunderson & Holling, 2002). A systems approach has the potential to identify a wider variety of issues (e.g., social, political, economic, environmental, institutional) and to develop a more robust understanding of NRM processes, particularly how adaptations and change can occur in learning concepts, and emergent properties that come out of these changes.

Science, Policy, Community Intersection

It is accepted within policy areas in Australia to use participatory approaches to better inform policy and policy decisions, and as they recognise the power of the public, participatory approaches are used to placate the public regarding policy decisions (Pena, personal communication, September, 2003). Scientific and research organizations accept the intersection with policy considerations (e.g., Land & Water Australia, 2003). However the benefits that can be derived from recognising and creating intersections of science with local and community considerations is less understood by these organisations (Throgmorton, 1991, 1996, 2000). Research providers are a little bit slower on the uptake of integrated, participatory and collaborative approaches, but have "recently begun to understand the context of complex problem settings, multiple stakeholders, divergent interests and scales of relevance associated with integrated natural resource planning and management activities" (Johnson & Walker, 2000, p. 82).

The issue of why policy areas have so effectively embraced the notions of participation, especially creating opportunities for, and maintaining, dialogue with the community, while scientists have traditionally had difficulty incorporating participation and collaboration with both community and policy, is an important one to raise. Learnings from participation in the policy arena may be transferable but we cannot assume that they are as we are dealing with a diverse cluster of science domains that have different understandings about what participation is, and different community groups who feel they have a right to be involved in this 'participatory aspect' to the research program. The agricultural extension approach is drawn upon in NRM which strongly focuses on practice rather than 'practice-theory' (e.g., Murray, 2000; van der Fliert, 2003). However, a 'theory-practice' model generally drives current approaches to participation within NRM. This is because these approaches view participation as a set of guidelines for methods and practices for getting communities and the general public involved (Buchy & Hoverman, 1999).

Undertaking participation based on this 'theory-practice' model potentially has wide ranging impacts for the communities involved in these participatory approaches. In adopting theory-praxis models to participation there is consideration for the needs of the 'powerful' rather than a mutual consideration of (i) the practicalities of getting communities involved, (ii) the potential impacts of these participatory approaches, and (iii) communities needs who are involved in these participatory approaches.

Developing Models: Practice-Theory-Practice

A practice-theory-practice model is needed to address these three aspects of community involvement in NRM. The example of the OBP, the substantial increase in the number of papers within community psychology to do with NRM (particularly the whole journal edition that was dedicated to NRM), common frameworks of participation, empowerment and systems theories within community psychology and NRM, and evidence of potential impacts from participatory approaches being adopted without much thought to the impacts on communities, are indications that community psychology has a 'natural' place within NRM. Community psychology, particularly those traditions emerging from South Africa, South America, and Australia (e.g., at CSIRO, Victoria University, Curtin University, Edith Cowan University), emphasise practice and the development and application of theory, placing them in a perfect position to create a change to a different model of approaching participation within NRM. This is because these approaches encourage 'learning' from action. They also tend to adopt different conceptual and methodological frameworks, which actually may be more conducive for exploring the 'social' in NRM issues.

Community psychology could benefit from incorporating issues of NRM as the nature of the NRM field is such that it potentially allows a reflexivity in practice and theory which constantly adjusts to the increasing understanding of the complexity of the relationships within and between the sciences, society and environment (e.g., see Probst, Hagmann,
NRM does not just offer a new issue to look at through the same lens, but actually means adopting a different set of methodological, theoretical and philosophical lenses. By incorporating NRM issues into community psychology (and vice versa) it will require us to more systematically (but reflexively) address the range of scales required to look at these issues (ranging from the individual, to the community, to the regional, to the national/international policy levels e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 1979). It will also force us to look at the relevance of current community psychology principles to peoples' everyday lives, and to other disciplines, and may encourage us to change and develop our theories in such a way that addresses more pressing concepts of the intertwined values of social, community and environmental equity and health (Brueckner & Horwitz, 2003).

Adopting NRM within community psychology is not just about incorporating a new issue within the already existing frameworks, theories and value systems within community psychology. It signals a new era and potential development of the discipline. In particular it could create (i) an opportunity to adopt new frameworks and perspectives on ways of working; (ii) a way for community psychology to become increasingly relevant to society in terms of the nature of practice and; (iii) lastly, provides an opportunity to develop theories that are reflective, reflexive and sensitive to the issues that are relevant within communities. Given our environmental context within Australia, and the increasing attention that environmental issues are receiving for example in regards to water resource management (e.g., salinity, water quality, ecosystem diversity and biodiversity issues surrounding the Murray Darling Basin; Heartlands Core Group, 2000), it seems ironic that our discipline is not more seriously looking at environmental health issues and how this impacts on the communities that we are working with.

The social and political forces that have created the push towards the current rhetoric of participation and sustainability in NRM R&D and policy, are reflected in communities, as communities ‘demand their right’ to participate in different ways with the research and policy that influences their lives (Bellamy et al., 2004). Given that the concepts of environmental and human health are intrinsically intertwined (Brueckner & Hortwitz, 2003), we would be unwise as a discipline if we do not see, and act upon, the importance of environmental health to our praxis and theory, and the potential significance of our role in facilitating this change to ESD.

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The Social and Psychological Impacts of Mobile Phone Usage

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In recent years mobile phones have become an integral part of the way people communicate with each other. This change in the way we communicate is due in part to a broader societal change in nature of our communities and the way we relate to one another. The aim of this research was to explore the social and psychological impact of mobile phone usage. It was conducted in two parts. The first scoping phase involved a grounded theory approach, involving two focus groups and an archival search of the main Perth newspaper, The West Australian. The second part involved 15 semi-structured based on the themes resulting from the scoping phase. The data were analysed using thematic analysis. The scoping phase highlighted a number of themes; the role of media in reporting of events and how these events were represented in mobile advertising; safety and security; accessibility; and power and control. A thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews resulted in themes of accessibility and immediacy of contact, physical and emotional dependence and new social values. Overriding all themes was a sense of ambivalence about the paradoxical nature of mobile usage. The results from this study are discussed in relation to the psychological and social meanings of the increased mobile phone usage. The impacts of these findings are explored further in relation to the changing nature of relationships and the importance of mobiles to our contemporary lifestyles.

Key words: Mobile phone usage, Social change

Mobile phone usage in recent years has become integrated into the daily lives of a large proportion of people from a variety of age groups, backgrounds and occupations. In 2000, Australia had one of the highest mobile penetration rates in the world (Chea & Utting, 2000), with 86 percent ownership currently (Telstra, personal communication, June 1, 2003). This high percentage is indicative of the important role mobiles play in people's lives, covering a broad spectrum of communication opportunities (Mathews, 2004). These include long-distance communication, integration with other mediums such as the internet, remote working and working from home, safety and security and immediate access to other people (Arnold & Klugman, 2003; Green, 2002). Social interaction is becoming more and more dependent on technological devices, as the nature of the communities and the way we relate to one another also changes.

The Changing Nature of Communities

The dominant structure of social relationships in the Western world is currently in a transitional period, and the needs of individuals are becoming integrated with the needs of the community (Newbrough, 1992). Problems of this social period include chaos, confusion and uncertainty, as individuals negotiate rapid change and the loss of fixed identities. This period is an integration of the Gesellschaft ("the many") and Gemeinschaft ("the one") community structures, with an emphasis on 'the one and the many.' In the Gesellschaft, individual needs take precedence over the needs of the community, and social problems include fragmentation and alienation as a result of a lack of social supports. In contrast, the Gemeinschaft social structure is based on the needs of the collective. While social belonging is emphasised, the basic problem of the Gemeinschaft lies in its overlooking of individual capacities (Newbrough, 1992).

The transitional period is the 'third position', and mobile usage may be representative of an attempt for society to move towards this position. Mobiles enhance both individuality and connection to others. The fragmentation of communities, as human mobility increases, may be partially responsible for high mobile penetration rates, as the re-establishment of connections is sought through the use of these tools. Paradoxically, while mobiles emphasise accessibility, there is the risk that they also create further distance between individuals. Ease of accessibility requires less demand for face-to-face contact, especially if Short Message Service (SMS) is the primary mode of communication. Relationships may then become more reliant on mobiles to sustain them, creating barriers to movement towards the 'third position.'

The personalisation aspects of mobiles are also individualistic in the sense that functional devices like caller identification and different ring tones for different callers, while increasing choices may be isolating for some people. The associated power and control it gives people may seek to disconnect them from others, as social saturation results in only partial identity formation (Gergen, 1991). The need for connectedness with others also brings with it frustration and fear about the boundary crossing, increased surveillance and lack of privacy aspects of mobiles (Green, 2002). While encouraging both independence and interconnectedness, mobiles may also be responsible for creating barriers between people, as trust is transferred from other people to communication tools; interconnectedness, safety and security may be traded off against reduced privacy. Green conceptualises technological mediums like the Internet and mobile phones as contributing to the fragmentation and commodification of society, and
describes the individual experience in contemporary communities as dynamic and disjointed. The role of mobiles in this individual experience is that as community membership is largely created through conversation, it is conversation in its many different forms that is increasingly becoming mediated by technological devices.

Social Impact of Mobile Phone Usage
Mobiles play an extremely important role in Australian society, and as protective devices to help counteract safety and security issues, they are also relied upon for connection (Mathews, 2004). These objects give people the means to express themselves in everyday social interactions and also impact on their identification with their social worlds (Brown, 2002; Pels, Hetherington, & Vandenbergh, 2002). Mobiles have an identity-sustaining role, providing a physical presence that promotes the values and activities of the culture (Pels et al.), as well as providing important information about issues of social status and identification (Dant, 1999, as cited in Edensor, 2002).

On the other hand, Hage (2003) describes Australia's present cultural climate as an ideologically legitimate culture of worrying, which is at the expense of both personal and collective wellbeing. He refers to this as a state of paranoid nationalism and describes it as, "This nationalism...the breeding of an endemic nervousness, where people are trained in the art of vigilance...and what this means is much restlessness, but no promise of tranquillity." (p. 30) Characterised by insecurity, avoidance, and paranoid nationalism does not allow people to release their defences, resulting in a loss of stability and detachment from social reality. The role of mobile phone technology in this context needs to be explored.

Research on Mobile Phone Usage
Past research has evaluated technical aspects of mobile usage, but has not examined its impacts on individuals within their social systems in relation to broader social and technological change. Researchers have reflected however, on the need for non-technical aspects (Aoki & Downes, 2003; Brown, 2002). Past endeavours include consumer satisfaction (Grant, 2002), mobile penetration rates (Arnold & Klugman, 2003) and consumer reasons for purchase and their current usage patterns (Aoki & Downes; Grant; Mathews, 2004). Differing views on the appropriateness or inappropriateness of mobiles in public space and the impacts of the merging of public and private space as a result of mobile usage have also been investigated (Bailey, 2000; Gant & Keisler, 2001; Green, 2002).

Individual use of technological devices has been found to reflect predominant social values and practices, as well as future aspirations (Brown, 2002; Gigliotti, 1999). Interpersonal communication patterns are becoming increasingly dependent upon mobiles, which are representative of increased accessibility and decreased privacy. They are also depicted as devices of safety and security, providing practical benefits and incentives for continued usage. Problems that may arise concerning mobiles include the violation of personal space, and social saturation resulting from multiple relationships allowing only the partial expression of self (Gergen, 1991; Green, 2002).

Gergen (1991) refers to devices like mobiles as contributing to the loss of moments in which to ponder and meander. He believes these technologies help to shape identity in the postmodern world, which is lacking stability due to increased investment in a multiplicity of partial relationships. Mobiles are representative of increased connection to others, however the accessibility created has the potential for social saturation and only partial identity formation.

Aims and Objectives
The aim of this research is to determine the impacts of mobiles on relationships from a social and psychological perspective. The short-term and long-term effects of mobile usage will be examined from a consideration of the broader, macro-levels of analysis. Single loop and double loop learning processes (Argyris & Schön, 1974), reflection on action (Schön, 1983) and the development of critical awareness about dominant social structures (Freire, 1972) will be utilised.

Method
The investigation of the social and psychological impacts associated with mobile phone usage was conducted in two parts. The first scoping phase involved a grounded theory approach in which the investigators' approached the issue with open minds and no hypotheses. This part involved two focus groups and an archival search of the main Perth newspaper, the West Australian (1993 to 2003). This initial phase guided the conduct of the interviews of the second part.

Part One—Focus groups and archival research
Focus groups
Focus groups are interviews based on the description and understanding of an issue from the perspective of the participants. They are useful tools in exploratory research where the researcher seeks to gain a preliminary understanding of a little known social phenomenon (Rice & Ezzy, 2000). A reported strength of focus groups is their ability to mobilise participants, in responding to and commenting on the contributions of others and the meanings that are constructed through joint discussion.

Another strength is the provision of a more natural setting than the individual interview, which therefore yields higher ecological validity (Creswell, 1998). In this research, focus groups were held as part of a multi-method approach to obtaining data on mobile usage. They provided important information about initial reasons for ownership, usage patterns and the effects of mobiles on relationships. This procedure also helped to narrow the focus of research.

Participants were aged between 18 and 25 years, and were all full-time university students or full-time employees. Informed
Archival research

Archival research is an unobtrusive research method used to supplement other, more interactive methods (Kellehear, 1993). It is advantageous in that it often provides a source of data collection that is politically infeasible to collect by direct means (Rice & Ezzy, 2000). Archival methods for this study were based on thematic analyses of The West Australian newspapers between the years of 1993 and 2003.

The West Australian provides accessibility to factors such as the media reporting of important social events, the allocation of resources to various sectors of society at different time periods and trends in marketing. Over the ten-year period, the research focused on the correspondence between trends in mobile marketing and trends in media reporting of social issues. Data were thematically analysed, and important themes were combined with the major themes of the focus group analyses.

Newspaper editions were randomly allocated for analysis between 1993 and 2000, and three newspapers per year were sampled. Between 2001 and 2003, five newspapers per year were sampled. This increase was due to the increase in mobile penetration rates post 2000 (Chea & Utting, 2000) and the need to obtain links between the reporting of social and technological issues post September 11, 2001 (9/11), and the nature of mobile phone marketing during this time period. To gain insight into funding issues and changes in perceptions of social needs, federal budget editions were the specific focus of analyses during these years. The use of historical data as representative of important events and social transitions helped to give divergent perspectives of the social phenomenon. It also provided techniques of analysis at the macro-levels, which were based on inductive, rational research methods. Historical research based on The West Australian newspaper was deemed appropriate because it is the state's only major newspaper and covers a broad spectrum of society in its readership.

Integration of findings - focus groups and archival data

The findings of focus groups and archival research were combined and then used as a guide for the direction and scope of the study. Strauss and Corbin (1990) emphasise both process and change in exploratory research. The continuously evolving nature of experience and the active role people play in shaping their social worlds are given primary importance.

Archival research and participant reporting of changing mobile usage patterns exemplified this. Participant responses were considered within the broader social systems in which they were embedded. Social and technological change issues at state, national and international levels provided the framework for considering responses and changes over time in participant perceptions of reality. This reflected the influence of the media in how concepts were reported by participants.

Part Two - Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are based on a set of general predetermined themes and topics, and the establishment of open-ended questions arising from these. Denzin (1989) emphasises that constructed questions should be phrased and ordered in the manner by which they fit into the respondents approach to the interview. Interviews are both exploratory and open, however the construction of a list of themes to be covered is helpful. This enables the interviewer to concentrate on the interactional process that is taking place (Rice & Ezzy, 2000).

The process and construction of themes for the 15 semi-structured interviews were based on the themes of focus groups and archival research. Interviews were conducted over a period of two weeks and took place in three separate locations. These locations were the Curtin University Bentley campus, the interviewer's home or the participant's home. Each interview lasted for 30 minutes, and sessions were tape-recorded and transcribed, then analysed thematically.

Interview respondents were all female, with a mean age of 22.4 years. This age range was deemed appropriate because results of focus groups emphasised the transitional nature of this time period. Greater independence and responsibility were associated with receiving mobiles for security and accessibility to others. It was also important to gain some understanding from individuals who were able to reflect on earlier periods of their lives when mobiles were not featured in their relationships or general lifestyle patterns. Verbal informed consent was obtained from each participant.

The decision to interview only female respondents was reached after thematic analyses of the scope of research revealed vastly different mobile usage patterns between males and females. This finding is consistent with an Australian (Mathews, 2004) and UK (Elidrige & Grinter, 2001) studies in which teenage females were found to use mobile phones significantly more often than males. This was particularly evident during transitional phases of experience, both in participant's lives and in mobile marketing and media portrayal of social issues. The complexity of considering the perspectives of both males and females was beyond the scope of this study, as time constraints prevented an adequate representation of male and female usage patterns in relation to broader social issues.

Participants were approached through snowball (chain) sampling, and consisted of full-time university students and full-time employees. Verbal informed consent was sought, which was considered appropriate due to the nature of the
research. Namely, that the outcomes could not be predicted in advance because they were dependent on the responses given by participants. The seeking of written consent may also have led to erroneous participant expectations. Participants were informed that although verbal consent implied participation for the duration of interviews, they were free to withdraw from interviews at any stage without affecting their rights or the rights and responsibilities of the researcher.

**Results**

This research was exploratory, and involved theory generation through the construction of a formal framework in which to understand the phenomenon under investigation, in exploratory research, data collection and analysis occur simultaneously, as each process guides the other. During both the scoping phase and interview phase, major themes were identified, and responses congruent with these themes were coded and subjected to comparison with other responses. For the interviews, in particular, earlier participant responses produced extensions of existing interview questions. The richness of data was dependent on the contributions of participants, which increased as the issues emerging from prior participants were elaborated on.

The first process of data analysis was open coding, where comparisons between actions, events and interactions were made (Rice & Ezzy, 2000). Conceptual labels were applied to these, as social processes were exposed and deemed representative of this phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Patterns and themes were identified, which were then subjected to more rigorous specification procedures. This axial coding procedure involved the seeking of connections between categories, as data were broken down and reconceptualised. Categories were then subjected to selective coding, where central themes were identified. These core categories provided the theoretical basis of integration for mobile usage.

**Overview of Themes - Focus Groups and Archival Research**

The task of the scoping phase of research was to track the changing mobile usage patterns of individuals and how this was reflective of significant social changes and strategies of advertising. The age group of participants (18-25) allowed the transitional stages in both advertising and lifestyle to be reflected through mobiles. The transition from school to university or full-time employment, turning 18, and obtaining a driver's license coincided with the purchase of mobiles. Initially for safety purposes and then becoming tools of social contact, the perception of mobiles as essential devices for staying in touch was also reflected in advertising, reflected in the quotes, "Now, you can be seen as well as heard" and "Out of sight, not out of touch."

These represented assumptions about the existing social networks of university students and the desire of students to maintain networks based on less face-to-face interaction. These assumptions were based on individual needs for accessibility. Participants were concerned that staying in touch became more difficult once they became more independent, concerns also shared by parents. They also found that mobiles reflected their busy lifestyles and were useful tools for staying in touch with people they would otherwise lose contact with. Jane says, "I might message four different people in a day, and if I didn't have a mobile phone and messaging didn't exist then I probably wouldn't have spoken to those four people anyway."

Advertising themes reflected the integration process of mobiles, in their transition from tools available only to a limited sector of society to tools enabling frequent social contacts. From targeting potential mobile customers, strategies over time have been redirected towards existing mobile phone owners. More recently, as the features of mobiles have come to represent greater diversity of lifestyle, advertising campaigns have incorporated this aspect element. Illustrated by the following examples, "The World in your hand" and "Stay one step ahead with pocket news alerts," mobile features increasingly tie in to lifestyle elements. This may have been due to the wider integration of mobiles into society over the ten-year time period examined.

This preliminary research provided a focus for both the direction and scope of the study. Interview questions were based on the issues covered by focus group participants, as well as how these issues related to social change. Of particular importance was the role of media reporting of events and how these events were represented in mobile advertising. The themes of safety and security, accessibility and power and control were integrated into individual interviews and the scope of relevant literature.

**Overview of Themes - Individual Interviews**

A thematic analysis of the fifteen interviews resulted in themes of accessibility and immediacy of contact, physical and emotional dependence and new social values. Overriding all themes was a sense of ambivalence about the paradoxical nature of mobile usage, as the benefits were always balanced by costs. All participants with the exception of one person owned a mobile at the time of interviewing (she had destroyed it after the break-up of a relationship), and like focus group participants, initially got them in response to perceived safety needs.

Some participants did not originally intend on becoming mobile owners, and made comments such as "I said I'd never have a phone and now I've got one," "I used to be so anti-phone," and "I didn't see them as being necessary...that's changed a bit" to describe this. There was reluctance initially, but pressure from parents and other family members, societal pressures, and encouragement from friends, partners and workplaces made it difficult for participants to feel they could remain social without a mobile phone. As social acceptance of mobiles became more widespread, people regarded them as more necessary than before, and found that being without one was no longer an option.
Participants were reflective about their initial usage patterns and changes to these over time. Increased contact with others or the opportunity for this was viewed as beneficial, particularly SMSs. SMS was utilised a lot more than phone calls, due to its lower cost and perceived speed and efficiency. These frequent contacts were also recognised as superficial in many ways, and open to misinterpretation and ambiguity. This was due in part to SMS not being capable of conveying a broad enough range of human emotions. For example, Chelsea (21-year-old student) states "you can't hug someone through a SMS and you can't get your true feelings across in a SMS."

Participants were also ambivalent about their own dependence on their mobiles and feelings of attachment towards them, especially when faced with the prospect of not having them. This dependence involved both a physical and emotional component, particularly in how text messaging provided participants with ways of conveying their emotions in a non-confrontational manner. The lifestyles led by participants meant that staying in touch with friends and acquaintances was a priority, regardless of the length, type and quality of communication they had. Non-confrontational aspects of mobiles allowed them frequent contact without the fears and uncertainties that talking and face-to-face communication produced. Increased accessibility was conducive to the busy, independent lifestyles of participants. Providing immediate accessibility to others and in turn being able to access others easily was an important theme in participant responses.

Immediacy of contact and accessibility
Mobile phones were conducive to participants' independent lifestyles, and as a result of their continuously changing schedules provided a sense of stability and continuity. They were also perceived as empowering devices, as Marie (23-year-old student) illustrates in her comment "I can contact people when I feel like it, when I want to, when I need to, rather than when my schedule allows and for me that's a good thing." Paradoxically, mobiles also contributed to frustration and irritation (words used frequently by participants) in the sense that easy access to others was costly in terms of privacy and the ability to carry out tasks and activities free of interruptions. Participants also recognised ease of contact often resulting in a compromise in actual quality of contact.

The impact that immediacy of contact had on participants' relationships was that it often produced a sense of complacency and laziness. With the option of calling or SMS always available, there was now less of a need to make the effort to visit people. Participants were concerned that this ease of access to others had a negative impact on their relationships, as it often compromised the quality of their communication. Easy of phone access was felt to replace communal social activity in public places and homes.

Social conditions may have altered to the extent that, for some participants it was essential to own a mobile to be a fully participating member of society. For example, Renae (21-year old student) states, "I think for people who don't have mobiles there's a definite 'oh you don't fit in' type thing but if you do have a mobile then you are fitting in." New social norms mean it has become less acceptable for people to be away from home with no means of contact with others.

On a practical level, the major changes mobiles produced in participants' lives was the reduced need to plan for social meetings, they had more flexibility to make last minute changes to plans, and they could make spontaneous decisions and have the tool to act on these. In terms of relationships with boyfriends or partners, participants thought that being able to send them text messages at any time to let them know they were thinking of them in a positive way. This also had its drawbacks, as messages were often seen as redundant and unnecessary. Calls or messages of this kind seemed to be more of a reassurance mechanism for the caller rather than as a way of passing on important information. Mobiles also allowed participants the freedom of warning others if they were running late, which also had its drawbacks in that participants could then become more complacent in time keeping.

The concept of time was a common feature of participant responses, as most used their mobiles as alarm clocks and/or watches. Participants also thought mobiles had a major impact on their ability to save time, decreasing the need for planning in advance and allowing the opportunity for last minute cancellations, letting others know they were running late and passing on quick pieces of information without the need for lengthy conversations.

Participants recognised that in the initial stage of relationships, mobiles made it a lot easier to initiate communication, as Mathews (2004) also found. They made comments like "less confronting," "it takes the fear out of that sort of thing" and "you can say things you wouldn't ordinarily say on the phone" to describe the contribution SMS made to new relationships. Feelings of insecurity, uncertainty and the fear of rejection were overcome because they no longer had to be fearful of others reactions to them. Renae, for example, described the mobile phone as the key to her relationship with her boyfriend. Without this device she could not see it as being possible, as they lived in different states and could only communicate in this way.

Other participants with partners working away or travelling, found that mobiles bridged the distance gap by allowing a more frequent exchange of thoughts. This frequent exchange of thoughts also extended to friendship circles. Amelia says "You can SMS them every day and you know, sort of update each other more often than you could without the phone." This style of contact, in frequent and short bursts reflected the pattern of interpersonal exchange given by most participants.

The theme of immediacy of contact and accessibility was associated with frustration and irritation as well as convenience and efficiency. Participants described their frustration and irritation when others were not immediately available to them. This seemed to tie in to the way time was experienced by participants and the difficulties they had in fitting everything in,
including their social lives. If they were not able to contact somebody at a particular time in agreement with their
schedules, this created problems. An implication of
convenience was that it discouraged thinking and reflection
time about whether it was actually appropriate at that
particular moment to contact the other person. As a
mechanism of reassurance, mobiles played an important role
in allowing participants the flexibility of contacting others when
the need arose. Mobiles also reassured participants through
their functions as watches, alarm clocks and items of necessity
and convenience that accompanied them wherever they went.

Physical and emotional dependence
Participants were both physically and emotionally reassured by
the presence of a mobile in their lives. Katie (22-year old
student) exemplifies this when she says “If you don’t feel it,
have it with you, you sort of feel a bit nak... not naked but it’s
like your purse and your keys. It’s like a package, the mobile
comes too.” Despite most participants initially getting mobile’s
for physical safety purposes, they rarely used them in this way
and instead used them for staying in touch with friends and
family members.

The emotional security that mobiles provided was an important
aspect of participants relationships. The prospect of not being
accessible to others was disconcerting and characterised by
unease and uncertainty. Experiencing time periods without a
mobile allowed some participants to recognise their physical
and emotional dependence on their phones. As mobiles had
become such an important part of their daily routines, it was
difficult for participants to imagine life without them.
Participants felt a sense of loss and a sense of ‘what if?’
during these times, as though a vital element of their lives was
missing. Their phones practical benefits as watches and alarm
clocks were also greatly missed.

New social values
Participants recognised that social values and rules of conduct
had changed dramatically as a result of widespread mobile
usage. Discussion was based on what they perceived to be
inappropriate mobile behaviour. This included overhearing
private conversations or being exposed to others conversations
without their knowledge, being interrupted during face-to-face
meetings and being interrupted by phones in public places.
Participants found having a lack of choice in what they heard
when other people conducted private conversations in public
space both frustrating and disempowering. Comments
included, “I hate not having the choice about what I hear,
because you can hear things that you don’t want to hear... you
wouldn’t hear these things normally because they would be in
private” and “I wish there was some universal mobile phone
etiquette courses that you could send people to who really
annoy you.”

New social values about what was expected in terms of
accessibility to others seemed to have made it difficult for
people without mobiles to be as accepted socially as those
with mobiles. Participants acknowledged that they often
automatically expected others to be mobile users. Amelia
states, “80 percent of people expect you to have a phone and
they’re like ‘what, you don’t have a mobile?’ Like even I do it,
I’m disgusted at myself.” This expectation was related to
pressure from others to conform to the way of life owning a
mobile engendered, which was related to Renae’s comments
about “not fitting in” if you didn’t have one.

Participants also made assumptions about the reasons people
chose not to have mobiles. The common themes in responses
were that it was for financial or protest reasons against the
dominant social norms that people chose this option. People
were also described using adjectives like strong, independent,
frustrating, and rebellious. Louisa says, “I can understand why
some people opt not to have them... for financial reasons or
protest reasons.”

Participants also described SMS as a less authentic form than
face-to-face communication in many ways. Louisa says, “I
think it obviously is a lesser form of communication” and
Cassandra says of one of her friends, “Everything with her
revolves around the phone. And revolves around these
superficial contacts.” On the whole however, most participants
believed SMS to be such an efficient and cheap method of
short information exchange that at the surface level the
benefits seemed to outweigh the costs. Beyond the practical
benefits was a desire for more contact, with the ambiguity of
SMS resulting in the absence of important social cues like
facial expression, tone and body posture. Participants found
this frustrating but could not see any way around it due to the
changed nature of their relationships and their busy lifestyles.

Overarching Themes
Most of the benefits participants recognised in mobiles were
balanced by costs, particularly those resulting in less of an effort
being made socially with friends now they were so accessible to
them. All participants thought mobiles were unnecessary for
children, although the way younger people were perceived to
use them was similar to how participants used them.

Participants recognised that the emotional reassurance mobiles
provided was often more important than the prospect of physical
safety, and there was an element of security in keeping a mobile
just in case the need arose to use it.

Participants thought that being accessible to others was
important and that the social connections mobiles provided
were essential in maintaining relationships. Mobiles seemed to
have become compulsory communication devices in the social
sense. Amelia says of the future, “Everyone’s going to have to
have one except it’s going to become almost
like... compulsory. If you don’t have you’re going to be at a
huge disadvantage.” As a university student, she compared not
owning a mobile to not owning a computer. Participants also
brought up the idea of mobile phone ownership creating
further divisions in society between the rich and the poor, as it
was becoming less socially acceptable not to own one.
Participants recognised that there were dangers associated with mobile usage, especially when SMS was used above talking to others or face-to-face communication. They also recognised that in many ways they had become both physically and emotionally attached to their phones. Participants were ambivalent about the ease of communication mobiles allowed, feeling as though in some cases phones made things too easy. This was particularly the case when describing new relationships with people. Casey describes her experience of beginning a relationship without mobile phones as, “I felt like it was really good because we would just speak to each other and it felt really real when we were getting together.”

Participants thought mobiles allowed people to be more confronting in a less confronting manner (through text) which would influence their ability to communicate honestly and directly in face-to-face encounters. Some participants thought that the immediacy mobiles allowed seemed detracted from their ability to think about things before they communicated them to others.

The perceived value of face-to-face communication but the continual use of SMS and brief mobile calls appeared reflective of the ambivalence in which participants viewed mobiles as impacting on their lives. This was most evident in comments about being without their mobiles, where participants were able to recognise the influence it had on their daily lives. They were also able to recognise the emotional impact this had, especially if they were missing out on possible emotional connections they would ordinarily have. An acceptance of these communication downfalls, particularly the ambiguity of text communication, relates to the way in which mobile users have shaped their social lives around a tool which was initially a safety precaution, but which quickly became a concrete part of their social worlds.

Discussion
The results from this study are discussed in relation the psychological and social meanings of the increased mobile phone usage, and are further explored in terms of the changing nature of relationships and the importance of mobiles to our contemporary lifestyles.

Psychological Meaning of Increased Mobile Usage
At present, the majority of the Australian population are mobile users (Mathews, 2004). The research began with an exploration of individual perspectives of the changed nature of their experiences since mobiles became important communication devices. Participants considered mobiles essential in maintaining their connections in a rapidly changing social context of sophisticated technology, increased expectations and increased choices. This resulted in less available time to fulfil requirements, mobiles provided practical solutions to these dilemmas. Being able to incorporate the social, academic, work and family facets of experience through mobiles was advantageous, and in maintaining frequent but brief contact participants maintained connections while adjusting to the increased commitments they were faced with.

As devices capable of producing feelings of dependence and attachment, mobiles had an important role in the provision of emotional security. Physical security, although a socially acceptable reason for ownership, was generally masked by the major role of mobiles in maintaining participants emotional connections. Emotional insecurities should therefore be considered within a social context in which missing social engagements or important educational or work opportunities due to the absence of mobiles is a major concern.

The dominant worldviews and cultural ideologies of participants promoted beliefs about mobiles that prevented them from being severely disadvantaged in the social, occupational and educational spheres. As a result, mobiles enhanced their micro-level structures of family and interpersonal support networks. These two relationships are reciprocal, as social and cultural ideologies influence individual values and beliefs. Mobiles are therefore operating at the interface of both levels of experience.

Social Meaning of Increased Mobile Usage
The meanings associated with mobile usage are both complex and diverse. Mobiles are continuously developing, and their uses becoming increasingly implicated in all facets of experience. Participants reflected on the increasing social expectation that staying in touch with people could only be achieved through mobiles, which fitted into the rapid social adaptation process in which instantaneous communication had become a necessary element of an increasingly stressful and demanding society. The assumption that non-mobile users were rebelling against these dominant social norms reflected an attitude of reciprocal influence between social norms and individual values and beliefs. The physical divisions created by mobiles allowed different perspectives about relationships to emerge by different sectors of society.

The Changing Nature of Relationships - Quality or Quantify?
The presence or absence of mobiles in relationships is indicative of a new context for communication. Mobiles provide increased communication opportunities, which may not necessarily result in increased social support in an atomised society. The question of whether additional contact is representative of better quality contact is implicated in societal and individual beliefs and expectations about relationships.

The increased choices available to people in terms of responding to calls and messages provide opportunities for an increased number of social contacts in a wide variety of forms. With more social stimulation available to people than ever before, there is an expectation that this is both desirable and beneficial. Participants did not always experience this as beneficial though, and increased accessibility equated to frustration and annoyance in many cases. The benefits of immediacy of accessibility were also balanced by the costs of a decrease in talking communication and less need for contact based on physical presence.
The importance of physical presence in relationships is characteristic of traditional, place based communities. In the absence of this, the quality of communication can only be judged within the confines (context) of the social structure in which it occurs. Mobile usage exists in a context of rapidly changing social structures, and exists as a fixed point of contact for individuals who are continually in motion, providing both stability and continuity. The contemporary settings for communities are therefore individuals themselves, and as channels of communication increase it is no longer practically necessary for physical presence to play an essential role. Mobiles have provided communication opportunities based on spontaneity, immediacy, and the overcoming of problems of physical distance, however have not provided adequate solutions to human communication needs based on face-to-face contact.

Gergen's (1991) conceptualisation of the postmodern self as socially saturated by communications technologies clarifies the need for rapid and spontaneous communication. This also indicates that less reflection on action occurs, because there is little time for contemplation concerning what is communicated and whether it is necessary. Participants relationships were impacted on by the ease in which they were able to express their thoughts and feelings, and in new relationships mobiles had become a solution to the former uncertainty and fear of rejection that previously characterised the beginning stages.

In situations of strong emotional relevance, mobiles seemed to have replaced the self as the instrument of communication. As a less confrontational method, they provided more opportunities for communication, resulting in the most convenient, efficient and fast methods to be preferred above other forms. For participants, SMS was an important component of relationships, resulting in less talking and in some cases less face-to-face contact. Social themes of increased expectations and rapid change therefore provide a context that is not conducive to reflection on action.

The Importance of Mobiles in Contemporary Life

Mobiles were found to be tools enhancing individuality as well as social belonging, however SMS related usage lacked reciprocity of exchange, which is important for confirmation of presence. Verbal and face-to-face interactions provide this essential component of emotional security, but the increased choices available through text-based interactions do not encourage reciprocity. The wider range of options means recipients of exchanges are not obligated to confirm the presence of the other, resulting in many one-sided SMS exchanges. From a marketing perspective, the ease and efficiency of SMS discourages other forms of relating, a viewpoint shared by participants. Emotional security is therefore not granted through the presence of others, but is provided by mobiles themselves. The dominant social structure is increasingly accommodating towards mobile usage, and participants reported on the creation of divisions between mobile and non-mobile users. Participants perceived those without mobiles as rebelling against dominant social norms, which is reflective of pervasive social definitions of discordance, particularly relevant in the post 9/11 social structure. The nature of the immediacy of responses to this event produced high levels of public dissatisfaction, manifesting in regular protest action and civil disobedience. The implementation of stricter border protection and other defensive measures for safety and security exacerbated these divisions. Mobile penetration rates increased significantly in this time period, as mobiles came to represent individual tools of power and control.

The current social climate of rapid change and uncertainty has been addressed through the process of single loop learning. The increasing divisions between social policy makers and the general public, and the corresponding divisions between mobile and non-mobile users reflects an absence of critical awareness. Social support networks that are not dependent on fixed locations or physical presence are provided by mobiles, which also promote accessibility, convenience and efficiency. This provides reassurance of safety and security, but in turn produces social uncertainty and fear, which is characteristic of the isolating functions of border protection policies.

Conclusions

This research generated knowledge about the meanings, usage patterns and relationship and lifestyle changes resulting from mobile usage within the context of rapid social and technological change. The dominant social structures and changing patterns of social support systems in the contemporary world supported individual mobile usage, as themes of safety, security, accessibility, physical and emotional dependence, power and control and changed social values emerged. The period of social history following the events of 9/11 relate to many aspects of the changed social values of contemporary Australia, and the interconnectedness of people, their tools of communication and their social systems were emphasised by research findings.

Individual transitions and broader social transitions were reciprocally related, and mobile usage was found to be both connecting and isolating. As this became more pervasive it was construed as increasingly important in the maintenance of relationships, the workplace, family life, education and general patterns of daily life. Ambivalence, contradiction and uncertainty represented the intimate connection of mobile usage within its context. Mobiles provided necessary contact for people experiencing increased independence, while simultaneously contributing to social isolation. Mobiles enhanced individuality, independence and power and control, however also encouraged dependence, attachment and emotional insecurity.

The richness of knowledge gained from individual and group perspectives allowed a social phenomenon to emerge as a
continually changing, evolving entity, masking the slower, less visible processes underlying the human desire for face-to-face contact. Interpersonal communication as the thread of relationships, ideas, the pursuit of knowledge and the development of critical awareness was affected by mobile usage. The surface level changes to relationships were reflective of the uncertainty and confusion characterising contemporary society. These impacts are potentially damaging to individuals, their relationships and society because in the absence of reflection on action, quality of life may be compromised. In a social context of rapid change and uncertainty, this adaptation process has the capacity to provide short-term solutions only, to problems of long-term importance.

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Creating whanaungatanga: Kaupapa Maori support in the Psychology Department at the University of Waikato

Bridgette Masters*, Michelle Levy, Keri Thompson, Aana Donnelly and Casey Rawiri

Attendance at university has been recognised by some as a competitive environment that does not cater for a co-operative philosophy followed by many Maori. Within the Psychology Department at the University of Waikato there have been efforts since the Department’s early days to place emphasis on the Maori cultural experience, but there were few Maori students and no Maori staff back then. Now, in 2004, the Department has a team of Maori staff and courses with Maori content at both undergraduate and graduate levels. Yet the environment that the students move in is still competitive. Grades are based on individual assessments through undergraduate level. At graduate level the emphasis on group dynamics comes to the fore. The availability and accessibility of Maori staff at different levels in a Kaupapa Maori Programme provides one of the strategies of support for Maori students at Waikato. This paper discusses the issues around managing, delivering and providing opportunities so that Maori students studying psychology feel supported for the duration of their time at Waikato University.

Keywords: Maori, psychology, support mechanisms, community.

Context
This paper is a collaborative piece with contributions from Maori teaching staff, tutors and students in the Psychology Department at the University of Waikato. The reflective writing throughout the later sections of the paper is sourced from the different perspectives. As a result the reader may note multiple personalities; these are intended.

Introduction
Research on ways to bridge the gap between Maori and Pakeha, not only in education but society as a whole, has identified 3 central issues: the need for Maori input, the centrality of Maori in doing their own research, and the role of non-Maori working alongside Maori in Maori controlled contexts (Benton, 1979; Douglas, 1979; Hirsh, 1990; Reddy, 1992; Te Puni Kokiri, 1993). Douglas (1979) found that Maori have a vast store of under-utilized ability and the benefits received from gaining better formal education could reap untold benefits of society. While the identification of issues towards supporting Maori students is not new, the education system has a history of limited Maori input (see Alderfer, 1994; Calabrese, 1990; Durie, 1995a) and was noted for its demand of cultural surrender for Maori students (Durie, 1995b; Walker, 1990).

Within the field of psychology the exclusion of Maori content and perspectives in its training courses has been well documented (Abbot & Durie, 1987; Brady, 1992; Glover & Robertson, 1997; Levy, 2002, Masters, 1997; Masters & Levy, 1995; National Standing Committee on Bicultural Issues, 1995; Nikora, 1998; Older, 1978; Paewai, 1997; Stewart, 1993). As a consequence of the exclusion of relativity to the context of Maori students, there are few Maori participation rates at both graduate and undergraduate level of study. Other constraints such as family expectations, financial, academic support and social support networks within the chosen discipline were relevant (Masters, 1997; Nikora, Levy, Henry, & Whangapirita, 2002). This was supported by Nikora (1998) who identified that for some Maori students, psychological training was a harsh environment because undertaking western psychological training meant that they faced a risk of rejection from their own whanau, hapu, and iwi as being too white or a "Pakeha psychologist" (Lawson Te Aho, 1994).

During the mid 1980s Maori communities were becoming more vocal with their unhappiness at whanau members returning with such Pakeha models and frameworks for managing processes (Te Awekotuku, 1991). In conjunction with the community stance, a shortage of Maori psychologists was noted (by Lawson-Te Aho 1994 & Nikora 1998). The efforts of communities to reclaim their own reality, the development of Maori philosophies, frameworks and approaches to the discipline had an impact on Maori participation in different ways (Watene-Haydon, Keefe-Ormsby, Reid, & Robson, no date).

The number of Maori students continuing on to graduate study meant that the previously identified absence of role models, mentors, teachers and psychology practitioners was less salient because Maori students were now able to see career options in psychology simply because there was another Maori person in the field who could articulate the relationship of psychology to their family situation.

Unfortunately nationwide the steady increase in Maori student numbers in psychology was not mirrored in the number of staff or the structure of course content. Course conveners expected Maori students to follow the model they had always used. As a result when Maori staff joined the Psychology Department at the University of Waikato they became a vehicle for implementing the desired change for students. An example of how this has occurred is demonstrated in the development of a Kaupapa Maori Tutorial Programme (which is discussed later in the paper).

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1 A Glossary of terms has been provided at the conclusion of this paper.
University of Waikato

First established in 1964, the University now employs approximately 1,000 academic staff and 1,200 general staff who teach and support more than 13,000 students annually. The Psychology Department at the University of Waikato is well known for having made significant progress in relation to furthering Maori focused agendas, in terms of teaching, research and support for Maori students. Reflective of this, the Department has a long history of supporting Maori students. In 1989 the Department made the first Maori academic appointment to a Psychology Department, which was followed in the 1990s with the introduction of the Kaupapa Maori (KM) support and tutorial programme. Currently the Department has three Maori teaching staff, one full-time Kaupapa Maori Student Advisor, an undergraduate tutorial support programme and the Maori and Psychology Research Unit (MPRU), staffed by a full-time convener.

Relevant Department Policies

The University Charter, a high level strategic policy document, provides those focused on Maori workforce development within psychology with a platform from which to validly operate, and a foundation in which to embed our Kaupapa Maori support programme and associated activities. The University Charter highlights the commitment the University places on partnerships with Maori; namely commitment recognised within the Treaty of Waitangi to kaupapa and tikanga Maori on the campus environment and amongst the University community. In particular, the University recognises the value of Maori students and staff and the significance of their contributions to the University (University of Waikato, 2004).

Building on the direction of the Charter, there are two key Psychology Department policy documents which are used to facilitate our aims for Maori development within the Department. Firstly the Psychology Department Strategic Plan which includes as goals:

- Provide an environment that serves the educational needs of the Maori community, in both the Waikato region and nationally
- Create a reputation as the Department of choice for Maori students (undergraduate and graduate) throughout the country
- Objectives to achieve focus on maintaining emphasis on Kaupapa Maori in Department, and on the recruitment and retention of Maori students and staff

The second key policy document focuses specifically on our expectations for Kaupapa Maori in the Psychology Department. This policy includes a focus on:

- Recruitment and retention of Maori students
- Course content
- Research activities

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- Kaupapa Maori Tutorial Programme
- Kaupapa Maori Management Committee
- Maori and Psychology Research Unit

The purpose of the policy is to clearly indicate that Kaupapa Maori is an integral part of the day to day business of the Department. Reflective of this is a statement within the policy which recognizes psychology as a platform for Maori development and that the policy aims to encourage and support Maori students to reach their potential in their chosen specialty. Within the KM policy is an acknowledgement of the diverse approaches needed to contribute to active participation of Maori (students, staff and researchers) at the University and within the Psychology Department. In addition, the Kaupapa Maori policy aims to provide all psychology students with Maori and bicultural perspectives in psychology. Clearly noted within the policy are Maori staff positions and the Kaupapa Maori Student Advisor role within the Department.

To achieve these aims the policy includes a focus on monitoring the recruitment and retention rates of Maori students and on monitoring grades and addressing any issues which may arise. It is the expectation that courses will be regularly reviewed by course conveners to ensure that the educational needs of Maori students are being met and that bicultural perspectives are being incorporated within courses.

With respect to research, it is expected that all staff will ensure that staff and student research meet the Responsiveness to Maori section in the Psychology Department Ethical Review Forms. The Department also undertakes to support staff and students in developing an awareness and understandings of those requirements.

The policy clearly states that the Kaupapa Maori Tutorial Programme is recognized as a normal part of Department activity, with the minimum requirements being the availability of Kaupapa Maori tutorials in core psychology papers. Reflections on this programme are provided later in the paper and so will not be discussed in any depth here.

There is a Kaupapa Maori Management Committee which oversees Department development and further develops support mechanisms. The implementation of the policy has brought about an awareness of issues pertaining to Maori and more importantly, denotes collective responsibility. It is the collective responsibility of all staff (monitored by the Department Chair) to contribute. While Maori staff are often the active contributors, it is clearly documented that all psychology staff are responsible for creating and supporting such an environment. As such Maori staff are often the ones who deliver questions that remind staff of their accountability requirements. Rather than have individual (and sometimes junior) Maori staff approach more senior academics, a designated person manages such matters and does so with the confidence that they represent the views of the Maori staff.

2 Rather than enter into a lengthy description of the Unit here, readers are directed to the Unit's website: http://psychology.waikato.ac.nz/mpru/
All Maori staff in the Department are members of the Kaupapa Maori Management Committee (KMMC). This official forum maintains the KM systems and ensures that the collective responsibilities are upheld.

In recognition of the policy focus on monitoring student process, the KMMC implemented a Monitoring Project that involved phone calls to a selection of first year students. This project helped emphasise the help available to students and gave an opportunity to talk one-on-one with someone who could advise them where to go for help. Within the monitoring project direct help was offered by way of telephone conversations at key times (for example, before assessments or tests were due). During the conversation, if it was identified that further help was needed, referrals to on campus services (such as counseling, tutors, course conveners etc) were given. Many found that they appreciated this form of support and discovered later their studies that such support is very rare at university.

**Barriers to Maori Participation in Psychology**

To support Maori students to reach their potential in their chosen area of psychology it is important that we understand the barriers which may impact on their ability to enter the field of psychology. In the first instance, a number of barriers to Maori participation in tertiary education have been identified. These include isolation and lack of support: financial barriers; external commitments; transition and adaptation to unfamiliar environment; racism and discrimination; unwelcoming educational environments; and a shortage of Maori as teachers and academic role models (Nikora, Levy, Henry & Whangapirita, 2002).

In addition to these general barriers to tertiary education, Levy (2002) has also identified barriers which are specific to psychology. The dominant barrier to Maori participation in psychology is the environment in which Maori students and psychologists are required to participate. It is an environment which is dominated by paradigms, frameworks and models which are perceived to be of little relevance to the realities of Maori in Aotearoa today. It is also an environment where there is limited Maori participation in the training of psychologists, resulting in isolation and a lack of role models and mentors for potential Maori psychologists. The environment is also characterized by a lack of commitment to Maori focused agendas in psychology (Levy, 2002; Parsonson, 1993; Stanley, 1993).

How then to do we address these barriers? Levy (2002) identifies that the primary way to remove these barriers is through the creation of environments in which Maori wish to participate. Such environments would be characterised by the presence of other Maori students, psychologists and staff; there would be meaningful participation and active valuing of the contributions made by Maori psychologists; competency to work with Maori would be viewed as part of best practice; there would be the provision of opportunities to contribute to the development of Maori focused psychologies and the environment would include the provision of effective support for Maori students and psychologists (Levy, 2002).

**What does our Maori student population look like?**

Our role as staff within the Department is then is to work towards the creation of an environment in which Maori wish to participate, both as students and as staff. One of the means by which to do this is to be more familiar with the student population with whom we are working. Some general trends we have identified are discussed below.

Our analyses clearly indicate that different types of support are required for subsequent levels of study. For example, we have identified that at 100 level (First year courses) Maori students are tending to lack engagement with the support mechanisms available. The result of this is that we need to be thinking about the specific type of support necessary for first year students. Support mechanisms at this level need to be more focused on negotiating course requirements, the university system and creating a whanau environment. Our analyses show that as course levels increase, pass rates increase and fail/incompletion rates decrease (see Ashwell, Nikora, & Levy, 2003). This suggests that as familiarity and competence with the University environment increases so too do pass rates, with a corresponding decrease in fail and incompleation rates. Support mechanisms therefore need to be aligned with these findings.

Across all levels the majority of the fail grades for Maori students are recorded as incomplete (IC) grades, as opposed to fail grades. This means that students are opting out of courses by failing to complete required pieces of assessment, as opposed to actually failing the assessment tasks themselves. Often, an IC grade can be avoided by advising students of potential solutions should they find themselves in a situation where they have not completed a required piece of assessment. In addition to pass and fail rates, we are also interested in the grades Maori students are achieving. Whilst we are achieving high pass rates, the average grade is B-/B. This has implications for entry into graduate study or the professional programmes. We need to be thinking about how a focus on increasing grade averages can be included into the support provided.

There also appears to be a retention issue between first and second year study, with Maori enrolments tending to decrease primarily between first and second year, and numbers remaining relatively stable from second to third year. In order to manage the diverse needs of our Maori students, one of our Maori staff members holds one half of a full-time employment position. Her title is the Kaupapa Maori Student Advisor.

**Kaupapa Maori Student Advisor**
The Kaupapa Maori Student Advisor (KMSA) is a link between the student, tutors and staff. Some students are intimidated at the thought of discussing issues with staff, and so can
approach their tutor who can then liaise with the KMSA who is a recognized staff member.

The KMSA position is a full-time position that has been filled, of late, by two part-time staff. At present, there is only one person employed under this title. The role and responsibilities of a KMSA go beyond recruitment and retention of Maori psychology students. It includes the responsibility of being part of each Maori student’s educational journey. Hence the preference is for the smooth journey for both parties. Creating a warm and inviting space is paramount to the job. Therefore all spaces have a functional use. The KMSA utilise their door as a space to advertise upcoming events and inform students about resources available such as APA reference guides. The bright and vibrant look of the door within the Department helps students identify the office in a building where the doors look largely the same.

Involved in the recruitment and retention of Maori undergraduate and graduate students, the KMSA helps enact our goal of increasing Maori student participation and retention in psychology.

Recruitment

Maori staff and the KMSA are part of the ongoing recruitment of Maori undergraduate and graduate students by doing presentations on the diversity of psychology as a career for Maori and promoting the Maori support avenues available for students within the Psychology Department.

We have successfully organised and completed a haerenga to Wellington, with a group of Maori undergraduate and graduate psychology students, to attend the Annual New Zealand Psychological Society Conference. The aim of this haerenga was to encourage students to continue studying and explore the range of fields within the discipline of psychology. The underlying assumption of this exposure was to aid the student’s decision to continue with further graduate training in psychology. During the haerenga it was envisaged that students would be exposed to:

- a range of psychologists and their different roles,
- practitioner psychologists thus increasing networking opportunities,
- a noho marae experience, which fosters a sense of belonging within the group of students and to psychology.

A form of recruitment (with the added bonus of retention on to graduate study) we are implementing at the moment is to present profiles that highlight the diverse interests of Maori graduates and their intended professional direction. A profile of our students and their areas of studies are posted on a notice board. On the board we acknowledge their achievements as students and give them an opportunity to share their words of wisdom to anyone willing to learn from their experience.

Retention

Retention of Maori students involves the monitoring of student grades and progress. Coordination and communication is a skill that is necessary for a KMSA. Building rapport and trust with course conveners is essential so that if any issues arise for Maori students they can be dealt with quickly and effectively. Study and test preparation sessions are available for the first and second year courses with study groups encouraged at third year level.

Identifying and addressing student needs is a major part of the role, whether it means connecting students to the necessary support or providing kanohi ki te kanohi. Opportunity to meet with the KMSA is provided within specific student consultation hours where students are helped in a one-to-one session with issues such as career planning, specific course work, tutoring and scholarship information.

The role of a KMSA intertwines with many other Maori support systems throughout the campus. Two examples of these are Te Puna Tautoko and Te Aka Matua. University wide, Te Puna Tautoko is a student support system for all Maori taurā enrolled at this institution. In addition, because the Psychology Department is situated within the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) we link into that support system. At the Faculty level is a support avenue named Te Aka Matua. They provide support across the different Departments; such as History, Anthropology, Geography, and Linguistics. Te Aka Matua aims to provide a comprehensive and coordinated support service to tauira Maori. This allows KMSA and psychology students to be part of the events that Te Aka Matua organize (like study wānanga, or whanaungatanga activities). Being part of this support structure means that the kaiawhina can refer students to other Departments with the understanding that the students are being referred to knowledgeable and culturally safe support people.

Electronic Avenues of Support

Internationally and nationally, electronic support is becoming an instantaneous and common way of staying in contact with each other. As such, another way in which we maintain contact with our students is via electronic avenues for example, email and web-based learning (ClassForum). Many psychology courses have an electronic component to them. Thus the benefits of maintaining contacts via these mechanisms are twofold; tauira become accustomed to using the technology, and can develop their confidence to access staff support.

KMSA have established different electronic avenues of support. Such avenues involve:

- **Maori Psychology Online** - this website is an extension of the online information sources currently offered by the Department to students. The focus of this website is on

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3 Staff generally have office hours when they a appointment. This can be intimidating for those who think such a meeting might draw unwanted attention to them and invite the need for a conversation. By accessing email or ClassForum students can prepare their question and wait for a response without having to present themselves physically to staff.

4 These are still 'works in progress' that are undergoing construction and development on an ongoing basis.
informing Maori students of upcoming events.

- **Maori Psychology Support Network** - this interactive learning tool is based in ClassForum (webased interaction). The Network facilitates academic study through discussion, posting messages, and informing students about hui, wānanga, and any other events.

- **The Maori Psychologists Email List** - Available via email list, this list keeps current and former students as well as Maori psychology professionals up to date with current events and other important information on/around campus.

While technology is changing all the time and the way in which information is being disseminated to our students is also evolving, we recognize that some students prefer to engage in the age-old face to face manner. Therefore, the ways we access Maori students and provide support are diverse and provide an essential part of our ongoing support processes.

### Kaupapa Maori Tutorial Programme

The Kaupapa Maori Tutorial Programme (KMTP) is part of the normal way in which the Psychology Department provides support for Maori students. Referred to as KM tutorials, this support system is available for first and second year psychology papers as a space for Maori students to critique, question, challenge and learn course work in an environment that is safe and tailored to their needs. The KM tutorials are facilitated as “face to face” sessions that are structured specifically alongside course content. Prior to the commencement of the tutorial series, course conveners are expected to explain the nature of KM tutorials in an open lecture to all students.

While the KMSA is employed to provide support for Maori students, a key part of that role includes ensuring that the KMTP runs smoothly. Effective communication between course conveners and KM tutors is central to that process. As a consequence, the recruitment of KM tutors involves knowing and trusting the tutors that work with our students. As such the KMSA is involved in the selection of KM Tutors who will work in the KMTP.

The selection process of a KM Tutor involves an additional step in the standard tutor selection process. Once the course convener has received applications, they will then work in collaboration with the KMSA to select tutors that will support the KM processes that occur within the KM tutorials. Potential tutors are chosen firstly on the basis of good grades as a reflection of their understanding of course material. However, when selecting KM tutors it is imperative to consider qualities that go beyond academic attributes. An ideal tutor displays aroha and manaakitanga to others and understands that their role is kaitiaki of the knowledge that they are to pass on. It is our roles as teachers, tutors and kaitiaki to support our Maori students so that we produce practitioners that are knowledgeable and competent in their fields of choice. But rather than provide an overview of the attributes here, a reflective piece has been included by one of the KM tutors.

### Reflection from the perspective of a KM Tutor

Deciding to become a KM tutor in the first place was a decision based on my own positive private experiences and wanting to reciprocate that back to my students. I noticed that coming from Gisborne, a small town on the East Coast, there were not many other students from my school that were going on to tertiary education. It was with this in mind that I wanted to make sure that I created an atmosphere that was suitable and comfortable for Maori students at first year level who were in an unfamiliar environment. Being Maori myself, I wanted to encourage students to stay at university and show them where they can get to if they carry on past first year level (which is where many Maori students tend to drop out).

As a KM tutor I wanted to introduce myself to my students in a way that let them know more about me than just my name. Allowing students and tutors to introduce themselves using their own whakapapa and in Te Reo Maori helps create a whanau environment. All aspects of the tutorials are undertaken using tikanga Maori practices. Maori beliefs are held in high regard with appropriate protocol being respected by both tutors and students. Through my own experience of KM tutorials I found three students in my tutorial were affiliated to my iwi. This created a personal bond for us.

Another major part of KM tutorials is that we encourage students to participate in group discussions and group work. The work and assessments covered are exactly the same as that covered in general tutorials but the establishment of personal bonds helps learning and follows a Maori philosophy of learning through co-operation. Group work helps students develop relationships with fellows in the tutorials and encourages them to open up when discussing course work.

As KM students and tutors it is important for us to have a good support network. As tutors we have this with our course conveners and the KMSA who helps with all student issues. She monitors our students test results, their progress with assessments, and also follows up with any students who may need extra help.

The Psychology Department has made available a space for KM tutors to do their mahi, such as preparing for their tutorials and marking assignments. This room is for the use of both tutors and students and we very often get students coming in...
just for a chat or to discuss any queries they have about their course work. I have found it useful to have somewhere quiet to study with access to a phone, computer and other learning resources. Having the room situated close to the KMSAs and other psychology staff is an added bonus. The room provides a place for tutors to meet and support each other. Such interactions amongst the tutors may not have otherwise happened if a space was not available for us to use in this way.

**Reflections from the perspective of two Maori students**

Support available for Maori students is promoted through Psychology course lecturers and noted in course outlines. A major aspect of this support is Kaupapa Maori tutorials. The main focus of the tutorials is to provide support for Maori students new to the university system. At our first Psychology lecture we were introduced to the KMSA and the value of KM tutorials. It was through this process that we (as Maori students) were inspired to attend our first KM tutorial.

Some of the differences we found when attending KM tutorials in comparison to the general tutorials were that the introductions and whakawhanaungatanga were a lot more personal. They allowed us to make links between whanau and iwi. For instance in our first encounter with a KM tutorial we were asked to introduce ourselves and it was through this process that we found out we had affiliations with our tutor, who was also from the same region and shared the same whakapapa.

Another important aspect that we noticed about KM tutorials was the way they try to make everyone feel comfortable as some students are whakamā. When we first met our KM tutor it was a really comfortable experience. She did not create a hierarchical relationship. Instead she communicated with us on an equal level as she was a student herself. This allowed us to feel a lot more comfortable with our environment. Creating that feeling of belonging is the whole idea behind the KM tutorials.

One example of the additional supports we encountered as tauira were the drop-in sessions at the KMSA office. The drop-in sessions were allocated hours where the student advisor was available for consultation in her room. ClassForum allowed us to contact fellow students electronically and also allowed them to contact us. An important part of the support we encountered as students was the study wānanga. These were study sessions that were set up by the KMSA, where we all met in a designated room and spent a couple of hours going over course material and studying for any up-coming tests (not to mention eating lots of toffee pops!). These sessions made studying fun and were somewhere we could go if we had any queries. Both the KM tutorials and study wānanga created bonds and networks at first year level that have been carried through to third year. People we went to for help in our first year are still there for us now as third year and graduate students.

**Conclusion**

There are many support mechanisms operating within the Department that are led by Maori staff. Some mechanisms are clearly visible to the students, such as the Kaupapa Maori Tutorial Programme, and others not so visible (the Kaupapa Maori policy & Kaupapa Maori Management Committee). No matter what level of support being implemented there are common factors that can provide lessons to other institutions intending to deliver a support programme that recognises its indigenous population. While there is no claim that the University of Waikato provides a perfect form of support, we offer these words as a reflection of the lessons learned.

Approaches that we found to facilitate the creation of a sense of community amongst our Maori students include (but are not exclusive to): ownership and accountability at the Department level; creation of an environment that supports their cultural values while delivering required coursework; having a team of staff who are seen as mentors; knowing the population that you are dealing with; and, providing a space for meaningful interaction.

By providing an environment that offers a support base that is embedded in policy, it ensures that all staff within the Department are accountable, have ownership and therefore contribute to the delivery of support. This strategy ensures that the provision of such support is not personnel dependent. If staff leave, or new staff enter the Department, the same level of accountability is expected at all times from everyone.

Creating an environment that supports the cultural values of indigenous students while delivering the required coursework helps students see the relevance of their training to their lives outside of academic training. In this instance, creating such a space has opened opportunities for relationships between students and amongst staff that go beyond the classroom. In addition, when students recognise their cultural norms are equally important and relevant in their training, they do not feel as though they need to surrender their cultural values to achieve a tertiary level education.

Visibility of, and access to, a team of staff from the same ethnic group facilitates a 'magnet' approach. Students (in this instance, Maori) are drawn to staff that communicate academic training that correlates with their cultural experiences. Having access to a number of staff (both senior and junior) makes mentors visible to students and creates opportunities for apprenticeships. Such relationships encourage retention and can facilitate an interest in developing further models from one's own cultural perspective. This creates a synergy towards the development of indigenous models and frameworks. Such models can be negotiated with 'whanau' thus eliminating the sense that Maori are returning to their communities as "Pakeha psychologists". Maori students in the Psychology Department at the University of Waikato have been vocal when communicating their
expectations and needs as students. Often these students are the catalysts for change. Support systems are tailored to meet their needs and as such knowing the population that you are dealing with is important. For us it is a matter of listening to their ideas, understanding of the issues, observing the statistics (i.e. pass and fail rates) and making adjustments accordingly.

The provision of space for Maori students to engage with their study creates an environment where debates can be held, agreements forged and new learning shared. Whereas in the past system students may have felt alone in their journey towards higher learning, within this programme the opportunity to meet with fellow students and share their feelings reduces the feeling of isolation within their psychology training. Where there is space and opportunity for Maori students to engage in discussions with peers and mentors as they acquire knowledge and experience it has become clear that they gain confidence in themselves and feel an allegiance to their chosen field. The development of meaningful relationships that begin within courses and continue beyond academic study is evident as this programme has continued for several years.

**Glossary of terms**

Note: Maori words can have different meanings depending on the context that they are being used in. The definitions/clarifications listed here are given as explanations for the context that the words were used within this paper only and cannot be assumed to generalise to all contexts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maori Term</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aotearoa</td>
<td>New Zealand, or “Land of the long white cloud”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aroha</td>
<td>Affection, compassion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hakinakina</td>
<td>Sporting events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hangi</td>
<td>Process of cooking food in an earth oven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>haerenga</td>
<td>To take a trip, journey or to travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iwi</td>
<td>Tribal affiliation group (extended family)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kaiawhina</td>
<td>Helper, mentor or support person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kaitaki</td>
<td>Caretaker, custodian or guardian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kanohi ki te kanohi</td>
<td>Literally translates as &quot;face-to-face&quot; or in person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaupapa Maori</td>
<td>Maori philosophical base, or world view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mahi</td>
<td>Job, tasks, responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manaakitanga</td>
<td>The act of taking care of people(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maori</td>
<td>Indigenous people of New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noho marae</td>
<td>Communal sleeping at a meeting house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakeha</td>
<td>People of predominantly European descent who reside in New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tauira</td>
<td>Students or learners</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maori Term</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tikanga Maori</td>
<td>Processes that the indigenous people follow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Te Aka Matua</td>
<td>Name of a support group at Faculty of Arts &amp; Social Sciences at the University of Waikato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Te Puna Tautoko</td>
<td>Name of the support group available to all Maori students enrolled at the University of Waikato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Te Reo Maori</td>
<td>The language of the indigenous people of NZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treaty of Waitangi</td>
<td>An internationally recognized document between Maori and the British Crown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wānanga</td>
<td>Place of learning (eg. study group)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whakamā</td>
<td>To be shy or embarrassed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whakapapa</td>
<td>Family genealogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whakawhanaungatanga</td>
<td>Act of developing familial relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whanau</td>
<td>Family relative (immediate or extended)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whanaungatanga</td>
<td>Process of familial relationship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Acknowledgements**

We would like to take this opportunity to thank those staff and students who have contributed to the development of a support structure that provides for meaningful participation of Maori students in the Psychology Department at the University of Waikato.

**References**


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Negotiating a sense of community through research practice: Transitions from student to professional life

Darrin Hodgetts*, Keri Thompson, Sally Ridley, Carmen O'Meeghan, Laura Whangapirita and Mary Hira

The transition to professional life is often difficult for first generation graduates from marginalised communities. Such transitions can be facilitated through the development of communities of practice within which students are mentored and provide mutual support. This paper draws on work conducted during a postgraduate research practicum in which we used a reflexive focus group methodology in order to foster such a community of practice. Specifically, a class project involving students as both researchers and participants explored complexities surrounding communal life and our ongoing involvement within multiple communities. The analysis revealed a shared sense of marginalisation and the need to cultivate a stronger sense of belonging, support and legitimacy for students within our professional community. This analysis has wider ramifications in demonstrating the importance of critical reflexivity for enhancing the ability of emerging community psychologists to understand contextual influences on professional practice.

Keywords: Community, graduate, research, reflexivity

The term community emerged in sociology with reference to idealised rural centres in which people were linked through kinship and common beliefs (Bess, Fisher, Sonn, & Bishop, 2002). This original vision of community was later transformed into the concept of local community, which denoted group membership within a particular territorial area (Colombo, Mosso, & De Piccoli, 2001). Today psychologists refer to both locational and relational communities (Bess, et al., 2002). Locational communities comprise groups of people who share a sense of belonging to a certain territory or neighbourhood. Relational communities comprise groups who come together to participate in a particular activity such as work or sport. Recourse to both forms of community has been used to maintain a focus within psychology beyond the individual to social structures and institutions shaping our collective lives. At a time when psychology focuses more intensely on individuals we must preserve such a focus on our experiences of interconnectivity, interdependence and participation (cf., Hodgetts, Bolam, & Stephens, 2005; Marks, 2002; Prilleltensky, 2001). After all, the very thing that makes us human is our ability to commune with others.

Within Community Psychology considerable effort has been devoted to the measurement of core elements of community and their impact on various aspects of social life. These include levels of volunteerism, group membership, personal influence, needs fulfillment, shared emotional connectedness, and cohabitation (Sonn, Bishop, & Drew, 1999). These variables have been used to predict and monitor a range of social psychological phenomenon from crime and violence to social support and adjustment (cf., Cantillon, 2003). However, peoples’ experiences of community are more complex, dynamic and elusive than is indicated by findings from the use of existing measurement techniques (Bess et al., 2002; Colombo et al., 2001). The over reliance on quantification and the reduction of sense of community (SOC) to its constituent parts has not revealed the “inner workings” of our interconnectedness or communal existence in contemporary society. Rather, it has simply fragmented collective experience and stripped it of the very context that gives it meaning (Sonn et al., 1999). As Cantillon (2003) writes “Through our focus on measurement and related issues, we are getting further and further away from what sense of community is and what it means to people” (p. 30).

Our experiences of community are often situation dependent and necessitate the use of contextually orientated qualitative approaches. For instance, narrative theory and research techniques are particularly useful for investigating the processes by which groups of people negotiate commonality, organise themselves, maintain social relationships, and take communal action (Rappaport, 2000). We can learn about community by exploring stories of belonging, mattering to others, sharing, togetherness, cooperation, support, reciprocity, and inclusion (Dokechi, Newbrough, & O’Gorman, 2001; McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Zeldin & Topitzes, 2002). This is important because a SOC is associated with positive experiences of safety, trust, reduced disparities in morbidity and mortality, heightened cooperation, and collective action in support of social justice (Hodgetts, Masters, & Robertson, 2004; Zani, Cicognani, & Albanesi, 2001; Zeldon & Topitzes, 2002).

Community psychologists have enriched our understanding of both the positive and negative aspects of collective life. Such knowledge has been used in various attempts to lessen the negative impacts of inequitable power relations and social fragmentation, and to even the playing field upon which social life is conducted (cf., Colombo et al., 1991; Dokecki et al., 2001). However, by pre-selecting and defining the boundaries of specific communities in isolation from other communities to which many of our clients belong we have not been as effective as we could be in achieving our aims of social change and justice (Prilleltensky, 2001). After all, the interrelated social, work, geographical, and familial based communities to which people belong are not experienced as isolated or distinct
facets of life. As a result, there is growing awareness of the need to explore the resources people can draw upon, and the competing demands they face, across multiple communities (Bess et al., 2003; Brodsky, Lommis, & Marx, 2002). Such a focus is particularly important when attempting to understand the efforts of people from marginalised communities to infiltrate universities and professional bodies (cf., Fay & Tokarczyk, 1993; Johnson & Robinson, 1999; Jones, 2003).

This paper contributes to this agenda by exploring how a group of emerging practitioners from marginalised backgrounds collectively negotiate access to Community Psychology. This undertaking is particularly important for community psychologists because we need to be aware of our own implicit definitions and experiences of community before conducting research and trying to support the collective aspirations of other marginalised groups (cf, Prilleltensky, 2001; Rappaport, 2000). Such awareness can assist us in understanding the complexities of contemporary life across community settings and enable us to envision new and more equitable ways of promoting social justice.

Methodology

This section outlines the reflexive methodology employed to investigate our own enculturation as community psychologists. The project was a collaboration between emergent researchers and an already active community researcher, and was undertaken as part of a research practicum course. The class selected the research topic, designed an appropriate methodology, and conducted the project. Assessment was conducted on a group pass fail basis, the major product being the writing of this paper.

Material produced from reading exercises allowed us to narrow the research focus and formed the basis for the introduction to this article. The class also read work on the philosophy of social science and the link between epistemological, theoretical, and methodological dimensions of research (cf, Crotty, 1998; Holiday, 2002). A constructionist epistemology, a social interactionist theoretical stance, and a reflexive methodology were selected. This paper is based on an interpretive approach to social science (Newman, 2000) often associated with critical psychology (Prilleltensky, 2001) because we wanted to understand social practice from the perspective of the social actors who participated in the research.

We adopted a reflexive strategy based on the work of Bolam, Gleeson, and Murphy (2003), which allowed us to experience being both researchers and participants in the project. Briefly, Bolam and colleagues designed an interview schedule to elicit talk regarding health and lifestyle. As part of the study Bolam was placed in the position of the participant and interviewed by Gleeson. The resulting transcript was then analysed using the same procedures intended for use with 'actual' research participants. This reflexive strategy enabled the researchers to move beyond the positivist view of self as disinterested observer. It centralised the need to understand one's own experiences and expectations in relation to a research topic. In our case it formalised our own status as more than trainee community psychologists. We are also members of society who live, work, and play in various communities, whose personal experiences can shape their professional practice.

The decision to conduct a focus group was influenced by the work of Blumler (1969) who proposed that understanding peoples' social worlds requires an engagement with the meanings people impute to the objects, spaces, places, and actors that constitute or inhabit their lifeworlds. Focus groups provide an opportunity to witness how people negotiate community through social interactions. They provide a working example of a micro-community in action. These discussions can be used to gain access to stories of community, which contain references to routine gestures, such as a wave to a neighbour that can signal recognition and belonging. Focus groups provide one way of generating accounts that reflect how people offer stories in response to others and stimulate others to tell their own stories of community. Participants can share, compare and contrast experiences, negotiate interpretations of events, ask each other questions, offer answers, seek clarification, and elaborate collective understandings (Wilkinson, 1998). These storytelling processes are important because:

The psychological sense of community can be indexed by its shared stories. People who hold common stories about where they come from, who they are, and who they will, or want to be, are a community. A community cannot be a community without a shared narrative (Rappaport, 2000; p. 6).

Thus the focus group provided a space in which we could begin to negotiate such a shared story of our own.

Prior to conducting the focus group the class prepared participant information sheets and consent forms, participant background sheets, and hot-note sheets that could be used to record initial themes from the discussion. We also developed a focus group guide that was used in a semi-structured manner to prompt participants to reflect on their experiences of community and relationships between different communities. There were six people in attendance at the focus group, five female students and one male course convener. All attendees were from working class Maori or Pakeha communities. Two of the attending students facilitated the focus group, while the remaining four attendees became participants in the discussion. Critical reflection regarding the conduct of the focus group was enhanced by those who acted as researchers presenting their experiences to those who acted as participants. In turn, the participants presented their experiences to the researchers.

Analysing the transcript of the focus group in the same way as we would treat a focus group from a client community enabled...
us to actively engage with the assumptions and norms shaping our own conceptualisations of community. We could project and then reflect on the interactive processes through which we were beginning to negotiate our own community within the practicum class. This analysis involved all group members identifying and coding for specific themes, and writing analytic memos for each of these themes. We then met to discuss these codes, specific extracts, and associated memos. This process resulted in the identification of core issues such as the interdependence of locational and relational communities, fluidity in community relationships, changing roles, transitions between communities, and the need to support our efforts to negotiate access to the professional community.

The concept of a community of practice was useful for clarifying the research and teaching strategy used in this practicum class. Communities of practice emerge in situations where learning and professional development are conducted communally through social interactions (Wenger, 1998). An analogy commonly used to explain a community of practice is that of the apprenticeship where a group of people are engaged in shared activities through which learning occurs, expertise is developed, and meaning is constructed. Through the enactment of rituals that enable the pursuit of a shared enterprise, such as a collaborative research project, participants are able to engage in increasingly complex activities in order to build competence and confidence to a point where fuller engagement in the professional community is possible. For our community of practice to emerge we had to foster a supportive and flexible space and a sense of belonging and trust (Bateman, 2003; Wenger, 1998).

**Reflections on the group discussion**

Our analysis follows the general progression of the focus group discussion towards the emergence of our own community narrative. We begin by foregrounding some of our fundamental assumptions regarding, and the complexities surrounding, community and its enactment. Emphasis is placed on the need to approach community as more than an entity or 'thing' out there in society to be measured. Community is a fundamental component of life that is enacted through mundane social interactions and stories that invoke feelings of belonging, trust and support. An exploration of these dimensions sets the context for a discussion of competing demands associated with multi-community participation. We then explore why we did not have a sense of belonging to or being supported by the academic community. The analysis then outlines the implications of a discussion of these concerns for the construction of a shared story from which we can negotiate a sense of membership to the community of psychologists.

During the focus group we referred to 23 different communities to which we have various degrees of involvement. These ranged from our extended families and towns of origin, to cultural, religious and study groups. Deliberations as to why we experienced these particular social formations as communities opened up a dialogue through which we could reflect on the extent and function of community in everyday practice. In the process we began to question a set of assumptions evident in the literature regarding SOC (Brodsky et al., 2002; Colombo et al., 2001; McMillian & Chavis, 1986). These include the need to distinguish between locational and relational communities and the framing of a SOC as a stable or static phenomenon that must be maintained through conscious effort.

A key point to emerge from the focus group was that community is often experienced as an illusive social process that cannot be fully categorised as either locational or relational. For instance, experiences of communities were invoked through references to specific places that had been imputed with meaning through previous social interactions. These interactions depended on the enactment of meaningful relationships. This conceptualisation of community is reflected in the following extract in which we discuss what community means to us:

**Keri:** ...When you fly back home when you've been overseas, you know, when you get home and the plane is just about to touch down that's that overwhelming, you know, sense of belonging.

**Laura:** I get that when I go down the coast and there's this pink house around the coast road.

**Sally:** And that's your marker for when?

**Laura:** As soon as I see it it's like foot down. You get excited. [...]

**Sally:** ...But there's even the smaller things. Like I've had a sense of community at the local store, you know. I've been going there for a long time and, you know, everybody knows it's just familiar. It's a place you go...and feel like you belong, or that you feel comfortable in. [...]  

**Laura:** It's people mainly aye? [...] 

**Sally:** ...When I go up north, when I turn left at the Brynderwys [Hills] and go down [the other side], my heart you can feel it lifts. And I don't even know that happens but then... you get this big rush... Up there that's where I was born. And that's where, you know, I just get this big lift when I turn there... I'm going home and yet that's a place I've never lived at, but it's a place that, our batch is there, my grandparents were there, I was born at a dairy farm around that way, all that sort of thing. That's where we come from... and so you see that is my community. That's where we go, that's where we are, that's where our people are, you know...

Here the group discusses how a SOC is often felt through contact with, or recollections of specific places, such as a colourful building or a local store. These places have become memorable sites for or markers of communal life. They act as icons for our sense of specific communities and associated experiences of friendship and interconnectedness.

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**Footnotes:**

recollecting the importance of such places clear distinctions between geographical and relational based communities break down. For example, although a specific building can mark the physical boundary of a community, it also invokes recollections of relationships that occur beyond that point. Without the relationships formed in places such as local stores these spaces would not become significant sites for community. Although different people emphasise different communities in such extracts we recognised and concurred with each others accounts. For instance, Sally integrates points from Keri and Laura’s accounts into her own recollections. This illustrates early signs of the negotiation of a shared story regarding the meaning of community within our class. Common ground for this story was based on the need to make contact with significant places and to experience meaningful relationships. Via further deliberation we determined that associated feelings of belonging and place were linked to experiences of safety, trust, support and friendship:

Keri: With the circle of friends that I have, they come from all these different groups. There is something in that person that goes beyond safety and support and trust. You just have a good friendship with them that you keep forever...

Laura: I was going to say my sense of belonging would be when I’m with people who accept me for who I am and not what I do or what I can do for them...

Darrin: So there’s no ulterior motives often?

Laura: Yeah and you can trust them and I’m comfortable with them [...]

Mary: ...In our little neighbourhood we don’t live in each others houses or anything like that. We don’t really even know each others business much. But, we’ve formed a sense of community in looking out for each other a bit. Sort of keep an eye on each others properties a tad, and just taking interest in kind of what does and doesn’t go on, feeding each others cats when we go away and that sort of stuff, and we say hello across the fence sort of thing... We want to keep things a certain way in our little neighbourhood, and just the other day a couple in one of the units next door put a ‘for sale’ sign outside their place and I was devastated... I thought they’re going to sell and go away and I was really devastated because they are part of our little...community... I was really surprised at how that impacted on me, because I hadn’t even thought I’d care who comes and goes around the place. But I did..."

Here community is constructed as a taken for granted backdrop of everyday life that is realised through smiles and impromptu conversations. It is through such rituals that a sense of community is fostered. In constructing community in this way, mundane events that sustain community are presented as comprising more than a set of distinct variables which can be measured and manipulated (Cantillon, 2003). These are interwoven and inherently ritualised facets of everyday life that provide enactments of our interconnectedness (de Certeau, 1984). In short, mundane acts such as waving to a neighbour function to maintain relationships from which a sense of trust, support, and belonging is cultivated.

Points raised in the previous two extracts also highlight the transient nature of community. We do not need to remain constantly within specific places or in constant contact with people in order to experience community. Community is often taken for granted until it is disrupted, such as when a neighbour moves away or when we find ourselves in new environments where we lack meaningful relationships. In discussing these issues we began to move away from recollecting isolated communities as distinct facets of our lives and to consider our movements across various sites for community (Bess et al., 2003; Brodsky et al., 2002). For instance, issues around what community meant to us, how it was enacted, and what purposes it served were explored primarily through deliberations regarding what happens when our existing communal lives are disrupted by the transition to academic life. In the process community was constructed as being more flexible, fleeting, and complex than is inferred by traditional, and rather static, notions of locational and relational communities (Colombo et al., 2001):

Sally: You know your participation within different communities can change and be different things on different levels.

Mary: And I think that sense of community serves a different purpose too. Like the purpose that it serves it's not a big thing. It's where I get company and fellowship [...] Darrin: So it's almost in a way that a community can come into being or a sense of it when there is a need to address something?

Mary: Yeah, yeah [...] Laura: It seems to be people are the main part of a sense of community.

Sally: Yep that's right. [...] Mary: Okayness. [...] Sally: ...You can share things, you can feel quite comfortable talking about stuff you might not otherwise... Darrin: You belong Sally: Yeah...its belonging isn't it? Its feeling you belong [...] Keri: I feel like I'll care when I'm here [at the university], but when I walk away I'm ok with walking away, and I feel like I belong to this group. It's just that, you know, it's that emotional side of it. Then there's if you
Laura: Yeah it is because of that. Cos I was going to say it's
Sally: Some of your stories of where you've come from and
Laura: Yeah, but its fleeting moments

This emerged as a key concern within the focus group. The reduction in one's support networks (Brodsky et al., 2003). demands associated with entry to the academic community can lead to 'fractured allegiances', and a sense of belonging is identified as being fundamental to feeling comfortable within a community. Negotiating membership to professional communities can have personal costs, initially in terms of physical illness and later to the detriment of existing relationships and support networks. If communities are constructed through social interactions and are experienced within multiple locations then we would expect our sense of these communities to change as our personal and professional relationships unfold. These processes of transition have particular ramifications for students from marginalised communities who move into communities dominated by scholars from different socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds. For instance, previous research has shown that 'working class' and 'minority women' who attempt to enter academic communities face considerable barriers in balancing their existing personal and new professional relationships and responsibilities (cf., Fay & Tokarczyk, 1993; Johnson & Robson, 1999). In particular, the demands of different communities can impact on the ability of such women to engage in academic pursuits and can lead to 'fractured allegiances', and a reduction in one's support networks (Brodsky et al., 2003). This emerged as a key concern within the focus group. The demands associated with entry to the academic community were presented as impacting negatively on our abilities to maintain membership to other communities and resulted in unwanted shifts in our existing relationships:

Laura: …I don't have a strong sense of belonging in any of my communities.
Keri: Oh yes
Sally: What about in this community psych programme for instance?
Laura: Yeah, but its fleeting moments
Mary: Is that because you're busy?
Laura: Yeah it is because of that. Cos I was going to say it's like I've grown out of everything.
Sally: Some of your stories of where you've come from and...
These issues were emphasised in relation to a discussion of 'faking' the skills and confidence to participate in the academic community. This discussion invoked accounts of anxiety about personal failure and being discovered as a fraud:

Keri: Fakes-are-us. That was a community we've formed…

Carmen: You formed a community fakes-are-us?

Keri: Yeah, there are only a few members at the moment, but you can join... so that we can bluff our way through university.

Sally: It's true!

Keri: Because that's what we feel we're doing. You're faking it...

Sally: One day someone's going to figure it out.

Keri: You basically have to fake it. You have to, you know, because if you don't do it their way you're gone...

Laura: A lot of it is faking confidence aye?

Carmen: Jeez yeah.

Darrin: You've got to read Bourdieu on that stuff.

Keri: Who?

Darrin: I'll give you a book to read on that experience.

All: [laughter]

Darrin: Because his point is that you're not faking it... He talks about habitus, a set of intangible rules about going to a university or getting an education when, like you were saying, you haven't been raised for this... Part of the process for you is learning those competencies and skills. Whereas other students can take them for granted because they're children of people that have been through university, and so for them they learn it as kids.

Sally: Just as a matter of interest how many here have got academic parents? ... There's nobody else in their family has gone to university?

Mary: I've been like these girls, no one.

Sally: Yeah, so that's interesting. That's why I can see no-one nodding and I think that's why we can all identify with that.

Darrin: But that's what Bourdieu's writing about. He's saying there's a different cultural capital involved, and you have to learn that you do belong, cos you do belong, you get into a Master's programme... If you weren't competent you wouldn't be here'.

Sally: That's right [...] 

Mary: I keep wondering when the senior staff here are going to wake up and realize that I am faking it [laughter].

Laura: Yeah they're going to go 'how did we let this one in here' [laughter].
The role of academic staff in this process is a difficult one. On the one hand staff must recognise these anxieties and facilitate their resolution, in part, by generalising student concerns. However, this strategy risks re-establishing points of difference between staff and students. For instance, in the previous extract Darrin (the course convener) referred to the work of "Bourdieu" in an attempt to generalise the "faking it" experience. He encouraged us to read this material. In response we laughed because Darrin is always giving us more to read. The reference to Bourdieu brought to the fore different positions within our emerging community of practice and the knowledge gap that is central to our position in a border community. This interaction highlights how there are no quick solutions to these anxieties. The key to supporting students is the cultivation of a sense of competence and belonging (Bateman, 2003). This takes time and depends on the maintenance of an open dialogue. Darrin's initial attempt to generalise the experience was clarified through further deliberations. Subsequent instances of critical reflection have not resolved all our doubts and uncertainties regarding whether we are competent members of the academic community. However, they have allowed us to begin a series of activities through which the boundaries and borders of the academic community can be mapped and navigated. The ultimate goal is the construction of a sense of 'okayness' or belonging to, and being in the right place as community psychologists.

Conclusion

It is important for community psychologists to reflect on how we construct communal life and what assumptions and expectations we take with us when navigating the various communities intersecting our personal and professional lifeworlds (Bess et al., 2002; Prilleltensky, 2001). Such self-awareness can facilitate richer engagements with the stories and needs of clients and research participants (Bolam et al., 2003). We must investigate existing narratives and work collaboratively to ensure that these are tales of joy, which reflect our collective aspirations, rather than tales of terror, which reflect the practices of elitist exclusion (Jones, 2003; Ostrove, 2003; Rappaport, 2000). If communities are understood as processes rather than entities 'out there' in society then we are in a better position to develop and advocate for programmes and systems aimed at fostering equitable social relations rather than sort terms solutions to isolated problems identified by external experts.

The positioning of people within class, gendered and ethnic hierarchies is a persistent feature of contemporary society (Hodggets, Masters, & Robertson, 2004), which must be challenged and changed (Jones, 2003). If we are to address these issues then we need to support the efforts of students from marginalised backgrounds to enter professional communities (Bullock & Limbert, 2003). This necessitates the acknowledgement that the very narratives upon which academic communities are constructed can either support or impede people's efforts to enter, learn, grow, and belong. By articulating our experiences in this paper we have begun to negotiate a collective narrative as emerging practitioners. In the process we have illustrated the usefulness of reflexivity in education and research, and for enhancing community. In sharing such stories we can give coherence to experiences of tensions that emerge with peoples' movements between communities. Communing in this way can lead to the development of supportive networks, and a sense of belonging or ownership of academic institutions, which have traditionally been the preserve of people from more affluent backgrounds (Ostrove, 2003).

In sum, through this research practicum class we have attempted to foster such a SOC as a way of supporting each other through the transition to professional life (Johnson & Robson, 1999). The concept of a community of practice (Wenger, 1998) was used to foreground the importance of mentored group participation to this transition. Through the conduct of a collaborative research project we have constructed a sense of place, learnt to support one another, and contributed to a common goal (Bess et al., 2002). As McMillan (1996) writes, "Paying dues promotes sense of community by first opening a door for a member in the group. It also gives the members a sense of entitlement" (p. 318).

Research practicums structured as communities of practice provide spaces within which students can acquire knowledge and experience, and gain confidence. Such communities are more than "things" lying out there in society to be measured (Cantillon, 2003). They are inherently social processes that necessitate meaningful relationships and open dialogues through which a sense of safety, belonging and support can be fostered (Bateman, 2003).

References


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Critical Reflexivity in Counselling Research: A Retrospective Reflection

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Reflexivity is a research orientation informed by the paradigm of interpretive social science. This form of reflective commentary has gained increasing prominence in the domains of community and counselling psychology in recent years. Critical reflexivity, an emergent construct, has evolved from reflexivity but is informed by critical social theory that seeks to instigate change. Therefore it is perceived as a critique of overt and declared reflexive subjectivity. Both of these methods are discussed in the context of a recent qualitative exploratory study undertaken by the writers. The research project examined the notion of 'therapeutic presence' within the context of counselling practice in Western Australia and found to be a transitional process determined by the personal and professional development of practitioners. Implications for counselor training were articulated. Although reflexive measures were implemented to support the trustworthiness and credibility of the inquiry process and its findings, in hindsight these appear to be flawed. As critical reflexivity is perceived as an expression of practitioner reflection-in and on-action enabling explication of tacit knowledge, its use is recommended as an integral aspect of any qualitative endeavour.

Keywords: Critical Reflexivity, Reflective Practitioner, Self Reflection, Social Theory and Qualitative Methodology

The concept of reflexivity refers to the human capacity to "reflect upon" and enact beneficial action as a consequence of introspection (Russell & Kelly, 2002). Action research (Newbrough, 1992; Rappaport, 1977, 1987) enables the researcher to assume the role of 'reflective practitioner' (Schon, 1983, 1987) who "...sees inquiry as transactionally arising from the very practice of intervention. Knowledge is practical; practice yields knowledge" (Dokecki, 1992, p. 27).

Stringer (1996) described this process as an ongoing cycle of observation, reflection and action whose objective is the development of tacit knowledge (Polanyi, 1967). Tacit knowledge is learned and embraced at a deep level informing actions without the actor necessarily explicating it or being aware of its effect. Schon (1983) referred to this as 'double vision'. This construct refers to the phenomenon being viewed and understood as well as the viewer's personal constructions that influence the development of these understandings (Attheide & Johnson, 1994).

Community Psychology and Reflexivity
The importance of reflexivity in community psychology has gained increasing prominence as researchers acknowledge they are co-creators of emergent knowledge arising from their inquiries (Steir, 1991). As community psychologists balance the potential benefits of researcher involvement with representation of respondent voice (Ahern, 1999), investigators implement reflexivity as a mediator of research. While the image of the community researcher as a 'value-free and objective observer' (Wheatley, 1992) is being gradually replaced by acknowledgement of active participation and co-authorship, (Hatch, 1996) only limited changes have occurred in the philosophical scientism of psychology (Breut, 2000). However, Wiesenfeld (2000) suggests that inquirers have had opportunities to operationalize the subjective nature of research in a way that enables insight into process. Ahern notes that although researchers attempt to integrate reflexive strategies they frequently are unable to clarify how this may be accomplished. Their reports suggest an elusive quality to expressed subjectivity (Russell & Kelly, 2002). This article is an effort to overcome these practical limitations by engaging in a retrospective reflection of a recent study undertaken within the context of counselling.

Counselling and Reflexivity
McLeod (2001) proposes three basic principles that form the foundation of all reflexive inquiry within the domain of counselling. These state that:

• Reflexivity fosters understanding of the moral aspects of research
• Reflexivity provokes awareness of influences that co-construct research
• Reflexivity stimulates novel approaches to express these co-constructions

These guidelines are the impetus for this article, which is a reflexive critique of the process undertaken in the study that is described in brief.

Overview of the Study
An exploratory study was undertaken to determine how counsellors in Western Australia comprehend, describe and implement the meaning and function of therapeutic presence. 'Counsellor presence' is regarded as an aspect of the bond between client and counsellor within the therapeutic alliance. Practitioner perceptions regarding the quality and function of the relational dyad between themselves and clients were sought. An exploratory qualitative inquiry was deemed justified as rationalist positivism was regarded as having limited recognition of the notion of therapeutic presence. The views of eighteen participants engaged in the practice of counselling psychology, clinical psychology, health and human service counselling and psychotherapy were sought through snowball sampling and semi-structured interviews. Phenomenological
and hermeneutic coding and analysis uncovered common themes. Definitional notions of therapeutic presence were identified and correlated. A transitional model of counsellor practitioner development informed by awareness training, personal therapy and mentoring was identified. Implications for education and the professional development of counsellors were articulated. Limitations in scope regarding contextual aspects of cultural diversity, gender and socio-economic status were acknowledged.

Reviewing the process that facilitated these findings is the focus of this retrospective reflection. As such, a stance of conscious awareness is applied to a critique of prior research through the wisdom of hindsight (Finley, 2002; Rennie, 1992). By exploring the appropriateness of the research question, its domain background, objectives, rationale and methodology the research process is re-visited. McLeod’s (2001) recommendations for reflexivity and Schon’s (1983) principles of practitioner reflection-in and on-action are pivotal to this process.

**Domain Background**

Developmental psychology traditionally asserts that patterns of relationship formed in infancy determine the quality of interpersonal connection throughout the lifespan (Stern, 1985). Evidenced-based research demonstrates that ruptures in attachment during early childhood are at the core of adult psycho-social difficulties (Bowby, 1969). Appropriate contact with psychotherapists is said to foster ‘moments of meeting’ that are deemed curative (Stern, Sander, Nahum, Harrison, Lyons, Morgan, Bruschweller-Stern, & Tronick, 1998). Interpersonal connection in ‘being with another’ is considered by much of the literature to be at the core of therapeutic change (Spinelli, 2003). The significance of the notion of relational contact within counselling is affirmed by the origin of the discipline of psychotherapy itself. The term ‘psychotherapia’ is derived from its Greek root meaning ‘present attendance on another’ (Spinelli, 2001).

**Rationale of Study**

Driven by socio-political and economic rationalist forces, the imperatives of brief therapy, employment of ‘bells and whistles’ techniques and measured evidence-based outcomes, are said to diminish opportunities for clients to feel heard, seen and understood in counselling (Kottler, 1998; Miller, Duncan, & Hubble, 1999). Leading commentaries in the field infer that current practice is compromised by the ethos of economic rationalism (Cummings, 1995). Furthermore, experts argue organisations, ruled by fiscal demands, determine standards of acceptable mental health practice by monetary considerations (Kottler). These contextual issues led to the development of the study influenced by the view that if therapists respond to clients in economic terms they may be in danger of losing the essence of their craft - meaningful contact with another (Kottler). The inspiration for this study is also influenced by Spinelli’s advocacy (2001, p. 357) that therapists may be required to relinquish their role of technician and allow themselves to be seduced by the "dangerous proposal of listening to their clients" (Spinelli, 2001, p. 357).

**Methodology**

Informed by a constructivist paradigm, the methodology involved gathering and analysing data in a natural setting (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Miles & Huberman, 1994). A qualitative phenomenological approach was implemented (Christopher, 1996; Gadamer, 1975; Moustakos, 1994; Polkinghorne, 1989) to collate data through semi-structured interviews (Kvale, 1996). In efforts to mine and map meaning, hermeneutic application was used to interpret interview transcripts (Smith, 1996; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). New ‘tacit knowledge’ of the phases of ‘presence’ emerged which positively correlated with the therapists’ evolution towards ‘master’ practitioner status. The research process required a repetitive iterative orientation throughout all stages of the inquiry (Bishop, Sonn, Drew, & Contos, 2002).

Purposive snowball sampling was undertaken, incorporating a gender spread of ten females and eight males. Most participants were engaged in extensive personal/private counselling practice. Twelve informants had acquired graduate qualifications in psychology and were currently registered as counselling or clinical practitioners in Western Australia. The remainder had achieved a Master’s degree in social work or counselling. All were active and advanced practitioners, undertaking teaching or training of students at some stage in their career.

A brief semi-structured interview was initially developed aimed at eliciting detailed accounts of therapist practice and attitudinal beliefs. This stance enabled flexibility so that as ideas expanded as the process of data collation deepened (Smith, 1996). Qualitative integrity, credibility and authenticity were highlighted (Sarantakos, 1998). Reflexive notes, observations and commentaries reflecting coding and interpretation supported this intention. Triangulation was attained through validation of emergent themes by random participants and supervisory procedures (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, 1998).

**Findings**

An in-depth discussion of the study’s findings is not the intention of this paper, however a brief overview of the overarching themes include the following.

1. New definitional understandings of the meaning of therapeutic presence emerged highlighting that therapeutic presence was not a static construct but an on-going process of experience informed by evolving growth.

2. Therapeutic presence developed in four distinct phases over time. Stages shifted hierarchically from moments of being (a) present, (b) glimpses of presence, (c) extended states of presence, (d) to the full embodiment of presence.
A model of counsellor transformation toward the higher spiritual level facilitated by personal and professional development paralleled presence progression.

Personal development, self-awareness and master mentoring were recognised as variables that inform practitioner development.

Presence development was recommended to enhance the quality of counselling practice.

Awareness training, mindfulness, practitioner reflexivity and mentoring by master practitioners were viewed as means to promote presence development.

Having provided a summary of the study's design and findings, a retrospective review of the study is now undertaken as the focal point of this article. While a summary of some of the moral dimensions of research are explored initially, McLeod's (2001) three foundational principles for reflexivity (explored earlier) will then be applied to the study.

The Moral Dimensions of Research

Research in counselling is said to be a moral activity that exposes how individuals construct their subjective world, resolve problems and reflect (McLeod, 2001). Frank (1992) argues that positivist psychology, influenced by the physical sciences purports to stand beyond the realm of appropriate conduct by concealing the researcher's stance with regard to the issue being examined. Frank proclaims that this 'morality of distance' fosters an ethic of de-humanisation dishonouring the contribution of informants. This procility is enhanced by the culture of modernism in its use of objectifying language that depicts individuals as 'thin' one-dimensional representations. Should a transparent reflexive dialogue be adopted as part of the research process Frank suggests a more respectful, candid approach may be realised. However, constructivist and socially critical researchers are also accused of failing to acknowledge the moral dimensions of qualitative research. Insensitive interviews, insufficient or inappropriate debriefing, misuse of power dynamics and exploitation as a consequence of intimacy are common hazards (Parker, 1994). New ways of implementing and evidencing moral research in counselling are needed. The notion of critical reflexivity advocated by McLeod (2001) addresses this issue by demonstrating awareness of multi-dimensional influences made visible in novel forms of discourse.

Critical Reflexivity - Multi-Dimensional Co-Constructors of New Discourse

A basic principle of constructivist research is the understanding that the researcher's voice co-creates findings (Gergen, 1985). It is suggested that a reflexive statement represents a strategy that exposes researcher influences (Hatch, 1996). Moreover a secondary source of data enhancing the validity of a project is made available (Rennie, 1992). By making a reflexive statement the subjectivity of the researcher is declared. This is relevant to counselling research as practitioner inquirers are likely to have entrenched attitudes about the inherent nature of the issue under investigation (Russell & Kelly, 2002). Thus a statement of 'inward subjectivity' encourages a transparent stance revealing the bias within the inquirer's realm of awareness (McLeod, 2001). This evaluation may be expressed superficially or in-depth depending upon the degree of insight available (Hill, Nutt-Williams, Heaton, Thompson, & Rhodes, 1996). An alternative stance preferred by Gergen and Gergen (1991) stresses the value of 'outward reflection' in elucidating more generalised landscapes of cultural experience rather than the expression of personal interiority. However, McLeod suggests that both internal and external critical reflexivity are desirable. The individual standpoint of the researcher is an aspect of the wider general context so that the personal becomes the social. Consequently as one construction cannot stand without the other, the personal and social fuse into a singular entity and are 'brought to the research table'. In view of these principles advanced by numerous commentaries, reflexive tenets expressed by McLeod outlined previously are retrospectively applied to the conduct of the project (Breuer, Mruck, & Roth, 2002; Finlay, 2002; Horsburgh, 2003; Hurd, 1998; Koch, 1998; Mauthner & Doucet, 2003; Pillow, 2003; Pyett, 2003; Russell & Kelly, 2002).

A Retrospective Critique - Notional Reflexivity

The application of reflexivity during this study may be described as notional and negligible. Although some effort was made to incorporate reflexive statements this was limited to the process of interpretation of emergent themes. Transparency was not attempted with respect to the pre-conceived views regarding the research topic. This deficit is regretted as it is conceded that subjective ideas informed by the professional experience of the principal researcher as a practitioner are likely to have directed the development of interviews. These attitudes could have been revealed at the commencement of the project by an auto-ethnography. Furthermore changing narratives arising as a consequence of ongoing journal commentary could have been of assistance.

Researcher Bias, Consent and Reflexivity

As Patton suggests (2003, p.64) "to be reflexive is to undertake an ongoing examination of what I know and how I know it". Although an exploratory qualitative approach was undertaken, a comprehensive outline of the philosophical constructs informing the methodological perspective was not stated. The nature of the research topic and its objectives were reflective of 'knowledge-of and knowledge-how' epistemology (Payne, 1982). 'Knowledge-that' information was excluded as the principal researcher was disinterested in its role. Furthermore the researcher's personal commitment to a social constructionist approach of applied ethics as a narrative of living was not divulged. This omission is regrettable as this may have informed the project's findings. Furthermore although the tacit knowledge of counsellors (Polanyi, 1966) acquired through practitioner reflection (Schon, 1988) was the
major source of enquiry, the practice of substantive theorising (Wicker & August, 2000) was minimised in favour of the unconscious imposition of vague concepts on informants explicated by the literature. Thorough exploration of the substantive domain rather than a 'fishing expedition' with respect to conceptual development may have yielded more helpful results. Moreover a statement disclosing this conceptual approach may have enhanced the study. In summary the inquirers have realised in retrospect that data elicitation and analysis were constructed and interpreted through the lenses of the personal interiority of the writers without admission and ownership of this fact.

Although consent was obtained pursuant to accepted mores this was only acquired prior to interview commencement. There was no attempt to engage in process consent at various stages of data gathering or at any other time during the research endeavour. On many occasions participants seemed excited yet overwhelmed by the scope of interview expressing difficulties requires new ways of conducting, reflecting upon the minimal role of modality articulated by such theorists such as Norcross (1999) and Strupp and Anderson (1999) was adopted by the principal researcher. This approach may have been addressed during the project through iterative consensual checks from commencement to debriefing. Renewal of process consent at pre-determined stages throughout the project may have been advisable. A secondary text in the form of a third person reflexive report or a first person narrative of self could have provided additional data.

Awareness of Multi-Dimensional Influences that Co-Construct

Researcher influence informed by the philosophies of existential and humanist ethics has been realised retrospectively. Yet no mention of this bias was revealed in the study. It is believed that these attitudes may have affected the task of interview inquiry. In hindsight it is noted that these subjectivities could have been voiced reflexively. Furthermore the minimal role of modality articulated by such theorists such as Norcross (1999) and Strupp and Anderson (1997) was adopted by the principal researcher. This approach may have influenced the content of questions posed. It is argued that such attitudes could have been declared and bracketed off at the commencement of the study through the mechanism of 'inward subjectivity' (Hill et al., 1996). Recognition of these difficulties requires new ways of conducting, reflecting upon and conveying research in psychotherapy (McLeod, 2001).

Novel Approaches that Convey Research Discourse

Auto-ethnography is an autobiographical genre that connects the personal to the cultural in research discourse. Initially auto-ethnography is enacted through the inquirer's lenses of reflection and commentary that includes the personal and cultural aspects of experience. The following statement: "(Consequently researchers engage in) exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through, refract and resist cultural interpretations... As lenses zoom backward and forward, inward and outward, distinctions between the personal and cultural become blurred (Ellis & Buchner, 2000, p.739)."

In mirroring this experience the use of the 'first person' persona is endorsed (Webb, 1996). Such reflexive accounts divulge the richness, of lived experience making the voice of the researcher known. Perhaps this aspect of first person reflexivity is the most challenging to integrate into academic research and writing. The adoption of a 'scholarly' stance of assumed objectivity is seductive and 'dies hard' in the academic context. The prospect of illuminating the thinking process as apparent through auto ethnography is viewed with resistance as it challenges traditional aspirations embedded in the dominant positivist discourse that fosters impartiality and detachment (Russell & Kelly, 2002). Although the challenge of reporting in novel ways is exciting, some fear is inevitably experienced when embracing the new. This difficulty is strengthened by the realisation that limited guidance is available to those who wish to adopt such a creative approach (Wolcott, 1990). Furthermore the fact that reflexive writing does not satisfy APA format is a further institutional prohibition.

Conclusion

The aim of this article is to draw attention to the role of reflexivity in qualitative research. Despite a notional effort to disclose subjectivity, influences that shaped this project were not apparent at the time of inquiry. Reflection in hindsight suggests the need to build moral and ethical subjectivity to account for bias, consent, data elicitation and analysis at the outset of any study so that provision may be made to make influences transparent. The creation of dedicated opportunities, times and formats in which the researcher and the researched may be more reflexive is recommended (Siltanen, 2001). Regular meetings with supervisory panels and critical reference groups that undertake these activities derived from a discourse of researcher reflection-in and on-action is recommended (Schon, 1983). However it must be stated that great awareness is required to capture the subjectivity of any lens of inquiry. Indeed it may not be feasible to grasp all the filters through which the world is perceived as many of these are unconscious. Grosz (1995, p. 13) suggests that "the author's... emotions, psyche, and interiority are not only inaccessible to readers but are also likely to be inaccessible to the author". Therefore it is argued that there are limits to reflexive knowledge. It may be more fruitful to implement 'degrees of reflexivity', because some factors are easy to discern at the time of inquiry, whereas others require more distant detachment as is demonstrated by this article. In conclusion it is suggested that perhaps the most valuable observation that underpins and describes this retrospective reflection is the following metaphor of a failed love affair.
It is 'hot and urgent' while it lasts. 'Blind spots' are triggered by the conditioning of previous experience inflamed by lack of awareness. In the cold light of day when passion subsides, much pain is experienced about what was not done and what should have been done. That which was enacted is lamented and the vow to "do it differently next time round". Finally a new love emerges and the hope that "I have changed" is articulated. The cycle of groping in the dark begins again as is the wont of the human condition in its ongoing search. This drama is also enacted in the relationship between the researcher, the researched and the research.

References


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Wellness and Liberation in the Lives of Culturally Diverse Communities
(Phase—one of the Community Wellness Project)

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(Victoria University, Melbourne)

Paper addressing the themes of the 9th Biennial Conference on Community Research and Action, June 2003, Las Vegas, New Mexico.

The promotion of wellness and liberation in culturally diverse communities requires input from a wide range of community stakeholders including community members and community service providers/professionals. Collaboration with community members enables a grounded understanding of diverse community needs and facilitates the translation of values into action. In this paper we discuss two qualitative research projects, which employed a holistic model of wellness/well-being to explore perceptions of well-being among diverse community members and service providers/professionals from the St Albans region. The general aim of the studies was to gain a theoretical and practical understanding of well-being for this community. Findings from both projects support the utility of the model in generating a rich dialogue on factors that may lead us closer to community wellness and liberation.

Key Words: Well being; Wellness; Praxis; Community Members; Professionals; Multicultural; Qualitative research

Values, Action, Wellness and Liberation

This paper follows from a presentation delivered at the 9th Biennial Conference for [the Society for] Community Research and Action (SCRA) - Incorporating Diversity: Moving From Values to Action (June 2003, Las Vegas, New Mexico). Two qualitative research projects conducted with diverse community members and professionals in a poor multicultural community were the focus of the SCRA presentation. We begin the present paper by addressing the conference themes: Values, Action, Wellness and Liberation before describing the methodology and discussing the findings and implications of the two research projects.

The terms values and action have become central themes for the field of community psychology since they appeared in Julian Rappaport’s (1977) classic book entitled Community psychology: Values, research, and action and as implied by the name of the American Psychological Society Division for community psychology - the Society for Community Research and Action1. Values, research and action go hand in hand in that research on values can enable the latter. As stated by Tseng, Chesir-Teran, Becker-Klein, Chan, Duran, Roberts and Bardoliwalla (2002) a careful examination of the values of various stakeholders is essential to social change efforts, particularly when deciding what to promote and how to go about promotion. Therefore, values are guiding principles (Schwartz, 1994) or principles to guide action (Prilleltensky, 2003).

Even though some values and principles are regarded as universal, for example, justice and human rights (Kesler, 2000) values should be explored anew in each community, since as noted by Prilleltensky and Fox, “the particular configuration of values required for human welfare changes from society to society, group to group, and time to time” (1997, p. 9). The right for each community or culture to be judged by their own standards and to maintain its own values and style is strongly maintained by community psychology, which rejects the notion of a single standard (e.g., one cultural framework, set of norms, view of normality or wellness) (Rappaport, 1977). The role of shared values for community membership and a sense of belonging are also considered important in community psychology (Dunham, 1986; Fisher & Sonn, 2002).

Emory Cowen (1926-2000) should be accredited for introducing and developing the wellness concept in community psychology. Cowen viewed wellness as the “positive end of a hypothetical adjustment continuum - an ideal we should strive continually to approach” (1996, p. 246). He viewed wellness as more than the absence of disease and was interested in wellness for all people (1994). Cowen argued that there were five essential pathways to wellness. These were: (1) positive attachments and (2) competence development in the early years; (3) positive settings that favor wellness and (4) promote empowering conditions and offer people justice, hope and opportunity; and (5) skills to effectively cope with stress. He further argued that wellness depended on the “synergistic presence” of the five strands (1994, p. 159). Cowen advocated for a preventative, proactive and transformative approach and was concerned about discovering the underlying dynamics of wellness. The terms wellness and well-being are used interchangeably in this paper to refer to a holistic state of physical, psychological and social well-being.

1 Centre for International Corporate Governance Research, Faculty of Business and Law, Victoria University, City Flinders Campus, PO Box 14428 Melbourne City MC, VIC 8001 Australia.
2 Telephone: 9315 0442. Email: donna.robertson@optushome.com.au
3 The presentation was delivered on behalf of the authors by Julie Morsillo (PhD candidate).
4 The American Psychological Association lists 55 divisions. Community Psychology is known as Division 27 - Society for Community Research and Action: Division of Community Psychology (APA, 2004).
The influence of the liberation concept can be largely attributed to the work of Latin American 'liberationists' such as Paulo Freire (1921-1997) and Ignacio Martín-Baró (1942-1989). Freire was a Brazilian educator who argued for a system of education (pedagogy) that could liberate oppressed people. In his book Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1972) Freire outlined the nature of the pedagogy as one that "must be forged with not for the oppressed" in order to help people regain their humanity from a dehumanising social reality. This pedagogy he claimed "makes oppression and its causes objects of reflection by the oppressed and, from that reflection, will come their necessary engagement in the struggle for liberation" (p. 30).

Liberation emerges through dialogue and praxis: reflection and action on the world in order to transform it (Freire, 1972).

Martin-Baró was a Jesuit priest and social psychologist who questioned the basic assumptions underlying the psychology of his times and argued for a new praxis that is committed to the needs of the people. According to him:

Only through such a praxis of commitment will we be able to get a new perspective on the people of our communities, with a view not only on what they positively are but of the negativity as well - of all they could be, but have been kept by historical conditions from becoming.

The truth ... will ... not ... be a simple reflection of data, ... but of what needs to done (Martin-Baró, 1994, p. 23).

Values, action, wellness and liberation intersect in the present research, which explored community members' and professionals' perceptions of well being in order to facilitate action to promote wellness and liberation in the community. The two projects reported in this paper formed the first (exploratory) phase of a broader action research initiative known as the Community Wellness Project (Prilleltensky & Gridley, 2001).

Theories Guiding the Studies

Community Wellness Model

Prilleltensky's (2001a) Community Wellness Model, needs theory as developed by Roth (1990) and an action research model known as the cycle of praxis (Prilleltensky, 2001b & c) informed the design of the phase one projects. The Community Wellness Model may be seen in Table 1. A major assumption associated with this model is that wellness is "a positive state of affairs brought about by the simultaneous satisfaction of personal, relational, and collective needs of individuals and communities" (Prilleltensky, 2001a, p. 2). The model can be described as a critical community psychology alternative to individualistic models of well-being, which tend to 'blame the person' (Ryan, 1971) and ignore the broader (relational and collective) forces, which impact on well-being.

Table 1 Prilleltensky's Community Wellness Model: A Synergy of Personal, Relational and Collective Well-being

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Wellness Model</th>
<th>Personal</th>
<th>Relational</th>
<th>Collective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sense of control over one’s life, physical health, love, competence, optimism and self-esteem</td>
<td>Social support, affection, belonging, cohesion, collaboration, respect for diversity and democratic participation</td>
<td>Economic security, social justice, adequate health and social services, low crime, safety, adequate housing and social structures (e.g., educational, recreational and transportation facilities) and a clean environment</td>
</tr>
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</table>

(Adapted from Prilleltensky, 2001a)

Praxis: From Values to Action

Praxis according to Martin-Baró is "an activity of transforming reality that will let us know not only about what is but also about what is not, and by which we may try to orient ourselves toward what ought to be (as translated by Aron, 1994, p. 29)".

In a progressive move towards praxis, Prilleltensky (2001b), proposed a cycle of praxis that begins with philosophical considerations about values that are capable of promoting personal, collective, and relational wellness; or what is also referred to as the ideal vision or what should be? The cycle continues with research on needs (or what is missing?) and contextual factors (actual state or what is?) and ends with pragmatic (what can be done?) considerations for action. The model also shares some methodological parallels with a needs assessment. According to Roth (1990) 'need' can be defined as the discrepancy between a target state and an actual state. As expressed by the following equation, X is the target state (e.g., values, ideals), A is the actual state and N is the need or discrepancy: X - A = N (Roth, 1990).

5 The Community Wellness Project was funded by the Australian Research Council and involved a research and community development partnership between Victoria University (VU), Wellness Promotion Unit and the community welfare organisation called Good Shepherd Youth and Family Service (GSYFS). The two projects were the authors’ theses for the Master of Applied (Community) Psychology degree at VU.
A model that integrates Prilleltensky's previous praxis diagram (2001c), with the concept of need and community wellness was developed by Totikidis (2003) and may be seen in Figure 2. The result of the integration is a cyclical model proposing that pragmatic plans of action (A) (what can be done?) to promote wellness and liberation must be based on research that explores a community's ideals (I) (what should be?); needs (N) (what is?); and strengths (S) (actual state or what is?). The model has been referred to as Community Wellness Cycle of Praxis (Totikidis, 2003; Totikidis & Prilleltensky, in press).

**Method: Interviews and Focus Groups**

**Participants**

St Albans is located in the Local Government Area of Brimbank, a region characterised by cultural and linguistic diversity as well as significant disadvantage. Over 70 languages are spoken in Brimbank with Australian born people making up the largest group in the region, followed by Vietnamese people, Maltese and then Italian born people (Richardson & Macaffer, 1999). The present research with community members involved a total of 31 people (17 women and 14 men) aged between 18 and 70 from these four main groups (Anglo, Vietnamese, Maltese and Italian) as well as two individual interviews involving a Maltese and Serbian woman to pilot the questions. Most of the participants for the community focus groups were recruited from local community centers, ethnic clubs and the St Albans shopping precinct with several referred by GSYFS staff.

The research with professionals consisted of two focus groups and nine individual interviews with a total of 27 participants, 6 men and 21 women. Participants were recruited from local agencies through association with the research partner Good Shepherd Youth and Family Service. Participants ranged from over 18 to approximately 50 years in age and were from diverse cultural backgrounds. The cohort was made up of professionals working in Women's Health, Police and Family, Community Nursing, Counseling, Youth, Accommodation and Housing and Employment Support Services. All the participants had significant knowledge with respect to their own area of involvement and the issues faced by community members residing in the western suburbs of Melbourne.

**Materials**

A semi-structured interview schedule consisting of four sections or themes and ten questions was used in the research. The schedule was designed for the research with community members and was then adapted for use with service providers. The version used with community members is shown in Table 2. With some overlap, section A, B, C & D correspond to the ideals, needs, strengths and actions of the praxis model and to the research questions posed earlier (see data analysis section).

The first two questions in section A were also employed in the interview and focus groups with professionals, thus the focus was on professionals' own definitions of well-being for the first two questions. Questions 3-8 (section B and C) inquired about professionals' perceptions of well-being in and for the St Albans community. The section D questions asked service providers to comment on what they thought community members could do to improve well-being (9) and what they (themselves) and other professionals could do for the community (10).

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**Aims and Research Questions**

The aim of the two studies were to apply the Community Wellness Cycle of Praxis in qualitative research with diverse community members and service providers from the St Albans region in order to gain a theoretical and practical understanding of well-being for this community. The praxis framework guided the overall design of the research including the development of the following research questions and the interview/focus group schedule.

Specific research questions developed for the research with community members were:

1. What are the community wellness ideals (a); needs (b); and strengths (c); of St Albans community members?
2. What actions can be undertaken to improve well-being in this community?

Specific research questions developed for the research with service providers were:

1. What are the community wellness ideals of service providers who work in the St Albans community?
2. What are service providers' perceptions of the needs and strengths of the St Albans community?
3. What actions can be undertaken to improve well-being in this community?
Table 2 Questions Employed in the Research with Community Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section A: The meaning of well-being and the lack of/or opposite of well-being</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) What does well-being mean for you?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2) What does the lack of/or the opposite of well-being mean for you?</td>
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<tr>
<th>Section B: Positive things about your present state of well-being</th>
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<tr>
<td>3) What is good about your present state of personal well-being?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4) What is good about your present relationships with other people?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) What is good about the present conditions in your life and community?</td>
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</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Section C: Negative things about your present state of well-being</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6) What is not so good or missing for your personal well-being at present?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) What is not so good or missing in your present relationships with other people?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) What is not so good or missing in terms of the present conditions of your life and community?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section D: Actions or changes that could improve well-being in St Albans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9) What are some of the things that you and other people who live in St Albans could do to improve well-being in the community?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) What could other people (health and community service workers, governments, researchers) do to help us improve well-being in this community?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Focus Group and Interview Procedures
The focus groups were held at GSYFS and each session began with informal conversation and introductions over morning tea to facilitate discussion between participants. Name-labels were distributed, and the format of the session together with matters of confidentiality, privacy and other rights were explained when participants were seated. Individual interviews were conducted in private counseling rooms at GSYFS with only the researcher and interviewee present.

The questions used during the focus groups with community members were presented both verbally (Totikidis) and visually using an overhead projector (Robertson) and brief notes of the responses were written on transparencies during the discussion for participants to see and reflect on. All the meetings were audiotaped for the purpose of producing verbatim transcriptions. A compensation of 20 dollars was given to each community member at the end of the discussions. The focus groups with service providers were conducted in a similar way with questions presented verbally by the researcher (Robertson) and visually using an overhead projector (Totikidis). Service providers were not paid for their participation as they attended during working hours and were paid by their respective organisations. Questions were presented verbally in the interviews.

Care was taken not to impose our own ideas and values about well-being onto participants. This was achieved by asking two general questions about well-being (Section A) before introducing the concept of personal, relational and collective wellness, explaining that differences in opinion about well-being were acceptable, and by introducing the model by means of an uncomplicated colourful diagram. The diagram included the symbols used in Table 1 with the words personal, relational and collective, but not the value items within the model. As the researchers in this study we ascribed to the precepts of liberation psychology articulated by Freire by giving voice to others and understanding that it "is not our role to speak to the people about our own view of the world, nor to attempt to impose that view on them but rather to dialogue with the people about their view and ours" (1994, p. 77).

Data Analysis
Matrix analysis is a popular technique for analysing qualitative data as demonstrated by Miles and Huberman (1994). In the present work, a common conceptual analytical matrix was used to guide the analysis of data that emerged from the research with community members and professionals. An example of the matrix for community members appears in Table 3. This involved six analyses (2 interviews & 4 focus group). The relationship between the areas explored (top row) and interview/focus group questions (second row) is also shown. The research with professionals involved 11 analyses (2 focus groups & 9 interviews; not shown in the table) and also involved attention to areas explored and interview/focus group questions.

The analyses involved reflecting on the research process, listening to the audiotaped responses and reading the transcripts, notes and transparencies. Whilst each researcher conducted the data analyses independently, some of the strategies used included highlighting, comparing, summarising and tabling responses, developing common themes and drawing out quotations to demonstrate themes and responses.
Table 3 Conceptual Matrix Guiding the Data Analyses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview or Focus Group Analysis*</th>
<th>A. Well-being and Lack of Well-being</th>
<th>B. Personal, Relational and Collective Strengths</th>
<th>C. Personal, Relational and Collective Needs</th>
<th>D. Action by Community Members and Health and Community Service Workers, Governments, Researchers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>9</td>
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Further strategies are discussed throughout the findings and discussion section.

Findings and Discussion

Community Members' Wellness Ideals, Strengths and Needs

Ideals: Participants’ responses from all sections (A-D) and questions (1-10) of the interview schedule were examined to address the research question on community wellness ideals.

From this, concepts or factors that could be classified as ideals were entered into tables for each cultural group and the interviewees. These are too numerous to be presented here but are available elsewhere (see Totikidis, 2003; Totikidis & Prilleltensky, in press). Further thematic analyses of the tables, transcripts and other materials revealed 15 common wellness themes or ideals among the participants' responses as a whole. The themes are shown in Table 4, with three classified as personal, five as relational and seven as collective.

Table 4 Community Members' Personal, Relational and Collective Wellness Ideals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Ideals</th>
<th>Relational Ideals</th>
<th>Collective Ideals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Positive Thoughts and Feelings (towards oneself and others)</td>
<td>5. Friendship and Social Support</td>
<td>10. Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Inter Cultural Harmony</td>
<td>12. Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. Community Cohesion and Participation</td>
<td>13. Community Services, Resources and Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14. Community Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15. Good Government</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of these 15 ideals, items one to six were considered to be areas of strength for this community while items seven to fifteen were areas of relative need. Community strengths and needs were determined by assessing whether responses related to each theme were positive and satisfied or negative and dissatisfied. For example, the following quotes (in Table 5) are obviously negative and dissatisfied and (together with other such comments by participants) point to the need for greater community cohesion and participation, improved safety measures, more responsive (good) government and work to promote respect for diversity (inter cultural harmony) in the community.

Two types of cultural harmony were identified in the research with community members. One of these was inter-cultural harmony, which could be defined as harmony between cultures and which is related to tolerance and respect for cultural diversity. The other was intra-cultural harmony, which could be broadly defined as harmony in relation to one's own culture and could include positive cultural identity, adjustment and self-acceptance. Although some people expressed negative attitudes towards other cultures, most participants displayed attitudes that were conducive to inter cultural harmony. A positive example of this theme is shown in Table 6 (first row). Further examples of community wellness strengths related to the themes of intra cultural harmony, spirituality and family are also shown in the table.
Table 5 Selected Quotations Illustrating Community Wellness Needs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of Community Need (negative/dissatisfied responses)</th>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Well like everyone talks about the transport [railway problems] in St. Albans [but] when it comes to blockade [protests] here, the same people turn up. Only 20 or 30 people turn up. If more people turn up ... you know it's not enough ... &quot; (Maltese woman).</td>
<td>Community Cohesion and Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;It's very isolated, like I walked through St. Albans the other night at 11 o'clock - there was practically no one there, no one. And one of my friends said: (in surprise) &quot;Oh, how can you walk, you know, God, there [are] drug users, you know?&quot; ... If I'm not going to provoke them, they're not going to harm me. But I have to admit there are risks ... you just never know&quot; (Serbian woman).</td>
<td>Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;And the Prime Minister of the country and the present Federal government are quite happy for the gulf between the 'haves' and the 'have nots' to get bigger, and bigger and bigger, and for people on low incomes, working class people - to be disenfranchised from the political system. Quite happy for that, and they're doing it by stealth and the opposition is just letting it happen. There's ineffective political leadership!&quot; (Anglo man).</td>
<td>Good Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;They're coming into our country, with their own stuff, their own culture. And they're like, you walk down the street and there's just Chinese everywhere&quot; (Female focus group participant).</td>
<td>Inter Cultural Harmony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I would like to make a point that we need more mental health services ... Mental Health services, that's an umbrella; I mean we need more support for families who have a member of the family suffering from mental health problems, more awareness of the services that are already there ... The mental health area is an umbrella which covers a lot of things not only with regards to the patients themselves, but also the families&quot; (Maltese woman).</td>
<td>Community Services, Resources and Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;When it comes to youth there aren't many places where they could go. I mean like high school students - all they have is shopping centers ... They're at school till 4.00 o'clock; the school grounds get locked and what are they going to do afterwards? The shopping centre is the only place they can go to, if they are under 18. Over 18 they have nightclubs and certain places. But for the younger age group there is nothing&quot; (Serbian woman).</td>
<td>Community Services, Resources and Information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 Selected Quotations Illustrating Areas of Community Wellness Strengths

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of Community Strengths (positive/satisfied responses)</th>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Some weeks ago we had mass and there were different languages and there were different choirs from different nationalities and it was beautiful, the mass. And then after mass there were different dancing groups dancing. It was beautiful, it was a multicultural thing ... to share their culture with each other and to appreciate each other's culture and to live in peace together&quot; (Maltese woman).</td>
<td>Inter Cultural Harmony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I am an Australian citizen. I chose to live in this country. I thank God that my parents migrated here. And, I'm also proud of my country of my birth and my roots and where I grew up&quot; (Maltese woman).</td>
<td>Intra Cultural Harmony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;To love one another, to help one another, is to be true to each other. That's total fulfilment I believe. I mean when you talk about religion or whatever, it's talking about being one with God, or Buddha, or who ever. It's up there at that level, above humanity, spiritual&quot; (Vietnamese man, age 22).</td>
<td>Spirituality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Even though you may not be living in a perfect society or perfect neighbourhood, for example, if you have your family it does make you complete, and makes you feel good and loved, and also love is part of being well&quot; (Serbian woman).</td>
<td>Family</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Community Members’ Suggestions for Actions to Improve Well-being in St Albans

A rich amount of information with respect to actions that could improve well-being in the community was generated in the research. As shown in Table 7, the responses consisted of suggestions on what community members felt they could do and on what they thought others (health and community service workers, governments, researchers) could do to improve well being.

A list of recommendations was developed after reflecting on participants’ views regarding action and other issues identified in the research.

- Culturally appropriate family services and support to migrants need to be set up in the community
- Information regarding existing community services, resources and benefits need to be disseminated to migrants
- Mental health and other services in the area need to be strengthened and made more accessible
- Strategies and community education to curb negative attitudes and promote harmony need to be implemented in this multicultural region
- Local government, policy makers and community workers need to engage in ongoing consultations with the community to resolve community problems
- Policing of certain areas needs to be increased and crime prevention and community safety measures need to be further implemented
- Business and employment to the area need to be developed
- Community events, celebrations and festivals need to be valued and encouraged
- Elderly clubs need to be supported and adequately funded
- Youth services, recreational activities and opportunities need to be improved and extended
- Affordable education and learning opportunities need to be provided to the community
- An ongoing community wellness group should be set up and run by community members to identify areas of need, initiate projects and monitor progress

Table 7 Community Perceptions on Actions or Changes that could Improve Well-being

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Action</th>
<th>Action by Others to Help Improve Well-being</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maltese</strong></td>
<td>Better monitoring by council and council services (e.g., hard rubbish collection) need improving. Giving services back to certain areas. More mental health services needed. Awareness of services. Support for families with mental illness and more activities for people with mental illness. Social support groups. Preventative community education. Policing, reduce crime and promoting safety. Address traffic problems in St Albans. Support and help for families. Funding for beautification of region. Cleaning of public areas. Community education on environmental issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vietnamese</strong></td>
<td>Teaching techniques need to change. Gambling issues need to be addressed to protect peoples’ livelihood. Local community groups need funding. Information about services needs to be disseminated to community. Trust and friendship between agencies and community needs to be built up and language issues need to be addressed. Better representation of community in local government. Work needed to guard peoples dignity and pride. Sense of community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Italian</strong></td>
<td>Shopping services need improving - more quality shops and bring it closer to the people. Discount for pensioners at shopping places. Unemployment issues need to be addressed in this area. Safety of community needs to be addressed. Safety on transport. Staffing of stations. Security in trains. Broken glass on bus stops. Robberies need to be stopped. Graffiti needs to be stopped. Different religions are an issue. More discipline in schools and education on respect and morals needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anglo</strong></td>
<td>Improve medical services. Address cultural integration issues. No more tokenism from government. Free dental services. Employment. Education. Cost of living for low income should be addressed. People have to have courage to speak out against bad policies. Cease fire in St Albans (conflicts among youth). Effort from migrant groups to mix.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Only focus group responses are included in this table.
Professionals' Perceptions of Well Being

A summary of professionals' responses and selected quotes are presented in this section. Table 8 presents a summary of what professionals' thought were the positives and negatives of personal, relational and collective well-being for community members. Responses related to the first two general questions regarding well-being and the lack of well being have also been integrated into this table. Overall, participants' responses supported the view of Prilleltensky (2001a), that well being is a holistic concept and that a balance in the personal relational and collective domains is crucial for overall wellness. As one participant so aptly explained:

"Well being is] "Feeling well mentally, physically, and emotionally... with a social side to that as well. It's the holistic approach, it's not just about dealing with some part of the person, it looking at all aspects."

Professionals' Perceptions of the Strengths of Community Members

Personal, Relational and Collective Strengths. It is interesting to note that when asked about what was good about the current state of wellness of community members at the personal level, professionals struggled to think in terms of the positive aspects of community members' wellness. This is reflected in the following two responses:

"I think sometimes it's just getting your mind frame around it (what is good or what are positive aspects for community members wellbeing) because we are always thinking in the negative...what is it that they want...because we don't take the time to think about what is positive."

"They [community members] don't come into my orbit if they haven't got problems."

This finding supports Prilleltensky's (1994) assertion that the nature of the health care professionals' work requires that they respond in a reactive manner and this requires that there is a search for deficits as opposed to building on the positive assets, emphasizing strengths, health and wellness rather than deficits and limitations. However the nature of the health and welfare professionals' work entails that they do see people at their most vulnerable times and while participants, found it "very difficult to talk in terms of what is good, " they were able to identify positive aspects of the community members' when presented with the prompts. For example, one of the participants explained:

"My experience is that they [referring to Vietnamese people, in particular] experience themselves certainly as individuals but the collective is important...it's essential to their well being...the sense of belonging is important."

Table 8 Professionals Perceptions of Well Being and the Lack of Well Being in the Personal, Relational and Collective Domains

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Well Being</th>
<th>Lack of Well Being</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling valued, feeling balanced, self control, contentment, empowerment, control of own future, physical and psychological health, emotional health, ongoing sense of security, self esteem, confidence, self worth, physical and motivational energy, coping skills.</td>
<td>Stress-physical/emotional overwork, poor health, lack of work, negative emotions- anger frustration, mental health problems, powerlessness, lack of control, not being valued, lack of opportunity to develop creativity, lack of motivation, feeling like a third class citizen, isolation, fear, lack of skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social support-family, strong links with culture and family, harmony in the family, love, belonging-connectedness, tolerance of diversity in community, good work relationships, safety in community.</td>
<td>Negative relationships - general, family or work, generational cycle of disadvantage, family disruption, lack of sense of community, racism by potential employers, domestic violence, individualism, age discrimination in employment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate support networks in health, education &amp; employment, sense of belonging, schooling system supportive of cultural diversity and instrumental in connecting peers in wider community, dedicated service providers, educational opportunity, good networking and collaboration among the service providers, material aid available through services, fairness, social justice.</td>
<td>Lack of access to quality services, racial, economic &amp; gender discrimination and labeling, negative relationships, economic hardship, inefficient public transport, menial work - impact on leisure, life and family, lack of affordable housing, homelessness, lack of sense of community, gentrification (reinforces underclass system), low income, adequate community education &amp; information, inadequate public transport, huge job loss in recent years, work for the dole may have negative impact, basic needs not met, poverty among sole parents, inadequate doctors/dentists/community agencies, poverty trap.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In both the individual interviews and the focus group meetings health and welfare professionals indicated that there was a vulnerability among community members from the four ethnic groups and so community members could find security and protection by keeping close connections to their own cultural group. This relates to the theme of Intra-Cultural Harmony identified in the research with community members and was identified as conducive to personal, relational and collective wellness.

**Professionals’ Perceptions of the Needs of Community Members**

**Personal Needs.** The findings of this research suggest that there was sensitivity among professionals to the dominating psychosocial quality of life experienced by community members. When asked what was missing or lacking for community member’s personal well-being participants indicated that social inclusion, material standard of living, feeling valued and respected is crucial to the quality of life for people they work with. Language barriers among community members were also identified as problematic which caused people to learn new job skills and find work. Language barriers among community members were also identified as problematic which caused people to learn new job skills and find work. When asked what was missing or lacking for community member’s personal well-being participants indicated that social inclusion, material standard of living, feeling valued and respected is crucial to the quality of life for people they work with. Further issues raised as having a negative impact on personal well-being appear in the following quotes:

"[There is] a lack of access to quality services...the waiting period for quality services...economic hardship...not being valued."

"Lack of respect...discrimination...lack of control in decision making...economic hardships."

"There is hostility in these groups [four main groups] and it's connected to acceptance and tolerance."

**Relational Needs.** Discussions around the negative aspects of community members’ relationships with others included concerns over the identities imposed on others, about family breakdowns, early exiting from school and unemployment within this community. The discussions provoked a passionate response from participants in regards to labeling and victim blaming.

"Labeling...I think what happens is...when we don’t know or understand we label...then we are able to make perceptions of what they are such as the long term unemployed...single mum’s...they just keep having kids to get more money...the elderly well...they have done their time but...they can’t participate or give back to society so we’ll just make communities for them elsewhere...young people that are not at school well...they’re just bums or drug addicts..."

**Collective Needs.** The responses indicate that professionals believe that well-being is closely connected to community members’ economic and social status at the collective level. The lack of access to quality services and affordable housing, low income, inadequate public transport, poverty among sole parents and difficulty satisfying basic material needs were seen as the negative factors influencing community wellness. Participants shared the ability to summarize their perceptions of the lack of well-being to a compact essence. They described the aspects that contribute to the lack of well-being at the community level often in point form, indicating a familiarity with the local needs.

"The public transport system in Brimbank leaves a lot to be desired...this affects work opportunities."

"There are far too many agencies in the west and doctors...there is so much trouble attracting doctors to the West (western suburbs of Melbourne)...there are few lawyers, fewer doctors there are fewer dentists there are fewer community agencies..."

"A lot of jobs have been lost as large organisations have been closed down particularly factory areas."

**Professionals Perceptions on Actions or that could Improve Well-being in St Albans**

**What can Professionals do to improve wellbeing?** Participants demonstrated an informed understanding of general needs and policy issues affecting the community that they worked in. Participants spoke of the need for critical interventions into social policy initiatives in order to provide equitable resource structures that take into consideration the "regional needs and issues". Health and welfare professionals viewed housing as an issue that highlighted the need in the community for equitable distribution of resources.

One of the reoccurring themes in the overall study and one of the major issues discussed at the collective level of intervention was that "there is huge unemployment." It was suggested that the government implement programs that help people to learn "new job skills and find work." This would in effect liberate welfare recipients rather than keeping them "dependent on the system." Participants explained that government responsibility also needed to be extended to increase funding to education, community development and the health and welfare sector. Concerns were stressed over inadequate levels of funding to respond to the needs of clients. The length of time required to wait for an initial appointment was cited as an indication of the need in this area, as one participant explained: "I think one of the things is economic resources which take time and effort to access...we have long waiting lists."

**What can community members do to improve well being?** The overall response to this question suggest that health and welfare workers perceive their client base to be, to some extent, powerless in bringing about change. It seemed highly implausible to health and welfare workers that there was any real lifestyle choices to be made without social changes in employment and educational opportunities. The existing literature tends to favour the notion that feelings of control can enhance or prevent the degree of decision making power the person has to shape their own life and take control of their health (Rappaport, 1987). This was a reoccurring theme...
among participants. For example one of the participants explained:

"It's the ability to actually make choices and that doesn't mean that people can't make choices but there very limited choices ...... unless people have a sense of control of their lives and they're basically pro-active, in terms of seeking support structures .... and knowing how to access what they need in order to get what they want. Then it makes it very hard to get out of the spiral."

The responses from participants in this study support the assertion that health and well-being are related to economic status and that change could only occur through action at the collective level. As said:

"Better health outcomes and lack of disease are absolutely related to the economy... to tell the individual to rise above that to go out and find a way out [of their problems] ...it's not realistic... it adds to a sense of hopelessness".

The participants offered ideas for tackling the negative aspects that impact on community member's wellness and this included involvement in action and education as a tool of empowerment. Previous research also suggests that one path to promoting empowerment and change in the client, is to incorporate education about power into everyday practice so that people gain awareness of oppressive forces in their lives and of their own ability to overcome injustice (Prilleltensky, 2000).

**Conclusions**

This research employed the Community Wellness Cycle of Praxis to explore the views of community members and professionals in the multicultural suburb of St Albans. The praxis model encourages participants to reflect on personal, relational and collective aspects of well-being in order to identify the ideas, strengths and needs of a community that can guide future action to improve well-being. Our assessment of this model was that it was useful in generating a rich dialogue among participants that was reflective of their "situation in the world" (Freire, 1993, p. 77).

Thus the model could be employed equally well with different populations to assess their own special needs and views of 'their' world and most importantly to generate concrete ideas for actions that could improve well being in the community. Even so, people cannot discuss issues that they do not know about so broader samples and other strategies to assess community needs (e.g., surveys and analysis of social indicators) are warranted for a more comprehensive account.

It is interesting to note that service providers' responses showed a greater focus on collective needs for wellness. The comparisons made between the personal, relational, and collective levels indicate that professional's perceptions of the positive aspects of well being for this community are to be found in the relational domain and that the negative aspects of wellness are closely connected to their economic and social status at the collective level. There is also evidence from the results that health and welfare workers consider community resources to be scarce. In so far as wellness is a product of one's social standing in life, there is a continuation of concerning among health and welfare workers trends in the shortages of accessible and equitable resources across the community. This was largely supported in the research with community members, although unlike the research with professionals, the community research revealed a more pressing need for improved community cohesion, participation and cultural relationships in addition to collective concerns regarding resources and infrastructure.

While the professionals' struggled to provide proposals for the ways in which community members could help themselves they provided a prolific amount of information on the ways in which society at large could improve conditions for the community. It is clear from the findings that professionals understand that the factors that determine wellness are not always in the control of the person and that remedial efforts aimed at the personal level of wellness continue to make little progress. According to professional's perceptions for this community in Melbourne's West, what is clearly required for a balance in the community's overall wellness are fundamental changes and provision of resources at the collective level.

Professionals believed that wellness is also determined by choices that are made; being able to have control over choice of life's circumstances and by ensuring that the society we live in creates conditions that allow for the attainment of wellness. There is a need in the community for advocacy in regard to these issues and the findings suggest that participants understand that there is a need for channels to be opened between the health sector and the broader social political and economic structures at the collective level. In wellness promotion we have to be careful in defining what is needed and by whom, when and where. It is suggested that future research be decisive in taking into consideration the views of community members and that they take part in defining what wellness means.

Finally it is suggested that wellness promotion works through concrete and effective community dialogue in setting priorities, making decisions, planning strategies and implementing them. Though such communication, disadvantaged groups can get the recognition and support they need to encourage resilience and a positive self-identity. These are the imperatives that can create different paths towards wellness and at the center of this process is the empowerment of communities, their ownership and control of their own affairs and destiny.

The responses of community members and professionals working in the health and welfare sectors of the area of Brimbank provide some on-the-ground support of a model that juxtaposes personal, relational and collective needs as equally essential to the attainment of wellness. However it was acknowledged that professionals' responses were coloured by the nature of own crisis oriented work. Changing the "mindset" of professionals away from traditional preoccupations with individual deficits and towards solutions that engage personal,
relational and collective strengths is likely to be a long term undertaking. A wellness model that is relatively simple to describe and understand, as utilized in this study, offers a tool for developing balanced approaches and gauging progress in the balanced promotion of wellness at all three levels. This research could prove valuable for future development of theory and practical interventions, assisting and informing the further community development objectives of the larger Community Wellness Project. The research is an important step in understanding how psychological wellness is experienced and how it can be promoted in different life stages and settings. The initial phase of this research has demonstrated that both community members and professionals have a valuable role in the promotion of wellness. The information gathered from these stakeholders in the community, needs to be added to the theorization of a psychology of wellness. We have attempted to understand the common reflection of and for the community and in turn facilitate a vision for action based on the needs and aspirations of the community.

References


In July of this year, we were privileged to attend the 9th Biennial Australia-Aotearoa Community Psychology conference held in Tauranga, Aotearoa. As four students completing our Masters in Community Psychology in Melbourne, we felt that this was a unique opportunity to link into the broader community of community psychologists, as well as share some of our stories of ‘social action and change’.

Attending the conference has had a profound impact on each of us, providing a distinct marker in our continuing professional development as community psychologists. We agreed that one of the most salient aspects of attending the conference together was the mutual support and companionship of each other as fellow students. The importance of our immediate peers, who have also become close friends over the last two years, cannot be underestimated. It was in the early hours after our third and final day, waiting for our bus to the airport, that we felt driven to document our reflections of the conference experience. By reflecting upon our status and experiences as students at the conference we hope to collectively be in a better position to share our experiences and to implement change. This will be in the form of informing the planning and delivery of the next or future conferences, particularly in the hope of ensuring it is a student-friendly experience for those involved.

While the article is structured around four distinct experiences, it is actually the result of ideas that were discussed and agreed upon collectively. As such, we both acknowledge individual differences in our experiences at the conference, and support each other’s reflections as they appear in this article.

First narrative

My identity as a student is just one of my natural communities and is a minority grouping of sorts. It is one inherently associated with inequalities in power and status. “In academia power is unequally distributed between occupational groups (i.e. student vs. lecturer) and academic credentials (i.e. BSc vs. PhD)...[s]tudents are placed at the bottom and professors at the top of the resulting organisational hierarchy.” (Duckett, 2003)

You might expect a community psychology conference to provide a perfect example of a supportive environment for students, with little need to raise issues of power and hierarchy. However, inequality permeates the atmosphere. What might be different, and more promising, in this situation is that students are actually talking about it and feel free to do so.

So having identified it as an issue, where do we go from here? As students, we are in an important position where we may be able to positively intervene for the benefit of future students. Huygens (1988) identified two ways in which we can empower ourselves in a manner that will benefit others, and make us key agents for change:

(i) Identify our own “minority” status and work to empower our group

(ii) Identify the ways we disempower specific groups and work among our own group to lift this oppression.

We need to be aware of how we contribute to, and reinforce, this hierarchy. This means working to reduce the inequalities in our status with regard to both our “superiors” and those “lower” down the hypothetical ladder. By being submissive and cautious in approaching certain well-known and highly esteemed individuals, for example, we simply serve to perpetuate the status quo. Furthermore, how often have we, intentionally or otherwise, demeaned the status of an undergraduate in relation to our own postgraduate status? How often have we, as practicing psychologists, undermined the contribution of ‘community’ delegates differently?

Further inequalities in power were apparent in other guises, and I would like to draw out a couple of examples. I was ‘lucky’ enough to be part of a presentation that was awarded a prize. While at first happy to be rewarded for our efforts, it also raised a number of questions within our group. In particular, we asked what messages do the giving of prizes convey to those that win, and to those that do not. Our inklings of awkwardness did not do so on the basis of intellectual merit. The prize was obviously felt some injustice and implied that another ‘winner’ did not do so on the basis of intellectual merit. The prize was for the ‘best’ graduate student presentation. Criteria unknown.

As well as potentially creating an air of jealousy and competitiveness, these practices serve to reify the networks’ hierarchical architecture by creating within it positions of power, adulation and influence.” (Duckett, 2003). Duckett continues by asking how we are to acknowledge individual achievement without encouraging a cult of celebrity, such as my initial...
flickers of pride. Do we need prizes at all? What purpose do they serve? If prizes are the antithesis of community psychology, is there a way to celebrate multiple contributions somehow? (Gridley, 2004, personal communication)

Another situation I want to draw attention to is a round table discussion. Despite the content being focused towards learning and teaching in community psychology, it represented another forum in which some participants experienced discomfort caused by hierarchical structures. The discussion was housed in a boardroom, around a large wooden table. The roundness of the circle of participants was at the mercy of latecomers eager to squeeze in. Academics dominated the conversation. As eager as some may have been to encourage student participation it was not to be the case. Why is this so, and what can we do about it? One possible solution that we identified was to have a structured student session or forum to raise our own issues, with a further opportunity to feedback to the rest of the congregation. But should we really have to resort to explicitly carving out our own private space to ensure that we can have a say? Or would this serve only to encourage segregation and risk perpetuating the inequality?

Despite my somewhat negative preoccupation with the evident hierarchical structures permeating the conference, I nonetheless departed New Zealand excited about my future as a community psychologist and the prospect of becoming an active member of the community psychology community. "Community psychologists need a peer group of like-minded people from psychology, other academic disciplines, and the community." (Nelson & Prilleltensky, in press) A conference such as this provided that opportunity. Perhaps the freedom with which I feel I can write these comments is testament to the willingness of the community psychology community to address these and similar issues and to pave pathways for change.

**Second narrative**

So much has happened since the conference. It's only December, but it seems like the conference was in another year. Somehow the three days in Tauranga have got lost in the middle of a year of proving myself as a student, proving that I can join this group that call themselves community psychologists. The conference was part of that, a hurdle I set myself along the way. Successfully negotiated, in my eyes anyway. I've moved on in my quest to join the profession, and now have time to stop and reflect upon those days in Aotearoa.

At last, I'd found a big community of community psychologists. And how giving they were, through presentations or without formally presenting. What a relief to not have to explain to anyone what community psychology was! Those from non-psychology backgrounds were beautifully embraced. Social workers from Aotearoa were there, earnestly contributing and being heard. To be part of this was very special.

Students from Aotearoa asked me specific questions about indigenous people in Australia. I couldn't answer them. They knew so much about Maori culture it was embarrassing for me. I resolved to do something about this. On return to university, I changed my final elective from Psychology of Health to Aboriginal People and Psychology.

Aside from the above, my overwhelming memory of the conference is my sense that my work was not taken seriously enough. I think I felt isolated by the lack of attention to environmental issues. There seemed to be unstated/unacknowledged assumptions about the weight of your presentation or topic of interest and the presentations and presentations that I was part of just didn't have the weight. Although we were made to feel very welcome and felt very supported, I left feeling there were real issues and there were other issues. In my darker moments, it felt like I was facing a challenge to even keep the environment on the fringe of community psychology. Can you really speak about the littering of cigarette butts when other pressing issues of the world are looming large?

Apparently, community psychologists are concerned about oppression and inequity in the community. Leopold (1949, 1966) advocated for the expansion of the notion of community to include other species. Community psychologists are thinking of others beside themselves and people like them. Questioning the processes and structures that systematically disadvantage people. Trying to do something about such things. What are community psychologists doing for future generations of people and plants and animals? Because it is very clear to me that their needs are being disregarded every minute.

Attendance at the conference also put me in a very compromised position. To ease my guilt I'll write about it. I flew there. It's a big deal to me to be in a plane, the fossil fuel use is extraordinary. A lot of people flew here. The ecological footprint of this conference is massive. The area of earth required to make this conference happen is alarming. How can we, as community psychologists, continue to be part of that? The price of oil recently broke the $US 50 barrier for the first time. Are you worried about that? Petrol in Melbourne is $1.07 per litre and rising. I am loath to use money to get your attention but I've found that it often works well. Is there a way you could have got to the conference on time and not used fossil fuels?

The calculations for a personal ecological footprint require information about your plane flights. In fact, plane flights will blow your ecological footprint out the window. You can live in an ecologically sensitive manner in every possible way, but one plane flight will greatly increase the amount of land required to sustain your existence. We won't run out of oil. It will just become no longer cost-effective to extract it. Imagine your grandchildren talking about how you used to fly to conferences using fossil fuels, to talk about your favourite topic. Earth Garden magazine pays an eco-tax every edition for the resources it uses. Greenfleet gives motorists the opportunity to plant trees to offset the emissions from their vehicles. Could we have community psychology do the same? Conference delegates could be invited to plant some
trees in an area local to the conference or make some other environmental contribution.

After the conference, I stay with old friends in Auckland. She works in marketing for a multinational fast-food chain; he works in finance for a multinational alcohol distributor. This clash of cultures is inevitably difficult for me. We became engaged on a difference of opinion about Maori people. I've thrown myself straight back into the fold. The conference sustained and nurtured me to do this, to chip away at the dominant culture. For that I am very grateful. I look forward to seeing you at the tree-planting session next conference.

Third narrative
I was initially apprehensive and unsure about presenting at and participating in the 9th Biennial Australia-Aotearoa Community Psychology Conference. Being a student in the VU Masters program, I had heard that community psychology existed in other places, read lots of articles by some of the community psychology legends, and knew of this 'community' of community psychologists. It was not until I met other students and conference attendees who called themselves 'community psychologists' that I really believed it was true. I think I was beginning to believe that community psychology did not exist out side of VU- I'd certainly never heard of it during my undergraduate training in the UK and nobody else I spoke to outside of my course had any idea what it was about. Sometimes, there seems to be this sense of 'isolation', an idea of working solo on a secret mission! So, it was really motivating to attend the conference, hear about research in areas I wasn't aware of and meet people from vast perspectives.

The biggest learning for me, however, was meeting, hearing from and getting to know the people from Reach-Out in Scotland. I chatted to other community psychologists and went to workshops but I really felt that I connected with Reach Out- their presence made me think. If community psychology is really about empowerment, collaboration, social justice and change, then why do we need to have a conference, in a luxurious setting at a winery to tend to each other's egos and have a break from what is often difficult and stressful work? I have no doubt that community psychologists need a retreat and a break just as much, or even more than everybody else, but the notion of a conference- the 'getting together' of experts on a topic, just seem counter-intuitive to community psychology to me.

As I was involved in two presentations, and this was the first time I'd ever presented at a conference, I found that my nerves prevented me from really absorbing myself in others' research and stories wholeheartedly. I was disappointed to find that I was not able to attend the parallel sessions of those whom I had met and related to during breaks and meals. And sometimes felt that more breaks and opportunities to 'break out' from sessions without 'missing out' on content would have been useful. My highlights were the apres-conference celebrations: drinks, laughs, karaoke, dancing with my friends, other students, and indeed a lecturer or two on tabletops and even an indoor balcony! For me, this was when I really felt a sense of community, a real connection to the spirit of community psychology.

Fourth narrative
I attended the conference as a student, co-presenting some of the narratives explored within my thesis project. The presentation explored personal, professional and political aspects involved in supporting refugees in Australia, and was jointly presented with my research participant or co-researcher. My experience at the conference was not only influenced by my status as a student, but also by my background as a White Australian. This has specific significance in the context of the topic explored both in my thesis and in the presentation.

As I boarded the plane for Aotearoa (New Zealand) to attend the conference, I was particularly aware of the privileged position that I held as a White Australian, a position that enabled me to leave and travel freely to another country. This was in particular contrast to people who are (were) seeking asylum in Australia. I had become more informed about the situation facing refugees in Australia over the course of my thesis, including the impact of policies of deterrence such as immigration detention. The provision of Bridging Visas had become particularly familiar to me, as my thesis project had focused on the efforts of one person supporting a group of young men given these visas; the conditions of which restricted the right to work, to public health cover or to any welfare payments. The situation of these young men, along with 8000 others on Bridging visa's, was in stark contrast to my own situation and my ability to leave Australia; to travel freely to another country to participate in a conference.

Throughout the conference, as I heard the stories of those involved in, and affected by social change projects, I was reminded of the absence (at the conference) of the young men involved in the stories shared within my thesis. As we suggested in our presentation, ours was also a "story about dilemmas, including our decision to offer to present at this conference. We will be presenting our stories, not the stories of the young men involved. To tell their stories would be to put their appeals processes in jeopardy. The Australian system of bridging visas and temporary protection visas is a very effective way to silence individual stories. We would ask you however to regard this as a presentation in which the subtext is far more important than the narratives we find ourselves able to present on this occasion." One of the strengths of the conference, for me, was the foregrounding of particular conference attendees (as keynotes), and the creating of space for their stories to be shared. I found Reach-out's performance creative, funny, informative and confronting and was privileged throughout the conference to get to know members individually. Sue Bradford's address was equally challenging, reminding us of the significance of change at a broader political level. It was with great respect
that, on the final day, I listened to Patricia Grace reading from her novel 'Baby No-eyes'. I found these stories very powerful. By co-presenting with my research participant or 'co-researcher', I was also attempting to create a space for us to jointly share our narratives. This reflected the collaborative approach to constructing narratives within the thesis, where traditional researcher/participant roles were discarded in favour of a more fluid and open research relationship (Plummer, 1995). Unfortunately, as we only had 20 minutes within which to present, there was not enough time to communicate this method of co-construction, nor were we able to engage with the audience on the narratives presented. It was disappointing that further collaboration, through the sharing of experiences and reactions of those who heard the presentation, could not occur within the session. Following the session however, we did extend the conversations with some men representing Auckland Refugees as Survivors, who were to present the following day. These men shared their responses to our project, as well as their own experiences. To me, this was what the conference was about.

Finally, presenting as a student to peers, academics and local community members is a daunting task. Receiving feedback, both formally and informally from others at the conference, provides a supportive context within which stories can be exchanged. It also has the potential to encourage more students to present their narratives at future conferences. While the number of students attending the conference was fairly small, it was encouraging to meet, share stories of community psychology, and recount experiences of the conference itself together. These experiences were at least as significant as the formal presentations, in making up my experience at the conference.

**Endpoint**

This article represents some student narratives or versions of the conference and of the discipline more broadly. We question hierarchical structures and ask whether they are inevitable or if, by altering our practices, it is possible to address the power imbalance more adequately. We ask where environmental concerns fit into the equation and how we judge what topics are more worthy of discussion. We reflect on the role of the conference within our field, and draw out both positive and negative aspects. We raise issues around privilege, and wonder how experiences and ideas can be more effectively shared in such a forum.

While our reflections are based on our experiences at this recent conference, two of us have attended APS and community psychology conferences (in Australia) previously, and our reflections could equally apply to these conferences too. The point we make here is that as students, we feel that certain themes have emerged in our experiences of these conferences, so our comments are not necessarily isolated to this particular conference.

By writing this article, we hope that our reflections may serve to inform and remind others (particularly non-students and conference organisers) that despite our rhetoric within community psychology, dominant narratives also can marginalise and exclude those within this (marginal) area of psychology. This is in line with Lather's (1986) contention that "we who do empirical research in the name of emancipatory politics must discover ways to connect our research methodology to our theoretical concerns and commitments. At its simplest, this is a call for critical inquirers to practice in their empirical endeavours what they preach in their theoretical formulations" (p. 258). Surely the same applies to conferences, whether it is the location, venue, roundtables or involvement of local communities?

This conference was a pivotal point in our careers as community psychologists and we look forward to the 10th Biennial Australia-Aotearoa Community Psychology Conference. We extend our thanks to the conference organisers, and are grateful for the opportunity to attend the conference, and to write about the experience in this network edition.

**References**


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THE APS COLLEGE OF COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGISTS

presents

a Professional Development Workshop facilitated by Dr. Helen McGrath

Bounce Back!

Promoting resilience in young people

at school and community levels

1.00-5.00pm, Saturday 12th February, 2005

Treacy Conference Centre, 126 The Avenue, Parkville

Cost (GST incl): $55; Community College members $44, students/concession: $22

Afternoon tea will be provided, and refreshments at registration (from 12.30pm)

The Facilitator: Dr Helen McGrath, Deakin University

Dr Helen McGrath is a counselling and community psychologist in private practice, a senior lecturer in psychology and education at Deakin University, an author of 16 books, and a consultant to schools and businesses. She and co-author Dr Toni Noble have been working extensively in the area of resilience and positive psychology for a number of years. In 2003, their Bounce Back! Program (published as a series of four books) was awarded The Robin Winkler Award for Applied Community Psychology Research. This APS Community College award recognises excellence in a field of community psychology.

In this half day interactive workshop:

Helen will elaborate on the many components of the Bounce Back! Resilience program and explain how they can be implemented both in schools and in counselling and community settings. Skills in the program that have been shown to predict resilient behaviour include social skills, optimistic thinking, helpful thinking, anger management, goal setting and persistence, integrity, a sense of humour and preparedness to ask for support. An anti-bullying component of the program will also be briefly described. Helen's workshops have proved extremely popular with primary and secondary schools around Victoria and interstate that are seeking to establish whole-of-school approaches to the promotion of prosocial behaviour and youth mental health, and are booked ahead well into 2006. So this is a unique opportunity for college members, educational psychologists and others to jump the queue at a special APS rate.

For more information or to register, please contact Heather Gridley

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Network publishes work that is of relevance to community psychologists and others interested in the field. Research reports should be methodologically sound, and papers reporting the use of qualitative methodologies will be especially welcome. Theoretical or area review papers are welcomed, as are letters, brief reports and papers by newer contributors to the discipline. Contributions towards the four sections of the journal are sought.

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