Welcome to TASA 2017 Conference

The University of Western Australia is pleased to host the 2017 Australian Sociological Association Conference, which returns to Perth after ten years. This year’s conference is held at the beautiful UWA campus on the shores of the Swan River. As one of the most isolated cities in the world, with a very high migrant population, and highly mobile workforce including temporary visa holders and fly-in-fly-out workers, but also a range of issues around immobility, Perth is well placed to host a conference on the theme ‘Belonging in a Mobile World’. UWA promotes itself as being ‘in the zone’ – the same general time zone as 60 percent of the world’s population – a gateway to the Indo-Pacific region, ‘Looking north, thinking east, facing west’. Thus its relationship to this part of the world, its economies, cultures and peoples, and engagement with it through movement, commerce and technology, are key areas of interest.

This year’s conference explores the theme of belonging and mobility in a world characterised by global flows and precarities. What are the implications of growing levels of permanent and temporary migration, undocumented migration, and movements of people seeking asylum? What are the implications of recent policies (Trump’s, among others) curtailing movement? Are we really becoming superdiverse and hypermobile? How are internal movements, and movements across national borders, to be understood through a sociological lens? Have multiculturalism and social cohesion been co-opted, and to what ends? How do culture and belief systems reflect or challenge mobility? What role has technology played in these changes, and in the maintenance and creation of relationships locally and globally? What is the relationship between physical and social mobility (and inequality)? What new identity formations are available? What place has nationalism and cosmopolitanism in the current climate? What are the implications of mobility for the environment? What are the implications of contemporary mobilities for indigenous populations globally? What about the dark side of mobilities, such as, in the Australian context, the Indigenous experience of mobilities as a form of colonial oppression, removal from families, and over-representation and deaths in custody? How can Indigenous knowledges and Indigenous voices contribute to debates about mobility and immobility? We look forward to engaging these questions, and more, with you.

We are very pleased to have an extraordinary set of keynotes/plenaries including Professors Mimi Sheller, Alison Phipps, Anthony Elliott, Sharon Pickering, and Matthew Tonts, and a special session from Yoland Wadworth. We also have a number of features of this year’s conference, including sessions on the nexus between sociology and other disciplines, criminal justice and Indigenous peoples, and decolonizing the ethics of research. In addition, a social research methods half day will be held on the Friday after the conference, as well as a number of associated activities.

We also hope you will stay to enjoy some of best West Australia has to offer.

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Conference Conveners
Farida Fozdar and Catriona Stevens

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TASA is the professional association of Sociologists in Australia. Each year TASA hosts its annual conference in different locations across capital cities and regional towns. The aim of each Conference is to further progress the Sociological agenda to local communities and students who might not have the funds to travel. TASA is ably assisted with Canberra-based Conference Solutions and TASA Conferences have the feel of ‘community’, which is great for learning and networking.

The Conference Proceedings have been compiled by Mandy Winter, Sally Daly and Roger Wilkinson.

Sally Daly
Executive Officer, TASA
admin@tasa.org.au

Roger Wilkinson
rogerwilkinson333@gmail.com
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Guanxi network in Chinese labour resistances: Its structures, strategy and strength to protest outcomes

Wei Chen

Hong Kong Baptist University

Abstract

Suggested by previous literature on Chinese labour movement, the official trade union has seldom played a role in organising workers to strike, for its double identity as both a state apparatus and labour organisation; and therefore, Chinese workers have to rely on informal networks to initiate resistances. The importance of social networks that greatly facilitate the informal labour organisation in China have been identified by scholars, yet how they affect the outcomes of labour protests has not been emphasized. Further, the guanxi networks with particular Chinese characteristics, that distinct from common social networks in western literature, have seldom been acknowledged in existing labour studies.

Through the examination of strike cases in the Pearl River Delta, this paper attempts to show how the guanxi networks give rise to the emergence and mobilisation of migrant workers’ protests. In addition, the guanxi networks have also been utilized by local governments to handle the protests, which prove to be efficient. The identification of guanxi networks in labour protests will show the uniqueness of Chinese workers in their way of organising strategy and in turn, how the local governance benefits from this network.

Keywords: labour resistance, guanxi network, protest outcome, repression, collective action

Introduction

Previous studies on Chinese labour resistances have already examined the formal labour organisation of Chinese trade union, remaining incapable of organising workers (Chen, 2003; Howell, 2008); and more recently, focused on individual strike initiators who play important role in organising protests (Leung, 2015). However, very few studies have paid much attention to how these factors influence protest outcomes, and further, how workers build social networks to seek success. Based on the fieldwork in Pearl River Delta (PRD) region, this paper attempts to explore the role of guanxi network and how it gives rise to the emerging labour protests. Moreover, how the local governments utilize guanxi network in diffusing workers’ actions.

Labour movement and its outcome in China

As an ultimate goal of a social movement is to bring about changes to society, it is thus important to scrutinize the outcomes of a movement. In light of the abundant social movement literature, scholars (McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald, 1996) have emphasized the role of different
organisational structures, including formal organisations, informal networks, and meso-level groups, is one of the central elements in the discussion of movement outcome. It is believed that social movement is normally stemming from the established institutions or informal associational networks; otherwise, it may not be possible to survive and to achieve success. Subsequent studies (Clemens, 1993; Staggenborg, 1988) have further illustrated it empirically, in terms of the effect of organisational repertoires, the size and strategies, protest leadership, and professionalization to the ultimate results of different social movements. Indubitably, organisational structure is crucial to the fate of social movement, which also sheds light on the study of labour movement. By examining the strikes in France, Shorter and Tilly (1974:192) demonstrate that “the greater federations, with the sophistication in bargaining and the large numbers of participants” contribute to the effective struggles against the employers. Therefore, the success may sometimes depend on whether strike leaders could be able to establish an effective organisation (Brill, 1971), or whether the unions could fulfill the missions they assign themselves. However, most of them are based on the empirical evidences in democratic countries, where labour unions and other types of labour associations are independently organised and professionalized. In regard of authoritarian regimes, the lack of freedom to unionize has largely constrained the capacity of workers’ associational power to achieve successful resistances. Then, how can the protesters in non-democratic countries develop their organisational strategy and enhance their associational capacity?

Previous literature (Cai, 2002) on Chinese popular resistance has pointed to the importance of movement leaders in collective actions and social networks built by the leaders, particularly when formal organisations are absent for mobilisation. The effective social networks built by protest leaders can strengthen the opportunities of success, and sometimes win the support from the elites (Cai, 2010: 87-109). The exploit of potential network from state agencies and mass media in the non-democratic regime could possibly lead to favorable results for protesters. As for Chinese workers, they can hardly rely on the official trade union, due to its double identity as both a state apparatus and a labour organisation (Chen, 2003; Howell, 2008); while the emergence of individual worker leaders among them, may become an informal agency power, though still weak and unsustainable (Leung, 2015; Li, 2016). Lacking other effective channels, this paper intends to explore how migrant workers strive for potential opportunity to success through building social networks. The role of social networks or social ties in mobilisation of collective actions has been identified as an important way for protesters to seek success (Gould, 1991; McAdam & Paulsen, 1993). Researches on social networks tend to focus on organised networks, which emphasise rule- governed and institutionalized procedures (Diani, 1992); and regard weak ties are more effective than strong ties in disseminating activism (McAdam & Paulsen, 1993). In Chinese society, however, guanxi networks carry more weight, which act as implicit rituals for coping with the absence of formal regulations. Hence, movements for labour activism in China, also rely upon such social networks to mobilise and to survive.

**Collective actions and guanxi network**

As discussed above, the episodes of popular contentions always develop from social ties that already exist (McCarthy, 1996). In western society, as Granovetter (1973: 1371) points out that, “those to whom we are weakly tied are more likely to move in circles different from our own and will thus have access to information different from that which we receive”. Thus weak ties play more important role in conveying new information than strong ties, which appear to be effective in activism. In contrast, the influence of guanxi network is pervasive and unique in the context of Chinese society, which displays a different pattern of information flow, normally through strong tie links. The existing studies on guanxi network can be found in diverse disciplines, most of which focus on the exchange of gift economy system. According to Yang (1989), guanxi practice builds on everyday life between social actors, which allows people to trade by a special gift exchange...
tradition, along with many rituals in timing and situations to present or receive gifts. In a short summary, the notion of guanxi practice has several features. First, guanxi is generally regarded as a composite of emotion (qinggan), personal loyalty (yiqi), favour (renqing), or even bribery (huilu). Through implicit rituals and social norms, people may gain good guanxi networks accumulatively. It is often the case that, the viability of a long-term guanxi network usually depends on the people’s commitment to their guanxi relationship (Park & Luo, 2001). Secondly, guanxi network is reciprocal, which emphasizes more responsibility of reciprocity than emotion and personal loyalty, yet it usually does not require an equal level of reciprocal obligation. In a guanxi network, it normally does not specify the frequency of exchanging favours and the forms of gifts, no matter tangible or intangible. Thirdly, guanxi is more of utilitarian rather than merely based on emotional attachment. Compared to social network theory, where characterizes networks as commercial and impersonal, guanxi network in China focuses more on personal interactions and favour exchanges.

The significance of guanxi network to collective actions in Chinese society has been suggested as a double-edged sword. From Wang and Woods’ (2013) observation, the role of guanxi in Taiwan rural movements has not only facilitated to the recruitment of rural activists, but also generated negative effects of mistrust and suspicion. Beyond the exchanges of favour in economic terms, guanxi ties have also been found in accelerating the engagement in the realm of politics, often associated with a higher rate of success, when people obtaining insider connections with state authorities (Su & Feng, 2013). In addition, apart from the discussion of guanxi networks utilized by activists in their collective actions, guanxi has also been used by the authoritarian government in the suppression of protests and movements (Qi, 2017). In this paper, I argue that, guanxi network performs like a dynamic mechanism on its function of labour collective actions, where it gives rise to the emergence and mobilisation of protests. In the following parts, I use a multiple-case study to illustrate how guanxi network practices in labour protests.

Guanxi network in Chinese labour protests
In this study, I choose three strike cases based on my fieldwork in the PRD, which happened in Mars factory, Eros factory and Juno factory respectively. The comparison of these three cases can be found in Table 1. In brief, all these cases happened between 2014 and 2015 in similar region of southern China, with large scale of participants (above 500), which were all foreign-invested factories. The causes of the strikes were quite similar, for the reason of the transformation or relocation of the existing factories. I try to use the most-similar method to compare these three cases, with similar background and causes but resulting in different outcomes.

Table 1 Case Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mars factory</th>
<th>Eros factory</th>
<th>Juno factory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Shenzhen</td>
<td>Shenzhen</td>
<td>Guangzhou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ownership</td>
<td>HK-owned</td>
<td>HK-owned</td>
<td>TW-owned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causes</td>
<td>Factory transformation</td>
<td>Factory relocation</td>
<td>Factory relocation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demands</td>
<td>Transformation compensation</td>
<td>Relocation settlement</td>
<td>Relocation settlement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>Failure with tolerance</td>
<td>Failure with suppression</td>
<td>Success with discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guanxi network</td>
<td>Place of origin</td>
<td>Co-workers</td>
<td>Co-workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotion</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favour</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal loyalty</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mistrust/suspicion</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mobilising strategy. As noted previously, protest activists in the above cases are able to mobilise ordinary workers through guanxi practice when lacking other effective channels. Emotion, favour and personal loyalty are the common ways for recruiting potential participants in the collective actions, which carry more emotional weight than reciprocity. For instance, at the beginning of Mars strike, worker leaders attempted to cultivate workers’ personal loyalty to their actions by using banquets to encourage more participants. One leading activist told me that they would go to a restaurant famous for their native cuisine regularly for meetings. On the one side, the frequency of participating such meetings would manifest the propensity of potential workers to join their collective actions; while on the other side, to be treated by such banquets with their hometown dishes would also foster protesting workers’ loyalty and morale, especially when their guanxi networks were largely built on the place of origin. Likewise, activists in Juno factory also emphasised their morale building through regular meetings and banquets in their industrial community. These social interactions seemed to be important in forming preliminary guanxi ties at first; once it formed, there would exist a chance to improve guanxi ties between the leaders and ordinary participants. Moreover, such interactions would further be beneficial for maintaining internal solidarity among the protesters.

The strength. Through guanxi practice of emotional attachment and traditional rituals, protest activists can strengthen their mobilising structure and foster members’ solidarity to the group. As Granovetter (1973) noted that, the strength of a tie depended on the amount of time, the intensity of emotion, the intimacy and reciprocity. In order to enhance the strength of guanxi networks, activists need to spend time and energy to maintain good guanxi connections with participants. If it has not been well operated, the existing guanxi ties may not generate positive effects. The case of Eros factory proves to be an example of its negative side. The activists of Eros factory had not put too much efforts to maintain good guanxi with its participants, like to use rituals and banquets to improve members’ loyalty to their actions, and thus lost participants after the management’s bribery on those pendulous workers. It may further generate suspicions between leaders and participants when their guanxi gets mistrusted.

Protest outcomes and Guanxi
As showed in Table 1, I briefly conclude the outcomes of three protests in terms of both economic and political level. Here, I borrow the clarification of protest outcomes from Cai (2010), which depend on two dimensions: whether workers’ economic demands are met, and whether the state response is repressive or not. In the Mars and Eros factory, workers’ demands on compensations were in general not satisfied, while Juno workers had almost got the money as they claimed. Then, in relation to the state response, both Eros and Juno workers suffered with government’s repression on their protests, with some workers arrested, whereas Mars workers’ collective actions were tolerated by the government.

As for the state reaction to labour protests, it is not unusual for local governments to use repressive tactics in authoritarian regime (Cai, 2010), though the severity of repression may be conditional. In some cases, the use of protest policing may to a certain degree lead to the escalation of protests, which would show the local officials’ incompetence in local governance and thus destroy their work performance. Hence, when using protest policing tactics, the governments would calculate its costs and benefits case by case. Concerning the costs of violent repression, the local officials may sometime choose other “soft” strategies to handle the protests. Mostly, local authorities would rely on their guanxi networks, such as relatives, friends and ethnic relations, to defuse protesters, characterized as “relational repression” (Deng & O’Brien, 2013). For example, in the Éros case, after workers protesting for more than one month, local government first arrested some leading activists and then adopted the strategy of relational repression to the rest. They used

1 Interview, Mr SSC on Aug 27th 2014.
guanxi network to persuade the protesters, as well as their relatives and friends; and meanwhile, a work team had been sent to each protester’s home. One activist told me that, “if we do not make concessions to the local government, our worker leaders will not come out (of the police station). Their (referred to worker leaders) relatives persistently claim that it is our fault to make them arrested.” Through this kind of “thought work”, other protesters finally dispersed without achieving any favourable results. The effectiveness of using guanxi network, like persuasions, and pressures on the key figures in the protests may largely exert impacts on the protest outcomes. In this way, the authoritarian government is capable to solve the disputes in a more peaceful way by using their guanxi networks, rather than invoking confrontations between protesters and the police.

Conclusions
Through the examination of guanxi network in Chinese labour resistances, this article shows the guanxi network is not only related to the emergence and mobilisation of labour collective actions, but it is also relevant to influence protest outcomes. When comparing Chinese labour movement with western experience, the lack of formal labour organisation usually leads to the underestimation of Chinese workers’ associational power in obtaining successful protest outcomes. Though the effectiveness of guanxi network may be conditional under different situations, the role of guanxi network should not be ignored in examining labour protests in the Chinese context.

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Integration, transnational belonging and ambivalent identities: the case of Horn of Africa migrant youth in Melbourne

Abay Gebrekidan
La Trobe University

Abstract
In recent times, the integration of young people from refugee and migrant family backgrounds has continued to be controversial in western democratic nations including Australia. Sometimes fuelled by nationalist sentiments, members of the mainstream society label these minority youth as outsiders, problematic groups or undesired others who belong ‘elsewhere’. Drawing on qualitative interviews with young people living in Melbourne who have Horn of Africa backgrounds, this paper offers new insight into the integration and transnational belonging experiences of visibly different youth in Australia. The study shows that the young people have succeeded in integrating and adapting in Australia, while also keeping their ethno-cultural identities, but they nevertheless feel hesitant and ambivalent about belonging in Australia.

Key words: African youth, ambivalent identity, Australia, belonging, integration

In recent times, integration of young people from refugee and migrant family backgrounds has continued to be controversial in western democratic nations including Australia. Most of these young people were born or raised in those host nations. Sometimes fuelled by nationalist sentiments, members of mainstream society label these youth as outsiders, problematic groups or undesired others who belong ‘elsewhere’. What do the young people themselves say about integrating in the host nation, and what does it mean (not) belonging for the locally grown up youth? How are local integration and transnational ties to ethnic or national backgrounds maintained? This paper addresses these questions by drawing on data from a doctoral study researching the experiences of Horn of Africa (HoA) background youth living in Melbourne, Australia’s second largest and most multicultural city. Through analysis of participants’ narratives and lived-experiences, the paper investigates the integration of ‘visibly different’ minority youth in a complex multicultural society.

Generally, Australia is considered as multicultural country where minority migrants are embraced and equally treated. This maybe a policy principle encouraged by multiculturalism but appears to be less discernible in practice. Members of ‘visibly different’ ethnic communities
still suffer from open discrimination, structural and institutionalised racism (Fozdar & Torezani 2008). A large body of research indicates that ‘visibly different’ minority migrants who easily stand out due to their skin colour, cultural or religious dress codes or language accent suffer from a range of disadvantages related to the extent and type of their ‘visibilities’ (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury 2007; Fozdar & Torezani 2008; Hatoss 2012; Jakubowicz, Collins, Reid & Chafic, 2014). They are systematically excluded and treated as temporary residents, outsiders, or strangers expected to return to where they came from (Hatoss 2012). Some members of the mainstream society also think that “ethnic minority youth are a threat to the social cohesion of western societies” (Collins & Reid 2009: 379). Visibility is one social factor that hinders the social integration of minority refugees into mainstream Australian society.

In particular, ethnic minority youth from African and Middle Eastern backgrounds have been overrepresented in sensationalised media reporting of crimes, criminal activity, and ‘ethnic youth gangs’ (Collins & Reid 2009; Windle 2008). Following the arrival of African refugees in 1990s, negative images against African migrants have been distributed by mainstream media, which affects their integration and overall sense of belonging in Australia. Windle (2008) stated that mainstream media labelling of African youth as ‘problem groups’ has two major motivations. The first is characterising anti-social behaviours by racial attributes targeting visibly different African youth. The second motive is more strategic and aims to construct stories of “difficulties of integration”, which then implies the necessity of ‘assimilating’ and ‘integrating’ minority Africans into the mainstream society (Windle 2008:563). The extent to which minority youth are socially incorporated in their local communities and by default the state has a vital impact on their capacity to develop a sense of belonging, and their integration partly “depends on how their identities are validated in the society as stakeholders” (Jakubowicz, Collins, Reid & Chafic, 2014:10). Given the continued debates about ethnic minority youth integration on the one hand, and exclusionary practices and treatments on the other, it is important to explore youngsters’ own perspectives and experiences of integration and belonging in multicultural Australia, which this paper aims to do.

**Theorising Migrant Integration and Belonging**

Vanessa May (2011:368) defines belonging as “a sense of ease with oneself and one’s surroundings” which comes through familiarity with the environment, the people and involves embracing the cultural values and practices. Belonging is also about the act of self-identification or identification by others as a member of a social group in more stable or transient ways (Yuval-Davis 2006: 199). If belonging is about being at ease with one’s surroundings, “not belonging can be characterised as a sense of unease” (May 2011: 372). Not belonging may emerge when people feel unsafe, unstable, or threatened in the community or society where they live. Having a sense of comfort and stability within social groups or collectivity helps people to feel accepted, welcomed and a sense of belonging. Antonsich (2010) stated that belonging can be understood as operating at different scales, yet identified two analytical dimensions: firstly, belonging as an individual’s feelings of being at home, including intimate and emotional attachments to the place or society. Secondly, belonging also involves citizenship rights, privileges and entitlements constructed in socio-spatial discourses of inclusion and exclusion.

In multicultural societies such as Australia, belonging becomes more politicized, as ‘who belongs and who does not’ becomes more contentious in a space of plurality and social inclusion (Yuval-Davis, 2006:207). While who does (not) belong maybe subjective, it is also highly politicised and operates within boundary differences. Within these boundary differences, individuals and groups may engage in the dynamics of ‘seeking’ and ‘granting’ belonging (Antonsich 2010; Skribis, Baldassar & Poyntin 2007:261-62). This suggests the double-sidedness of a politics of belonging where there are those who claim belonging and those who possess the power to ‘grant’ belonging.
Minority immigrants’ sense of belonging also relates with their level of social incorporation in the wider population in a range of socio-economic and political sectors. Ager and Strang’s (2008) integration framework suggests that citizenship and rights are fundamental to understanding the principles and practices of successful integration of refugees. The framework outlines ten core domains—employment, housing, education, health, social bridges, social bonds, social links, language & cultural knowledge, safety & stability, and citizenship & rights—clustered into four themes: a) means and markers of integration (such as education, housing, employment), b) social connectors (interpersonal networks and connections), c) facilitators (like language capabilities, sense of safety & stability), and d) citizenship and associated rights. Although the core elements of this framework emphasise the integration of the first-generation refugees in the host nation, its core ideas have wider significance beyond the first-generation into the second, or third-generation migrants. As some scholars argue, minority youth integration relates to the extent in which they are incorporated in the local neighbourhood and by default the nation (Jakubowicz, Collins, Reid & Chafic, 2014). Integration of minority immigrants is best achieved when the mainstream group is open and inclusive (Berry 2005; Ager & Strang 2008). Fozdar and Hartley (2013) distinguished migrant belonging as civic (attained through provision of services and benefits) and ethno-national (inclusion in the national identity), and argued that minority ethnics may easily claim civic belonging, yet remain excluded from the national belonging. In this context, belonging in the host nation is the ultimate indicator of an integrated community harmoniously living together.

The Research Methods
The paper draws on qualitative interviews with 37 African background youth (aged 18-24), born or raised in Australia, living in Melbourne. Findings reported here are drawn from data collected for a doctoral research project that examines self-ethnic identity and belonging experiences of Horn of Africa background youth. Participants included youth from four ethnic communities (Ethiopian, Eritrean, Somalian and South Sudanese), selected using a snowball sampling method. Data collection involved in-depth, face-to-face interviewing and observations of community events. A grounded theory approach was used to identify, code and thematically cluster concepts to capture the lived-experiences of participants (Strauss & Corbin 1998).

Findings reported below discuss the integration processes of becoming Australian, self-ethnic identity maintenance, ambivalent identities and symbolic significance of transnational ties.

Integration processes and tensions of ethnic identity maintenance
Two key themes highlight participants’ integration process in becoming Australian—a process that involves integrating into mainstream society and culture. The first relates to integration processes and accompanying adjustment challenges encountered during initial resettlement periods. The second relates to the desire to retain ethnic identity. Participants described these processes of adaptation as ‘fitting-in’, the bicultural experience that involves negotiating intercultural differences and preserving dual or multiple identities. Some adjustment challenges for the overseas-born participants included English language barriers, adapting to new culture and school systems, and coping with everyday discrimination. English language acquisition was the initial primary problem. As many respondents came from refugee camps in Africa, they had neither English language skills nor basic education. Upon arrival in Australia, they went to English language schools for a short time and then directly transferred to formal schools corresponding to their age. For instance, born in Sudan, Mackual came to Australia in 2007 from a refugee camp in Uganda. As was the case for many others, Mackual’s initial main challenge was English
language, which he later managed to improve through short-term training programs. Similarly, for Selam, who came to Australia at age eleven, English was a significant problem during her initial resettlement period, when she had to learn English before going to school. She recalls the difficulties of communicating with the mainstream students at school. Mackual, Selam and many other respondents who come to Australia during their primary school years have overcome their English language barriers and succeeded in joining colleges and universities for further education. Most of them were university students at the time of the interview.

As integration theorists claim, the school is the most important gateway and place of contact for refugee children to meet and interact with members of the mainstream community (Ager & Strang 2008). However, other aspects of integration challenges appear to be enduring and occur in the form of cultural clashes, divergent cultural expectations and identity confusions. As the young people become adapted and socialised into the mainstream culture and language, they also grapple with retaining and ‘fitting in’ to both cultures. The comment below by Adau, a South Sudanese descent participant who came to Australia aged eight, asserts this struggle.

I was socialised into here at a very young age, that really impacted on me, the way that the two cultures clash, even more to me but it is sort of like I have had, growing up here was quite a challenge because you had to live up to the cultural expectations as well as trying to fit in as a lot of kids try to fit in here in Australia. So that was something a lot of us have experienced as well … even the ones that were born in this country, they wanna fit in as other the kids so that was a sort of the issue (Adau, female)

‘Fitting in’ as intercultural engagement and adaptive process is a daunting experience for the African migrant youth growing up in Australia. It shows the ways in which individuals are caught up in negotiation processes to attain acculturation outcomes that are adaptive to both cultures (Berry 2005). The bicultural tendency and transition processes towards ‘becoming Australian’ appears to be complicated by the desire to incorporate and assimilate to both cultures and identities. However, this desire for dual engagement becomes a source of confusion, uncertainty and identity crisis among the minority youth. Regarding this, one female participant commented:

I grew up here but I have two cultures, as young people we do have identity crisis because on one hand we are Ethiopian but on the other hand we have to assimilate to the society that we are living in, the Australian way (Hannah, female).

As indicated in Hannah’s comments above, tensions and ambiguities of reconciling intercultural differences are part of the integration processes of the migrant youth. Maintaining ethnic identities and cultures take places alongside integration into mainstream Australian society. Indeed, integration requires substantial negotiation of cross-cultural differences and conflicts (Berry 2005).

**Double situatedness, ambivalent identities, indifferent belonging**

The findings also show that the African descent youth assert a mixture of ethnic and Australian identities expressed in hyphenated forms such as ‘Ethiopian-Australian’, ‘Somali-Australian’ etc., which suggests allegiance to both identity backgrounds. However, these hybrid identity forms also become a source of ambivalence and tensions as the young people struggle to self-identify and position in spectrums of dual or multiple identities. For these young people, being Australian is intricately combined with a strong desire to maintaining ethnic identities and heritage cultures. In addition, many of them experience a lack of belonging completely either in Australia or in their respective countries of origin. For example, Charlie’s accounts reveal the double rootedness of his upbringing and the resultant feelings of being neither fully Ethiopian nor Australian because ‘you always feel like you are lacking in some way, you are not always gonna be 100 percent purely Australian whatever the stereotype average Australian is; you are not gonna be 100 percent
such partial and incomplete sense of identity makes the migrant youth feel situated in-between being ethnic and Australian. They have strong sense of ethnic pride and attachment, yet also claim a sense of Australianness. This dual situatedness creates partial, incomplete, or ambivalent identity and indifferent belonging. Having stayed in Australia for a long time, many of them have succeeded to adapt to the Australian ways of life and call Australia home; however, this does not mean that they have a full sense of belonging to it. As Adau’s comments indicate, participants strive to secure dual or multiple identities, yet in practice they remain uncertain about where they genuinely belong.

Sometimes I do feel belonging in Australia, sometimes I don’t to be honest, like I feel very in limbo; I feel like I am in limbo, I don’t think I would really ever fit in anything but I am sort of okay with that because here I probably would never fit in; Khartoum I would not fit in at all (Adau, female)

The sources of such indifferent belonging arise from shallow experiences and attachments to ethnic cultures and identities. Those who visited places of their parental origin talk about the excitement of meeting extended family relatives, a sense of homeness, acceptance and being able to easily blend in the local society and become invisible. However, despite these advantages of intermingling with the local society, many of the youth also reported about a sense of ‘culture shock’ and strangeness in their native countries because they were not able to culturally ‘fit in’ in the local society.

Similarly, in Australia, negative stereotypes, discriminations and racism erode the young peoples’ sense of belonging in a predominantly white Australia. Regarding this, Jemal illustrates how discrimination erodes minority migrant youths’ sense of belonging:

I honestly think that how can somebody belong to something that you always encounter discrimination with? You could belong to Australia, but how can you want something that doesn’t want you because it conflicts with you, with who you are. So if I said I belong to Australia, Australia is just the name. The people that live in Australia make Australia. If the people that make Australia discriminate you of your colour, of your race, of your religion, how can you feel that you are part of it? So, to answer your question, Australia is home. Australia is everything but I don’t think I belong to Australia (Jemal, male)

Participants such as Jemal define belonging from the perspective of ‘seeking’, or wanting to belong that requires unconditional acceptance by the dominant group (Antonsich 2010; Skrbis, Baldassar & Poynting 2007). And suggests that the mere presence of a sense of safety, comfort, or satisfaction among minority groups does not generate a sense of belonging. It highlights that the existence of social acceptance and recognition from the mainstream group as key indicators for the development of minority youth belonging.

Conclusion

This paper has explored integration experiences, transnational ties and ethnic identity maintenance among African descent youth with refugee family backgrounds living in Melbourne, Australia. The paper has examined the integration of minority youth in a complex multicultural society characterised by ethnic pluralism and white predominance. Analysis of participants’ accounts revealed that the young people have overcome the English language barriers prevalent during the initial resettlement years, and succeeded in ‘integrating’ into mainstream Australian society. Maintenance of ethnic identities continued to be asserted through transnational ties to places of parental ‘homelands’, occasional visits, retaining ethnic languages and culture, yet their sense of belonging in Australia remains marginal and only ambivalently defined. The self-identity of the youth features intermixtures of hybrid or hyphenated identities that marks claims for and allegiance to dual or multiple identities. Despite such efforts of renegotiation, these identities
remain suspended, partial, and without strong foundation either in Australia or in the places of their parental origin. Such identity split between ‘here’ and ‘there’ leaves the young people’s sense of belonging half-full, without securing ‘hundred percent’ belonging in either society.

Acknowledgement
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References


The construction of opposing discourses as strategies for challenging racism in discussions about asylum seekers in Western Australia

Ashleigh L Haw

The University of Western Australia

Abstract

While racism has received considerable focus in discursive research, limited attention has been paid to discussions that challenge racist discourses. Prior research suggests that anti-racist discourses are often articulated as arguments against an opposing viewpoint, supporting the notion proposed by van Dijk (1985) and Billig (1987) that attitudes are constructed as arguments against a counter-position. Fleras (1998) referred to this as ‘duelling discourses’. To further explore this notion, this research employed Rhetorical Analysis (Billig, 1987) and Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1992) to examine how constructions of asylum seekers are articulated as opposing discourses in a sample of Western Australians. This paper reports on one component of the results of a larger, PhD research project examining community perspectives on refugees and asylum seekers, including how the Australian news media portrays both groups. The belief that asylum seekers are illegal immigrants is discussed as an illustrative example of how participants constructed their perspectives in a dialogic manner. Findings indicate that the legality argument remains a key feature in discussions of asylum seekers, highlighting a need for further public education concerning the difference between illegal immigration and seeking asylum. These findings also suggest that some members of the Australian public are currently positioning their views as opposing arguments when discussing asylum seekers. It is recommended that future research examines the efficacy of anti-racist discourses as tools to undermine racism during discussions about asylum seekers.

Keywords: Discourse, argument, racism, anti-racism, asylum seeker, illegal, dialogic

Introduction & Literature Review

Approximately 13,750 people are granted refugee status annually under Australia’s immigration policy (Phillips, 2015). While most lodge applications from refugee camps via the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), some apply after arriving in Australia. This group are referred to as asylum seekers. There is considerable public debate surrounding asylum seekers in Australia with social research revealing that many Australians hold hostile attitudes towards them (Every & Augoustinos, 2008; Pedersen, et al, 2006; Mares, 2002; Pickering, 2001). These attitudes are often articulated in the form of racist discourses. While racism has
received considerable focus in discursive research (e.g. Wetherell & Potter, 1992; Billig 1987, 1991; van Dijk, 1987, 1993), limited attention has been paid to discourses that challenge racism (Fozdar, 2008). Wetherell and Potter (1992) defined racist discourse as “that which has the effect of establishing, sustaining, and reinforcing oppressive power relations between those defined as racially or culturally different” (p. 70). In contrast, anti-racist discourses are those that challenge these oppressive power relations (Fozdar, 2008).

A common feature of anti-racist discourses is the tendency for such perspectives to be constructed in a dialogic manner (Fozdar, 2008; Fozdar & Pedersen, 2013). This was initially theorised by discourse analysts Billig (1987, 1991) and van Dijk (1985, 1987, 1993), who posited that attitudes on a given topic are always situated within a wider argumentative context. According to Billig (1987), human beings “do not possess just one way of looking at, and talking about, the world - Instead, our species is characterised by the existence of contrary views” (p. 49). Similarly, Wetherell and Potter (1992) argued that particular discourses are constructed as a means of challenging alternative perspectives the speaker disagrees with. This is a phenomenon Fleras (1998) referred to as ‘duelling discourses’.

Fozdar (2008) expanded on the work of Billig and van Dijk by examining Fleras’ (1998) notion of ‘duelling discourses’ in discussions of race in New Zealand. Her results uncovered a tendency for people to frame their perspectives as arguments against an opposing point of view, supporting the notion of ‘duelling discourses’ as a feature of anti-racist talk. Fozdar's (2008) research also highlighted that attempts to challenge racist discourses occur in everyday discussions about race. Fozdar and Pedersen (2013) further explored this concept by examining anti-racist discourses present in responses to an online blog about asylum seekers in Australia. Their analysis revealed that people routinely expressed their opinions as arguments against a counter-position, providing further support for the notion that sentiments constructed in the form of ‘duelling discourses’ are employed as a discursive strategy for challenging racism (Fozdar & Pedersen, 2013).

This paper builds on the previous literature by exploring opposing discourses in the context of discussions about asylum seekers. In order to do this, it was essential to identify one common discourse concerning asylum seekers, and analyse arguments articulated both for and against this perspective. A common discourse identified in the literature is the view that asylum seekers have committed a crime by seeking protection in Australia (e.g. McKay, Thomas & Kneebone, 2011; Sulaiman-Hill, Thompson, Afsar & Hodliffe, 2011; Every & Augoustinos, 2008; Pedersen, et al, 2006; Pickering, 2001; Betts, 2001). Participants of the current study discussed the illegality trope and there was clear evidence of a duelling discourse occurring, with both supporting and challenging perspectives voiced. As a result, the ‘illegality’ discourse was chosen as the focus of this paper.

The term ‘illegal immigrant’ refers to a person who has entered a country for the purposes of migration without obtaining a valid visa (Phillips, 2015). Conversely, an asylum seeker is a person who has left their country of origin to seek protection in a safe country due to persecution, or a reasonable threat of persecution (UNHCR, 1951). Australia is a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, which means that it is not illegal for asylum seekers to seek protection in Australia (Phillips, 2015). Despite the legal distinction between seeking asylum and illegal immigration, there is continued debate concerning the legality of seeking asylum in Australia (Every & Augoustinos, 2008). This has been further explored in the current research, with results indicating the presence of opposing discourses in participants’ constructions of asylum seekers. This paper discusses these findings in more detail, with emphasis on the implications for future discursive research.
Approach
This paper reports on one component of a larger study focused on community perspectives about asylum seekers and the discourses presented in Australian news media texts. Upon providing informed consent, twenty-four participants (12 male and 12 female) in WA were recruited using a combination of purposive and snowball sampling. These participants took part in semi-structured interviews about their perspectives on asylum seekers and how the Australian news-media portrays the issue. These interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed to uncover key themes pertaining to participants’ views.

This study utilised Rhetorical Analysis, which examines how arguments are structured (Billig, 1987, 1991) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which explores how discourses concerned with power are constructed, understood and challenged (Fairclough, 1992; van Dijk, 1993). CDA approaches recognise that language can be ideological and in turn, they seek to determine the interpretation and social impact of these ideological constructs (Fairclough, 1992). Fairclough (1992) recognised that the relationship between society and discourse is dialectical, resulting in a society that can both influence, and be influenced by, the construction of a given ideological position. van Dijk (1985) proposed that the value of discourse analysis in sociological research is that it provides insight into how social issues are articulated during everyday communication and how prejudicial discourses can be challenged:

Discourse plays a crucial role in the ideological formation and communicative reproduction of larger problems such as class differences, inequality, sexism, racism, and power. As soon as we know more about the discursive representation and management of such problems, we have the design for the key that can disrupt, disclose and challenge the mechanisms involved (p.7).

Similarly, Wetherell & Potter (1992) proposed that discourse analysis allows for the development of strategies that seek to undermine racist ideology by gaining a more comprehensive understanding of how racist discourses are formed and reinforced. The analysis discussed in this paper revealed a number of themes concerning participants’ perspectives on asylum seekers. This paper focuses on the ‘illegal immigrant’ discourse as an illustrative example of anti-racist discourses being positioned in a dialogic manner.

Results & Discussion
Table 1 shows the discourses pertaining to participants’ views on asylum seekers along with the opposing views or ‘duelling discourses’ (Fleras, 1998; Fozdar, 2008) evident for each of the key themes. Here, the focus is on the ‘illegal immigrant’ discourse and challenges to it (see Table 1, discourse B).
Table 1: Discourses Concerned with Participants’ Views on Asylum Seekers in Australia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourses</th>
<th>Opposing Discourses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The terms ‘asylum seeker’ &amp; ‘refugee’ refer to the same concept</td>
<td>The terms ‘asylum seeker’ &amp; ‘refugee’ refer to two distinct concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is illegal to seek asylum in Australia</td>
<td>It is not illegal to seek asylum in Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genuine refugees follow ‘proper channels’ when seeking asylum in Australia</td>
<td>The notion of ‘proper channels’ is flawed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asylum seekers with money must not be in genuine need</td>
<td>Asylum seekers do not have to be poor to have a genuine claim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asylum seekers &amp; refugees are economic migrants</td>
<td>Asylum seekers &amp; refugees are not economic migrants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asylum seekers use deception and/or manipulation to come to Australia</td>
<td>Asylum seekers do not use deception or manipulation to come to Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugees are often ungrateful to Australia for offering protection</td>
<td>Refugees are often grateful to Australia for offering protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking asylum is a choice</td>
<td>Seeking asylum is not a choice: People facing persecution have no choice but to flee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The finding that some participants believe it is illegal to seek asylum in Australia is consistent with previous Australian research into community attitudes (McKay, et al, 2011; Sulaiman-Hill, et al, 2011; Pedersen, et al, 2006; Pickering, 2001; Betts, 2001). In the current study, when asked what the term ‘asylum seeker’ means to him, Bryan, a middle-aged (40s) male, UK-born British-Australian Liberal voter with a bachelor degree and Church of England religion answered:

‘They can’t be refugees because they have come here illegally. Frankly, I see it as this kind of political word to describe illegal immigrants, like the politically correct way to talk about them.’

Similarly, in the context of differentiating between migrants and asylum seekers, two participants commented on the perceived illegality of seeking asylum in Australia. Don, a retired (60s) male, Australian Liberal voter with a high school-level education (year 10) and Church of England religion, commented:

‘My perception of what they’re trying to do is illegal. They are, in my opinion, illegal immigrants.’

In the same context, Beth, a young (30s) female, Indigenous-Australian Labor voter with a high school-level education (year 10) and Christian religion said:

‘The only difference I know is the, um, illegal thing. One is illegal and one is not.’

Some of these participants elaborated, suggesting that asylum seekers choose to migrate to Australia illegally despite legal means being available to them. This was demonstrated via comments with reference to terms such as ‘the back door’ and ‘proper channels’. Participants who referred to the conduct of asylum seekers as ‘illegal’ also tended to express non-accepting views, with the majority of these participants recommending that Australia decrease its annual intake of refugees. This falls in line with previous literature showing that people with non-accepting views towards asylum seekers often believe common myths and misconceptions about them (Suhnan, Pedersen,...
& Hartley, 2012; Croston & Pedersen, 2013; Pedersen, Atwell & Heveli, 2005) – In this case, the misconception is that asylum seekers are illegal immigrants, which is incorrect according to the UNHCR's Refugee Convention, which asserts that it is not illegal to seek asylum in Australia (UNHCR, 1951).

Some participants challenged the discourse of illegality, supporting Fleras’ (1998) notion of ‘duelling discourses’. For instance, Renee, a middle-aged (50s) female Australian with a postgraduate degree who identified as a swing voter (between Labor and The Greens), of Roman Catholic religion, stated:

’I think people don’t understand, I think a lot of people feel that there is some illegality about the process. We just run over and say ’you’re a better person because you came in legally’.

Renee voiced her opposing perspective to the illegality argument by referring to the fact that some people view seeking asylum as illegal. This is evidenced by her statement ’I think a lot of people feel that there is some illegality about the process.’ Renee made this comment in the context of discussing how debates about migration are often framed in terms of some migrant groups being seen as more deserving of acceptance in Australia than others. Renee brought up the issue of people voicing hostile views towards asylum seekers with references to illegality. Renee was then asked to provide her perspective of those views. - Her response ’I think people don’t understand’, indicates that her position differs from the perceptions of illegality she was referring to and suggests she believes these views are not correct. Thus, Renee has challenged a common position on asylum seekers by implying that this position is guided by a misunderstanding of the asylum seeker issue.

Like Renee, Jodie, a middle-aged (40s) female, Atheist, Serbian-born Australian, Greens voter with a postgraduate degree talked about asylum seekers’ actions as legitimate, without actually engaging in the language of legality:

’I feel that they’re perfectly entitled to come to Australia.’

Jodie’s remark was provided in the context of discussing Australia’s harsh mandatory detention policies for asylum seekers who arrive by boat. In this context, her comment about asylum seekers being ‘perfectly entitled to come to Australia’ is a statement against the perspective that seeking asylum is unlawful and warrants time in a detention centre. Similarly, Susan, a middle-aged (50s) female, Atheist, Australian, Greens voter with a postgraduate degree, addressed the illegality trope by arguing that arriving to a new country to apply for refugee status is the only legal means available for seeking asylum:

’What we should be doing is allowing them to get on their boat if they so choose. It’s the, actually the only way they can claim asylum, it’s the only legal way someone can claim asylum in the country is to arrive on its doorstep and ask.’

Susan’s use of the term ‘actually’ suggests that she is arguing against a counter position. The term implies that there is an opposing point of view the speaker is aware of and as such, by prefixing her statement about arriving by boat as ‘actually the only way to seek asylum’, Susan appears to be alluding to the fact that others view seeking asylum in this manner as illegal. She has also flipped the trope of illegality on its head by asserting that asylum seekers who arrive in the country to seek asylum actually fit the UNHCR criteria for seeking asylum legally.

In the examples cited above where participants opposed the illegality view, Fleras’s (1998) notion of ‘duelling discourses’ is evident. It is also worth noting that Renee, Jodie and Susan all expressed welcoming views toward asylum seekers, arguing that Australia should increase its annual refugee intake. This is consistent with research conducted by Pedersen, et al (2005), whereby people
with accepting views about asylum seekers were less inclined to view them as illegal immigrants than those with non-accepting views. This also supports Fozdar’s (2008) assertion that ‘duelling discourses’ are often employed as a means of challenging racist discourses as evidenced by the fact that instead of merely stating their views (i.e. that seeking asylum is legal and justified), these participants framed their discussions as responses to the notion that asylum seekers are illegal immigrants with remarks that subtly challenged these perspectives.

Conclusion
It is evident that the legality/illegality argument remains a key feature of discussions about asylum seekers in Australia. The results reported in this paper indicate that pro-asylum seeker advocates often challenge views of illegality by asserting that seeking asylum is legal, suggesting that further public education regarding the difference between illegal immigration and seeking asylum is necessary. Furthermore, as participants’ perspectives were constructed in a dialogic nature, this research supports the notion proposed by van Dijk (1985, 1987, 1993) and Billig (1987, 1991) that perspectives are often constructed as arguments against a counter-position, which has also been demonstrated by sociological research concerned with the construction of racist and anti-racist discourses (Fozdar, 2008; Fozdar & Pedersen, 2013). It is important to note that while these findings are useful for confirming the existence of Fleras’ (1998) ‘duelling discourses’ in discussions about asylum seekers, it was beyond the scope of this study to examine what causes discourses to be constructed in this manner. Thus, it may be beneficial for further research to explore specific factors that cause perspectives on asylum seekers to be constructed in an oppositional way. Nonetheless, the current findings are encouraging for the plight of anti-racism scholars and advocates as they provide further evidence for the continued use of anti-racism strategies that challenge problematic discourses with the potential to further harm and oppress vulnerable groups in Australia. It is therefore clear that more information is needed regarding the efficacy of anti-racist discourses, as it is unclear whether pro-asylum arguments are ‘heard’ by others. Future research could benefit from examining the implications of discursive strategies for reducing racism in terms of their propensity to progress asylum seeker discussions and in turn, impact policy direction in Australia.

References


Ethical research design in mental health recovery

Debbie Horsfall¹, Joy Paton²

¹University of Western Sydney, ²University of Sydney

Abstract
How do we design and create research spaces to enable stories of lived-experience to emerge from the margins? How can we do research which positively impacts people’s wellbeing? These questions underpinned the Stories of Recovery research project, conducted with 32 people living with complex and severe mental illness who generated visual and written narratives detailing their lived experiences. In designing for safe and ethical ‘sensitive enquiry’ we brought together the principles of mental health recovery with trauma-informed practice and collective impact strategies. The result was a methodology for embedding and embodying recovery principles in qualitative research design and practice that gives participants epistemic privilege and ‘takes care’ of participants and researchers. We found that the project’s inclusive and creative research design was key to eliciting the voices and perspectives of those living with complex mental illnesses. Success of the design strategy was also evident in the high retention rate of participants, despite their ongoing intersecting vulnerabilities. In this paper, we discuss the conception of the tripartite approach (research design) followed by how this was applied in the research (methods and procedures) and concluding with how the design did what we hoped for (findings and outcomes).

Keywords: ethical research design; qualitative research; sensitive enquiry; mental health recovery; trauma informed; collective impact.

The complexities of ‘sensitive’ qualitative enquiry are especially acute in the field of mental health where research design requires attention to the often emotionally sensitive and trauma-based character of individual histories and circumstances. There can be challenges in recruitment and retention of participants living with severe and persistent mental illness (Harris & Roberts 2003) and tensions between ‘care’ of participants and the “generation of credible data” (Chan et al 2015:261). However, current changes to mental health service provision makes such research essential. Tensions have been identified between the “internationally adopted concept of recovery” (Slade & Longden 2015:3) and the restructure of mental health services under the new National Disabilities Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Against this background, the Western NSW Partners in Recovery (PIR) consortium funded Stories of Recovery from the Bush: Unravelling the experience of mental illness, self and place, a research
partnership between Western Sydney University and The Benevolent Society (a long-established community-based non-profit organization serving the needs of marginalized and disadvantaged Australians).

We took it as axiomatic that recovery principles would guide and shape the *Stories of Recovery* project which aimed to further develop knowledge and understanding of mental health recovery from the perspective of those with lived experience of severe and persistent mental illness. We wanted the research design to embed, embody and grow recovery in an innovative methodology that ‘gives back’ to and empowers participants while ‘taking care’ of participants and researchers. We developed a unique approach that brought together consumer-led recovery; trauma-informed practice; and principles of collective impact. This integrated methodology provided an ethical and coherent basis for design and implementation of the research, ensuring consistency between the methodological approach and the substantive investigation of mental health recovery. In the following sections, we discuss conception of the research design, followed by how this was applied using methods and procedures and concluding with how the design did what we hoped for.

**Embedding recovery in the research design**

In this project, we wanted to “help empower individuals to share their stories and enact meaningful social change” (Babchuk & Badiee 2010:27). The research design problematic centred on how we safely give preference and privilege to people’s voices and experiences. For us, the starting point was an ethical design that gave participants epistemic privilege and viewed them as co-producers of knowledge. We also wanted to deploy creative methods which have proven effective in research with emotional or painful experiences that can feel exposing to vulnerable participants (Horsfall & Welsby 2007). We worked collaboratively with the partner organization to factor in sufficient flexibility for “consumer participation and involvement” (Phillips 2006:171), seeking congruence across the whole research design and implementation process. In this, we developed a ‘recovery oriented’ research practice that mirrors the principles of recovery oriented mental health practice, as defined by the National Standards for Mental Health Services (CoA 2010).

Recovery is a consumer generated, person-centred paradigm supporting people with lived experience of mental illness to pursue a meaningful life and positive sense of identity, with or without symptoms. It holds that people living with persistent and severe mental illness are the experts in their own recovery. Recovery-oriented services aim to support the recovering person’s capacity for hope, agency, self-determination, and “meaning and purpose in life pursuits” (Onken et al 2007:3), enabling development of an holistic and positive sense of self. Our recovery-oriented methodologies were designed to uphold the principles of recovery and to support participant’s journey of positive self-authoring beyond illness identities and the stigma and discrimination associated with them.

We placed participants at the centre of knowledge generation and designed the research to be as flexible and responsive as possible, ensuring genuine choices in participation to safeguard people’s dignity. We practiced a strengths-based approach to recovery, amplifying the contributions participants could make to the research and to positive social change (Tse et al 2016). However, this required a delicate balance between honouring participant’s strengths and providing supports that enabled their participation. The research design had to negotiate a tension between research that could speak powerfully, yet at the same time take care of research participants. In considering how to operationalize recovery-oriented research we had to be mindful that consumers who engage with mental health services are often “trauma survivors” (MHCC 2013). This required us to also draw on the principles of ‘trauma-informed practice’ to shape the research design.

Trauma survivors often have a history of being silenced and abused and can experience “periods of intense anxiety” (Ferencik & Ramirez-Hammond 2011:38). The impacts of trauma can disrupt
memory and capacities for information processing, emotional regulation and interpersonal relationships (MHCC 2010). Trauma needs time to build the trust necessary for relationships and the skills necessary for affect regulation. Trauma-informed practice extends recovery oriented practice by emphasizing safety and positive relationship connections where trauma survivors are “respected, informed, connected and hopeful” (MHCC 2010). We used our understanding of trauma to design research that was supportive of participant control, choice and autonomy and which also enabled opportunities for power sharing and collaborative decision-making.

In creating a space for participants to take part in a journey of self-authoring focused on strength and resilience, we provided a safe physical and emotional environment with appropriate safety measures in place, such as having a familiar staff member available and close by, conducting interviews and workshops in familiar places, enabling people to bring a support person with them and providing simple refreshments. Facilitating stories about people's experiences is “a critical element in the trauma recovery process” (Bath 2008:20). We therefore constructed the research methods around creative experiences that give voice to participants and contribute to relationship building and social integration. Success of the project also depended on a complex fabric of organizational and interpersonal relationships. Carers, supports and staff from the partner organizations would all be involved in facilitating participant engagement in the research. Here, we turned to the principle of ‘collective impact’ guiding recovery-oriented services to further inform the research design.

Collective impact initiatives are developed to address social problems with a view to bringing about (usually large-scale) social change. They involve trust-building and coordination between different organizations in different sectors (public, private, non-profit) who come together around a common agenda to generate collective social impact (Kania and Kramer 2011). Collective impact recognizes that the complexity of social problems requires systematic, multifaceted and coordinated solutions involving a range of stakeholders working together. Such projects depend on a shared vision and comprise a “centralized infrastructure, a dedicated staff, and a structured process that leads to a common agenda…and mutually reinforcing activities among all participants” (Kania and Kramer 2011: 38).

We deployed collective impact principles on a smaller scale that recognized the diverse network of familial, community and social relationships within which the recovering ‘self-authored’ person is embedded. The partner organization served as the ‘centralized infrastructure’, coordinating activities and facilitating the engagement of staff who ‘believed in’ the research objectives. The common goals and clear communication between all those involved in the research enabled a robust and united commitment to the participants and their continuation in the project. Bringing collective impact to bear on a project embedded in the principles of recovery and trauma-informed practice provided a successful methodological approach that delivered research findings in a safe and respectful way.

**Embodying recovery in the methods and procedures**

Our methods needed to facilitate participant control and support researcher sensitivity. The research team decided to use “photovoice” (Wang & Burris 1997), a form of participatory action research involving “community members in generating practical knowledge…and through this promoting personal and social change” (Schneider 2012:153). The photographs provided stimulus for recorded interviews, thereby generating data for analysis, and also formed the basis of a community awareness campaign through a public exhibition of participant photographs and written narratives. Consistent with recovery principles, the photovoice method locates each person as the expert in analysis of their own life by giving them control over the cameras and photographs they choose to take for later discussion at interview.
The research was conducted in phases over a 1 year period – photovoice workshops, individual interviews, public exhibition – and this helped participants to integrate each step within a comfortable timeframe. The research process was also flexible with workshops and interviews scheduled in various locations and interviews re-negotiated to accommodate participant’s needs. The timing of interviews also considered the “self-care” of researchers who might be exposed to stories of trauma and loss (Dickson-Swift 2009:74). This meant allocating sufficient time and resources in the research design to set in place appropriate measures for de-briefing and supervision, including with the partner investigator, on a regular basis.

We began the research process by conducting pre-recruitment meetings with staff from the partner and affiliated organizations. These pre-recruitment meetings consisted of a two-hour face to face information and training session, introducing people to the main photovoice method. This enabled support staff and other interested parties to understand what was involved in the research and how potential participants could best be supported. It also began the important process of building relationships with the organizational staff who would be key to participant recruitment and ongoing participation in the project. A total of 36 people (25 women and 11 men, aged 19-70 years) with complex needs experiencing persistent and severe mental illness attended photovoice workshops. Of these, 32 (22 women and 10 men) attended interviews and continued through to completion of the project.

The retention rate of participants was excellent at 100% of those who proceeded to interview and 89% overall. However, this was even more significant given the ‘every day’ problems they faced over the duration of the project. Many were living with complex personal and social issues, such as poverty, lack of employment, being continued victims of abuse and stigma, dealing with profound grief, managing their engagement in the research around traumatic experiences, hospital admissions or the effects of medications and other treatment like ECT. We facilitated people's involvement in the research by ensuring appropriate supports, as determined in conversation with participants, thereby enabling them to successfully complete the research. Utilising the principles of collective impact to create a helpful environment for the participants, as well as their families and/or support people was key to the retention and engagement of participants.

We conducted four photovoice workshops in regional NSW locations with between four and ten participants attending per session. Support staff and carers were in attendance to assist participants and researchers as needed. These workshops provided details of the research project and opportunities to demonstrate and practice the photovoice method. These processes also helped us to start building relationships with the potential participants. The three-hour workshops were held in safe, familiar places such as local church halls and community centres, with transport provided where needed. Carers and support staff attended to aid participants and researchers where necessary. All of the participants had the opportunity to read (or have read to them) a plain language information sheet (also available on audio recording) and to sign consent forms that provided details about the project, the use of photography and what would be done with the data that was collected. Re-negotiation of consent was ongoing throughout the project, which is important for participants with trauma histories.

At the end of workshops, participants were given copies of the research documents (participant information schedule; copy of consent forms; timeline of steps in the research process) along with disposable cameras which had a capacity for 28 photographs (a small number of participants chose to use their own digital devices). We asked them to take as many photographs as they wished of what was helpful to them in recovery. During the subsequent two to three weeks period in which participants were taking their photographs, researchers made up to three follow-up telephone calls to offer support and encouragement and to help problem solve where necessary. This process helped with retention and also to maintain and further build relationships of trust.
between the participants and the researchers. At the end of the photo-taking period, participants
returned their cameras for development and the photographs were subsequently discussed by
participants with a researcher in individual interviews.

The individual interviews provided participants with the opportunity to talk about their
photographs, choose the images they wanted to exhibit, and discuss the written narratives
that would hang alongside their photographs in the exhibition. The two-hour semi-structured
interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed. The interviews took place at the offices
of the partner or affiliate organizations which were locations familiar to the participants and safe
spaces for both the participants and researchers. Support staff were accessible from outside the
interview room if needed while the interviews were being conducted. Two participants had a
support person remain in the interview for part (one) or all (one) of the time.

At the beginning of interviews, we spread the photographs out so that participants could
look at them, discuss those they felt were of most significance and discard any they wanted
to. Photography, like other visual arts, can serve as a mechanism to communicate that which
is difficult to speak about (Booth & Booth 2003) and provides a form of detachment that
facilitates critical reflection. In the discussions, we focused on stories of recovery prompted by
the photographs and guided by a series of questions previously given to the participants (to allay
anxiety about the interview process). Focus on the photographs provided people with a space to
talk about personal and sensitive issues in ways that were comfortable for them, thereby enabling
us to understand what was important to participants and why this was the case.

Following analysis of the de-identified interview transcripts, we collaborated with participants
in the development of their one-page narratives, ensuring the insights we had identified from
the transcripts had meaning for them (Hewitt 2007). Participants chose an alias for the public
exhibition of their narratives and photographs. The exhibition was held in a regional gallery over
a three-week period which we hoped would provide an empowering experience for participants
while presenting ‘stories of recovery’ that might help break down the stigma associated with
mental illness. Anecdotal evidence from the participants, support workers and exhibition visitors
affirmed this hope. Participants were involved in curation (selecting images) as well as the
exhibition opening where a group took the lead on organizing aspects of the event and some
were involved in speaking at the opening or providing part of the entertainment. Importantly,
more than two-thirds of the participants attended the opening event, demonstrating the extent
to which they felt empowered to challenge the stigma and discrimination surrounding mental
illness.

Growing recovery in the findings and outcomes
In this project, we aimed to further the understanding of mental health recovery by providing
opportunities for people with lived experience of severe and persistent mental illness to convey
their knowledge about recovery. Overwhelmingly, the research findings provided evidence that
supports the recovery-oriented approach to service provision (see Horsfall, Carrington & Paton
2016). Within the thematic findings, new insights emerged about current understandings of
recovery and these stemmed from centering the participants themselves as experts. The tripartite
research design was enabling for participants and the creative methods used facilitated participants
to express their stories, knowledge and experience in ways that would not have been possible with
traditional interviewing techniques alone.

The recovery orientation of the research method gave people opportunities to speak about
what they contributed rather than being asked ‘what do you need’. Similarly, asking participants
‘what is helpful’ elicited powerful examples of resilience and renewal amidst moving stories of
trauma, loss and grief. Our research methodology, based in recovery’s conception of people as
self-determined choice-makers in control of their lives, enabled participants to verbalize their concerns about service provision, highlighting what is important and what is unhelpful. Based on the projects findings and recommendations, the partner organization has already implemented changes to service provision for regional communities to better support people experiencing severe and persistent mental illness.

As a ‘recovery oriented’ project, we also hoped that participants would gain from their involvement in the research in terms of empowerment, growing positive identity and social inclusion. Simply knowing that people had the opportunity to contribute to improving service provision and to challenge stigmatisation was a positive influence on their wellbeing. The enabling character of the research methodology was apparent in participants growing positive identity and capacity to speak about what they believe is necessary, important and sometimes unhelpful from service providers. Relatedly, the opportunity to tell their stories and be heard was a very powerful dimension of the research as many participants had histories and experiences of not being listened to. The positive impact of this self-authoring process on their wellbeing, notwithstanding complexity of illness, cannot be overstated (Onken et al 2007).

Important to the success of the methodology was the collaboration between the research team, partner organization staff and participant supports (carers and family) that stemmed from a collective impact approach. This enabled opportunities for participant leadership and input to the design as the research progressed, especially in the exhibition phase. Participants had very clear ideas about what story their exhibition narratives should convey to viewers and felt sufficiently empowered by our methodology that some made substantial changes. They contributed to the evolution of the research methodology throughout the course of the research, including redesigning our strategy for giving back their photographs. Post-project telephone follow-ups revealed the opportunity to reflect more holistically on their lives through visual form and to articulate their stories publicly was empowering for participants and had a positive impact on their level of social engagement.

Concluding comments
Conducting ‘sensitive enquiry’ in the mental health field can pose unique challenges but it can also be satisfying work when facilitated by appropriate research design. The Stories of Recovery project utilized consumer-led recovery principles to inform the overall design and practice of the research. On a macro level, we also used collective impact to elicit a shared vision across the net of support necessary for participant engagement in the research. At the micro-level, we integrated trauma-informed ‘care’ into a best practice research model using strategies that supported participants as well as researchers. The research approach and methods enabled participants to express their stories, knowledge and experience in a context of safety. The findings showed that the project’s inclusive and creative design was key to eliciting the research outcomes. The research also contributed to participant empowerment and enjoyed an exceptionally high retention rate despite people’s ongoing vulnerabilities and challenges. In its capacity to generate insightful data while at the same time maintaining safety for all involved, the tripartite research design provides a comprehensive and ethical approach for implementing sensitive enquiry in the field of mental health recovery.

References


Maintaining and subverting Chinese class boundaries in Australia: Do ‘people from different backgrounds keep to their own circle’?

Catriona Stevens

University of Western Australia

Abstract

Migration can work to perpetuate, or to subvert, homeland class boundaries. During the last resources boom, a new cohort of Chinese trade-skilled migrants and their families came to Perth to fill labour market shortages. Unlike the tertiary-educated elites that have typically characterised contemporary Chinese migrations to Australia, this new cohort of trade skilled migrants are working class with lower academic attainment, and are often from non-traditional sending areas. This paper explores how class structures that originated in China have been replicated but also challenged in the Australian context. Two broad points of difference are considered: migrants from middle-class and working-class backgrounds, and migrants with rural and urban hukou status.

Migration to Australia has created more opportunities for Chinese from different backgrounds to interact in their daily lives; encounters arise because of a shared language in a strange land, ethnic concentrations in some suburbs, and ethnic rental markets and other niche economies. The unique economic conditions of the resources boom have meanwhile subverted occupational hierarchies established in China. This paper explores how this has been experienced by migrants from diverse backgrounds, and considers some common boundary-maintaining discursive responses.

Keywords: Class, Chinese migration, labour migration, skilled migration

Introduction

During the last resources boom Western Australia experienced significant labour market shortfalls in certain occupations, including semi-skilled workers and tradespersons (Lowry, Malloy and Tan 2006). In response, recruitment consultants sourced temporary labour migrants from around the world; a large number came from China, particularly welders and metal machinists. Almost all left China with sojourner intent, quite sure they would return home at the end of their contract with savings in the bank. However, many found compelling reasons and uncomplicated skilled visa pathways to remain in Australia and are now long term permanent residents, even citizens (Stevens 2017).
When this cohort of labour migrants first arrived in Australia, the China-born population in Perth was growing rapidly, see Figure 1. Earlier Chinese migrants were typically urban, middle class international students or tertiary educated professional skilled migrants, and predominantly came from traditional migrant-sending regions in south China. By contrast, this new cohort of trade skilled migrants are working class with lower academic attainment, and often from places in north China with a less established history of out-migration, including rural areas as well as large, industrial cities like Shenyang.

Figure caption: China-born population in Perth metropolitan area.

![China-born population in Perth metropolitan area.](image)

Source: Stevens (2017).

This paper explores how class structures that originated in China have been replicated but also subverted in the Australian social and economic context. There are two broad points of difference where class-based categories are regularly recognised and invoked by migrants living in Perth. The first point of difference is between blue-collar working class migrants and white-collar tertiary educated migrants, including professional skilled migrants and foreign students. The second is between working class migrants that are originally from large urban centres in China, and those with rural hukou (household registration) status. This paper considers both these points of difference, focussing on the first in pursuit of brevity. The data presented is drawn from qualitative research conducted among Chinese migrants in Perth between late 2014 and early 2016, with a particular focus on these temporary-turned- permanent labour migrants and their families.

Class in contemporary China
The socialist history of twentieth century China, coupled with the widespread reforms and dramatic economic growth has led to the development of class structures and class relations that are distinctively Chinese. As in most countries, Chinese class models are linked to education, occupation and income. Old Maoist political class designations are fading in significance; while urban factory workers were once lauded as the vanguard of the revolution, secure with their ‘iron rice bowl’ of lifetime employment and welfare support, their situation has changed. Liberalising economic reforms, the restructuring of SOEs and the commodification of housing
has resulted in ever widening income differentials and an expanding population of working class urban poor (Wu et al 2010). Social and economic mobility is once again discursively associated with educational attainment (Fong 2006, Hsu 2007), however coveted opportunities to join the ranks of the middle class have not grown as quickly as tertiary graduates. CASS scholars’ analysis of stratification based primarily on Weberian occupational class demonstrates that white collar employment is tightly constrained, and will continue to remain so (Lu 2004, Goodman 2014).

Chinese class has another, more unusual, dimension: the connection between class and an individual’s place of origin or place of hukou registration. The household responsibility system (hukou) has created a Chinese hierarchy of place that directly influences the day-to-day lives of almost all Chinese citizens. The hukou system is the key point of interface between the individual and the state, and results in ‘differentiated citizenship’ (Wu 2010) whereby access to public services and welfare is restricted or non-existent for many. The administrative implementation of hukou-related policy compounds structural inequalities between rural and urban Chinese, and between urban Chinese from cities with differing budgetary constraints. Moreover, because hukou status is hereditary, those disadvantaged in the spatial hierarchy may see little opportunity for the next generation to escape such institutionally validated constraints to social and spatial mobility (Wang 2005, Solinger and Hu 2012).

Working class vs Middle class
The unusual economic landscape of Perth during the mining boom subverted occupational hierarchies established in China. Welders, metal machinists and mechanics who in China were ‘ordinary workers’ with very ordinary incomes found that in Western Australia they were respected tradesmen and moderately high earners. In contrast, middle class Chinese in Australia are often deskilled through limited access to employment commensurate to their qualifications. Moreover, their legal status in Australia may be tenuous; the ‘visa churning’ practices of international students and recent graduates means that individuals may apply for and be granted a series of temporary visas before possibly finding a pathway to permanent status (Gao 2006, Birrell and Healy 2012, Robertson 2013).

Eric is one such serial visa holder. After completing an Australian BA in under two years because his university gave him credit for prior learning in China, Eric learned upon graduating that he consequently had not been in Australia long enough to meet the residency requirements for a graduate visa. He then enrolled in a second degree, an expensive Masters that he did not originally plan to study, in order to keep a valid visa and remain in Australia. In addition to his own experience, he told me of many other white collar friends frustrated by the migration programme. Eric contrasted them with a blue collar family of his intimate acquaintance:

While at the same time there are other migrants that really cannot assimilate¹ and are having a tough time, people with hardly any English at all. My landlord is like this. He is a welder from north east China who works fly-in fly-out, and his wife works in a tofu factory. They don’t know anything about Australia and they don’t try to learn anything. They don’t try to assimilate – this cannot be a good thing for Australia… Take their son, for example. He is nineteen years old and came here seven years ago when he was twelve, so when he came he was young enough to assimilate. I have read that any time under fifteen is good for assimilation. But he spends all day gaming and chatting online and when I do hear him speak English – when he needs to contact someone on behalf of his parents, sort out something with the house – his English is no better than mine is after just two and a half years here… His parents asked me to help him find a job and I had to tell them that if he can’t find a job it’s just because you’re not looking hard enough.

¹ This conversation was conducted in English; ‘assimilate’ was his choice of word. Most participants interviewed in Mandarin used ‘rongru’ which can be translated as ‘integrate’.
Yes, good jobs are hard to find, but if you just want a normal job then it’s easy… But his parents don’t know this. They really know nothing about Australia.

Eric is perhaps more angry than most about this perceived injustice in the migration programme, yet the tenor of his prejudice was echoed by many others from educated family backgrounds. Time and again, tertiary qualified and professional migrants expressed discomfort and embarrassment when discussing the ‘different habits’ of some of their co-nationals, describing them as ‘low quality’ (suzhi) or ‘cashed up bogans’ / ‘rich trash’ (tuhao), while expressing concerns that their behaviour would be noted by ‘local Australians’ and reflect badly on the Chinese community as a whole.

When I discussed the focus of my research project with middle class Chinese, I was often told that blue collar migrants lacked the capacity to understand and engage with my research. Sometimes this disregard for the capabilities of lower class migrants went so far as to deny them the agency to offer informed consent to participating in the research. For example, one day Cherry, a middle class migrant from one of the most developed cities in China, accompanied me to the home of a welder and his wife who lived in a street near her house and with whom she had already spoken about my research. The welder was out at work, as expected, while his wife was at home caring for their young child. We stayed there chatting with her for much of the afternoon. At one point during the conversation another woman of a similar educational and occupational background who lived in the neighbourhood called by. Our host introduced me and explained about my research, upon which Cherry urged the new arrival to also arrange meet with me and share her migrant experience. She seemed a bit taciturn, suspicious even, but we still exchanged phone numbers, and when I later called her, she agreed to meet for an interview the following week. I happened to speak to Cherry before the appointed day and mentioned my concern that this woman did not seem entirely at ease. ‘No, don’t worry about that,’ responded Cherry, ‘She doesn’t understand, she’s from the countryside. You can ask her any questions that you want.’ Suffice to say, when I met up with the new research participant I clearly explained my project and her involvement. She understood very well, not only telling me her own story, but also exactly what problems and policy recommendations she thought I ought to include in my research report. I went on to see her and other members of her family again, and they contributed a great deal to the shape of my research.

Working class migrants are well aware how middle class migrants discuss them. Sam is a welder from north east China in his early forties. He first arrived as a temporary labour migrant in 2007, and has been in skilled employment in Western Australia all the way through the boom. When I met him in 2015, he was still working as a welder and had a lucrative fly-in fly-out role with a resources company. He was very dismissive of the sense of superiority so common among more highly educated migrants. Sam argued that different economic conditions and occupational opportunities in Australia challenge the class relations that previously structured their interactions in China:

The difference between us and the white collar migrants and the foreign students is that they think they are better – but we are in the better situation. A foreign student comes here and has to spend so much on fees, and then they have their living costs on top of that. They can only work 20 hours a week and then only in low paying jobs like cleaning. In four years they spend the same amount that we earn! And during that time we pay tax, so we are a big help to Australia too. The Australian government is very clever. They work out exactly what they need in terms of skilled labour and that’s what they allow in visas every year. The students - they spend all that money and then at the end they still aren’t able to get a visa!
We also have a higher status here (diwei). In China a worker has a comparatively low status, but in Australia a worker is a good thing to be. A plumber or welder or mechanic is a good job and can make money. They think they are better because they are well educated and speak good English, but who has the good job? Who has bought a house and a good car, maybe a boat?

Eric told me that ‘people of different backgrounds keep to their own circle’ yet the reality is that migration has brought diverse individuals who in China would have had nothing to do with one another into regular, even daily, contact. The ethnic rental market is a key point of contact. Eric may be the son of wealthy Cantonese, but he rents his room from a Dongbei factory worker. Cherry first met her welder neighbours when she rented a room in a shared house (again, owned by another welder) during her first couple of months in Perth. Despite such close interaction – indeed, perhaps because of it – educated migrants use the same language of ‘quality’ and ‘civilising’ popular in China to discursively construct and maintain class boundaries in Australia (Hsu 2007, Ao 2014, Chen 2013).

Rural vs Urban
There is not space in this paper to consider in depth the expressions of class difference found between trade skilled migrants from rural and urban backgrounds in China. Zhang, a 50 year old welder from a top-tier northern city explained that he tries to keep social distance from welders from rural backgrounds, even to the extent of not buying a house in a suburb popular with migrants from China. He argued that place-based class shapes how a person experiences migration:

The way you feel about migration, about Australia, depends a lot on where you come from in China. I’m from Shenyang. It’s a big city. You’ve been to Dalian, you know what that’s like. Well, Shenyang is the provincial capital, like Perth. Many migrants are from the countryside, from Shandong or Sichuan. They were farmers and then they came to the cities as migrant labour (nongmingong). So they think differently.

When I spoke with working class migrants from rural backgrounds, many of them did indeed relish the change in status that accompanied joining the Australian workforce. The life of a rural migrant worker was tough, I was told, but the hardest part was the discrimination they faced in the cities, discrimination borne out of the place-based class structures of contemporary China.

Conclusion
Class has often been a site of intra-ethnic difference and conflict for different vintages of migrants leaving their home countries for Australia at different points in history (see, for example, Colic-Peisker 2002, Baldassar et al. 2017). For contemporary Chinese migrants, however, people newly arriving in Perth are entering social spaces where class boundaries are recognised and negotiated.

Migration to Australia has clearly created more opportunities for middle-class and working-class Chinese to interact in their intimate daily lives. While in China people from such different educational and occupational backgrounds may have had little reason to interact as they worked in different spaces, lived in different compounds and sent their children to different schools (Tang 2013), in Australia they are thrown together by ethnic concentrations in certain suburbs, through the ethnic rental market and commonality of language in a strange land. The differences of structure and economy Chinese migrants encountered in Perth, particularly during the resources boom, serve to challenge and even reverse much of the class privilege found in the Chinese setting. Urban factory workers, and even some rural labourers who once lived in dirty, cramped accommodation, struggling to earn a living wage while working in the big cities of China, now own Australian investment properties and lease rooms to the educated, professional elites who might have barely glanced their way back home.
References


BDSM Blogging and the submissive Body

Jacqui Williams

Monash University

Abstract
This paper presents some preliminary analysis of five BDSM blogs written by women. As part of the “sex blog” genre, BDSM blogs offer women a range of benefits including community building and the ability to share experiences of their “taboo” sexuality. This analysis is situated within my broader PhD project which is investigating the embodied sexuality of the BDSM practitioners who identify or practice as the submissive partner. Therefore, this paper specifically focuses on how the bloggers express, understand and experience their bodies in relation to their submissive and BDSM practice. In particular, the paper looks at two sub-themes in the analysis of the “submissive body”: exhibitionism and body image.

Keywords: BDSM, embodiment, sex blogs, exhibitionism, body image

Introduction
Blogs offer their creators a range of benefits including creative outlet and the cathartic release of sharing one’s opinions with the world. For those bloggers who find themselves a part of marginalised or taboo communities, such as practitioners of BDSM, this ability to share their thoughts and experiences takes on added meaning and potential benefit. As part of my ongoing PhD research into BDSM sexuality and embodiment, this paper presents to-date analysis of BDSM blogs written by female submissive practitioners. The research aims to better understand the practice of BDSM and in particular the under-researched experience of submission. While my analysis is in the early stages, initial findings have revealed several aspects of BDSM that have received limited academic attention, and these findings are discussed under the two sub-themes: exhibitionism and body image. Throughout the paper I argue that blogs offer a rich and fruitful qualitative data source for understanding hard-to-reach communities such as practitioners of BDSM.

Terminology
Throughout this paper I refer to the sexual practice of BDSM, more commonly known as sadomasochism. The acronym is an umbrella term which describes a range of activities and interests of its participants, and stands for: bondage, discipline, dominance, submission, sadism, and masochism (Turley et al., 2011: 123). Of central importance to practitioners is informed and negotiated consent (Barker, 2013: 896; Wiseman, 1996: 52-56). The term submissive is used throughout the paper to denote those practitioners who practice on one side of the power-exchange dynamic (Dominant/submissive (D/s)). This can vary from being submissive in a “scene” or time-
specific encounter, right through to “24/7” or “total power exchange” relationships (Green, 2013; Dancer et al., 2011).

**Literature**

Traditionally social science research, and practitioner-centred research into BDSM, has relied on interviews, observation and focus groups. Several excellent studies have used these qualitative methods to better understand BDSM practitioners (Bezreh et al., 2012; Newmahr, 2008; Ritchie and Barker, 2005), however, specific exploration of submissive sexuality has been limited to the analysis of representations from popular culture (Deckha, 2007; Khan, 2009). More recently with the rise in digital communication, online content such as blogs have become a new and rich data source for understanding these hard-to-reach communities. One study by Meg-John Barker (2013) interrogates discussions of consent and the *Fifty Shades of Grey* trilogy on the ‘BDSM blogosphere’. The study analyses several prominent BDSM blogs in relation to the notion of consent and the prevalence of abuse in the BDSM community. Barker (2013: 897) found that the BDSM bloggers offered nuanced discussions of these complex topics, including resisting simplistic ‘neoliberal’ understandings of consent. One important aspect of Barker's study is the focus on the blog format itself as the subject of investigation, as well as a source of data. Through the analysis of blogs, we have the potential to learn not only what bloggers have to say as an expression of their “lifeworld”, but also what blogging offers them and how the blog format as communication device is tied up in their lives and communities.

While the academic analysis of BDSM blogs has been limited, several authors have looked at the meanings and uses of blogging and sex blogs, particularly for women (Mitchell, 2012; Attwood, 2009; Downing, 2012; Wood, 2008). According to Lisa Downing (2012: 6), blogging offers several advantages, including democratic authorship and publishing, literary freedom, community building, and reader collaboration. Feona Attwood (2009: 5-6) also points out that blogs offer women a ‘safer space’ online compared to forums or chatrooms, and that women can gain a sense of validation from ‘communicating in public’. The sex blog genre, a contemporary hybrid of the journal and sexual memoir, has come to be ‘heavily dominated’ by women (Attwood, 2009: 6). Elizabeth Wood (2008: 481), viewing this through a feminist lens, argues that sex blogs provide women with ways to share information and control the ‘transmission of their sexual knowledge’. Attwood (2009: 6) has also suggested that sex blogs can function as a way for women to share ‘truths about their sexuality’ which may be difficult in their offline relationships. The potential benefits set out by these authors such as self-publishing, community building and collaboration, a feeling of safety and being heard, of producing and sharing sexual knowledge, and of expressing sexual truths that are difficult to share, are particularly crucial for those with non-normative or alternative sexual desires. For the BDSM community, and in particular women who take a submissive role, blogging can be a way to share with the world elements of their sexuality which may be judged or rejected by those around them.

**Methodology**

As part of my PhD thesis project I will be conducting several types of qualitative research methods including: in-depth interviewing, participant diary/workbook, and content analysis (blogs). As part of my analysis I will be using both inductive and theoretical thematic analysis (Gray, 2014: 609). In the first instance, inductive thematic analysis will be used to gain insights into the participants lifeworld across a range of aspects of their BDSM sexuality. Secondly, theoretical thematic analysis will be used to analyse the same data set in regard to themes such as “the body”. This second approach is what I have used for the analysis presented in this paper.

In order to find blogs for analysis I conducted keyword internet searches and reviewed online catalogues of BDSM blogs. From my search, I found 64 female submissive blogs – of which, I
have to-date conducted a familiarisation and focused reading as well as initial coding of five blogs. I have chosen to present initial findings of two sub-themes with in the “body” thematic group: exhibitionism and body image. Of the five blogs analysed so far, three present content which fits under these two sub-themes and will be focus of discussion in this paper. In the table below I have outlined features of the three blogs, including: title, blogger pseudonym, self-identified role and type of relationship, type of content, and common topics.

Table 1: Featured blogs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blog title</th>
<th>Blogger</th>
<th>Role/relationship</th>
<th>Type of content</th>
<th>Topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life as owed slave kk</td>
<td>kk</td>
<td>“owned slave” in a Master/slave dynamic</td>
<td>Explicit personal narratives</td>
<td>BDSM D/s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A to sub Bee</td>
<td>Bee</td>
<td>“bratty sub” in “24/7” relationship with her “Sir”</td>
<td>Explicit personal narratives and nude photography</td>
<td>BDSM D/s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kind Regards, Mrs Darling</td>
<td>Mrs Darling</td>
<td>“slave” in a “24/7 TPE (Total Power Exchange) M/s (Master/slave) functioning in an ethically non-monogamous modern day 1950’s household”</td>
<td>Personal narratives</td>
<td>BDSM D/s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Findings: Exhibitionism

Two of the five blogs were particularly striking for their overtly sexual tone and the exhibitionism displayed by their authors. The first, life as owed slave kk written by kk (2012), features almost exclusively sexual content, including nude photography and descriptions of BDSM and sexual interactions with her “Master”. The banner at the top of her blog features a larger-than-life image of her naked and shaven crotch sitting on lush green grass. This “naked-in-nature” theme runs throughout her blog. A common occurrence which she recounts in several posts is walking in the park with her Master in various states of undress. In ‘a day in the park’ she recounts:

The Master and I had a great time together today in the park. Since the park was unusually crowded today we did not get to play like we normally do. Normally Master takes me for a walk around the park on my leash but today I could only wear my collar for him. He did have my blouse open so anyone could see my breasts if they cared to look.

[kk – 30 July 2005]

The couple’s exhibitionism also extends to the local shopping mall where kk on several occasions is commanded to sit in a short skirt, open-legged without wearing underpants while her Master looks on from afar at the reactions of passers-by. This voyeur/exhibitionist relationship can be seen to extend to the digital sphere when kk recounts the experiences in her blog, posts pictures of her naked body, and effectively relives the combined humiliation and excitement that these acts can engender. While on the surface it may be argued that kk’s Master objectifies kk for his pleasure, her posts indicate a constant excitement and arousal at both the scenes and their recounting. There is an activeness and involvement in their combined fantasy that is important to note, as well as a sense of agency within the exhibitionist act. Further, kk’s blog speaks to the voyeur/exhibitionist relationship as presenting a symbiotic fantasy – reflective of the broader Dominant/submissive (D/s) dynamic – which can be viewed in contrast to the lone voyeur or exhibitionist.
The second blog featuring a strong exhibitionist theme is *A to sub Bee* written by sub-Bee (Bee) (2017). Similar to kk, Bee's blog features numerous posts of the “naked-in-nature” variety, including by the ocean, in the woods, in a phone booth and by a road. In contrast to kk and Master, the exhibitionist adventures of Bee and her partner “Sir” tend to remain unseen by passers-by. Bee’s posts are often short in length and mostly accompanied by photography taken by Sir. These photos are almost exclusively of parts of her body and are reminiscent of an art-based “nude photography” style. With exception of a handful of posts written by Sir, the authorship of the blog sits squarely with Bee. However, the combination of photography and text that runs through the blog suggests a more collaborative engagement with the blog format. This collaboration can be viewed as again reflective of the partnership of the D/s relationship.

Very little social science research exists on the practice of and interest in exhibitionism, although Moser (1998: 24) has suggested exhibitionism is an ‘obvious motivation’ during BDSM encounters and parties. One recent quantitative survey of women (N=1580) in the “kink” community found over half of the women (n=887; 56.14%) had participated in some kind of exhibitionist behaviour including baring their breasts, being naked and having sex in public (Rehor, 2015: 828). While these figures indicate kk and Bee are certainly not alone, the quantitative nature of the study limits our understanding of what women enjoy about exhibitionism or how the voyeur/exhibitionist dynamic functions in relationships. However, through the use of qualitative methods and the analysis of practitioner-created texts such as blogs, we can start to unpack this fascinating aspect of human sexuality.

**Findings: Body Image**

The second sub-theme I have chosen to discuss is that of “body image” – with several of the authors expressing concerns with their body and body confidence. However, what was most striking was how they also explained ways in which their partner had helped them become more body confident, as well as ways they overcame aspects of their body anxiety on their own.

In the blog *Kind Regards, Mrs Darling*, self-professed “1950’s homemaker” and “sexy submissive” Mrs Darling (2016) shares her thoughts on her body image after giving birth:

> I probably don't have anybody's ideal body. Nobody is going to order post pregnancy C-section and surgery scarred body on their porn queue. [Mrs Darling – 17 July 2015]

The candidness of her comments comes across as both realistic and refreshing. They are also indicative of the tone of her blog which while still featuring sexual content, is also more focused on the submissive experience as well as day-to-day life in a 24/7 D/s relationship. Through this comment we can see a woman who views herself as both sexual subject and “everyday” woman and mother. In another post however, these comments are put in contrast as Mrs Darling explains how her attitude to her body has changed over time:

> I completely adore my curves. ADORE. But of course, like so many other women, that has not always been the case. [Mrs Darling – 24 March 2015]

Her secret she says is that:

> I didn't change my measurements. I only changed my mindset. [Mrs Darling – 24 March 2015]

Again, Mrs Darling’s comments give the impression of a her as a “realistic” woman who works hard at her body confidence, not simply a sexualised or objectified caricature of the “sexy submissive”.

In comparison, Bee’s discussion of body image revolves around a long-held self-consciousness about having small breasts. She writes:
I’ve always hated them, no, always been ashamed of them…I learnt to hide them away, learnt to not let people touch them and nobody protested. [Bee –14 May 2014]

Even the way she writes the post belays her anxiety around that part of her body, with her avoiding the word altogether. It is up to the reader to make the connection though the accompanying image of her topless torso. However, she goes on in the same post to explain that when she met her Master things changed:

…even now i still remember the fear I felt when you first undressed me, I was expecting you to recoil and make your excuses to leave. That fear was then replaced by a new fear, you reached out to touch them, I froze. But you soon discovered they’re directly linked to my clit as soon as you pinch and twist I’m totally yours or as you often call them, my ‘on switch’! The way you’re so non-judgemental and encouraging has changed me, my confidence has soared, for that alone I can’t thank you enough. [Bee – 14 May 2014]

The stylistic change to addressing her partner directly gives the reader a sense of intimacy, drawing you into a private conversation. While this post clearly showed a deep connection between Bee and her partner, it was not an uncommon one throughout the other blogs.

Almost all of the bloggers expressed gratitude to their partners for assisting in some way with their body confidence, such as kk who writes:

Master has made me feel great about myself and my body and to be proud of it. he tells me all the time to show off what [I] have because it is beautiful. [kk – 22 January 2004]

Several authors have written about the positive effects BDSM can have for practitioners, including, cathartic, therapeutic and spiritual aspects (Barker et al., 2007; Beckmann, 2007; Lindemann, 2011). However, concepts of growth in body confidence and improved body image as found in my analysis have not been discussed or identified previously. In fact, Staci Newmahr (2011: 25) found through her ethnographic study in a BDSM community in the US that ‘conversations about weight were relatively absent from community discourse’. Understanding of this contrast may lie in the blog format itself, which acts like a form of confessional that perhaps does not translate to real-world interactions. This suggestion is supported by findings in Wood's analysis of sex blogs which indicated body anxiety and body image were a feature. It is hoped that though the deeper and broader analysis of BDSM blogs we can better understand submissives’ experiences of their bodies and body image, and further how their partners (casual and committed) play a part.

**Conclusion**

While the analysis presented here is still in the preliminary stages, initial findings suggest there are rich narratives and “lifeworlds” to be explored within BDSM blogs. The blogs provide a complexity of experience, refreshing “realness” and a picture of the Dominant/submissive relationships which many may not have seen before. This paper has revealed some relatively unexplored aspects of BDSM including the voyeur/exhibitionist dynamic, the enjoyment of exhibitionism by women, the positive body image outcomes and several aspects of the partnership inherent in D/s relationships. It is my plan to explore these aspects and others in greater depth in my broader project, and hopefully this research can inspire other researchers with new avenues for exploring and understanding the BDSM community.

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“Like a Superman” - New Identity Formations in the Hazara Diaspora in Australia

Laurel Mackenzie
RMIT University

The nascent Hazara diaspora in Australia is a complex multicultural phenomenon, rich with its own internal dialogues and apparent contradictions, where older cultural forms exist alongside new performances of identity. Hazaras in Australia continue – to greater and lesser degrees – to observe cultural signifiers such as arranged marriages; sending remittances (hawala) to family and community in Iran/Pakistan/Afghanistan (Monsutti 2004); segregated seating for women and men at public events; formal living-room seating arrangements of large cushions; restrictions on contact between unrelated men and women; and wearing headscarves. But the Hazara women interviewed in this paper also described previously impossible experiences including learning to drive, running a business, and completing a degree. The correlation between new identity formations and inherent cultural signifiers contributes to the production of the Hazara diaspora in Australia, which I locate in this paper in the context of belonging: looking at substantive citizenship (performance of cultural tropes) alongside legislative or legal citizenship. The three interviews drawn from in this paper indicate how belonging is experienced.

Diaspora and National Identity

The Hazara ethnic and religious minority has been marginalised in Afghanistan since the end of the nineteenth century. Hazaras were further persecuted when the Taliban rose to power in 1996. Neighbouring Iran and Pakistan are traditional sites of refuge, but Hazaras are also treated as second-class citizens in these countries. These powerful push factors have provoked an exodus of Hazara people from central Afghanistan. Dandenong is the destination of choice for Hazaras (Mackenzie and Guntarik 2015), and today there are thousands of Hazaras living mainly around the south eastern suburbs of Melbourne.

The term diaspora in this context emphasises newness and hybridity. Following Avtar Brah, Abraham and Busbridge argue that “diasporas are complex communities constituted by the emergence of new forms of political identity and imagination, and desires for new beginnings” (Abraham and Busbridge 2014:244). According to Stuart Hall “diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference.” (Hall 1990:235) One of these transformations is in the emergence of new identity formations. Following Erikson, identity formation is a developmental stage experienced at the
resolution of a period of identity crisis, generally through identification with a larger group (Erikson 1968). This concept can also usefully describe the shifts in self-conception experienced by refugee migrants following crisis and transition (Bledin 2003).

Faist identifies two dominant models for conceptions of citizenship in Western democracies: ethno-cultural political exclusion, such as German citizenship which requires descent (rather than simply being born on German soil); and pluralist political inclusion, such as the French model which implies citizenship through action and active participation as a citizen (Faist 2005, cited in Ager and Strang 2008:174). Haggis and Schech argue that Australia follows an ethno-cultural construction of citizenship, based on birth and blood, which they see as deliberately policy-driven (Haggis and Schech 2010:368). As evidence they point at the shift in name from DIMIA (the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs) to the DIBC (Department of Immigration and Border Control), and the increasingly rigorous citizenship and language tests brought in by successive Australian governments – a measure which has been linked to historical policy measures to limit immigration to Australia of people not proficient in English – who tend also to be from countries with predominately non-white populations (Carter 2006). Radical demographers Betts & Birrell attribute the widespread support for these restrictive measures to Australian patriotic views of citizenship that locate it as “a union of people who have something like a family feeling for each other,” based on sameness not diversity (Betts and Birrell 2007:4; Haggis and Schech 2010:368).

The Hazara women interviewed in this paper perform aspects of Australian identity in such a way as to embody the shift from migrant outsider status to performances of belonging. This opens up the question as to whether these changes in behaviour and mannerism, reflecting a change in habitus through taking on aspects of the surrounding social milieu (Bourdieu 2005) – can also be seen as a step towards ‘sinking in’ (Grabham 2009:77), towards fully becoming members of the local community – or whether, as might be implied by identifying Australian citizenship as informed by ethno-cultural concepts, this level of belonging is restricted to those who are habitually read as white.

Methodology
This paper is drawn from research conducted in late 2016 and early 2017 as part of a project approved by the RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee looking at Hazara construction of identity in Australia. Open-ended narrative interviews were conducted with volunteer Hazara participants, who were invited to tell the stories of their lives. Participants were recruited from community associations, from the wider Hazara community living around Melbourne. All the interview participants have been granted citizenship, and have been living in the community for at least five years. Pseudonyms are used throughout.

Evidence and analysis
Hazaras in Australia often find themselves performing multiple subject positions as they negotiate inherited cultural traditions and new experiences of transition and belonging – a phenomenon common to migrant groups (Naidoo 2005:56). Keya Ganguly points out that the ‘home’ vs ‘country of refuge’ dichotomy is one of the problematic signifiers of difference in much mainstream representation of refugees, creating associations of self/other that always serve to position refugees on the side of the Other (Ganguly 1992). In much discourse around refugees, home is generally assumed to be the place where people come from; and in the case of refugees, will return to. As Mohabbat-Kar points out, the difference between exile and diaspora is the exile still looks longingly back home; whereas members of a diaspora have a more fluid idea of home, and are able to shift constructions of home onto the new space (Mohabbat-Kar, n.d., 40:10). Similarly, as Fantino and Colak describe, “typically immigrants can, at least, envision the
possibility of returning to their countries; most refugees cannot” (Fantino and Colak 2001). The Hazara women in these interviews spoke of Australia as their home, citing reasons such as safety.

Raqia’s family fled from Afghanistan to Pakistan, then her mother waited there with her children for seven years while Raqia’s father made his way through the journey to Australia via Indonesia, people smugglers, boat journey, detention, navigating Australian society until finally he attained PR (permanent residency) – and was able to bring his family to Australia under the Family Reunification policy.

I call this place home. The place you call home is where you feel safe, where you feel like people respect you, and it’s not where you were born. (Raqia)

This is not just an individual construction of home (although it is that too) – many interview participants spoke of wanting to build a new home for the whole Hazara community. Abraham and Busbridge point out that for the Hazaras in Australia “there is a clear desire to be seen as a model minority community” (Abraham and Busbridge 2014:247). This seems to be a conscious strategy to try and find a new homeland, building diaspora into Hazara identity at an individual and cultural level. They further point out, “the question of the Afghan diaspora disrupting Afghan tradition through engaging with the homeland demonstrates that diasporic identity involves dislocation” Abraham and Busbridge (2014:255). That is, the retention of old cultural mores does not indicate a ‘pure’ connection to the old or the homeland, but a continued back and forth engagement with it.

Coming from a country where you’re placed in one small community your mind is very closed – you know – you’re very closed-minded towards things like opportunities, taking risks, you’re very scared of taking risks, that’s why you don’t – you only follow what is the norm – that’s what my parents believed until you show them that like there’s other ways that you can achieve things as well. (Raqia)

Stuart Hall has argued for an understanding of cultural identity as a process, one that is constituted within, nor prior to representation, grounded on “…not the discovery but the production of identity. Not an identity founded on archaeology, but on the retelling of the past.” Cultural identity can then be understood as a ‘becoming’ as well as a ‘being,’ “not as an essence but as a positioning” (Hall 1990:224–26). This in turn allows for fluidity and shifts – not just in individual but also in cultural identity.

Tahera’s parents fled Afghanistan for Iran in the wake of the Communist invasion of 1979. In 2000 her father disappeared back to Afghanistan, and her mother applied for refugee protection visas for the family. After eight years their claim was processed and they were granted their visas - although it took another six years for her older sister’s claim to be approved. The family was finally reunited in Adelaide. Following Fozdar and Hartley, the mechanisms of exclusion they encountered on first arrival can be seen as evidence of a model of ethno-cultural belonging, rather than a model of pluralist multiculturalism based on choice (Fozdar and Hartley 2013).

My sister was in - on the train, the first two weeks, trying to go from city to my place and then catch a bus. She - like two people they were trying - they put alcohol on her scarf and they were telling my sister you are terrorist, go back to your country and my sister she couldn’t speak English. She was so scared. (Tahera)

Raqia at first did not realise that her family’s move to Australia was permanent – she was only five, and she missed her friends and school in Pakistan.

I was thinking to myself oh no, I don’t really like this place, I don’t have any friends here. I still remember those days. Even though it was a beautiful place, everything I imagined in my dreams, I was really homesick to the point where I was oh, I don’t really like this place, why are we living here, I don’t get why my parents are going it. (Raqia)
Raqia and Tahera both spoke of the strangeness of being in Australia after having only previously seen the place, with its confluence of busy white people and unveiled women, in film and television.

It was so unusual to see people without scarves, we'd only seen that in movies! It was so surreal. (Raqia)

Belonging can be mapped in multiple ways, as in Ager and Strang's framework that traces belonging through ten domains, over four levels: foundational; facilitators; social connections; and means and markers (Ager and Strang 2008). The foundation of this framework is legislative belonging around rights and citizenship. Both Tahera and Raqia describe the moment they stood up to receive their Australian citizenship certificates as a turning point in their self-conceptions. The rite of passage associated with the citizenship ceremony connoted legal, unshakeable belonging.

After that I feel like this is my country…. I feel like my responsibility is different, now I'm Australian. (Tahera)

I remember you do the oath, when you promise to the country. I feel like I got the goose bumps when I was saying it. It felt really good as well. (Raqia)

Substantive forms of belonging connote community membership – but at this point, Raqia and Tahera clung to the legal certainty and safety that their citizenship ceremony connoted. This is also seen in research by Haggis and Schech (2010). The next level in Ager and Strang's framework is facilitators: language, cultural knowledge, and security and stability. Bledin describes how migrants develop a sense of local identity in the new space by identifying with new objects and role models (Bledin 2003). Tahera cites learning English as the most important factor in starting to feel like she belonged. Then she was able to negotiate the new space around her. She spoke of how she learned how to 'be' in Australia – how to react, how to act, how to sit and move and speak.

I think it's all about your behaviour, how you behave, this is what I believe. If you have scarf, if you don't have scarf, if you have short dress or you don't, it's all about yourself. Now I know how to behave. (Tahera)

Social connections involve links with government services, bridges with local communities, and bonds within the ethnic community. Raqia started to feel a sense of belonging in year eight, when she formed connections with other members of her ethnic group: after attending Australian schools she was transferred to a school where there were other Afghan girls, and she was not the only one wearing a scarf.

I was like oh my god, there's other Afghans, I feel so comfortable wearing the scarf, whereas in this school I always felt self-conscious wearing it, so there were times I would take it off… so people don't look at me in a weird way. (Raqia)

Dependent on these connections are means and markers of belonging: employment, housing, education and health (Ager and Strang 2008). Tahera speaks to the emergence of 'herself' when she held a job in Adelaide. This reflects both the social connection she experienced and the signifier of belonging of holding a job in this sphere, particularly as in Iran she had been unable to work due to her ethnic status. She experienced this episode in her life not just as an event that had happened to her, but as an expression of a new part of herself – the experience of belonging allowed for identity formation in the new environment.

After 2015 and '16, when I tried to work for , during that time I improved my communication skills, I improved my professional skills. Like I improved a lot, I remember. I changed [into] another person. I was a bit, not shy, but you know, people
are different and this experience was a lot. It was so helpful. I helped - it helped me to be like - to be myself… (Tahera)

Fahmara fled to Australia when circumstances became too dangerous to continue running a women's education centre in Pakistan. She came alone to Australia on a student visa, a risky move she and her husband had planned together. After three months her children joined her, but it was another seven years before her husband was also finally able to come to Australia as a refugee. Fahmara describes her experience of learning to drive as an ecstatic transformation into the person she is able to be in Australia.

I said, impossible if I was the one in - on the road, driving. That was impossible. But one day I was doing that and I was feeling like another person - somebody coming out of my body, and just like a superman, standing - I am a different person. I'm not the person I used to be in Pakistan, really, this is just because of Australia, because of the equal opportunity. I love it. I really, really love it. I just - every time I talk; I talk from deep my heart. I get emotional because it really changed me. I'm a different person. (Fahmara)

In these latter examples Australian Hazara women can be seen as building bridges with their local host community, while their adherence to traditional cultural forms indicates bonds within their own ethnic community. Both of these forms of substantive belonging interrelate to reflect a sense of security. These are grounded by the legal fact of citizenship – which is of crucial importance for people who have come to Australia as refugees. But citizenship is itself not a pure signifier of belonging – this comes through the performance of substantive forms as well.

**Conclusion**

Australian constructions of national identity can be analysed as based on underlying assumptions around ethno-cultural belonging. However the nascent Hazara diaspora in Australia and the increasing sense of belonging experienced by Hazara women in this piece indicate that substantive forms of belonging such as employment, housing, health and education, language, and bridges and bonds with local communities effect shifts in the women's habitus that work alongside legal forms of belonging. Ultimately, the Hazara diaspora to Australia reflected in new identity formations experienced by Hazara women speaks optimistically of the possibility of migrant belonging.

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Mediating a mobile identity: the role of social media in the lives of Hazara youth in Australia

Amy Neve
La Trobe University

Abstract

One of the challenges for young people who have been forcibly displaced is the maintenance and production of identities across distance and in response to change. For them, settlement coincides with a life stage critical to personal and social identity development (Erikson, 1968; Kennedy & MacNeela 2014, Marcia, 1980).

This paper explores how young men from Hazara backgrounds living in Australia, respond creatively to that challenge through their uses of social media. I will specifically be looking at their use of Facebook. I argue that social media platforms act as a mediator of mobile identities for young Hazara men. Looking at the ways these young men use social media as a daily practice, it becomes possible to see how young migrants are creating and maintaining identities over time and place. These platforms provide a space for multiple aspects of their lives to be kept in one place and are accessible wherever they find themselves. These young migrants who have experienced mobility and forced displacement (Wilding 2012), use virtual spaces to maintain various aspects of their lives when their own geographic positioning is in flux.

Introduction

The internet has become an important platform where social, cultural and economic lives are performed (Kissau and Hunger, 2010). Social media platforms are used to navigate the relations between geographical place, community and individual identity (Collin 2014, Donà 2014). In this paper, I look at the uses and effects of social media in a small group of young Hazara men who all use at least one social media platform daily to communicate, interact and consume information, news and entertainment. I argue that social media acts as a mediator for their mobile identities. The use of social media amongst young Hazara men reflect how a very specific demographic of individuals construct a mobile identity. Participants are all male unaccompanied minors of Hazara ethnic background. In Australia, many asylum-seeking boat arrivals are single Hazara men. This is due to the instability in their homelands and the threat posed to young Hazara men of military age by the Taliban (Maley, 2001). These men represent the continued lineage of their families and assets, putting them more at risk than others (ibid.). This and the increased physical dangers young women would face on the journey, is why the experience of the young Hazara unaccompanied minor is highly gendered. The resettlement experiences of refugee
youth transitioning to adulthood are vastly different than those who are already adults (Nunn et al. 2015). These young men are now at an age when they are required to be independent, raising questions about how they navigate becoming adult men in Australia, at the same time as they build a new life.

Social media platforms can be a tool for the virtual bridging of borders, enabling interaction with different communities and places and greatly aid in socio-cultural adaption in a new society (Portes et al., 1999) in ways that were previously not possible. These platforms are having a transformative impact on the lives and experiences of young people from refugee backgrounds. The two identity categories of ‘Refugee’ and ‘Youth’ are each separately dehistoricized and universalized. This means they are a category that is “doubly dehistoricized and doubly universalized; whilst muting the voices of those who occupy this category” (Wilding 2012).

New media however, are providing opportunities to challenge how people can represent themselves and their life narratives (Elliott, 2013). Young people use social media platforms to link up the various places they have been, the activities they partake in and the communities they engage with. Technologies used are no longer separate, but are deeply intertwined in the production of identity, community and place (Collin 2014). Social media platforms have contributed to the “further shrinkage of the degrees of separation of the world’s population” (Elliott 2013, p179). These ‘virtual mobilities’ can counter the increasing distance and regular separation individuals are finding themselves in today (Elliott, 2013). This is particularly useful for migrants and refugees, who are likely to face extended time and distances away from homeland communities. For many refugees, this physical distance from homeland communities may never be able to be bridged (Maley 2001).

Social media platforms like Facebook, mediate family and community relationships, providing opportunities for engagement, as well as a sense of belonging within disparate societies (Marlowe et al. 2017). Without the use of this media, aspects of participants identity would be far more likely to become fragmented over time. This is due to the highly mobile nature of this group of people, as well as the reasons for which they are mobile. While starting a new life, they are no longer cut off from their past in the same ways previous refugees would have been (Donà 2014, Wilding 2012). This is through the maintenance of virtual connections. Social media plays an important role in bridging time and physical distance, enabling the weaving together of a more mobile identity. Social media consumption and communication is an avenue for producing a transnational space, where young migrants form and maintain communities across borders (Georgiou, 2006; Kearney, 1995). The increasing prevalence of digital communication has meant that many societies are now ‘characterised by a culture of connectivity’ (Marlowe et al. 2017), where digital media is a part of everyday life. Literacy in these tools can play a significant role in bridging home and host countries for migrants (Kissau and Hunger, 2010). Young migrants develop a sense of belonging across borders reflecting an emerging tendency for a transnational identity, rather than geographically bound and national (Wilding 2012). Here, belonging must be seen as ‘multi-layered’ as it encompasses aspects of people’s identities alongside the socio-political context in which they are mobile (Marlowe et al. 2017). Sites including Facebook provide individuals with the opportunity to display personal information, expand and maintain social networks, and communicate with others.

Methodology
The material presented in this paper draws from my PhD research project investigating the transitions into adulthood of young Hazara men who arrived in Australia as unaccompanied minors. Data collection was conducted in 2016 in Melbourne and Canberra through physical semi-structured interviews, and participant observation with two small groups of men in each city. Much of this participant observation was done casually spending time with participants over
meals, out at soccer games or at community events. Part of this participant observation however, included ongoing interactions through Facebook. This was initially the best way to organise meeting up with participants individually and in groups, however was then used as a space for participant observation. This was due to the prolific use and way in which engagement with this platform was used as a space for identity mediation.

Participants have come to Australia as Asylum seekers or refugees due to persecution in Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan. These young men arrived here without their families, who remain in those three countries, many waiting for their opportunity to migrate safely to Australia. Some have relatives within their extended family or from their home communities in Australia. Others are the first of their family and community to migrate to the country. As the project deals only with young men’s experiences, participants are all young males between the ages of 18 and 30 years. The approximate number of Hazara participants is 40 and all men arrived between 2005 and 2014. Specifically, I limited my participant base to Unaccompanied Minors who arrived before the 19th July 2013, as this marks the end of on-shore processing of this cohort with subsequent arrivals from then of being held in offshore immigration detention facilities (ASRC 2015b). Throughout my year of fieldwork, and certainly throughout the time I have known some of the men, interstate trips and relocations were common. Many young men who I have known for several years now have moved interstate for employment or to be reunited with family. One aspect of my project was to explore and show how this was happening.

Including Facebook as a space for participant observation allowed me access to their virtual lives, where I could observe the ways in which they engaged with social media and how some of the men engaged with each other. The ability to instantly communicate with each other using messages, videos, images or video chat gave me the opportunity to be far more present in their lives than I otherwise would have been. This type of research, or 'netnography’ (Donà 2014) is increasingly chosen as a methodological tool in looking at web based social practices and ‘virtual dialogues’ (Horst 2016). When negotiating ethical aspects of using Facebook as a field site, I had to consider the differing levels of assumed privacy that participants might have, regarding our interactions. I elected to use publicly accessible ‘Facebook pages’ participants followed and engaged with as sites of data collection. Here I focussed on content and use, rather than identifiable engagement. For Facebook conversations with participants, this was easier as I had already identified myself as a researcher and gained consent at the start of the project. I also chose to mention my project and their involvement regularly in our interactions. This was done to avoid confusion over my intentions throughout data collection.

Social media as a mobile identity
Away from their families, friends, and familiar environments and mostly on their own in Australia, the young men in this study would intensively consume Western, Persian, Pakistani and Afghan media available online, communicate with their parents and family members, and maintained existing peer networks around the world through various social networking technologies. Hazara refugees in Australia have a documented history of using technology to enable their transnational lives. For example, Glazebrook (2005) has looked at the use of mobile phones among Hazara refugees in Dandenong, Melbourne to manage their social networks within Australia and overseas. Here, mobile phones aid Hazara in gaining and managing social lives within the ethnic community as well as access and transmit news from their home countries and family (Glazebrook 2005).

Other studies show young refugees from other national and ethnic backgrounds involved in similar practices. Karen youth are described to use Facebook to share information about their everyday lives, watch music videos on YouTube and keep up to date with overseas pop music trends.
Afridi and Hazara themed pages on Facebook are regularly followed by most participants in the study. This is similar to the Karen youth in Wilding’s study. These pages are produced mostly by diasporic Hazara and other Afghan ethnic communities around the world. International public figures, images of Hazara cultural activities, quotes from the Koran or updates regarding the persecution of Hazara in Pakistan and Afghanistan where amongst the more common content found through thematic data analysis of these pages. Many of these pages appeared to be oriented to the Hazara diaspora, offering snapshots of life in homelands and representations of ethnic identity. An example would be women in traditional dress or images paying tribute to Baba Mazari (Hazara political leader). Media consumption however, is not limited to origin locales. For example, looking through participants Facebook activity I could see most had engagement with global pop culture consumption. Sport, music and celebrities from both Western and non-Western countries also make up many of these young men’s eclectic social media content.

According to both Metykova (2010) and Yin (2013) young migrants tend to use online media based in their home countries. Many of the young Hazara men however, first had access to social media only after leaving origin countries, while some did not have access until they came to Australia using these platforms for the first time in detention centres. Wilding’s (2012) research revealed similar trends, where participants were first taught how to use different communication technologies through a creative media project. They, subsequently engaged with these technologies regularly. Some Hazara participants reported in interviews that due to lack of infrastructure, there was limited access to technologies like Facebook in their country of origin when they had left which hadn’t changed. Others reported a lack of necessity for most people not using these platforms. I should note that some men reported an increase in use of these technologies in even rural hometowns since the time they left, where more people have access to things like the internet.

Young migrants orient themselves across multiple locations, directly affecting their identities (Vertovec 2004). These young men would often share photographs taken from different cities and places they were travelling to in Australia seeing friends or family. These friendships had been made prior to leaving their homes, somewhere on their journey to Australia or after arrival in Australia. This is an example where connections to people spanning various times and places, are all held in the same virtual space and can often be accessed instantly. These young men’s social media histories were observed, simply by scrolling down their pages. Here I could get a picture of the cities these men have lived in and travelled in Australia, who they were socialising with and notable events and milestones in their lives. Someone’s activity might show images and social media use from life Canberra, engaging with local attractions such as parliament house. Any time a friend was in their town, a group photo of them eating a banquet is taken and shared online. Trips interstate warrant a picture and achievements such as purchasing a car, gaining an education certificate or job, or key local sporting matches they participate in are shared for each other to see. I observed participants who had previously lived together in Canberra, having ongoing debates about international soccer tournaments despite now being dispersed around the country. Here relationships, events, tastes and achievements are swapped and shared without hindrance by their location and mobilities. They maintain an engagement with multiple aspects of their identities any time or place they choose.

Identity is a dynamic expression and social media is not just a platform for a mobile identity but also a place to develop how that identity is represented to others. This occurs when there is a reflexive attitude towards what content is displayed and how it may be received (Giddens 1991).
The content within these men’s social media spaces act as a canvas for their own developing identities. Some participants were observed to make posts expressing how they felt about themselves and how their lives had changed over time. These posts often referenced personal difficulties and struggles relating to starting a new life with very little means. The same Facebook post was sometimes paired with a statement about overcoming hardship and personal growth, reflecting an identification with a self that has gone through a journey and changed over time.

Looking at these young men’s participation in and practice with social media platforms like Facebook can show that understanding identity goes beyond the traditional markers, such as ethnicity, nationality and gender. Here digital interactions create a ‘situatedness’ wherever they are, which is influenced by their wider social context. This practice is far more meaningful than what is often assumed in virtual social spaces (Marlowe et al. 2017) which are influential tools for migrants such as these whose lives span across multiple forms of identity. These men use social media as a tool in the creation of a mobile identity. No matter where they travel (even within Australia), the platform helps to connect and maintain in some ways, this mobile identity. While the platform enables these men to bring together various aspects of their lives over time and place, they are also choosing what aspects they are engaging with and displaying through social media. This makes social media not only a tool in a mobile identity, but also a place for a performed identity.

My work aims to contribute to the literature on the role social media plays in the lives of migrant youth. For young people, identities are an important aspect of life due to the link between a stable identity and wellbeing (Hopkins 2010). For migrant adolescents, settlement coincides with a life stage critical to personal and social identity development (Erikson, 1968; Kennedy & MacNeela 2014, Marcia, 1980). The disruption of identity in the wake of their displacement can greatly affect how they navigate through a diversity of messages about what it is to be an adult (Katiaficas 2015). My work aims to add understanding to the role social media platforms can play in merging these identities within a single space, accessible at almost any time and place. We can see here with young Hazara men, how they are defining themselves in Australia. The personal motivations, meanings and experiences of transnational migrants allow for an understanding of an individual agents change over time and place (Vertovec 2004, p.972). By looking at the virtual worlds of these young men through their social media use, we can see how they are using these platforms to consolidate an identity that is as mobile as their lives.

References


Adopting a decolonising lens: Towards an epistemological transformation of social work knowledge

Kate Vincent
University of Tasmania

Abstract
This paper presents the experiences of a white social worker conducting research into Whiteness within social work. It is argued that social work in Australia is built upon Western epistemologies, which continue to dominate contemporary Western social work. First Nations peoples, people seeking asylum and people of refugee background commonly access social work services and many also become social workers. Why then, with multiple knowledges available and ways of doing and being possible, is the Western white way predominantly and continuously privileged over others? Adopting a decolonising lens, this paper argues for an unlearning and de-privileging of what is taught within Australian social work and the position given to white people and Western knowledge as the mainstream. It is argued that Whiteness can be understood as an embodied experience, that sustains and propels the power and privilege of the West above the rest. In this paper, it is suggested that the process of critically examining the embodied experience of Whiteness (as it relates to the production of social work knowledge) calls for a valuing and privileging of unheard voices, voices from the periphery, voices often labelled “alternative voices”, voices that demand a transformational rethink of what constitutes social work knowledge.

Keywords: Whiteness, social work, knowledge, decolonisation, Western epistemology.

I would like to start by positioning myself. I believe this is important because it locates me in relation to the research and it explains my context. I am a 28-year-old female and I identify as being Euro-Australian and white. I am heterosexual, able-bodied, and middle-class. I am also a trained social worker, which means I have received a university education. I understand that the majority of my social statuses are those most valued in Western society. This paper begins with a discussion of some of the contemporary literature exploring Whiteness, and then shifts to focus on Whiteness within the social work profession. I then incorporate experiences associated with my PhD research project which I believe are a relevant contribution to the Whiteness literature and what is being called for by Critical Race and Critical Whiteness scholars as a necessary step
My project, which at the time of writing was beginning the data collection phase, aims to explore how Whiteness is manifested and operationalised in white social workers’ practice and how white social workers interpret Whiteness in the context of their practice, focusing specifically on social work practice with people seeking asylum and people of refugee background.

**What do I mean by Whiteness?**

Whiteness is defined by Frankenberg (1993: 1) as the shape that race takes in white people’s lives. That is, Whiteness is “the invisible norm against which other races are judged in the construction of identity, representation, subjectivity, nationalism and the law” (Moreton-Robinson 2004: vii). It is often hard for white people to see themselves as raced given their lives are seen as natural; their way of living, traditions and understandings are the invisible norm (Frankenberg 1993: 105). In Western counties such as Australia, culture or race is often something that is only attributed to those who are not white (Pease 2010: 112–114). According to Frankenberg (1993: 1), Whiteness includes three linked dimensions. Firstly, “Whiteness is a location of structural advantage, of race privilege”; secondly, Whiteness is a standpoint from where white people view the world, themselves and others; and thirdly, Whiteness is a set of unmarked and unnamed cultural practices.

According to Ahmed (2007: 153), “if the world is made white, then the body-at-home is one that can inhabit whiteness”. Ahmed (2007: 152-155) explains that in a world where white is the norm people inhabit a white world, they become acquainted with and accustome to implicit knowledges of what it means to be near or far this white world experience. Thus, for Ahmed, Whiteness is embodied and “holds” through the habits of this white world and she adds (by including Pierre Bourdieus work (1977)):

> We can link habits to what is unconscious, and routine, or what becomes ‘second nature’. To describe whiteness as a habit, as second nature, is to suggest that whiteness is what bodies do, where the body takes the shape of the action. Habits are not ‘exterior’ to bodies, as things that can be ‘put on’ or ‘taken off’ (Ahmed 2007: 156).

Whiteness then, not only shapes what bodies do, but what they “can do”, how mobile they can be, how close or far they can get to the implicit knowledge of what it means to inhabit a white world and therefore what is or isn’t within their reach (Ahmed 2007: 150-152). Through discussion of the work of Frantz Fanon (1986 as cited in Ahmed 2007: 153), Ahmed explains that “bodies are shaped by histories of colonialism, which makes the world ‘white’, a world that is inherited, or which is already given before the point of an individual’s arrival”. Furthermore, white bodies, have an inherited power to shape the world through habits in a way where white bodies continue to be the best fit, the closest to, the dominant white world (Ahmed 2007: 156). To me, Ahmed (2007: 159-162) is saying that white bodies, within a white dominated society, are afforded more space, more mobility and more voice. In these spaces, white bodies become invisible as the norm, and non-white bodies stand out as “out of place” and unable to inhabit some spaces, far from the core of the white world experience and thus peripheral to it.

**Whiteness within social work**

It is argued that social work in Australia is white: moulded from American and British knowledge and understandings, which continue to dominate contemporary Western social work education and practice (Walter et al. 2013: 241). According to Young (2008: 105):

> It is widely recognised that social work’s genesis can be found in the same conditions which led to the colonisation of Australia, the development of capitalism, the Industrial Revolution, and the White desire of Europe to shape the globe in its own image.
White privilege is built into the profession’s knowledge, models of practice and values (Young & Zubrzycki 2011: 161). There is a consensus of opinion amongst those who have written in this area that the social work profession is built upon Western knowledge and traditions; that for the most part this has gone unacknowledged or unquestioned; and that social workers must turn the lens in upon themselves and interrogate their own privilege moving forward (for example, see Young 2004; Young & Zubrzycki 2011; Walter et al. 2013; Baltra-Ulloa 2013).

Walter and Baltra-Ulloa (2016: 30-31) argue that while the call for change exists, there remains a reluctance in social work to actually turn the lens in on itself and name white dominance within the profession. That is, whilst ideas of inclusion and being culturally competent and sensitive have become popular within the profession for acknowledging diversity and addressing oppression, void is the acknowledgment of white people as raced and thus the dominance they exert for being closer to the unquestionable norm – the white world. Whilst Walter and Baltra-Ulloa (2016: 31-32) do not claim to offer a “how to” manual, it is argued that a decolonising approach is required, which would involve a process of unlearning and de-privileging the Western knowledge that dominates Australian social work, and would involve letting go of control and power. This echoes the voices of authors such as Smith (1999), Briskman (2008), Grey at al. (2008) and Bennett et al. (2011) who have argued for a decolonised approach to practice, where we let go of our need for power and control, the assumption that the West knows best and the idea that expert knowledge lies within us as workers and researchers. In addition, it involves acknowledging the ongoing impact of colonisation, alongside a commitment towards honest relationships, deep listening and the valuing of local and Indigenous knowledges.

**Turning the lens in: My PhD project**

So, how do you take a decolonising approach and turn the lens in on yourself, as a profession and individually as a white social worker working with people seeking asylum and people of refugee background? This was the question that started my PhD journey and consumed much of the first year of candidature, as I aimed to develop a research method that turned the lens in on white social workers, their practice and the profession more broadly. Alongside this journey, I have been navigating the experience as a white social worker with a colonised mind and as a product of Western culture, conducting a project that interrogates Whiteness, with other white social workers. An obvious question is raised about how a white person does this if Whiteness for the most part remains invisible to white people? Essential then, was an additional aspect of the journey where I began an interrogation of Whiteness within my own life, to unsettle and question fundamental aspects of how I see social work, how I see myself, both personally and professionally, how I see my friends and clients, both white and non-white and how I understand power and privilege and oppression and the link between them.

I am currently working with a small group of social workers who themselves identify as white and who work with people seeking asylum and or people from the refugee arrived community, to interrogate Whiteness within their own practice and the profession more broadly. These social workers have been invited to meet with me individually several times to critically reflect on Whiteness and their practice, and to engage with literature related to Whiteness parallel to these interviews, aimed at facilitating an increased awareness of Whiteness and of having a white identity. During their involvement, participants are also invited to participate in a focus group, which will provide them with the opportunity to make sense of what they are learning and how it relates to practice, with other white social workers who are involved in the same process. My project will be further discussed later in this paper.
What a decolonising approach offers social work

In Australia, First Nations peoples and communities have been both voluntary and involuntary clients of social work services for decades, and many become social workers themselves. Furthermore, when people of refugee background and people seeking asylum enter the country, they receive social work support which are usually provided by non-government organisations. Once resettled, many people from the refugee arrived community have shown an interest in helping, and pursue careers in helping professions such as social work. What this diversity offers social work, is “multiple ways of knowing, being and doing” that may differ from the mainstream Western way of doing and thinking about social work practice (Baltra-Ulloa in press: 130). However, Western epistemologies continue to dominate how social workers perceive relationships and what we bring to them, the value that is placed on professionalism and how we approach interactions with those whose cultures differ from our own (Briskman 2008: 87-88; Baltra-Ulloa 2013: 99-100). The knowledge that dictates what social work knowledge is and how social work practice develops is often unquestioned by white social workers who receive their education in the West (Briskman 2008: 88). To me this ring true as my own educational experience afforded me proximity to the norm, the white world, that as a white social work student meant I saw everything I learnt as universally true.

Baltra-Ulloa (in press: 130) also discusses how Western knowledge sits at the centre of social work as the norm. It is argued that voices from the South, those from the periphery, who offer other ways of doing and thinking about how social work can be understood and practiced, are seen as alternative voices and the knowledge that they offer are thus alternative knowledges. Whilst these knowledges may be at times included into contemporary social work, their place as alternative remains. This status reaffirms Western knowledge as the privileged dominant knowledge, at the centre, and those that differ as alternative knowledges, on the periphery. Baltra-Ulloa (in press: 136-137), is calling for an unsettling of contemporary Western social work, which would involve the process of de-privileging and unlearning what is currently known and privileged. This would involve hearing and privileging voices from the periphery and being cognisant of what they offer us moving forward differently, not as alternatives to what we currently do and know, but equally valuable knowledges. Indeed,

the ultimate aim is to have no centre or periphery, no single writer and teller of stories and no preferred practice model other than splintering and unsettling all that we know while we honour the messiness of what we learn from each other (Baltra-Ulloa in press: 136).

To relate this work to that of Ahmed (2007: 156-158) and the argument that white bodies have more mobility in a white world, thus more ability to “do” and to define the world that is the norm, I believe in this context a decolonised social work would be about white social workers unlearning their privileged mobility and influence and thus allowing for an epistemological transformation of social work in which multiple ways of knowing and doing become the source of how we think about and do social work. This transformation would allow for a relearning that involves being in dialogue with each other, deep listening, being vulnerable and at times uncomfortable and two-way relationships that involve care, respect, trust, and knowledge sharing from both the client and the social worker (Bennet et al. 2011: 27-32; Baltra-Ulloa in press: 135-137). Westoby and Dowling (2013: 5) explain dialogue as a “deep, challenging, responsive, enriching, disruptive encounter and conversation-in-context; and also a mutual and critical process of building shared understanding”. Dialogue also involves acknowledging power and the historical context.

What I hope that my project will offer social work is a way of turning the lens inward in order to engage with the question of what a decolonised social work would look like. The explicit aims of my project are to explore how Whiteness is manifested and operationalised in white
social workers’ practice and how white social workers interpret Whiteness within their practice. However, what I also aim to facilitate is a project where white social workers develop an increased race cognisance, to make Whiteness more visible to those who participate in the project, and to create change within social work organisations and white social workers’ relationships with clients seeking asylum and/or from the refugee arrived community. It is hoped that my project takes social workers on a journey of unsettling the Western thinking that has informed their social work training and that may continue to inform their practice, to start a process of unlearning and de-privileging that knowledge. It would also require social workers to think about whose voices have been included and whose have been excluded and why this occurs. Whilst in reality, the unsettling that occurs during five months of participation might be modest, this project is my attempt to provide space for white social workers to begin a process of decolonisation of their practice and initiate a level of critical epistemological and ontological transformation of social work. This would involve unlearning the privileged mobility and influence they have closest to the centre of a white world, and would involve hearing and valuing voices previously considered alternative, to rethink and transform social work knowledge.

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Migration and Urban Livelihoods: A Translocal Perspective in Dhaka, Bangladesh

Lutfun Nahar Lata

The University of Queensland

Abstract
Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh, is the second fastest growing megacity in the world with a population of 18 million people. This growth largely stems from rural to urban migration, which is often triggered by natural disasters or lack of employment opportunities in rural areas. 300,000 to 400,000 people migrate to Dhaka every year. However, like other megacities, the local government of Dhaka has failed to provide for the housing and employment needs of incoming migrants. Consequently, almost one third of Dhaka's population lives in slum areas. They rely heavily on their social and kinship networks to access public spaces to earn an income. Drawing on interview data with poor migrants from Sattola slum in Dhaka, this paper explores how the urban poor make use of translocal networks to find work and claim a space for livelihoods in the city.

Keywords: urban poor, migrants, translocality, translocal networks, translocal communities, informality, livelihoods

Introduction
Migration is an important coping strategy for poor households to secure livelihoods in Bangladesh (Afsar, 2003; Pryer, 2017). In Bangladesh, translocal rather than transnational migration is an important migration decision by the rural poor, who often migrate to Dhaka in search of better livelihoods (Ishtiaque, 2012; Siddiqui, 2003). Although there are many studies in the context of migration and livelihoods (Afsar, 2003; Begum, 1999; Ishtiaque, 2012), few studies have emphasised the role of translocal networks that migrants utilise to appropriate a space in their destination in the first place (Etzold, 2016; Islam & Herbeck, 2013). Within this context, this paper explores how the urban poor make use of translocal networks to find work and claim a space for livelihoods in Dhaka.

Migration, translocal social networks, translocal communities and urban livelihoods
Like other megacities, Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh and the second fastest growing megacity in the world (Gruebner et al., 2014) is failing to provide housing, health, education and formal employment opportunities for the growing number of poor rural migrants, who migrate to Dhaka with a dream to change their fate for a better future. 300,000 to 400,000 people migrate to Dhaka every year (Hackenbroch, Hossain, & Rahman, 2008). Most of them end up living in
slums (Angeles, Lance, Barden-O’Fallon, Islam & Mahbub, 2009; Corner & Dewan, 2014). At present there are almost 5,000 slums in Dhaka (Islam et al., 2006). The majority of slum dwellers do not have access to formal economic opportunities provided by public or private organisations, except a few, who are engaged in the garment sectors and other low paid jobs. Most studies on Dhaka suggest that planning frameworks so far have not addressed the needs and problems regarding housing and employment opportunities for the urban poor (Hackenbroch, 2013b; Islam, 2014; Mowla & Hossain, 2007).

Almost half of Dhaka’s population live in slums and many of their livelihoods depend on access to public spaces (Bertuzzo, 2009; Islam, 2005). However, present urban development patterns do not leave space for the poor; rather, the development of model towns since 1990s indicates that public spaces are becoming inaccessible to the poor (Ghafur, 2006). Within this context, the urban poor often utilise their translocal networks to get access to public spaces to earn a livelihood. The term ‘translocal network’ refers to “sets of multidirectional and overlapping networks, constituted through migration, in which the exchange of resources, practices and ideas links” (Greiner, 2010, p. 137). Translocality is not automatically created through migration but it is formed “through regular communication, through the exchange of resources, and through investments in one’s local and translocal network” (Etzold, 2016, p. 171). In particular, networks are important to the notion of translocality as “they conceptually link agents (near and far apart), as well as structure and agency: they form the interpersonal structures that connect individual agents, institutions, and organizations, constituting the social space within and between places” (Sterly, 2015, p. 34). If a person belongs to a network, have lasting social relations and maintain close contact with members, they have ‘social capital’, so they can ask the members for a favour, advice or help (Bohle, 2005). This kind of relations between migrants, former migrants, incoming migrants and non-migrants form ‘translocal migrant networks’, which can facilitate further migration and translocal exchanges (Greiner & Sakdapolrak, 2013). This kind of network further establishes ‘translocal communities’ based on a common origin or place based identities (Etzold, 2016). Translocal communities minimise risks of movement and opens up an opportunity for engaging into informal economic activities (Lohnert & Steinbrink, 2005; Massey, Arango, Hugo, Kouaouci, & Pellegrino, 1999). The urban poor in the Global South often utilise this kind of translocal networks to appropriate public spaces for livelihoods (Datta, 2011; Greiner, 2011; Lohnert & Steinbrink, 2005).

In the context of Dhaka, translocal networks are often produced through place based identity, connections with local kin and friendship networks, who often encourage the rural poor to migrate to urban areas. The above conceptual framework is used in this paper to explore how translocal networks are used by the urban poor to appropriate public spaces and earn a livelihood in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

**Context and methods**

Data were collected from Sattola slum in Dhaka (Figure 1). Sattola slum was selected as a case study as most residents are engaged in some form of informal economic activity using public space. Sattola slum is one of the largest slums in Dhaka that is established on public space. This slum is located in the middle of Mohakhali, Niketon and Gulshan in Dhaka. There are 12,893 households in Sattola (BRAC, 2016). The residents of Sattola slum are mostly rural migrants. Some of them have been living in Sattola for more than 15 years. Most migrants of Sattola migrated from Barisal, Potuakhali and Bhola districts as people from these areas often lose their land and houses due to riverbank erosion. Beside this, kinship and social networks also worked as pull factors for many migrants. Many of them migrated to Dhaka in search of better livelihoods following their relatives and neighbours’ success. Few poor migrants migrated from Khulna, Mymensingh and Kishorgonj districts due to lack of economic opportunities in their place of
origin. Although the rural migrants have moved to Dhaka for earning an income, they maintain a strong bond with their place of origin. They often visit their parents and relatives during religious festivals. This is how they maintain regular contact with their place of origin.

Data were collected between November 2015 to February 2016, using a combination of qualitative methods, including in-depth interviews, key informant interviews, and observation. Selection criteria for interviews included a gender balance as men and women experience and use space differently and apply different strategies to appropriate negotiated spaces, livelihood practices (those who are engaged in informal economic activities) and length of stay. Data were collected by conducting in-depth interviews with 94 informal workers (18 women and 76 men) and 37 key informants, including 16 government officials, an academic, 8 local leaders, 3 NGO officials, 5 NGO formed community members (popularly known as CBOs) and 4 landlords were interviewed. Interviews lasted from 30 to 90 minutes. Interviews were conducted using a basic interview guide consisting of questions regarding causes of migration, use of translocal and local social networks for accessing to public spaces, access rules and arrangements, spatiality of livelihoods, legitimation of public spaces for livelihoods, contestations and power, and negotiations and resistance strategies with regard to access and use of public space. Data were analysed using a categorical coding approach. Themes related to the translocal networks and livelihoods are presented below.
Figure 1: Sattola slum and its adjoining neighbourhoods
Claiming a space through translocal networks in Dhaka

The local government of Dhaka does not provide shelter for the incoming rural migrants, who often migrate to Dhaka following the footsteps of their relatives and fictive kin. Hence translocal migrant networks play an important role in the success of a new migrant settling in Dhaka. In most cases, the rural poor migrate to Dhaka as their relatives and/or rural neighbours, who migrated earlier, tell them to come to Dhaka to earn an income. This is also reflected in Etzold’s (2016) study on food vendors in Dhaka. At first, the migrants settle down either with their relatives or they rent a room close to their relatives’ room. Apart from settling in, the urban poor mostly depend on their translocal networks to appropriate public space for earning an income as Miraj said:

I have been living in Dhaka for five years. My relatives live here. I did not like my village as there were not many employment opportunities. So I talked to my relatives first and then decided to come to Dhaka. My uncle’s son and aunt’s son live here ... The month I came to Dhaka, I did not rent a room. I used to live with my cousins. I rented a room the following month … At first I started my business at Mohakhali. I used other people’s vending site at the beginning. If someone decided not to go for vending on a particular day, I used to sell in their place. Sometimes they also offer me their vending sites, as I was new in this business. They did this favour saying, “I am not going today, you may go. You are new (in this business), so you go” (Miraj, 28, a food vendor, [96]).

Most food vendors got their first vending site with the help of their translocal networks – either their relatives or neighbours moved to a new place offering their old vending sites to new migrants. The reason behind this practice is that the old migrants have more knowledge regarding access to public spaces of Dhaka than the old migrants. Furthermore, they know how to appropriate a new space, whereas, the new migrant is a newcomer to Dhaka, who has limited or no knowledge in this matter. This practice further indicates that the old migrants hold more social power than the new migrants and helps the later to find a space for vending activities which is consistent with Anjaria’s (2010) study in Mumbai.

Business capital and translocal networks

Apart from getting vending site, the urban poor often receive start up business capital from their translocal networks (Table 1). They borrow money from their translocal networks as banks and other government financial institutions do not provide them loans due to lack of collateral. The poor households in Madras also utilized a variety of kinship and social networks to obtain necessary resources to fulfil the household’s basic needs (Noponen, 1991).
Table 1: Business capital for vending activities and sources of capital

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of vending activities</th>
<th>Business capital in BDT (1 BDT = AUD .017)</th>
<th>Sources of business capital</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Processed food (food vendors who sell food in pushcarts)</td>
<td>12000- 20,000</td>
<td>Brother/Brother-in-law/other relatives/fictive kin groups/friends, village cooperatives and sometimes from NGOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawking (Hawkers, who sell food carrying baskets or bags)</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>Own savings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tea stall</td>
<td>25000</td>
<td>Borrowed from BRAC (10,000 BDT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice cake</td>
<td>300 - 10000</td>
<td>Kin, NGOs, own savings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruits</td>
<td>8000-10000</td>
<td>Own savings Loan from NGOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boiled egg</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>Own savings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables and spices</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>Borrowed from neighbours/fictive kin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basket</td>
<td>10000</td>
<td>Own savings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s own work

Urban livelihoods and translocal networks
The urban poor learn business mechanisms through their translocal networks working as an apprentice for the first few months after they arrived in Dhaka. Later they begin their own business; however, they often run similar business that their kin and friends operate and make a business network of their own. Most food vendors in Sattola sold processed food. Most street food vendors (40-45) sold ‘bot’ (fried cow stomach/FCS), which was prepared using cow’s stomach, vegetables and spices (Figure 2). They also sold parata (flat round bread) and FCS. Some food vendors sold chicken shashlik along with FCS and parata. Most food vendors learnt this business from Ahmed Bepari, a local food vendor of Sattola, who used to operate this business before his death. He was the pioneer of this business and introduced the business to the residents of Sattola. This group of street vendors claimed that everyone who was engaged in this business in Dhaka originated from Bhola, Barisal (Figure 3). Due to river erosion and lack of employment, many rural poor of Bhola migrated to Dhaka and used their translocal networks to enter into the business. In this way, the rural migrants of Bhola created a translocal community based on a common origin.
This community had further established an informal business network. This informal network helped them to make a monthly contract with chicken and oil suppliers, who provided them chicken and oil every morning. Thus they travelled less to buy food-processing materials unlike the other food vendors. Kallol explained what they bought every day for their business:

A supplier comes to [Sattola to] supply chicken to everyone, whoever is engaged in this business. Today I bought 4 kilos [kilograms] chicken. I bought 20 kilos of cow’s stomach at 1200 BDT from wireless gate. I always buy cow’s stomach from him. I also bought 2 kilos of papaya (60 BDT), 3 kilos of cucumber (30 BDT) and spices of 100/150 BDT from Sattola market (Kallol, 28, a food vendor, [96]).

Figure 3: Role of translocal migrant networks in appropriating public spaces for livelihoods
Apart from learning how to operate business, the urban poor also first came to know from their translocal networks that they had to pay a certain amount of money to linemen if they wanted to buy temporary security over their vending spaces. A lineman is a middleman who collects security money from vendors and distributes it to other dominant groups; such as police, local police station, mastans (local enforcers) and political leaders (Lata & Walters, 2016). However, some vendors were able to deny this payment using their translocal connections with local political leaders.

**Conclusion**

This paper has shown the importance of translocal networks in the livelihood practices of the urban poor in Dhaka. As the local government of Dhaka does not provide shelter and much formal employment opportunities for the incoming rural migrants, translocal migrant networks play an important role in providing immediate shelter and employment opportunities for them. A translocal view of the livelihoods of the urban poor can enhance our understanding on the complex rural-urban connections that comprises an important element of livelihood strategies for migrant households. New migrants get a place to stay, a place to begin business, start-up capital for business and learn business strategies using their translocal networks. These findings are not only relevant to the urban poor of Dhaka rather similar practices are evident in other parts of the Global South, where strong social networks and kinship play an important role in the livelihood practices of the urban poor (Lindell, 2010; Lourenço-Lindell, 2002; Sharma, 2000; Singerman, 1995). Although this practice is to some extent different from welfare states in the Global North, who often provide safety nets for the marginalised groups (Korpi & Palme, 1998; Pierson, 2001), this is an important network for the urban poor in the South as Southern states do not provide much employment opportunities or other public services for the urban poor (Anjaria, 2011; Brown, 2006). Moreover, most poor households in Southern slums do not earn sufficient income to meet their own need nor do they have access to formal economic activities due to lack of economic capital (Braun & Aßheuer, 2011). Thus, the urban poor often create and maintain supportive relationships with their place of origin and place of destination communities in order to minimise economic insecurity, which shows the importance of local and translocal ties among migrant households.

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Australians’ attitudes toward the treatment of asylum seekers arriving by boat

Rouven E. Link
Monash University

Introduction
Over the last 40 years, Australian governments have tried to deter asylum seekers from coming to Australia by boat without a valid visa through ‘performances of political closure’ (McNevin 2007): They have successively excised Australian islands and the Australian mainland from the Australian migration zone in order to prevent asylum seekers who land on Australian territory from applying for protection in Australia; they have instituted mandatory onshore and offshore detention regimes for asylum seekers arriving by boat without a valid visa; they have set up military operations to intercept asylum-seeker vessels and turn them back to their country of departure. The message behind those policies is clear, and aptly put in a nutshell as the slogan of the controversial “No way” campaign of the Department of Immigration and Border Protection in 2014: ‘No way. They will not make Australia home’ (as cited in Laughland 2014).

Still, about three in five Australians seem to support resettlement of asylum seekers arriving by boat to Australia (see Table 1). Who are these Australians? What are their characteristics and background? Previous research has largely ignored these questions, focusing on why Australians might support restrictive asylum policies instead (Betts 2001; Klocker 2004; McKay et al. 2012). Recent data, however, indicates that opposition to policies such as turning back the boats has increased over the past few years (McAllister and Cameron 2016; Laughland-Booŷ et al. 2017; but see Markus 2016). This led Australian scholars to explore the factors that shape acceptance of asylum seekers arriving by boat among Australians (Laughland-Booŷ et al. 2014).

Previous research on permissive asylum policy attitudes relied on data from young Australians aged 16 to 21 living in Queensland (Laughland-Booŷ et al. 2014). The aim of my research is to explore the levels of acceptance and their socio-demographic determinants using a national sample of the general population.

Literature review
Attitudes toward asylum seekers and asylum policies are a popular research area in Australia, especially in psychology (McHugh-Dillon 2015, p 4). Although psychological studies have taken into account socio-demographic characteristics such as education and gender (Pedersen, Attwell and Heveli 2005), they focus primarily on the effects of personality traits, and emotions...
on attitudes toward asylum seekers (see Haslam and Holland 2012; McHugh-Dillon 2015 for reviews). This focus disregards that individual characteristics are shaped by broader social contexts. A sociological perspective enables a more holistic view on attitudes toward asylum policies by examining the links between individual and structural characteristics.

Previous research on attitudes toward asylum policies in Australia found that these vary by socio-demographic characteristics. In particular, women and more highly educated people are more likely than men and less highly educated people to support permissive or oppose restrictive asylum policies (Betts 2001; Laughland-Booÿ et al. 2014; McKay et al. 2012). Supporters of the Coalition parties also tend to be less supportive of permissive asylum policies than supporters of the Greens or Labor party (Laughland-Booÿ et al. 2014). Additionally, the geographical context may shape individual attitudes toward asylum policies. Drawing on survey research in Port Augusta, Klocker (2004) highlights the tensions between general support of harsh asylum policies and opposition to the establishment of local detention facilities. In their ethnography of Christmas Islanders, Briskman et al. (2012) found that the locals’ attitudes toward national asylum policies was shaped by the cultural change locals experienced as a result of the establishment and growth of the detention centre on Christmas Island. Research from the Netherlands suggests that support to host immigration detention facilities is high in local communities in close proximity to other such facilities (Zorlu 2016). Lubbers et al. (2006) found that municipality-level housing prices and socio-economic composition are associated with individual opposition to hosting immigration detention facilities. Thus, individuals may form their attitudes toward asylum policies based on their perceptions or experiences of how national asylum policies affect their everyday life.

Recently, Laughland-Booÿ et al. (2014:198-199) suggested that there are two qualitatively different types of acceptance of asylum seekers arriving by boat among young Australians, toleration and trust. Some people may tolerate asylum seekers arriving by boat if the consequences of not accepting them are less desirable than those of accepting them. Others, on the other hand, may accept asylum seekers arriving by boat because of generalised trust towards others they do not know, based on their own conviction that people are generally trustworthy.

It is crucial to measure different types of acceptance appropriately. The study by Laughland-Booÿ et al. (2014) falls short in this respect, using opposition to turning back the boats as indicator for accepting asylum seekers into Australia. I address this shortcoming by exploring people’s preferences regarding whether or not asylum seekers arriving by boat should be allowed to apply for either temporary or permanent residency in Australia. Additionally, given that socio-demographic characteristics explained tolerance better than trust (Laughland-Booÿ et al. 2014:198-199), this study did not distinguish between different forms of acceptance.

Data and methods
Data from the 2014 wave of the Mapping Social Cohesion survey is used in this research. Data was collected from an in-scope population defined as individuals of at least 18 years of age residing in a private household in Australia between 10 June and 16 July 2014, using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). Overall, 1,526 interviews were completed, with a response rate of 53%. The final sample was stratified by State / Territory and capital / non-capital city (see The Social Research Centre 2014 for the full methodological report).

The dependent variable was asylum policy preferences. Participants were asked regarding the best policy for dealing with asylum seekers trying to reach Australia by boat (“They should be allowed to apply for permanent residency”, “They should be allowed to apply for temporary residency only”, “They should be kept in detention until they can be sent back”, “Their boats should be turned back”). This item was dichotomised by collapsing the first two and the last two answers into one category each. Participants who preferred either temporary or permanent
residency were regarded as having permissive asylum policy preferences, whereas respondents who were in favour of detention regimes and turning back the boats were understood to have restrictive asylum policy preferences.

Independent variables included self-reported financial circumstances, employment status, party preference, place of residence, language background, gender and age. The level of education was recorded as “low” (schooling of up to and including year 12), “medium” (TAFE certificate or diploma) or “high” (university degree). The categories of all variables are shown in Table 1.

Logistic regression was used to estimate the effects of the independent variables on asylum policy preferences. Categorical variables were included as dummy variables. All cases with missing values in any of the variables used were excluded from analysis, thereby reducing the original sample from 1,526 to 1,225 individuals.

Results
Frequencies and descriptive statistics for all variables included are displayed in Table 1. The majority of respondents preferred to allow asylum seekers arriving by boat to apply for residency in Australia. Four in five respondents was Australian born. About the same proportion of participants had an English-speaking or non-English-speaking background. The sample consisted of more females than males. Seven in ten participants were living in a capital city. Respondents were on average 53 years old with a standard deviation of 17 years. Three in five participants were employed, and one in four was retired. More than half of the respondents described their financial circumstances as reasonably comfortable. Less than one in ten respondents stated to be struggling to pay bills. Most of the participants had a low level of education. The proportion of participants with a medium or high level of education differed only marginally. One third of the respondents supported the Labor party. This was 1.06% less than Coalition parties. Non-responses for this item were high (15.1%).

Table 1: Frequencies and descriptive statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>n (p)</th>
<th>Mean (standard deviation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asylum policy preferences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permissive policy preferences</td>
<td>722 (0.5896)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restrictive policy preferences</td>
<td>503 (0.4106)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>585 (0.4776)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>640 (0.5224)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration background</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
<td>998 (0.8147)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English-speaking background</td>
<td>125 (0.1020)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-English-speaking background</td>
<td>102 (0.0833)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>710 (0.5696)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>47 (0.0384)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>336 (0.2743)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>42 (0.0343)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home duties</td>
<td>46 (0.0376)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>44 (0.0359)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial circumstances</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Females were significantly more likely than males to support permissive asylum policies. In terms of immigrant background, there was no significant difference between participants born in Australia or in another English-speaking country. However, participants with a non-English speaking background were less likely to prefer any residency option than those born in Australia. Policy preferences did not differ between participants with a medium or low level of education. Respondents with a high level of education were twice as likely to favour residency opportunities as those with a low level of education. This is consistent with the results for employment status. Students were more than three times more likely than employed respondents to be in favour of offering resettlement for asylum seeker arriving by boat. Whether someone was employed or not did not any difference as to whether they supported resettlement. However, respondents that were students tended to support offering residency. The current financial situation was only important for economically vulnerable respondents. Participants describing themselves as struggling to pay bills were less likely than prosperous participants to support permissive asylum policies. Participants who supported the Greens were almost four times more likely to prefer permissive asylum policies than respondents supporting the Labor party. Participants supporting the Coalition parties were less likely than Labor supporters to support residency options for asylum seekers, which represented the lowest odds ratio of party preference. Age and place of residence had no significant effects.

Table 2: Logistic regression model predicting permissive asylum policy preferences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>n (p)</th>
<th>Mean (standard deviation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prosperous</td>
<td>193 (0.1576)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasonably comfortable</td>
<td>675 (0.5510)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just getting along</td>
<td>261 (0.2131)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Struggling to pay bills</td>
<td>96 (0.0784)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>495 (0.4041)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>356 (0.2906)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>374 (0.3053)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Party preference</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor Party</td>
<td>400 (0.3265)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Coalition</td>
<td>413 (0.3371)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Greens</td>
<td>112 (0.0914)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents and other</td>
<td>115 (0.0939)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refused/Don't know</td>
<td>185 (0.1510)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Place of residence</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital city of the state/territory</td>
<td>862 (0.7037)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of the state/territory</td>
<td>363 (0.2963)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>52.8384 (17.3656)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,225 (1.00)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Odds ratio                               Standard error
Gender                                    
Male                                       ref. 
Female                                    1.3271*  0.1742
Immigration background
Table 2: Logistic regression model predicting permissive asylum policy preferences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>predictor</th>
<th>coefficient</th>
<th>standard error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian-born</td>
<td>ref.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English-speaking background</td>
<td>0.9285</td>
<td>0.2047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-English-speaking background</td>
<td>0.4708***</td>
<td>0.1086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>ref.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>1.1469</td>
<td>0.1731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>2.4179***</td>
<td>0.4078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial circumstances</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prosperous</td>
<td>ref.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasonably comfortable</td>
<td>0.7874</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just getting along</td>
<td>0.6752</td>
<td>0.1505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Struggling to pay bills</td>
<td>0.3578***</td>
<td>0.1057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>ref.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>1.125</td>
<td>0.3714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>1.1375</td>
<td>0.2259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>4.264**</td>
<td>2.0932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home duties</td>
<td>0.8656</td>
<td>0.2886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.1713</td>
<td>0.413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party preference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor Party</td>
<td>ref.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Coalition</td>
<td>0.2824***</td>
<td>0.0447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Greens</td>
<td>4.0538***</td>
<td>1.5917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents and other</td>
<td>0.5167**</td>
<td>0.1173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refused/Don't know</td>
<td>0.4756***</td>
<td>0.6921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of residence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital city of the state/territory</td>
<td>ref.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of the state/territory</td>
<td>0.7715</td>
<td>0.1091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.9987</td>
<td>0.0053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log-Likelihood</td>
<td>-718.1046</td>
<td>1.225</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001, two-tailed test of significance

Discussion

The aim of this work was to contribute to the growing body of literature on permissive asylum policy attitudes in Australia. Past research on opinions about asylum seekers arriving by boat tended to examine why people were against offering residence in Australia, rather than exploring why some supported resettlement in Australia. Moreover, past research was restricted to relatively small areas, rather than covering the entire Australian population. This research uses data from a nationally representative sample and focuses on the socio-demographic determinants of preference for a more permissive policy option—letting asylum seekers settle in Australia.

This was largely the case. Female participants were more likely to prefer residency options for asylum seekers arriving by boat than male participants, Greens supporters held more permissive views than potential Labor voters who in turn were more supportive than Coalition voters. Not
surprisingly, economically better off respondents were more likely to support permissive asylum policies than respondents who reported being in difficult financial situations.

Respondents with a university degree, however, tended to have more permissive asylum policy preferences than those with secondary schooling. Students were also more likely to support permissive asylum policies than employed participants. These results indicate that studying or having studied at a university has a qualitatively distinct impact on asylum policy preferences than other forms of education, and that this impact is stronger than labour market participation.

In research on attitudes toward immigration policy, three approaches to explain the positive effect of education on such attitudes can be distinguished: The ethnic competition hypothesis, the liberalisation hypothesis, and the self-selection hypothesis. The ethnic competition hypothesis considers education primarily as an indicator for professional skills. It assumes that better educated individuals are less likely to compete with immigrants in the labour market and for other scarce resources such as access to social services because of their higher skill level in comparison to the immigrants, which makes them less afraid and more accepting of immigration in general (Jenssen and Engesback 1994). In contrast, the liberalisation hypothesis focuses on the cultural aspects of education and suggests that education leads to more positive attitudes toward immigration by promoting equality and tolerance (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007). The self-selection hypothesis argues that differences in attitudes toward immigration between individuals with varying levels of education stem from factors that influence the choice of educational pathways and the transition from education to work, such as parental education and the duration of educational programmes (Lancee and Sarrasin 2015).

The findings of this research lend support to all of the above-mentioned perspectives. As to the ethnic competition hypothesis, my findings indicate that individuals with a low or medium level of education disapprove of residency options for asylum seekers arriving by boat. This may be because of their comparatively weaker position in the labour market. Australians aged 17-24 years with a Bachelor degree are more likely to be employed than those who did not complete year 12; however, there was no difference between those who completing year 12, obtaining a Certificate 1 or 2, or a Diploma and whose who did not complete year 12 (Daly and Cole 2009). Additionally, the percentage of employed individuals was highest among those with a university degree, and lowest among those who did not complete high school (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016).

There is also some support for the liberalisation and self-selection hypotheses. It was found that those with a university degree to be more supportive of residency options than employed participants. These results can be explained by the distinct focus of a university degree compared to TAFE certificates or Diplomas. While the latter mainly serve the purpose of learning practical skills directly applicable in the labour market, university degrees are also meant to equip the individual with analytical and critical thinking skills. Additionally, people with lower qualifications than a university degree are under more pressure to find and secure employment.

Future research should more directly test the different hypotheses regarding the impact of education on asylum policy preferences. Because this study did not include measures for labour market competition or other attitudinal variables, the interpretations of the importance of a university degree remain tentative. The value of the self-selection hypothesis could not be assessed appropriately due the cross-sectional design. A longitudinal design would enable to measure variation in asylum policy preferences within individuals over time, and could thereby explore how these develop throughout different stages of the educational pathway. By doing so, it would also be possible to analyse the effects of parental characteristics, which have been found to be an important predictor of opposition to turning back the boats (Laughland-Booÿ et al. 2014).
Conclusion
Research has shown that restrictive asylum policies inflict serious harm on asylum seekers arriving by boat (McAdam 2013; Schloenhardt and Craig 2015). The results of this study underline the importance of socio-demographic factors in the preference for more permissive asylum policy options. Among these factors, higher education was the most significant. This indicates that the critical importance of higher education for the formation of an informed and open-minded civil society capable of bringing about social and political change.

Future research is needed to examine whether the impact of higher education found in this work stems from self-selection rather than its liberalizing effects on personal values and beliefs. Given the interconnection between parental background, social class and access to higher education (Koshy and Islam 2015), we will need longitudinal studies that would allow disentangling the effect of these factors, over individual life-course, on attitudes towards asylum policies.

References


Young Vietnamese graduates performing cultural mediation and cultural intermediary roles at INGOs

Mai Thi Quynh Lan

Vietnam National University - Hanoi

Introduction
In Vietnam the large-scale historical change under the influence of globalization is discernible in the economic renovation (ĐoixMoi) in the transition from a centrally planned economy to a market oriented one, and in the disjunction between traditional modes of theoretical focus education and the diversity of knowledge and skills required in a globalized labour market. The introduction of the ĐoixMoi economic renovation policy in 1986 facilitated new aspects of Vietnamese society, namely, multilateralisation and diversification, which resulted in an influx of INGOs to Vietnam to provide humanitarian services such as hunger alleviation for poor communities, or natural disaster relief for which state organizations lacked the resources to respond. NGOs perform political changes through the work of redefining participation in terms of their relationship with state and society (Ghosh, 2009). The ethnic diversity of the target groups of INGOs projects, most of them are ethnic groups which might have their own languages and cultures, together with a similar diversity of the human resources at INGOs, all make the work context at INGO projects culturally complex. Moreover, the diversified ethnicity of the Vietnam society challenges the intercultural competencies of both people from other cultures and people from different parts of Vietnam.

Intercultural workplaces at international non-government organisations (INGOs) in Vietnam would be potential for conflicts or misunderstandings arising from cultural differences between people from different cultures. It appears that the structure and purpose of INGOs would enable opportunities that arose for cultural mediation. Some young graduates working there were able to develop this cultural mediation competence successfully. An approach that draws on intercultural competency (Byram, 1997) and cultural mediation and cultural intermediary (Bourdieu, 1984) promises to shed light on graduates’ attributes essential for the intercultural workplace. This paper presents the findings of the research on how young Vietnamese graduates experience the intercultural workplace at INGOs and how they develop attributes for such environment.

Theoretical perspective
Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) contend that individuals respond to the requirements of the context through strategies they develop from their dispositional skills generated from their cultures, society and education, and also from their acquired knowledge. People of the same culture can
understand each other more easily because they share the same system of values. However, to understand the differences in the system of values, cultures, knowledge, and experiences of another culture is not easy. A person needs to become interculturally, communicatively competent, to be able to see relationships between different cultures, both internal and external (Byram, 1997).

Intercultural competence is defined as that of ‘fostering mutual respect and establishing personal links with the members of one’s multicultural team’, and is exceptionally useful for relationship-building, particularly for working in multicultural teams (Reid, 2012, p. 158). Intercultural competencies include culture sensitive knowledge and mindful reflexivity, which means the ability to take multiple perspectives, analytical empathy, and intentional creativity; and listening, observation, trust building and dialogic collaboration (Ting-Tookey & Kurogi, 1998, pp. 201-204). Cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions of cultural mediation are essential aspects of intercultural competence, and all require reflexivity (Ting-Tookey, 1999). Firstly, the cognitive component - cultural awareness - refers to an individual’s knowledge and understanding of his/her own culture and of others’ cultures. Secondly, the affective component - cultural sensitivity - enables an individual to be sensitive enough during intercultural interactions to acknowledge and respect cultural differences. Lastly, the behavioural dimension corresponds to communication skills and interpersonal interaction (Ting-Tookey, 1999). From the results of the survey conducted among all 1,200 employees of one organization in Australia, Lloyd and Härtel (2010, p. 896) confirmed that the relationship between individual and team in cultural diverse work teams was significantly improved through cognitive competencies, that is, the ability to accurately process information regarding culturally different others and culturally different practices, affective competencies, that is, positive emotional responses toward culturally different others and when faced with culturally different practices, and behavioural competencies, that is, acting in a positive and appropriate manner when interacting with culturally diverse others.

In 1981, the social psychologist Bochner proposed the term ‘cultural mediation’ to theorise mediation, specifically, as it occurs between people of different cultures. Intercultural communicative competence underpins the competence of ‘intercultural mediators’, who must, according to Byram (2003, p. 61) ‘have an understanding of the relationship between their own language and language varieties and their own culture and cultures of different social groups in their society, on the one hand, and the language (varieties) and culture(s) of others’ (cf. Bochner, 1981). Bochner argues that cultural mediators do more than disseminate information; they also promote mutual understanding, form culturally relativistic attitudes, produce cross-cultural empathy, spread international goodwill and reconcile disparate cultural practices. In language mediation, the cultural mediators is the supporter and liaison for both sides, mediating between the different sides until one integrated process for implementing the project was achieved. INGOs work environment, by the nature of their work, need employees to mediate between different structures, resources to develop new models for specific projects, and therefore, has the potential for conflicts or misunderstandings arising from cultural differences between people from different cultures.

The project
This paper presents results of the finding from my PhD research that explores how young Vietnamese university graduates experience the intercultural work environment at INGOs and how they develop the necessary cultural competencies and what they perceive to be their role(s) in such an intercultural workplace. This research applied inductive qualitative methods to facilitate an understanding of the informants’ perceptions, and focused upon discovering the nature of phenomena as humanly experienced (Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell, & Alexander, 1995).
Research method

The research strategy consisted of two stages. Firstly, the context of the INGO workplace was explored via job advertisements. The researcher collected twenty two INGO job advertisements during the period from 2009-2013 for positions such as project assistant, research assistant, internship, project secretary, project officer, and project manager on the official website of the VUFO-NGO resource centre. These job advertisements were descriptively analysed to check the range and consistency of the requirements of different INGO positions, and the meaning of terms used in describing these positions. An analysis of the job advertisements revealed that the primary requirement in terms of qualifications for all job advertisements was a specific university degree (Medical Doctor, Epidemiology, or Health Policy); or degree qualification in a relevant subject (rural development/agro-forestry, natural resource management, foreign language, social science, social work, community development). English language skills were compulsory in all job advertisements. Work-related experience was also required, even for intern positions (as a preferred point). In more senior positions and specialized jobs, the number of years of experience required could be from two up to five years. This requirement was very challenging for graduates who had just finished three or four-year university programs. The scope of qualifications and duties in the job advertisements set the explicit requirements for staff working at INGOs, and raised questions to be checked and further explored in the interviews with the young graduates.

Secondly, based on the primary information of job advertisements, the context and experiences of INGO workplaces were explored intensively via in-depth interviews with international employers in INGOs, some university lecturers and young graduates working at INGOs. During the interviews with young graduates they talked about their work history (the different positions they had held in the same or in different organisations), how they got their jobs in the first place; the different problems they encountered at this initial stage of their career; and how they resolved those difficulties.

Participants

The interviews were arranged into two phases from December 2010 to November 2012 with total participants of 19 young graduates, six international employers, two Vietnamese managers who were working at INGOs and 8 university teachers. This paper presents the interviews with international manager employers and young graduates.

A group of six top managers working at INGOs which included both international employers and Vietnamese managers were interviewed because they had the strongest impact on the decisions made in the organisation. They came from the USA, Sweden, the Netherlands, and UK. Where possible, INGO employers were selected from different organisations than ones where the young and newly graduated informants worked, to avoid a conflict of interest within one organisation. They were interviewed in English after the informants had read the research information and agreed to answer. Their interviews were to explore attributes and skills they expected of young Vietnamese graduates in the INGO sector.

Nineteen young graduates (four male and 15 females) came from six groups of university disciplines (Public health: 8; English language: 5; Economics: 3; Law: 1; Technology: 1; and International study: 1); and worked in four project positions (intern: 2; Project Assistant/Research Assistant: 12; Project Officer: 4; Project Manager: 2). The gender mix of the informants reflected the overwhelming number of female staff at INGOs (about ¾ of the total staff).

1 http://www.ngocentre.org.vn/vi/jobs
Background information about the young graduates (their names have been changed)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Graduate Year</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Phase: interviews conducted in December 2010 – January 2011</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Ms My</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Project assistant</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Ms Vu</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Project officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Ms Nguyen</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Project officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Mr Pham</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Project assistant</td>
</tr>
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<td>5 Ms Mau</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Project assistant</td>
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<td>Second phase: interviews conducted in October 2012</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Ms Dang</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Project assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Ms Le</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Project Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Ms Hong</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>research assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Ms Hoa</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Project Associate</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Ms Tran</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Intern</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 Mr Ta</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Field officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Mr Vi</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Project assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Ms Ba</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Project Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Mr Xuan</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Program manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 Ms Luu</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Project Associate</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 Ms Lien</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Project assistant</td>
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<td>17 Ms Kim</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Project manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 Ms Cuc</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Intern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Ms Dao</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Interpreter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data collection and analysis
The interviews in 2010 explored different perspectives of those involved in employing graduates, and the perspective of the graduates about how they work in INGO setting. Analysis of the interviews in this first phase revealed various problems or challenges for the young graduates, rooted in their inexperience, their lack of knowledge and skills, and a lack of high level intercultural communication skills. To develop a deeper understanding of the experiences of young graduates, the second phase of interviews with more young graduates were conducted from September to November 2012, using an interview protocol based on a ‘sense-making interview’ strategy developed by Dervin (1992).

To shed light on how graduates apply their knowledge and skills, and experience, and respond to the workplace at INGOs, the interviews of the graduates were analysed thematically against the job advertisements. The young graduates used words like ‘liaise’, ‘convince’, ‘negotiate’, ‘compromise’ to relate key aspects of their mediation roles. They used the notions of ‘shock’, ‘confusion’, ‘anger’, ‘cultural differences’, ‘giving feedback’, ‘boss’, and ‘doers’ to classify issues that demanded attention and action. The concepts that emerged from the interviews with the graduates were ‘unawareness of cultural differences’, ‘inappropriateness of skills’, ‘shortage of
appropriate knowledge’, ‘trials and errors’, ‘being cautious’, ‘in-between position’, ‘advocating’ and ‘facilitating’. These concepts are revealed in the discussion of the findings below.

**Findings**

**Cultural mediators**

The interviews with employers at INGOs showed the influence of differences in cultural norms, values, and practices in their daily communication, particularly at the early stages of their work in Vietnam. The diverse norms and practices such as benevolence, which includes traits, for example self-restraint, self-discipline, filial piety, loyalty, personal duty, and positive interpersonal behaviour, and the social hierarchical system of age respect (Kim, 2009) in Vietnamese culture, caused different cultural issues for the international employers, such as the hierarchical system of age respect in the Vietnamese society, as in the word of Mrs. A., a Swedish woman, and a country director of an INGO focusing on health and education, who has lived in Vietnam for many years, viewed:

> There are certain things that are typical Vietnamese after all, you know, like hierarchy in work, right, like age, position, and so on. So you, sometimes it is difficult to tell a younger person to tell an older person to do something, right. But, sometimes you forget that because in Europe that is normal (Mrs. A., international director).

The social hierarchical order of the Vietnamese culture encourages people to restrain one's emotions to keep face for the communication partner to show your respect to seniors, as in the experience of Mrs. N.:

> You never, never want people to lose face or to be embarrassed in front of other people, I think it is the really important thing, but that is very important anywhere, I mean in the USA or wherever, you don't want that but even more so problem in Asia, it is very important (Mrs. N., international manager).

The difference of cultural norms might lead to misunderstanding in the communication process (Triandis, 2000), for example, the different concepts of ‘privacy’ had confused both the Vietnamese staff and the international intern, as in the account of Mrs. A. About her thinking about the invitation made by a Vietnamese staff to an international volunteer to an early morning coffee:

> The Vietnamese colleagues felt sad seeing the international volunteer sitting alone at home, you know, so they came, maybe at 6 o'clock in the morning and wanted to take them out [to a cafeteria] … For the volunteer it was a little early. …You know, the Vietnamese, they wanted to be kind; they wanted to help the volunteer, while the volunteer may prefer to sleep in the morning (Mrs. A., international director).

Another example is the way to give feedback. While the international employers practised straight up feedback and expected that the Vietnamese partners and colleagues are familiar with this style, the Vietnamese staff might take offence in the international boss' direct comments and loss of temper, as in the word of Mr. Th. – an American Director.

> I think Vietnamese people have very different culture if you get angry. I think in my country people don't get as upset as the Vietnamese people do if you get angry with them. When I first came, I mean, I don't think I have bad temper, I didn't get angry very much, but I did one time, soon after I came, I spoke very sharply to one of our Vietnamese staff, I didn't mean to offend her, or anything, but she got very upset (Mr. Th., international director).

For the way in which project work is organised in INGO, staff were required to negotiate their ideas. Negotiating skill was a challenge for the young Vietnamese graduates, as the hierarchical
order in Vietnam society encourages junior staff to listen to their seniors (Nguyen Phuong Mai et al., 2006). The international experts who came from developed countries, often gave very straight forward and direct feedback.

In such work environment, the project staff, in the language mediation roles, were in many instances placed in an in-between position where they had to transfer direct feedback of the international experts to the target groups. Much of the work of the young graduates concerns communication; either communication of content between two different languages as in the case of interpretation (Byram, 1997), or clarifying the meaning of each side's practices and ideas as in the case of facilitation (Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998), or understanding of each side's cultural values, norms and customs as in the case of acting as a guide (Bochner, 1981). However, language mediation was only a part of the intercultural interactions that young graduates were actually involved in (Byram, 1997; Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998); they also needed to transfer the cultural meanings of the practices and ideals. To perform this role, young graduates must not only know the foreign language but also have certain knowledge of the cultures of the international consultants, and understand the culture and traditional practices of the local people. As in the words of Ms Dao:

As the interpreter, I was like a person in-between to solve the problem. In many instances, I had to please both sides. It was really difficult (Ms Dao, interpreter).

In troublesome situations, the young staff often had to become a resource for both parties to understand each other. In this role, they could encounter difficulties in interpreting differences between cultures, as in Ms Mau's recount:

… sometimes there was some expressions that were so different from the culture of Vietnam that the Vietnamese people did not want to hear. Then I had to find out whether the international consultant had said thing inappropriately. If that I had to find ways to explain, as a kind of trouble shooting (Ms. Mau, Project Assistant).

However, translation in the context of INGOs is not a simple transfer of meaning between people who do not speak the same language. Young graduates need to mediate between international experts and local people whose cultural dispositions, practices and customs are not the same.

**Cultural intermediary**

In addition to cultural meanings of activities, young graduates also need to get the local community to understand and apply the regulations of INGO projects. Ms Vu experienced a hard task to convince the local partners to use the concepts of planning in the development theory:

My INGO very highly appreciates the completion at deadline, because the progress of this work will lead to the result of the next activity. But sometimes – they [local partners] do not see the importance of the proposed timeline, following the objectives. They might not even like doing this first, doing that later, and they do not have prior discussion with us about those activities (Ms Vu, Project Officer).

Graduated in 2011 and interviewed in 2012, Mr Ta was the field project officer for a project of a leading INGO in the promotion of child rights. His project aimed to reduce early marriage among girls of ethnic minority identity living in a mountainous province. The baseline survey proved that law enforcement may not be an effective intervention. Strategically, Mr Ta and his project team applied a behaviour change approach and awareness-raising for local people, young girls and their parents, in order to change the custom of early marriage.

We did not approach the early marriage problem from a legal perspective but from a ‘better’ viewpoint, which meant [we assessed] which was better [early marriage or later marriage].
Actually, from the baseline survey, a legal approach was not so effective. We applied the ‘better’ view, for example [by promoting] the benefits that later marriage would bring about, what was better about later marriage compared with early marriage (Mr Ta – Project Officer).

Not only performing language and cultural mediation roles, Mr Ta negotiated his experience and knowledge to develop a localised model.

Another example is Ms Nguyen, graduated in 2004, interviewed in 2010, who became a project assistant with an education project for ethnic minority children in a mountainous district. She negotiated a comprehensive model, which used participatory approach in an innovative way through the parents’ association activities at the schools. This method allowed the parents to have their voice in school activities (Salemink, 2006). As in her words:

The participation method required that parents needed to be involved in the school process….In theory, the child participation approach had its own principles; however, which activities should be done to ensure those principles?…We should not create completely new activities (Ms Nguyen, Project Officer).

Her model continued to prove its effectiveness in her second job where Ms Nguyen worked with her team to develop a user-friendly library model for primary schools to promote literacy among children.

The initiative set up libraries, built classrooms, published children’s books in local languages, and supported girls to access better educational opportunities. Not only dissemination information, Ms Nguyen negotiated her ideas and lessons from her last projects, to influence the implementation process.

Evidently, young graduates are placed in-between the international experts and the local people applying their own knowledge and practices. They need to understand both the international development models proposed by the international experts, and the cultural traditions and practices of the local community. In carrying out their roles, young graduates also are integrating new work knowledge and skills with their existing knowledge and skills and transfer these into localized models, hence they are acting as cultural intermediary.

**Conclusion**

In either role of cultural mediator or cultural intermediary, young graduates demonstrated the effectiveness of their preparation for the work. In cultural mediation roles, graduates mostly relied on language skills for interpretation and translation tasks. Examples illustrate the role of the graduates as cultural intermediaries in many often stressful situations where there were significant cultural differences (manifested in super/subordinate relations, imposition of foreign ideas and models, interpreting rules and other documents and giving culturally sensitive feedback). The INGO projects in which the young graduates were involved, typically, did not use any fixed models of development since each project required a creative combination of theories and best practices in local context. The loosely bounded, intercultural organisational context in INGOs particularly fosters the development of cultural intermediary capacity. This meant that graduates at INGO projects needed to be flexible to work in between different organisational structures, resources and models.

The cultural intermediary role was not an explicitly stated role or task of any young graduate but the flexible working conditions, intercultural organisational context in INGOs projects particularly fosters the development of cultural intermediary competencies. The differences between the roles of cultural mediator and cultural intermediary, in the context of work in INGOs
in Vietnam, appeared mostly to play out in the different ways young graduates strategically mediated between different norms and practices of people of different cultures.

Acknowledgments
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References


Contested Ground: Migration Intermediaries and the State

Marina Khan
Western Sydney University

Abstract
This paper uses qualitative interview data to examine the perceptions of migration intermediaries concerning their professional dealings and relationships with the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP), drawing on the work of Groutsis et al. (2015) who argue that the shift from government to governance has resulted in a greater reliance on (largely unregulated) private intermediaries within migration processes. The premise of this paper is that the mechanisms of network governance, as they operate at the level of everyday praxis within Australia's migration industry, need further investigation, especially through the perspectives of the intermediaries themselves, as pivotal stakeholders operating within these networks. This paper thus seeks to understand how the workings of network governance are experienced at the meso-level. I argue that from the perspectives of migration intermediaries, network governance of the migration advice sector is characterised by contested relationships at various levels intensified by continued negotiation over law, regulation, and professional legitimacy.

Introduction
This paper borrows its theoretical stance from the work of Groutsis et al. (2015) who explain network governance as the state's transfer of authority to private agents who facilitate migration in a neoliberal context in which migration is directly shaped by the demands of national markets. This has subsequently placed the risks of migration more firmly in the hands of the migrants. This paper uses network governance not only as a theoretical framework that provides understandings of the mechanisms that have given rise of migration intermediaries but also as a socio-political context within which lived experiences of intermediaries will be explored. While the proliferation of migration intermediary networks is indeed a consequence of network governance, in Australia border control is still heavily centrally managed. This paper focuses on the perceptions of working relationships that have resulted between Australian migration intermediaries and the state due to this reinforcement of borders. The key challenges described by migration intermediaries in this study included policy shifts and the concomitant sense of changing attitudes in the DIBP resulting in a sense of lack of partnership, differing standards of training, and differing organisational
and work cultures between migration agents and case officers. These perceptions demonstrate the existence of power and conflict, rather than autonomous operations within the network governance of contemporary Australian migration.

**Literature Review**

Most empirical work on migration intermediaries in Australia has either discussed their role through a micro-level analysis of migrants’ perspectives (Buchan et al. 2005; van den Broek & Groutsis 2017) or from a macro-level lens of the state and public policy (Groutsis et al. 2015; Xiang 2012; Agunias 2009). While there has been some work analysing the meso-level of migration intermediaries (Findlay & Li 1998; Groutsis et al. 2015), there is negligible empirical work on intermediaries’ own perspectives on their role, practices, and subjectivities.

International literature on labour and education intermediaries provides some contextual similarities but has its limitations. Empirical studies, such as one conducted by Kern and Muller-Boker’s (2015) on labour brokers in Nepal, and Collins (2012) on Korean education agents in New Zealand found that agents often see themselves as ‘social workers’ and important facilitators in supporting better income strategies and new livelihood options for their clients. While these studies do touch upon some of the broader roles of these agents around their relationships with the state, the complexities of the implications this has on their professional identities have only received limited exploration.

In the Australian context, the most significant body of research conducted on formal migration intermediaries has been in relation to policy formation, which tends to place the bulk of the blame for corruption and migrant exploitation on intermediaries and suggests the need for greater regulation or a limitation of intermediaries’ practice as policy solutions (ICAC 2015; Renshaw 2016).

The scarcity of academic work in this area establishes the need for further research in uncovering the various dynamics of network governance at work and in appreciating this important niche in the migration industry.

**Methodology**

A broadly interpretivist research methodology was employed in this study. Data was collected data using a qualitative methodology of in-depth semi-structured interviews. Emphasis was placed on gaining an understanding of the perspectives of intermediaries in the ways they experience their profession.

Participants were invited to participate in the study using snowball sampling. Calls for participants were also sent out through relevant social media platforms, professional bodies, immigration forums and email invitations through publicly available Registered Migration Agents’ (RMA) databases. The data was analysed using a thematic-narrative analysis and has been coded on the consistency of themes across and within the responses of study participants (Silverman 1993, Patton 2002).

A detailed overview of the participants is available in the table below:
### Table 1. Participant Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Professional Designation</th>
<th>Interview Site</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graham</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Lawyer / RMA</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aimee</td>
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<td>Lawyer / RMA</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larissa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reshma</td>
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<td>RMA</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arian</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>International Education Agent</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>RMA</td>
<td>Skype</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>RMA</td>
<td>Skype</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daisy</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>RMA</td>
<td>Skype</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Migration agents and DIBP

#### Differences in Ideas of Ideal Migrants

A key theme across a number of interviews revealed that participants perceived a difference between the migrants that the DIBP seeks to admit according to their criteria and the desires of the migrant-clients that the participants service. This difference often creates a challenging relationship between the intermediaries and the DIBP. Most participants in this study often found their dealings with the DIBP challenging due to their perception of the DIBP holding an anti-settlement sentiment. Agents also believed that the department consists of officers who are discriminatory, and decisions are often made on implicit prejudices against migrants. The following narratives highlight these differing ideologies between agents and the DIBP.

... A government that is and has been known to be anti-migrants (...) I feel like the government knows that there's an economic crisis looming and so the more migrants you have in an economic crisis, the less opportunities there are for Australians. I think they are aware of this and I think that's my conspiracy theory as to [why] (...) the processing times taken are so long. (Roxanne)

Australia has actually got migration all wrong (...) Your cleaners, your aged care (...) that's where the real skills shortage lies in Australia. (Roxanne)

All they [DIBP] are saying is, if you’re just coming here to migrate and you’re going to be sitting on Centrelink [government payments and services], we obviously don’t want you. But if you’re going to be working, paying tax and being a good Australian citizen then of course (...) Now obviously the big companies are lobbying immigration to settle down a bit against more rejections (...) But what immigration is saying back is, “no, you guys are marketing for the wrong people. There’s plenty of other people that you guys can recruit, why are you only looking at the cheaper ones?” ... it’s the comparison between what they think is the ideal migrant and what companies have access to. (Arian)

These narratives reflect Semlinger’s (2008) idea of the network governance model of the migration industry as being a hybrid space of conflicting ideologies. Intermediaries often then find themselves in a space where they need to facilitate the gap between aspirations and criteria.

The following account further highlights that biases against migrants are inflected with racial prejudices:

A lot of skippies [white Australians] in the system have absolutely no cultural understanding observing they don’t speak any foreign languages and they end up, I think, projecting a lot of their own prejudices and inadequacies in the way they manage
decisions (…) People in the department, I think, apply a lot of gross stereotypes to the kind of applications and explanations people give and sometimes when we’re writing submissions, we have to think the case officer is not going to be so intellectually agile or sympathetic as to understand what I’m trying to say so we have to sometimes dumb it down for them. (Graham).

These narratives correspond with Stratton (2011) who argues that while the neoliberal state allows entry into its borders on rational and calculative terms such as through skilled-migration streams, it also reinforces institutional racism through which the presence of the racial other continues to be strictly controlled.

**Differences in Training and Professional Development**

Participants in this study claimed there was a severe lack of employee training and development in the DIBP. Differences in the perceptions of standards and requirements of legal training between migration intermediaries and case officers points to lack of shared learning and understanding, and is experienced as a double-standard by most participants, as can be seen through their narratives.

Migration agents have to do the graduate diploma and graduate certificate and they have all these other requirements including English language testing that they have to overcome in order to get registration. It was completely different for case officers where they will get their one to two-week training on what’s called the PAMs [Procedures Advice Manuals] and then they’re sort of released into the field and so there was this element of hypocrisy where you have MARA and the department requiring us as agents to have all of this knowledge and all of this expertise whereas case officers don’t. (Roxanne)

They [DIBP case officers] are, under-skilled, under-educated and through no fault of their own, have not been tested for English (…) they’re thrown in the deep end and have been just moved from one division to another. (Larissa)

Roxanne’s narrative questions the legitimacy of the role of departmental staff in comparison to migration agents. She therefore, sees herself as a superior and more legitimate representative of the law in comparison to case officers. Whereas Larissa almost sympathises with case officers and positions them as constrained actors who, perhaps, appear to be in negotiations of their own professional identities within a transforming governance space.

**Differences in Work Ethic and Organisational Cultures**

Network governance brings together a variety of different actors with different cultures, norms, rules, and procedures. These actors engage in intercultural exchanges which are often marked by conflicts and ambiguity (Sorensen & Torfing 2007). While some agents see these cultural differences as arising from working in different sectors, others view them as a result of transformations in the structure and management of the DIBP. Participants’ accounts demonstrate these issues in various different ways:

We are forever having that conversation in our team about… every time a new policy amendment will come through or a new decision on an application or something might come through, and it’s quite clear that either whoever wrote the policy or whoever made the decision has never actually had a proper job, in terms of outside immigration, is up in their ivory tower making all of these pronouncements (…) From this side of the desk, the impression that we get of pretty much everyone in Immigration, is they’ve got the ‘public service mentality’: Rock up at 9:30, 10:00; leave at about 4:00; do what I need to do to be able to tick the box and say, “oh, I actioned my twenty-five items today”. The fact that those twenty-five items may have been done really poorly or, in actual fact, just
passing an application on to someone else… they don’t know what hard work actually is, basically. (Reshma)

In a large number of different areas of the department (…) people are now treated like cattle (…) It’s the customs aspect of the new department – it’s really powerful. They’re all wearing uniforms (…) it’s quite embarrassing (…) A lot of the people are flooding out from the department because they’re really not ready for this new reality. (Graham)

Reshma exasperatingly comments on the DIBP’s poor work ethic, which she remarks jokingly as a ‘public service mentality’. As a professional in the private sector, Reshma claims to have a much higher sense of ‘hard work’, ‘commitment’ and ‘quality’ in the work she does and the services she provides to her clients. She almost reduces the work of case officers as not being a ‘proper job’ in comparison to her job. However, Graham feels that the service levels of case officers are poor not due to individual work ethic, but to broader organisational and management issues within the DIBP. A recent study conducted on DIBP’s amalgamation with the former customs agency also reported that organisational changes in the DIBP have led to the departure of several old department staff while some others have reported a sense of loss of identity and weakening morale (Easton 2015; Gerstein et al. 2016).

A Sense of Changing Relationships

Participants in this study expressed a sense of change in their relationship with the DIBP, something that has occurred after the amalgamation of the DIBP and the ACBPS, not only in matters regarding policy, but also at a more general and day-to-day level.

The department lacks consultation with the private sector so they (…) They used to consult but they’ve shut down external consultation centres (…) If we want to talk about anything the department will tell us what’s happening. (Larissa)

There was a time, when (…) you could call them up and have a conversation (…) I don’t wanna [sic] look at it as we are enemies, but it is very frustrating that, we, as a profession don’t have any direct benefits towards the general public (…) You know like an accountant, for example (…) They get fast tracking. They get all sorts of benefits. We get nothing (…) Back in the day (…) it was great because (…) we could achieve something together really quickly. Now you don’t know who you’re dealing with. (Daisy)

Larissa sees this as a lack of partnership between the government and agents on matters of significant importance. Being an agent on the front line dealing with migrants, and also someone who advocates and provides education and support for migration agents, she views herself as a rightfully important actor to participate in deliberations concerning migration policy. Daisy would like to see the department as her ‘partner’ but her narrative implies that more recently the association offered by the DIBP makes agents feel like they are ‘enemies’. Her comparison of migration agents to accountants, who also mediate between the government and their clients, is telling. While accountants’ clients get benefits from using a mediator, and accountants have specified lines of communication with the government, migration professionals experience a bureaucratic distance within a contested governance space which leads to persistent frustration.

Conclusion

This paper is framed by the theoretical concept of network governance that has resulted in the proliferation of the Australian migration industry with a closer analysis of how these networks function in practice. Australia’s migration industry characterised by contestations of professional identity and legitimacy at various levels. Many intermediaries position themselves in an ‘us against them’ battle with the DIBP based on opposing views on matters of migration policy and ideology.
Similar opinions were also expressed on differences in standards of training and development between migration agents and the DIBP, dissimilarities in work ethic and organisational culture, and the changing nature of the relationship between the DIBP and migration agents. Based on the accounts presented in this paper, network governance, as experienced in the migration advice sector of Australia, reveals a challenging and disputed space to work in, operating in a political and institutional environment that both facilitates and constraints capacities for negotiation and autonomy.

References


“It’s About Exposure”: Elite Indian International Students and the Desire to Accumulate Cosmopolitan Cultural Capital

Nonie Tuxen
Australian National University

Abstract
Throughout their international education experiences, international students accumulate many forms of capital; economic, social, symbolic, cultural or otherwise. In the present study, prospective and returned international students in Mumbai, India, spoke often of their desire to ‘gain exposure’ by engaging with international education. This paper posits that ‘exposure’ is a form of cosmopolitan cultural capital that (re)produces class boundaries (Igarashi & Saito 2014; Weenink 2008), which allows the elite to maintain distinction between themselves and the middle class. Drawing from interviews with 46 students, as well as parents, education counsellors/agents and other industry representatives, this paper discusses how exposure as a form of cosmopolitan cultural capital is used by respondents as a marker of class that is mobilised to set classed expectations about the outcomes of international education. This paper finds that elite students use exposure as a form of cosmopolitan cultural capital to hierarchize the international student experience, ensuring that middle class Indian students do not realise true social mobility by engaging with international education.

Keywords: International education, India, class, elite, cosmopolitan cultural capital, exposure

“The point of going abroad is not education. It’s about exposure. Exposure to life.”
— Mohit Tahiliani, male, 22, upper-middle-class returned student

The thirst for international education among India’s elite is not limited to a desire for foreign degrees. As Mohit’s comment suggests, international education is perceived by students as a unique opportunity to ‘gain exposure’ or ‘become exposed’. This paper interrogates what ‘exposure’ — a term that recurred over and over again in interviews with prospective and returned students, agents, and parents — means and why respondents desire it. One of the central observations of this paper is that ‘exposure’ is a local term used by participants that mirrors the academic notion of cosmopolitan cultural capital (Igarashi & Saito 2014; Weenink 2008), which is an important component in the reproduction of class status and class boundaries (cf. Bourdieu 1984, 1986).
The ‘amount’ of exposure that one is perceived to possess is typically the basis for producing classed distinction. This paper also explores the challenges that some prospective middle-class international students and parents face in appropriately embodying cosmopolitan cultural capital. This paper argues that international education does not provide a level playing field through which cosmopolitan cultural capital can be accumulated. On the contrary: class boundaries and identities that exist in Mumbai are reproduced through the international education experience to reproduce existing classed distinctions that separate the middle class from the elite.

This paper will first introduce the notion of exposure as a form of cosmopolitan cultural capital, drawing on relevant literature on class and social mobility in India. Second, I provide a brief methodological overview. Third, I explore the concept of international education as a key site to gain exposure as a form of cosmopolitan cultural capital, which participants imagine will lead to personal growth and independence. Last, I reflect on instances where respondents identified the ‘mistakes’ that other Indian international students make in performing (in)appropriate cosmopolitan cultural capital. Responding to Weenink’s (2008, p. 1104) call to not only focus on the forms of cosmopolitan cultural capital, but to turn our “attention to which social groups are able to determine the rules of the appropriate forms of cosmopolitan behaviour”, this analysis will demonstrate how exposure as a form of cosmopolitan cultural capital is used to construct class boundaries and to hierarchize embodiments of cosmopolitan cultural capital.

**Locating and Conceptualising ‘Exposure’**

The notion of exposure is a relatively under-developed concept in literature concerning class and education in India, which is surprising given its ubiquity in everyday discourse about education. However, there is some emerging work on this subject. In their short article about engineering colleges in Tamil Nadu and the IT sector, Fuller and Narasimhan (2006, p. 260) identify ‘exposure’ in two conditions: the process (i.e. “I got good exposure”) and the state (i.e. “I now have good exposure”). Their study also recognised that exposure is a class project, in which the middle class are able to conceptualise a requirement for exposure as a gatekeeping device and further use this to their competitive advantage in educational fields, thereby reproducing their status in Indian society (particularly in relation to the lower-middle classes). Turning to the upper-middle-classes, David Sancho’s (2015) study of an elite international school in Kochi, and Amanda Gilbertson’s (2014) research at an international school in suburban Hyderabad both recognised that international schools provide ‘exposure’ as a project of developing a ‘global orientation’ or knowledge of ‘outside’, which was also used by students and their families as a method of classed distinction that would separate them from the middle class.

The notion of exposure espoused by participants in the present study mirrors the academic concept of cosmopolitan cultural capital. Cosmopolitanism is a contested and often critiqued term. My goal here is to explore how cosmopolitanism as a form of cultural capital relates to class reproduction through international education. Cosmopolitanism operating as cultural capital, which is a source of power, has been identified as key “a locus of stratification” in the global landscape (Igarashi & Saito 2014: 223). This approach aligns with Bourdieu’s (1984, 1986) notions of capital and distinction. I take cosmopolitan cultural capital to operate in a similar way and in concert with Bourdieu’s notions of economic, social, and cultural capital (1986). That is, the accumulation of various forms of capital – including cosmopolitan cultural capital – function as markers of class, which (re)produces distinction between various class identities (Bourdieu, 1984).

Don Weenink (2008: 1092) positions cosmopolitan cultural capital as the “bodily and mental predispositions and competencies” which allow individuals to “engage confidently” in globalising social arenas. Weenink (2008: 1092) explains that people accumulate, deploy and display cosmopolitan cultural capital in a number of circumstances which involve travelling abroad,
interacting with foreign cultures, people, or products (such as media), and possessing a “near-native mastery of English and at least one other language.” However, Weenink also explains that there exist global hierarchies in which cosmopolitan cultural capital acquired in the West is imagined as most valuable, and that Other foreign contexts are less (or not) desirable. This is reflected in the current study, and by international education trends in general, wherein a majority of international students pursue their tertiary studies in the English-speaking West.

In the present study, exposure was not often framed by participants as an outcome of education itself; rather, exposure is a by-product of education, derived from the circumstances in which one is educated. Thus, someone who engages with international education does not necessarily acquire more exposure because of the foreign degree, but rather because of the people they share their international education experiences with, the country in which they study, and the activities they undertake in conjunction with their education. This paper will demonstrate that, in this empirical context, gaining exposure is an exercise in accumulating cosmopolitan cultural capital; exposure is understood as something that can be embodied, experienced, and possessed as a result of specific global, cosmopolitan activities undertaken by the individual. However, not all exposure is valued equally by (elite) onlookers.

Methodology
Based on eighteen months of fieldwork in Mumbai in 2015-2016, this paper will primarily draw from semi-structured interviews conducted with 26 students intending to pursue international education (‘prospective students’) and 20 students who had completed their international education and returned to Mumbai (‘returned students’). Student participants were aged 18–29. Using a purposive sampling method, I ensured that student samples contained equal proportions of men (50%) and women (50%), had a variety of religious and community backgrounds (see Tables 1 and 2), and represented different geographical locations within Mumbai (which I divide into suburban Mumbai and South Mumbai).

Table 1: Religious identities stated by student participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hindu</th>
<th>Jain</th>
<th>Catholic</th>
<th>Buddhist</th>
<th>Sikh</th>
<th>Sindhi</th>
<th>Parsi</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prospective</td>
<td>65% (17)</td>
<td>4% (1)</td>
<td>8% (2)</td>
<td>4% (1)</td>
<td>8% (2)</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>8% (2)</td>
<td>4% (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returned</td>
<td>45% (9)</td>
<td>25% (5)</td>
<td>5% (1)</td>
<td>5% (1)</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>10% (2)</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>10% (2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Community identities stated by student participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gujarati</th>
<th>Punjabi</th>
<th>Goan</th>
<th>South Indian</th>
<th>North Indian</th>
<th>Sindhi</th>
<th>Marwari</th>
<th>Maharashtrian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prospective</td>
<td>27% (7)</td>
<td>23% (6)</td>
<td>7.5% (2)</td>
<td>19% (5)</td>
<td>4% (1)</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>4% (1)</td>
<td>15.5% (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returned</td>
<td>35% (7)</td>
<td>15% (3)</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>5% (1)</td>
<td>5% (1)</td>
<td>20% (4)</td>
<td>15% (3)</td>
<td>5% (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One of the central research questions was how class status interacts with international education. During data collection I therefore asked participants to self-define which class they identified with; categories and terminology that participants employed were fairly consistent, resulting in the three aforementioned categories. Subsequently, I will refer to respondents as belonging to middle class, upper-middle class or upper class backgrounds. These narratives are also supplemented by
data obtained from interviews with 11 parents of prospective students, 12 education agents and counsellors, 11 university representatives and other individuals involved in the international education industry (a total of 80 interviews including students). Using a grounded theory approach, whilst analysing the data I developed a series of strong themes pertaining to exposure as a form of cosmopolitan cultural capital. This research is fundamentally interested in the nuances and hierarchies that exist within ‘middle-class’ identities in contemporary urban India, and how these understandings of class subtly shape the way that young people engage with international education.

**Purchasing Personal Growth**

While participants agreed that ‘exposure’ is a term that refers to the skills, experiences and practices that are gained by engaging with international education, there were class-based divergences between how participants imagined exposure influencing their lives. Upper-middle and upper class (i.e. elite) participants, who typically lived in South Mumbai, came from business families and had attended elite private schools, described gaining exposure as a rite of passage through which they would become ‘independent’, which contrasts with the career-oriented aspirations of middle class participants (not discussed in this paper). This section focuses on the notion that India’s elite anticipates exposure to foreign cultures, through international education, as a (rite of) passage to developing a cosmopolitan personality.

Coupled with their position that India’s education system and its ability to provide exposure is lacking, education counsellors and agents promoted international education as a way to ‘make’ a young person ‘independent’. Ankit, an education counsellor catering to South Mumbai’s elite, explained the value of international education as follows:

> Overall it makes you independent, it’s a life changing decision, it makes you responsible, opens your mind up, makes you a world citizen and that’s why a foreign education – at a good institute – is something everyone should consider.

This is, of course, the party line of a seasoned professional who sells international education for a living. However, selling international education in this manner valorises the importance of exposure for those who wish to become ‘independent’, ‘open-minded’ ‘global citizens’. The implication of this pitch is that those who remain in India lack the opportunity to become ‘independent’ because they are not ‘exposed’. This allows the elite to establish themselves as the ‘cultural nobility’ who possess a set of *global* dispositions (Bourdieu 1984).

When probed about what ‘being independent’ means and why it matters, respondents from elite backgrounds, as well as the international education professionals that cater to them, revealed class-specific dynamics around exposure as a form of cosmopolitan cultural capital. Akash, a returned student from an elite background who is also an education counsellor catering to the South Mumbai market, explained that gaining exposure is about temporarily shedding the material benefits of being upper or upper-middle class in Mumbai in order to build ‘character’ and capabilities:

> I think the kids who are going abroad, they come from pretty pampered lifestyles. In India, as you can imagine, everything is kind of spoon-fed: their tuition teachers, their drivers, their maids. So it’s a very convenient place to live, and it can spoil. And their parents didn’t come from those beginnings [but they] want to give their kids everything. Sending them abroad to just rough it out on their own – I know it comes at a cost – but you know, they’re doing their own laundry, they’re living in smaller rooms, they figure out how to use a washing machine; most of them have never used a washing machine before. So they *do* become independent.

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1 Pseudonyms used.
For parents who have been upwardly mobile, value is placed on their children experiencing (very relative) ‘hardship’ in the form of learning to take care of themselves as young adults. In fact, families pay for the privilege of experiencing ‘hardship’, which is undoubtedly an activity that is restricted to the wealthy. The elite thereby use their existing economic capital to gain access to cosmopolitan cultural capital, which fortifies their elite status (cf. Bourdieu, 1986). However, not all respondents appropriately embodied this classed performance of engaging with international education.

(In)appropriately Embodying Cosmopolitan Capital
Participants uniformly framed the acquisition of cosmopolitan cultural capital as a positive outcome of international education, however, elite returned students in particular often recounted instances wherein their middle class Indian peers had not embodied appropriate or desirable cosmopolitanism whilst undertaking international education. The elite held this up as subtle evidence of their own advanced, competent cosmopolitan cultural capital that differentiated them from Other Indian international students.

By being able to distinguish between performances of cosmopolitan cultural capital and identify that some people ‘do it wrong’, respondents imply that exposure is – in fact – accumulated over time. This ability to accumulate cosmopolitan cultural capital over time, as opposed to during a quick burst of international education, is a marker of relative amounts of cosmopolitan cultural capital (which is, in the Bourdieusian [1986] sense, facilitated by greater or lesser stores of other forms of capital). This also implies that, even as international education becomes an experience accessed by more and more young Indians from various segments of the middle class, the elite construct boundaries and markers that ensure their superiority abroad as well as at home.

The following responses demonstrate that elite students establish boundaries to prevent middle class students from accessing real social mobility through international education; they police students lower in the class hierarchy, ensuring that they can never ‘do’ cosmopolitan cultural capital in the ‘right’ way. Sahil, 22, an upper class returned student, described the ‘aspirational middle class’ as those who are not willing or able to push themselves outside of their comfort zone whilst overseas:

S: In the aspirational middle class, say if someone goes abroad, they might be a little conservative and they might not want to branch out to local people or, you know, go outside of what’s known to them.

N: Why do you think that is?

S: I just think it's the sense of comfort that they have with their own Indian community. … It gives them security and the other person understands where they come from. I think it's a cultural barrier more than a language barrier. I think some people from the aspirational middle class feel like they might be perceived differently.

Sahil identifies the ‘aspirational’ middle class’s conservatism as the result of cultural boundaries, rather than language boundaries. The implication is that the middle class do possess English language skills required to interact with foreign friends, but lack the cultural capital that facilitates comfort in the company of non-Indians. Being ‘more open’ to other cultures and finding comfortable spaces within foreign landscapes is thus a marker of possessing ‘more’ cosmopolitan cultural capital. Consequently, and ironically, individuals need to possess prior exposure (gained through international travel and elite schools, for instance) before they are able to acquire

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2 No reliable statistics are available to indicate the class backgrounds of Indian international students, however, the large amount to economic capital required to engage with international education, even with a scholarship, would mean that the vast majority of Indian international students are at least middle class, if not upper-middle class and upper class. Further, there are no reliable statistics available as to how many students leave India each year. However, prevailing receiving countries (USA, UK, Canada, Australia and NZ) have recorded consistent growth of incoming Indian students over the past decade.
cosmopolitan cultural capital, which is how the notion of gaining exposure becomes a key site for the reproduction of elite class status via international education.

Sahil continued his thoughts about why the aspirational middle class behaved with constraint whilst abroad, suggesting that their motivations are different to his because of divergent class-based incentives:

They have an end goal in mind. I was there for an experience; so while my end goal was a degree, I had absolutely no doubt that I was going to get that degree. … I really held to the fact that I had this opportunity to make it an experience. At that level, I think they [aspirational middle class] were there because it was like, ‘If I don’t have that degree, then what is it going to be like?’ For them, the degree is the end-all and be-all. … I think it’s a difference in approach. I think it just doesn’t occur to them to give it a shot, to put themselves out there.

Sahil points to the unevenness of international education experiences among Indian students, which centres on class-based attitudes and expectations. Sahil frames seeking personal enjoyment as well as successfully obtaining a degree as the ultimate international education experience; those who fail to do both apparently lack ‘enough’ cosmopolitan cultural capital.

Several elite participants mocked other Indian international students who came from less privileged backgrounds for not embodying appropriate cosmopolitanism whilst on campus. Divij, 24, a returned student from an upper-middle class South Mumbai professional family, ridiculed scholarship students (the implication being that they could not otherwise afford a foreign degree) because they tended to take pleasure in ‘smaller things’:

There were also people who came on scholarships, and I think they enjoyed smaller things a lot more, like walking down the street or getting a free meal coupon … They really found a great thrill in that. I guess for them it’s special.

Divij constructs a dichotomous relationship between middle and upper class students, differentiating on the basis of economic capital (scholarship vs. non-scholarship students), but also on the cultural capital that each group performed. These responses suggest that there is a gradient of how capital is embodied by Indian international students, with those who have greater stores of accumulated capital creating differences that can be used to create boundaries between Indian international students, even though most of them possess enough economic capital to facilitate their access to international education in the first place. Cultural capital, especially cosmopolitan cultural capital, thereby becomes a highly-valued marker of class.

**Conclusion**

This paper has briefly explored the concept of exposure as a form of cosmopolitan cultural capital, and has demonstrated how exposure is used as a marker that constructs class boundaries between the elite and the middle class, and hierarchizes embodiments of cosmopolitan cultural capital. International education was imagined as a rite of passage through which young Mumbaikars build character and capabilities. However, gaining exposure in this sense involved a ‘necessary’ temporary divestment of material benefits that being upper-middle or upper class in India affords; participants imagined that experiencing ‘hardship’ would deliver independence and personal growth. Ironically, students’ families pay for them to experience said hardship. In this case, it is desirable for young Indian people to experience downward class mobility, temporarily, in order to maintain elite status in Mumbai.

Respondents created hierarchies in several key ways, each indicating that access to exposure as a form of cosmopolitan cultural capital is uneven and unequal. First, obtaining exposure through international education is expensive; access to economic capital is thus the first hurdle
for prospective students and their families. Second, destinations that students were able to afford or gain entry to were also hierarchized, with the English-speaking West (particularly the USA) positioned at the top of this hierarchy (see also, Peidong 2016). Third, how students engaged with the international education experience was also hierarchized; those who sought cosmopolitan social experiences were located above those who focused on receiving good marks or enjoyed 'simple' pleasures during their international education.

This speaks to broader literature on class in India and how individuals at every class gradient toil to distinguish themselves by accumulating various forms of cultural capital. Craig Jeffrey’s (2010) lower-middle class university students distinguished themselves by performing urban identities rather than rural identities. Amanda Gilbertson’s (2014) middle class respondents attended ‘international’ schools rather than local schools. And Fazal Rizvi (2014) discusses how old elite schools distinguish themselves from mushrooming international schools in India. The respondents in the present study represent another rung on this ladder; the elite use exposure as a form of cosmopolitan cultural capital to differentiate themselves from those who have access to international education but do not embody the same elite class-based performances of capital.

References


The Sarvodaya’s Three Spheres of Development in Post-disaster Reconstruction and Reintegration - The Case of Addapalam in Sri Lanka

Praveena Rajkobal

Deakin University

Populations today are not only mobile in terms of skilled migration and asylum seeking, but they are also impelled to move, internally within their countries or internationally between countries, because of the impact of natural disasters. Integrating a disaster-affected community back into the mainstream ideals of development is not an easy task as these communities are exposed to six types of vulnerabilities, which are social, economic, physical, cultural, environmental and institutional. In spite of these vulnerabilities, most disaster affected communities find it a great challenge to adapt to their places of resettlement. This paper looks into a case study of a post-disaster resettlement community in Addapalam in Sri Lanka, and examines how a religion-based social movement called the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement assisted them in overcoming some of these vulnerabilities through a spirituality based approach to community development. The paper also looks into some of the issues that have risen in the long term which disrupted the connectivity of Addapalam community. Within this examination the paper also provides some policy recommendations that could help further Sarvodaya’s model of disaster reconstruction and development.

Introduction

Natural disasters and extreme weather events have shown an ever increasing trend in the last decade. Communities worldwide, regardless of their geographical location, the Global North or the South, are exposed to these disasters and many of them need resettlement (UNISDR 2015). Disruptions to their existing structures place these communities at risk, creating economic, social, physical, cultural, environmental and institutional vulnerabilities (Birkmann et al. 2014). The aim of this paper is to examine the contribution spirituality can make in post-disaster reconstruction towards governing these vulnerabilities of post-disaster resettlement communities. The paper draws from the village of Addapalam in Sri Lanka, which was reconstructed by the Sri Lankan social movement called the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement. Through their spirituality-based framework, Sarvodaya aided Addapalam overcome a significant institutional vulnerability caused by ethnic and religious divisions. Sarvodaya also created social and cultural resilience in this community instilling the values of diversity, harmonious living and tolerance. However, the
villagers’ physical, economic and environmental vulnerabilities were not successfully addressed due to the nature of the resettlement land – its distance from the major town, disconnection due to the lack of transportation, and the lack of physical and social infrastructure such as roads, healthcare facilities and schools. These dynamics led to new forms of social, economic, and physical vulnerabilities in the village, challenging the belongingness of the community in the mainstream ideals of development. The paper examines these subtleties based on the Movement’s spiritual framework of Consciousness, Economics and Power and suggests some policy recommendations for the advancement of this model.

Background to the village Addapalam

Addapalam is a post 2004 Boxing Day tsunami resettlement village in the South Eastern Province of Sri Lanka, in the Ampara District. This village was reconstructed following the philosophy of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement (hereafter Sarvodaya Movement). Sarvodaya Movement is a religion and spirituality based social movement which began in 1958 aiming at grassroots rural development.

Addapalam was established in the Ninthavur Divisional Secretariat (DS) in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka, which is predominantly a Muslim area. However, the locality where Addapalam was proposed to be reconstructed was primarily a Tamil area (Cassini et al, 2008). Addapalam redevelopment brought together 78 displaced Muslim families and 22 Tamil families through Sarvodaya’s philosophy of harmonious living and tolerance. The numbers of Muslims and Tamils were selected based on the percentage affected (Addapalam Sarvodaya Leader, Interview 2015).

Conceptual framework - Governing community vulnerabilities through religion and spirituality

Disaster-affected communities are exposed to six types of vulnerabilities, which are economic, social, physical, cultural, environmental and institutional (Birkmann et al. 2014). Although it is difficult to reach a conclusive definition, vulnerability is referred to as the probability that humans and the essential structures that they depend upon “experience harm and suffer” losses (Birkmann et al. 2014, p.3).

Economic vulnerabilities arise from the destruction of infrastructure that a community’s economic activities depend upon. Social vulnerability arises from the damage or disruption to social systems such as family networks, educational and health systems, altering gender relations, and making (negative) changes to the health and wellbeing of the communities. Cultural vulnerability means the damage to intangible aspects of life, such as values, meanings, customs and habitual practices.

Physical vulnerability is created from the damage to the physical infrastructure and places that gave meaning to the lives of disaster-impacted people. Environmental vulnerability is caused by the damages that happen to green infrastructure. Institutional vulnerabilities following a disaster take the form of damages to the governance systems that existed, such as organisational forms and functions, disruptions to formal and informal rules and regulations, and customary rules and structures (Birkmann et al. 2014).

The most important method to address vulnerabilities in the long term is to give recognition to individual and community capacities and strengthen them through reconstruction and resettlement interventions (Wisner et al. 2004). This is also referred to as building up resiliency (Briggs et al. 2009). Resiliency, as Briggs et al. (2009) explained, means the complete empowerment and emancipation of the resettled communities, which could be achieved through re-establishing support systems, re-establishing regular routines, and ensuring the abilities of the impacted communities to return to their previous livelihood or an equivalent standard of living. As Briggs
et al. (2009) further noted, internal cohesion within a community is one of the most important aspects of resilience.

Disaster reconstruction frameworks should ideally take the concepts of vulnerability and resiliency into account when re-developing disaster-affected communities. In the 2004 post-tsunami reconstruction, the Sarvodaya Movement used its framework of the Three Spheres of Development – Consciousness, Economy and Power. This paper queries the effectiveness of this framework in governing the above mentioned vulnerabilities of the Addapalam community.

Figure 1 illustrates Sarvodaya’s Three Spheres model.

As shown in Figure 1, the Consciousness sphere is placed at the top, which aims for the spiritual development of Sarvodaya communities. It contains values derived from Buddhism and Gandhism such as non-violence, universal love, loving kindness, compassionate action, selfless joy and equanimity. The Movement began with these Southern values of Buddhism and Gandhism in the post-colonial era as an alternative approach to counter the western technocratic approaches of development. However, as the developmental work of the Movement began to expand into the villages all around Sri Lanka, the Movement serviced the villages of different religious and ethnic backgrounds drawing from the cultural and religious values of those villagers. The Movement appointed grassroots leaders from within the village itself to carry the spiritual framework forward based on the villagers’ own cultural and religious beliefs. The communities were expected to become cohesive and honour ethnic, religious and cultural differences with the proper utilisation of these cultural and spiritual values.

Economic sphere is also a similarly important dimension of Sarvodaya’s plan for holistic development. In place of the capitalist values of surplus extraction through the assets of land, labour and capital, Sarvodaya proposed an economic system “which avoids both affluence and poverty and generates a middle course which permits a simple lifestyle for all” (Sarvodaya Annual Service Report 2012-2013, p.14). In a middle course economy, economic projects satisfy basic, secondary and tertiary needs of communities with an intention of delivering production that is sustainable. To achieve this outcome, Sarvodaya philosophy adopted the concept of Ten Basic Needs here, which are: a clean and beautiful environment, adequate provision of clean drinking water, minimal supplies of clothing, adequate and balanced nutrition, simple housing, basic health care, basic communication facilities, a minimal supply of energy, holistic education, and the satisfaction of spiritual and cultural needs. Sarvodaya developed the ideals of grassroots’ leadership and good governance with the Power sphere. The power sphere aimed for bottom-up
grassroots participation in decision making and project management where “power is really with the people at community level” (Sarvodaya, Annual Service Report 2013, p.14).

In order to build in these values in disaster reconstruction communities, the Sarvodaya Movement adopted a systematic process called the 5Rs – Relief, Rehabilitation, Reconstruction, Reconciliation and Reawakening (Sarvodaya General Secretary, Interview 2015):

- **Relief** – Providing immediate assistance in the form of food, clothing, shelter & essential commodities to affected communities.
- **Rehabilitation** – The process of rebuilding lives together with the assistance of Sarvodaya.
- **Reconstruction** – Reconstruction of damaged and destroyed infrastructure.
- **Reconciliation** – Implementing all programmes keeping in mind the ethnic and religious diversity of the affected.
- **Reawakening** – Developing human potential. It is a comprehensive process taking place on the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, economic and political levels to reintegrate the resettled communities into the mainstream of development (Sarvodaya General Secretary, Interview 2015).

Although the 5R process of post-disaster reconstruction goes in the order of Relief, Rehabilitation, Reconstruction, Reconciliation and Reawakening, as gathered during fieldwork, the phases of Relief, Reconciliation and Rehabilitation were closely interconnected with each other in Sarvodaya’s efforts of community building. Reconstruction and Reawakening were closely interconnected in sustaining the solidarity created through Relief, Reconciliation and Rehabilitation.

**Methods**

This paper is based on a qualitative methodology and the method of in-depth interviewing. The paper contains primary data collected from semi-structured interviews with the General Secretary of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement, the Addapalam Sarvodaya leader and 10 Addapalam community members.

In-depth interviewing is a derivative of the broader method of interviewing, which is a type of conversation that can let the researcher gain great insights into the interviewee’s perspectives, lives and experiences by probing into the areas that are important to the questions investigated in the research (Babbie, 2007). In-depth interviewing was important for this research as it aimed at gaining a thorough understanding of how the Sarvodaya’s Three Sphere model was implemented in Addapalam along the 5R process, its strengths and limitations.

**Relief, Reconciliation and Rehabilitation**

Since Addapalam was not a pre-existing village, the village began at the stages of Reconciliation and Rehabilitation. These were phases of deep engagement between the Sarvodaya, the resettling community members, the Government and the rebel group of the Liberation Tigers of the Tamil Elam (LTTE). Through their approach to Reconciliation and Rehabilitation, Sarvodaya addressed some of the prevalent institutional vulnerabilities in the area and increased social and cultural resilience. Institutional vulnerability, as explained before, arise from the weakened structures of governance. As Nintavur was an ethnically divided rural region in Sri Lanka, their informal, yet customary structures of ethnic separation hindered post-tsunami relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and resettlement efforts. Sarvodaya, in collaboration with other implementing partners, negotiated with the Government and the rebel group the LTTE, both who were seemingly able to control the demographics of the area. Finally, an agreement was reached to construct the resettlement village for 78 Muslim and 22 Tamil families. After reaching this
agreement, Sarvodaya then faced resistance from the members who were to inhabit the village. As the Addapalam Sarvodaya Leader (ASL) (Interview 2015) explained:

In the beginning of this all, people had no idea what Sarvodaya was about. For them [the beneficiaries], putting two ethnic and religious communities together in one village was a cultural problem. A Muslim won’t go to the kovil [the Hindu place of worship]. A Tamil won’t go to the mosque [the Islamic place of worship]. The majority here don’t go to the temple [the Buddhist place of worship]. Especially the Muslim community didn’t support the program.

The Sarvodaya approach, as described by the Addapalam Sarvodaya Leader (Interview 2015), was to first understand the roots of this fear. As ASL (Interview 2015), who was a Muslim, said, “we [Sarvodaya leadership] saw this as a problem of identity. They were afraid that their identity would be lost in these moments of coming together as one community”. ASL (Interview 2015) also pointed out that some villagers doubted the motives of Sarvodaya, an organisation which, outwardly, could be interpreted as a Sinhalese Buddhist organisation. However, ASL (Interview 2015) with his more than 10 years of experience working with Sarvodaya further added that, once the communities develop a deeper understanding of Sarvodaya, these misconstructions almost always fade away.

Therefore, as ASL (Interview 2015) explained, “we tried to communicate the spirituality of our approach as opposed to the problems of identities they saw.” The approach to Consciousness building in ASL’s (Interview 2015) words is:

We explained to them that sticking into ethnic and religious divisions and fighting against each other is not the way to develop. We made the strength of unity clear to them – the mental and spiritual energies that unity can create. We taught them how to think as Sri Lankans – one large peaceful community – all three communities living in peace and harmony as Sri Lankans. If we divide, our energies are divided and wasted on negative emotions, but if we live together, we can develop ourselves through that spirituality.

As Addapalam villager 4 (AV4) (Interview 2015) too agreed, before the resettlement of communities, Sarvodaya leaders got both the Tamil and Muslim beneficiaries together and gave them a platform to express their thoughts, feelings and fears related to resettling in a multi-ethnic community. Community leaders and general citizens participated in these meetings. As AV4 (Interview 2015) added:

During the seminars, Sarvodaya leader explained to us that we are all humans and the ultimate goal for all of us should be to live in that happiness created through harmonious existence. They told us that we will eventually see how religion and ethnicity don’t matter and how we will only value the friendships with each other. That was right. Now we live together as brothers, sisters and friends. Everyone as Sri Lankans.

As ASL (Interview 2015) saw, “there are no communal violence, ethnic problems and racism here. Everyone lives as friends. There are no issues to talk about.” The interviews with villagers in 2015 also gave the same sentiment (Interviews with Addapalam Villagers 1-10).

In this process, the Power sphere intersected with Consciousness raising. Power given to the community through grassroots participation made the communication between stakeholders more effective. Addapalam Sarvodaya Leader mobilised the key leaders of each community and gave them the opportunity to share their concerns, gradually clearing up the misunderstandings through dialogue.

While addressing the root causes of a main institutional vulnerability (ethnic division) in this area, Sarvodaya also created social and cultural resilience in this community instilling the values
of diversity, harmonious living and tolerance. A social system of reconciliatory multi-ethnic living was established through the Consciousness of non-violence, universal love and equanimity.

The next section examines the stage of Reconstruction, where the sphere of Economics was developed. In doing so, this section also inquiries into the effectiveness of Sarvodaya's Three Spheres of Development – Consciousness, Economics and Power in Addapalam's redevelopment, evaluating the status of Reawakening of the community.

**Reconstruction and Reawakening**

Reawakening, as defined by Sarvodaya, is the actualising of human potential – spiritually, culturally, economically and politically. The idea of Reawakening therefore also implies the right balance between all three spheres of Consciousness, Economy and Power. Ideally, the Sarvodaya concept of Reawakening goes beyond the concept of resiliency in disaster reconstruction, which only means ensuring that the disaster affected communities return to their previous or an equivalent standard of living. In order to ensure the empowerment and emancipation of the community, and their gradual development towards Reawakening, the Sarvodaya utilised the sphere of Economics and implemented it through the Ten Basic Needs.

The village was built in a clean and a beautiful environment and the community was educated on how to maintain healthy environmental practices. However, in the long-run, the agricultural land used for reconstruction began to have drainage problems and flooding, impacting negatively on the overall hygiene of the environment. Water pollution, mosquito and fly breeding, toilet blockages and foul smells are some of the issues that the residents raised. These issues have created an environmental vulnerability through the creation of unhealthy environmental conditions.

The government's water supply system delivers clean drinking water to the community. A minimal supply of energy was given through the installation of solar panels. Although the solar panels became a costly system to maintain, the electricity supplied from the government's main grid ensured the continued supply of energy to the village. The notion of simple housing was addressed through the reconstruction of houses. Their basic spiritual and cultural needs were satisfied both by the mosque and the kovil situated inside the village. The community centre also allowed the villagers to get together for functions that were held at the community level. The villagers were satisfied with and appreciative of the way in which these facilities were provided. A minimal supply of clothing, adequate balanced nutrition and basic communication facilities were planned to be sustained through supporting household economic activities. While the villagers did not have concerns in relation to these economic aspects, they had strong concerns in relation to holistic education and healthcare.

Both healthcare and education suffered due to the disconnection of the village from regular transportation routes. The villagers have to spend a lot of time and money finding alternative ways of travelling to the nearest activity centre. Goods and services inside the village also cost twice or thrice more than they are outside of the village. Although the Sarvodaya took steps to ensure most of the Ten Basic Needs in Addapalam, the following quote depicts that the villagers think beyond what is available within the village:

> We spend Rs.350-400 every day to travel to Nindhavur. Our work is there, our facilities for health, education, even the market, are there. We have to go to Nindhavur for our day-to-day needs. From children to adults, everything we need is in Nindhavur. It is one of the good cities. Now from Addapalam to Nindhavur, we have to spend a lot of money from our income on transportation (AV2 Interview, 2015).

Addapalam lacks physical infrastructure of roads and transportation. Not only that, they lacked suitable social infrastructure that would support their healthcare and educational requirements. This disconnection has created new forms of social, economic, and physical vulnerabilities.
in the village, challenging the belongingness of their community in the mainstream ideals of development.

**Discussion, conclusion and recommendations**

Getting a disaster-affected community back into the mainstream ideals of development is not easy as these communities are exposed to six types of vulnerabilities. In the case of Addapalam, the Sarvodaya Movement assisted the Addapalam community in overcoming a significant institutional vulnerability created by ethnic and religious divisions. The Sarvodaya movement’s Consciousness building activities, together with the intersection of Power through grassroots’ participation, mitigated most of the social and cultural issues that came with ethnic divisions. While this created a cohesive, tolerant community who valued diversity, in the long-term, the limitations in the Economics sphere hindered their further development. Therefore, while the interconnection between the Consciousness and Power was successful in the community building process through the Rs of Reconciliation and Rehabilitation, the R of Reconstruction hindered the Reawakening of the community.

While the philosophy and commitment of the grassroots movement Sarvodaya developed the Addapalam community up to an admirable extent, their further development could not be actualised in a policy vacuum. The national Government should be responsible for the provision of suitable land for resettlement and ensure the development physical infrastructure. In this case study, what was important for community Reawakening or total empowerment was well-planned partnerships between the main actors of governance.

**References**


Metaphors of Migration

Catherine Martin

University of Western Australia

Abstract

From its inception, the nation of Australia has enacted migration controls as a means of regulating and shaping the population. The press plays a crucial role in the (re)production of discourses of nationality and the legitimation of migration restriction; the language used in the press is therefore of critical importance. The use of metaphors to stigmatise migrants can be traced back to press reports that are contemporaneous with the earliest non-White migration, and this usage persists to the present day. Research has shown how such language has been used to create a sense of national identity based on exclusion, as well as to justify and legitimate legal and political action that targets migrants. Within the Australian context however, there is a lack of research on the specific historical, social and economic contexts that occasioned (and were sanctioned by) such metaphors of migration, or on how such usage developed. This paper highlights that lack as an area in need of further study as a means to explore the ongoing utility of metaphoric language that stigmatises certain categories of migrants, and designates them as intrinsically external to the nation state.

Introduction

As a settler nation, Australia’s history is the history of migration. The devolution from colony to independent country, the white Australia policy, as well as the subsequent shift to multiculturalism have been well documented elsewhere (Hollinsworth, 1998; Jupp, 2001, 2002; Markus, 1994). However, such developments were neither natural nor inevitable – the categorisation of whiteness, and the resultant policies of migration exclusion and restriction were the result of specific historical, political and social conditions. Concerns about Australia’s geographical position within Asia, and fears of invasion (Markus, 1994; Walker, 1999) as well as developing anxieties about health and white suitability for life in the tropics (Bashford, 2004; Markus, 1994; Walker, 1999), the wish to avoid perceived racial problems that were occurring in other parts of the world (Palfreeman, 1974; Walker, 1999), the denial of legitimacy of Aboriginal peoples (Elder, 2003; Hollinsworth, 1998; Markus, 1994) and a conflation of migrants with disease (Bashford, 2002, 2004) were all important factors in Australia’s racialized articulation of (white) nationhood, and related restriction of non-white migration.

Racialised systems of thought do not exist in a vacuum – they are part of the everyday discourse within a social group, that is communicated within daily conversation and practices. Racial prejudice reflects and sustains the dominance of certain groups; through complex processes of
in-group/out-group differentiation, barriers are maintained, which has implications not only for how group member relate to each other, but also how they relate to other groups. (van Dijk, 1987; Wetherell & Potter, 1992). Van Dijk has shown how individuals’ communication on racial issues tends to reproduce the dominant racial prejudice, often centering on negative aspects of immigration, criminality, negative characteristics of migrants and cultural conflicts (van Dijk, 1987), and he uses the concept of the ideological square to describe the process of positive in-group description and negative out-group description. This functions through the emphasis of the in-group’s positive properties and actions and mitigation of their negative properties/actions, while simultaneously emphasizing the out-group’s negative properties/actions and minimizing their positive ones (van Dijk, 1998). Wetherell and Potter go further in demonstrating how the ideological effects of the racial discourse embedded in everyday speech is the legitimation of existing, uneven power relations in society, and the justification of the on-going dominance of the white majority in New Zealand (Wetherell & Potter, 1992).

Racism and the Press
Newspapers are of particular interest when it comes to the (re)production of discourse around ethnic groups. Research has shown that the vast majority of ‘facts’ that people draw on for legitimacy in their everyday communication about this topic are drawn from media reports, not based on personal experience (van Dijk, 1987). However, news is neither neutral nor natural – as Stuart Hall says: “The media do not simply and transparently report events which are ‘naturally’ newsworthy ‘News’ is the end-product of a complex process which begins with a systematic sorting and selecting of events and topics according to a socially constructed set of categories.” (Hall, 1978, p. 53). In addition, partly due to time and economic constraints and partly due to concerns with ‘objectivity’ and ‘fact’, news is heavily dependent on sources, either official government or industry sources, or elite individuals with privileged access to the media (Fowler, 1991; Fulton, 2005; Hall, 1978; van Dijk, 1987, 2015), which results in a view of the world being articulated that generally coincides with that of the dominant elite within society.

The language used in the press is a powerful tool in defining a situation. “Anything that is said or written about the world is articulated from a particular ideological position: language is not a clear window but a refracting, structuring medium” (Fowler, 1991, p. 10). If the press is constrained by a reliance on official sources, then the ideological position is usually that of the elite. To understand the way in which certain ideological positions are articulated, in can be useful to focus on particular instances of language use, to track how they function. Wetherell and Potter use the term interpretative repertoires to describe the way language can be organized around certain concepts to construct a particular discourse (Wetherell & Potter, 1992).

Metaphors
There is a discernible pattern of certain metaphors being used to talk about migrants. Hollinsworth notes that language like ‘waves’ and ‘hordes’ was used to talk about Chinese migrants in the 1850s (Hollinsworth, 1998); this is confirmed by a brief scan on Trove evidencing that such negative metaphorical representation of non-White migration to Australia began contemporaneously with the migration itself. The use of a set of metaphors around a concept such as ‘immigrant as invader’ could be considered an interpretative repertoire; focusing then on metaphors of migration is one way to interrogate the ways in which discourses of migration are related to wider discourses of belonging/exclusion and the legitimation of established social orders. Van Dijk himself has made note of metaphors used to describe migrants, although he has stated “The negative connotations of such metaphors hardly need comment” (van Dijk, 1987, p. 372). Conversely, I would argue, as have others ( Charteris- Black, 2004; Santa Ana, 2002), that this is precisely what needs

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1 Online newspaper archive
Van Dijk has been criticised for highlighting the press as a vehicle for the production and reproduction of racist discourse, but only then focusing on the ways in which newspapers reproduce discourse (Ferguson, 1998). Focusing on the origin and tracing the development of certain metaphors to speak about migrants could provide a means to also analyse the production of such discourse, as well as its reproduction.

Metaphor has long been a feature of literary concern, but it was Lakoff and Johnson’s seminal work that radically altered the way that metaphor was understood. Within it they make the claim that metaphor is central to the way in which we conceptualise the world; it structures the way in which we understand, not just the physical world but all aspects of our lives. According to Lakoff and Johnson, our understanding of the world is primarily experientially based, which constitutes our source domains; this understanding is then metaphorically mapped onto other concepts, the target domain, and it is through this mapping that we make sense of the world (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

If we examine metaphor in reference to migration, a common metaphor is Immigrant as Invader. This can, on its most basic level, be linked to container metaphors. Lakoff and Johnson contend that we experience ourselves as bounded and discrete, or in their words, as a container. This basic understanding provides the experiential basis by which we understand other things as containers, for example land areas. Whether a room, a house or a country, all are conceptualised as being bounded, discrete entities with clear in/out differentiation and definite boundaries (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). The imagining of a nation state is intrinsically linked to a physical, bounded space (Billig, 1995) hence, a nation is conceptualised, metaphorically, as a container. Immigrant as Invader can then be understood in relation to Nation as Container, as it is the conceptualisation of the nation as naturally bounded and contained which gives rise to the possibility of attack and occupation by those that are external to it, who do not naturally belong within its confines. Thus when migrants are designated as invaders, it makes a powerful exclusionary statement about their status.

One final point to take from Lakoff and Johnson is the understanding that a metaphor, by nature, will highlight some aspects of a situation, while obscuring others; so, for example, if migrants are categorised as problematic, all benefits of migration are eclipsed. This shaping function of metaphor is best expressed in Donald Schön’s notion of the generative metaphor. Schön explores the use of metaphor in social policy and makes the argument that the metaphors we use to conceptualise a ‘problem’ then generate, and also limit the solutions that are possible for resolving the problem (Schön, 1979). Stuart Hall makes the same point, albeit not about metaphor: “If you establish the topic as ‘the number of blacks are too high’ or ‘they are breeding too fast’, the opposition is obliged or constrained to argue that ‘the numbers are not as high as they are represented to be’. This view is opposed to the first two: but it is also imprisoned by the same logic – the logic of the ‘numbers game’.” (1990, p. 20).

Conceptualising immigration in terms of invasion therefore, automatically structures all responses in terms of defence. This ‘numbers game’ and the contention that too many migrants are ‘invading’ Australia is a commonly employed trope in Australian anti-migration discourses (Hage, 2000).

A major criticism of Lakoff and Johnson is that they haven’t fully engaged with the ideological function of metaphor. Other theorists have extended their work by focusing on the function of metaphor in the development of ideology. Jonathan Charteris-Black’s work is strongly focused on the importance of pragmatics – that is the intentions of the speakers when choosing certain metaphors. He makes the argument that while metaphors may be a pervasive feature of language, the choice of metaphor in a particular situation is a matter of individual choice, and serves a persuasive function. By analysing the metaphors within a text, and putting the text into context,
we can discover the underlying ideological systems that are encoded within it. While he also makes the point that not all choices are always based on power differentials, and in addition, the choice of metaphor does not necessarily dictate the how it will be interpreted, this should not detract from the benefits of studying metaphor as a means to critically evaluate the discourse of the press and its role in the (re)production of ideology (Charteris-Black, 2004).

Metaphors of migration
Chavez introduces the idea of the Latino Threat Narrative to describe the process of vilification, negative stereotyping and restriction of Latino migrants that takes place in the US press. He links this to specific historical and social processes, as well as the process of exclusion as a means for defining citizenship and belonging. He references the ubiquity of certain metaphorical representations of Latino migration – i.e. invasion, floods and he links this to wider narratives of Latinos as a threat to US society (Chavez, 2013). These metaphorical representations are further explored by Santa Ana who researched newspaper coverage at several points in the 1990s when the Californian government passed specific laws targeting Latinos. The political expediency of blaming migrants for wider social problems is well illustrated, and the range of metaphors explored are thorough. In particular, there is widespread usage of what he terms Migrant as Dangerous Water based metaphors, with extensive flood and tidal metaphors. This is not harmless: “Treating immigration as dangerous waters conceals the individuality of the immigrants’ lives and their humanity. In their place a frightening scenario of uncontrolled movements of water can be played out with devastating floods and inundating surges of brown faces” (Santa Ana, 2002, p. 77). The targeting of Latino migrants came at a time of political turmoil, and the generation of anti-Latino sentiment was used to justify the passing of racially targeted statutes, as well as bolster initially low political support (Chavez, 2013; Inda, 2000; Santa Ana, 2002).

Similar metaphors are explored within the UK around the 2005 General Election, although in this case the flood and tidal metaphors are conceptualised as being part of a conceptual metaphor Immigrant as Natural Disaster (Charteris-Black, 2006). Several functions of such metaphors are identified, including the legitimation of right-wing political thought as well as the objectification of immigrants, which in turn legitimates certain ways of behaving toward them (Charteris-Black, 2006). The same has been found to be true in a study of metaphors used to stigmatise migration in the early nineteenth century in the US, which found widespread usage of invasion, natural catastrophe (in particular flood), sub-human, and infection metaphors to denigrate migrants as a way to support restrictive and hostile policies targeting them (O’Brien, 2003).

Discussion
Within the Australian context, there has been less analysis of such metaphors. Some of the motivations for and effects of such metaphoric representation have been examined, in particular the justification of restrictive legislation that targets migrants (Z. Anderson, 2011; Pickering, 2001), as well as the ongoing associations of migrants with disease, and the related metaphorical associations of national purity with bodily purity (Z. Anderson, 2011; Inda, 2000). Furthermore, the links between animal metaphors and racist classifications, and the way this links to power structures, have been explored (Hage, 2017), as well as the use of war metaphors within media narratives about Lebanese gangs (Noble & Poynting, 2003). Wider research has also shown how moral panics around race and migrants have been formulated in the media (Martin, 2015; Mayer, 2013; Poynting, Noble, & Tabor, 2001; Taylor, 2013).

However, an explicit critical discourse analysis of metaphor usage has yet to be performed. This is a critical lack as in order to fully understand metaphor usage and choice, it is necessary to study particular instances within their social and historical contexts (Charteris-Black, 2004; Santa Ana, 2002); so while similar situations in other countries may be instructive, they cannot
fully account for the development and usage of such metaphoric classifications of migrants within the Australian context. Within Australian popular literature and imagination, fears and fantasies of invasion were increasingly widespread in the later parts of the 1800s (Walker, 1999); studies of newspaper coverage of migration would likely show an increase in such metaphoric description as such ideas gained currency. Discourses around the body, disease and contagion increased in popularity slightly later (W. Anderson, 2005; Bashford, 2002, 2004), so it is likely that the usage of metaphors relating migration and migrants to disease also appeared slightly later, but this needs to be researched.

Initial research into newspaper articles from the 1850s suggests that such metaphors of migration were present but not as prevalent as later times, which raises the question of when they gained wider currency. It is possible that, much as in the US or the UK, certain metaphors became more widespread in response to migration changes and the need to propagate certain ideas as a means to support particular political agendas. However, it would be necessary to track how and why such metaphors circulated to establish this with any certainty. Also, initial research shows that such metaphors were originally linked to explicitly racist discourse of racial superiority and inherent deviance, which raises the question of when (and if) they become disassociated from such ideology. Whether they became so conventionalised that the original discourse they were embedded in has become implicit or whether the uses of such metaphors changed is unknown.

Since the 1850s there have been massive cultural and political shifts; changing social conditions has typically engendered a shift in the language used in the press to discuss migrants (Laurie, 2004) yet the use of certain metaphors remains. Such metaphoric description of migration and migrants is so widespread that it often passes completely without comment. When the negative implications of such language are noted, the underlying grounds of such language is often left un-interrogated (Pickering, 2001). That is not to criticize existing research that highlights such language, but rather to suggest that this is an area that needs further research. A diachronic study of certain metaphors is essential to explain the ongoing utility of such language when it comes to marginalising specific categories of migrants. There are certainly issues with the persistence in press usage of metaphors of migration to maintain categories of belonging and exclusion within Australian national imaginings, and questions as to why, in a (post) multi-cultural society, such classifications retain their efficacy.

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Abstract
Filipino migrants are the empirical embodiment of global care chains (GCC). Social scientists have demonstrated how Filipino women migrate to provide physical and emotional labour for those in the global North, while simultaneously taking care of those that they have left behind in the Philippines. While Filipino migrants are renowned for caregiving, little is known about how Filipino migrants receive care from others after migration. This paper examines a case study of a recent Filipino migrant to Perth, Western Australia. Focusing on the cultural aspect of care and its role in determining migrant belonging, this author examines the public and private relationships forged by the subject. This author argues that including the cultural strategies for community building is essential to finding an answer to the ‘who cares for the carer’ question. While state citizenship is no doubt important, other forms of membership should also be acknowledged in order to recognise Filipino migrants as receivers of socially generated goods and services. An examination of community memberships is thus important in understanding what migrant needs are, who meets these needs, and why meeting these needs is beneficial.
Keywords: care, citizenship, migration, belonging, culture, transnationalism

Introduction
Care is best understood as practices that contribute to the wellbeing of an individual or a collective through the meeting of needs (Yeates, 2012). These practices can range from the physical, hands on tasks to the emotional aspects of having affection or concern for the other in a way that develops the relationship between the caregiver and the recipient (Yeates, 2004). Social scientists have demonstrated how Filipino women migrate to provide physical labour for those in the global North, while simultaneously providing emotional labour to those that they have left behind in the Philippines (Parrenas, 2001; 2005). While Filipino migrants are renowned for caregiving, little is known about how Filipino migrants receive care from others after migration in order to feel ‘at home’ in a new country (Yuval-Davis, 2011).

This paper examines a case study of a recent Filipino migrant to Perth, Western Australia. Focusing on the cultural aspect of care and its role in determining a sense of belonging, this author examines the public and private relationships forged by the subject. This author argues that including the cultural strategies for community building is essential to finding an answer to
the ‘who cares for the carer’ question. While state citizenship is no doubt important in setting the parameters for rights and providing a claim to belonging, other forms of membership should also be acknowledged in order to recognise Filipino migrants as receivers of socially generated goods and services. An examination of community memberships is thus important in understanding what migrant needs are, who meets these needs, and why meeting these needs is beneficial.

**How do Filipino migration and care intersect?**

Filipino migrants are the empirical embodiment of global care chains (GCC). In fact Hochschild’s (2000) theorisation of the GCC was premised on the Filipino nanny leaving her children behind in the Philippines to care for another wealthier woman’s children in America. She defines the GCC as “a series of personal links across the globe based on the paid or unpaid work of caring” (Hochschild, 2000: 131). The Filipino migrant (woman) is implicated in the GCC in two ways. Filipino migrants would migrate to the global North to provide physical and emotional labour to the ageing population (Amrith, 2017). Additionally, they would continue their familial roles in the Philippines through the creation of a single social field (Basch, Glick Schiller and Blanc, 1994). This social field is maintained through the sending of remittances, mediated technologies and substitute family members who act as ‘proxy’ mothers for the children left behind in the Philippines (Parrenas, 2001; Baldassar, 2008). As a result, Filipino migrants have become synonymous with caregiving. What is underresearched is the role that Filipino migrants play as care receivers. Who cares for their wellbeing?

McKay (2016) found that Filipino migrants in London would develop extensive social networks and deep friendships with one another in an effort to mediate their lives in a foreign country. She argues that the informal care that Filipino migrants received from these social networks enabled them to deliver care effectively in their role as paid caregivers (McKay, 2016). Her research is a continuation of the findings that she had discovered through her extended period of fieldwork in the Philippines. McKay found that Filipino migrants defined care as an expression of an “ethic of shared labour and mutual affective exposure” (2012: 215). Care is not just about the practical or emotional tasks where one person gives care and the other person has their needs met, but is a practice that has shared cultural value, reinforcing the migrant’s membership to the community within which they live. Filipinos have subsequently taken this local understanding of care into the ‘global’ through their sojourns abroad. McKay (2012; 2016) thus demonstrates the importance of including cultural aspects of care, which has the effect of shaping membership to a community, thus allowing Filipinos to belong or to feel ‘at home’ in a new country (Yuval-Davis, 2011).

Extending McKay’s (2012; 2016) research further, I examine the cultural aspects of care and its role in determining a sense of belonging. I draw on data from an interview with a recent Filipino migrant to Australia named Eva. Eva’s narrative is part of a series of interviews conducted for a doctoral thesis on cultural citizenship in Australia. I begin the discussion with the struggles that Eva faced in her migration, focusing particularly on the social and physical isolation that she faced. I then explore the social strategies that Eva uses to counter this isolation by focusing on the relationships that she has developed in Perth. I argue that including the cultural strategies for community building is essential to finding an answer to the “who cares for the carer” question (Tronto, 2001).

**Care and the Multilayered Citizen**

Eva is a community care worker for the elderly in her neighbourhood. She describes her job as just driving around to houses and delivering food. She smiles when she talks about her job, describing it as “very easy”, as she says “all I do is eat, because when I make sandwiches for them I make one for myself too”. Eva explains that her role is to ensure that the elderly do not forget to take their medication, and is somewhat akin to the provision of social support rather than the
physical hands-on tasks of caregiving. Eva would know; she worked in an aged care home prior to this, where she said she would “wipe, wipe wipe, all day”.

Unlike other overseas Filipinos who had migrated to fill the demand for aged carers in the global North (see Huang et al, 2012; Lopez, 2012), Eva came over to Perth, Western Australia in 2008 as a horticulturalist under the 457 visa, which is a skilled migration pathway to Australia. Eva was qualified to apply for the position as she had a Bachelor of Science degree and over three years’ experience working as a horticulturalist in the Philippines. Also, unlike her overseas compatriots, Eva was able to apply for citizenship after working two years for the same employer and is currently an Australian citizen.

Citizenship is a contentious issue in the GCC literature, particularly within the context of migrant welfare and wellbeing. The importance of citizenship has emerged due to the lack of rights that labour migrants have when working as a paid carer in a receiving country. For example, Filipino migrants working in Singapore as foreign domestic workers are not allowed to get married to local Singaporeans or return to their home country for the first 2 years of their work contract (M.o.M, 2017). The issue of citizenship is further compounded by the lack of protection and social rights provided by the sending state, leaving migrants vulnerable to human rights abuses (Gonzalez and Holmes, 1996). As a solution, feminist researchers have suggested that carers be granted citizenship status when working in a host country so as to ensure that migrants are recognised as receivers of socially generated goods and services (Tronto, 2001; Beasley and Bacchi, 2007).

Eva’s experience, however, contradicts the finality of such a solution. Even in a world where technologies such as Skype and Facebook proliferate, Eva describes the loss of the sharing of physical co-presence with her family as the most difficult adjustment she had to make when she migrated to Australia (Baldassar, 2008). The costs of sharing physical co-presence, however, are high, as migrants have to take into account factors such as visa restrictions and loss of livelihood. Eva’s father has an agricultural business in the Philippines and her mother owns a sari-sari store. Bringing them to Australia would mean that both parents would lose their only source of income. Similarly, although Eva was married at the time of her migration to Australia, her husband could not accompany her as he did not have transferable skills. This has meant that although Filipino migrants working in Australia on 457 visas have the option of bringing family members over, they do not always do so, leaving a chasm in their social support system that citizenship would not have filled.

Eva’s need for physical co-presence from her family was further constrained by the extended waiting periods for tourist visas. At the time of our interview, Eva was about to get married to her second husband. Due to his visa restrictions - Eva’s husband was on a marriage prospective visa - they had to get married within 9 months. Given how close Eva was to her family, I asked if they would be attending the wedding in Perth. Eva informs me that the process would take 3 - 6 months by which time the wedding would have been over. The lengthy application process for a visitor’s visa to Australia has meant that Eva’s family does not get to visit her in Australia, even for special occasions such as a wedding. As a result, Eva only gets to see her family once a year, when she returns home to the Philippines on her annual leave. The acquisition of Australian citizenship for Eva, although important in allowing her to remain in Australia and bring her prospective partner over, has not translated into the meeting of a vital need for Eva.

To cope with the need for physical co-presence, Eva resorts to finding friends in Australia. As she puts it, “you know wherever you go, Philippine community, you always look for fellow Filipinos”. Eva found a local Anglican Church near where she was staying and made friends with Filipinos there on her weekly Sunday visits to church. She joined Migrante International through a serendipitous encounter with a fellow Filipino in a store. Eva describes the encounter
as just going up to the person and asking “kabayan?”. Through her friend, she was able to get in touch with someone who organised weekly weekend meetings for the members. Her weekly social interactions with the friends that she made in these community organisations countered the monotony of Eva’s daily routine, where her life centred around “work, work, work”.

Another strategy that Eva used was through the opening up of her home to fellow Filipinos. Eva owns a house where she rents rooms to Filipinos on 457 visas. I asked if she knew these Filipinos prior to their migration, to which Eva responded “no”. When asked why she rented the rooms out to her compatriots, she explains that it was “just a good practice for Filipinos to help each other”, adding that it was the “Filipino culture”. When I visited Eva for her interview at her home, there was a lot of activity going on, as her sharemates returned home from work. Eva introduced me to them and they would converse at times. For Eva, the benefit that she gained from renting these rooms to fellow Filipinos was not just for monetary gain, but was a way for Eva to feel a sense of belonging in a new country. This cultural exchange between Eva and her tenants is interpreted as one that is mutually beneficial, reflecting care as a value shared by those who belong to the Filipino community in Australia.

Eva’s experience thus illuminates an alternate angle to the state citizenship solution in the ‘who cares for the carer’ question. While Australian citizenship has no doubt provided Eva with benefits that she could not have before as a temporary labour migrant, such as access to welfare and social services, the memberships that she has formed in the public and private spheres have ensured her wellbeing by meeting the need for physical co-presence. As Eva says, “it is only now that I have company”. When Eva describes her daily routine, where she Skypes with her family in the Philippines after work, she says that all her friends were “also like that”. Eva also says she now has “companions” thanks to her friends. She reports that this has led to feelings of “happiness” rather than loneliness.

The care that Eva receives from her fellow compatriots can be interpreted as social strategies for belonging. However, I argue that by doing so, one renders these practices invisible in the making of the productive citizen. As Tronto has argued, such “care work is an invisible prerequisite for worker-citizens” (2001: 67). This argument is further supported by McKay’s (2016) findings, where she found that state citizenship did not matter as much to the undocumented Filipino migrants in her study as did the care that they received daily from social interactions with compatriots that occur in both private and public spheres. State citizenship, although important, should thus be subsumed under a multilayered citizenship model so as to capture the cultural aspect of care and its role in determining migrant belongings (Yuval-Davis, 2011).

Conclusion
Eva’s experience demonstrates an alternative interpretation of the GCC as a model that can be used to explain the migrant travelling from global South to look after the nonmigrant in the global North. Instead, her experience highlights the importance of focusing on migrants as receivers of socially generated goods and services so as to gain a better understanding of the needs that Filipino migrants have. While social scientists have argued for the importance of state citizenship, I concur with Yuval Davis’ (2011) argument for a multilayered citizenship model. There is no doubt that Australian citizenship has benefited Eva’s life. The impact of Eva’s other memberships in both public and private spheres, however, bears greater meaning in shaping Eva’s day-to-day life in Australia. An examination of community memberships is thus important in understanding what migrant needs are, who meets these needs, and why meeting these needs is beneficial.

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Institute of Asian Studies.


‘A Walk Among the Gum Trees’: Bushwalking, Place and Self-Narrative

Rebecca Banham
University of Tasmania

I’ve always walked. Ever since [I was a kid] … So it’s something I’ve always done, and enjoyed. So I just… I don’t know. Maybe it’s just in the, in the psyche. (James)

Amidst the “alienation and insecurity of the modern, mobile world” (Barry 1999: 98), bushwalking – that Australian take on walking in nature – performs an important function in the establishment of self-identity. There is an understanding that self-identity has important links to sense of place and the environment, and Giddens (1991) suggests that the stability of ‘self-narrative’ is sought in light of a contemporary landscape of insecurity, and changed relationships between humans and the ‘natural’ world. How, then, might a situated activity such as bushwalking function as a means of establishing self-narrative? Drawing on the experiences of a group of Tasmanian bushwalkers, this paper argues that bushwalking has significant implications for the sense of belonging, continuity, and security by informing a stable self-narrative.

In analysing the effect of the shift in conditions from the pre-modern to the contemporary world, Giddens (1991) details the characteristics of ‘self-narrative’. This establishment of the self is a reflexive process, through which the individual forms their identity through a sense of trajectory, progressing from the past into the future. This story of the self is the ‘main event’ for the individual, taking precedence in perception over outside events (which are conceptualized and integrated as part of the ‘story’). The establishment of this internal biography is predicated upon constancy, and the demarcation of personal time; it is a reflexively embodied experience that takes place through ‘passages’, or life stages, through which the individual balances potential opportunities and risks. Self-narrative is primarily that, a narrative - the establishment of which informs the individual’s sense of self and behaviour (Giddens 1991). Bushwalking can function as a performative element of self-identity, by fulfilling these characteristics that constitute the establishment of a stable self-narrative.

Identity, place and bushwalking

Perceptions and experiences of the natural world have an intimate relationship with self-identity. Cheng et al. (2003) suggest that personally meaningful places provide a sense of order in the individual’s world; as Egoz (2013: 272) puts it, “landscape [builds] identity … in response to the basic human need to belong”. As such, the environment is understood through the lens of
self-identity, with a wide range of literature exploring this process (Greider & Garkovich 1994; Cantrill 1998; Clayton & Opotow 2003; Urquhart & Acott 2014). Two overarching elements of the literature are relevant here. Firstly, the process by which ‘the environment’ is understood is tied to macro-level changes, such as globalisation, shifts in national identities, and increasing mobility and uncertainty (Giddens 1991; Rennie Short 1991; Beck 1992; Egoz 2013). Secondly, this process has to do with the individual’s experiences of constancy, stability and belonging (Giddens 1991; Whitmarsh & O’Neill 2010; Egoz 2013; Drescher 2014). This latter point was reflected in participants’ discussions about their connections to particular places, childhood experiences, finding a sense of continuity in the cyclical rhythms of nature, and their sense of Tasmania as ‘home’. Emotional attachments to place appear to be an important component of environmental experiences.

The term ‘bushwalking’ - as opposed to ‘hiking’, ‘walking’, or ‘tramping’ - ties the activity to its identity as an ‘Australian’ act. Bushwalking was pioneered in the early twentieth century by Myles Dunphy, who established a link between bushwalking and conservation, believing wilderness experiences to be “good for the mind, the soul, and the country” (Hutton & Connors 1999: 65). While place connections and behaviours such as bushwalking are not synonymous with environmental concern, there appears to be a correlation between them (Svarstad 2010).

Giddens (in Barry 1999: 98) suggests that in a globalised, mobile world - in which we increasingly relate to the environment as ‘sequestered’ from other spheres of life - environmental concern is a method by which the individual may seek “moral … and normative security”. In popularising environmentally-conscious bushwalking, Dunphy and the ‘Mountain Trailers’ - middle-class men (and women) who were “product[s] of the age in which [they] lived” (Hutton & Connors 1999: 65) - helped to create a practice that remains reflective of contemporary socio-environmental conditions and interests.

Moreover, participants’ bushwalking was also a ‘Tasmanian experience’, shaped by the social, political, and material conditions of the State. Issues of forestry have also been instrumental in the political landscape of Tasmania. The environment appears to be highly salient to the personal identities of many Tasmanians; see Krien (2012) for a discussion of the importance of environment to the cultural make-up of Tasmania. As such, sense of place is important for self-identity, insofar as it involves belonging to communities, cultures, and material settings. Bushwalking is a performative element of this, and ties sense of place into the self-narrative.

The bushwalking experience
The extracts below are from interviews conducted with 27 Tasmanians about their ontological and emotional experiences of the State’s forests. Participants self-selected, based on their interest in forests and forest issues. Sixteen participants were men, eleven women; a wide range of ages were represented, with most participants at or approaching the age of retirement. Most were from the south of the State. The project was advertised primarily through various environmental organisations in Tasmania, and by word-of-mouth. Interviews were thematically analysed, and emergent themes include bushwalking experiences, childhood and family stories, and emotional reactions to forest landscapes.

Not all participants were bushwalkers, nor is bushwalking the focus of my broader PhD project; nevertheless, most spoke to some extent about such experiences. Bushwalking was associated significantly with interest in forest issues, as a performative element of a wider environmental awareness. This awareness encompassed a range of social issues and positions, such as forest conservation, timber access policies, and ambivalence regarding the services provided by Forestry Tasmania; participants’ bushwalking practices spoke to diverse knowledge and experiences. While there is arguably a social identity aspect to bushwalking - such as normative expectations
around who ‘a bushwalker’ is, particularly for those participants whose walking was tied to their employment and public image - participants emphasised the intimate, experiential aspects of bushwalking. Bushwalking was apparently perceived as a highly personal activity, even when done with others.

While some authors are particular in their operationalisation of hiking (Svarstad 2010; Collins-Kreiner & Kliot 2017), such restrictions have been consciously avoided here. While several participants expressed their opposition to being seen as a ‘serious bushwalker’ - “I’ve never really been what you call a … marathon bushwalker” (Leon) - bushwalks do not necessarily need to be difficult or arduous in order to impact emotions and self-identity. As participant Ben puts it:

I’ve found they don’t have to be major hikes. Sometimes, [longer walks are] the ones that … leave you with the most energy and passion, but even just short trips I’ve found to have been really, really important.

While some participants noted it as a benefit, physical fitness and exercise were not identified as the primary goal of bushwalking (although this is perhaps a product of the chosen sampling method, which encouraged participation on the basis of forest attachment rather than an interest in fitness). When participants described bushwalking as being ‘good for them’, they alluded to a general sense of emotional or mental wellbeing. This speaks not only to a sense of bodily reflexivity, but to the emotional and personal dimensions of bushwalking. The experience of ‘wilderness’ is closely tied to bushwalking and conservation interests (Hutton and Connors 1999: 68), and the affective dimension of bushwalking can function as an implicit performance of pro-environmental identity, fostering ongoing, relational connections to place:

I was very young [when I gained] my first impression of ‘a forest’ … seeds were sown very early on for me. So this is why I feel very attached to the idea that nothing detrimental should happen to Tasmania’s unique resource, the forests. (Ken)

Whether in the form of conservationist memoirs (such as Law’s 2008 account of the Franklin River campaign), or in the everyday experiences of the study’s participants, bushwalking is clearly instrumental in the self-narrative. As per Giddens’ (1991) definitions, trajectory and reflexivity play a crucial role in this process.

Trajectory
Bushwalking works to inform a trajectory of the self “from the past to the anticipated future” (Giddens 1991: 75). Participants had usually been long-term bushwalkers, and experienced it as intimately tied to family - that common site of continuous belonging. Many participants traced an interest in bushwalking and environmental awareness to a young age:

I look at my narrative … things develop and change. [It] started with my dad, when I was a little girl and he loved native Australian plants … So I see that that connection with nature sort of started there. And then I think then, because of that I always loved to be around big trees. (Catherine)

Several participants similarly identified key formative experiences in their bushwalking ‘career’. Speaking about outdoor education camps, Jack says:

You don’t realise the effects those camps had on you until you grow up a bit … having that exposure to a wild, natural place at a young age I think is really positive. Even if [you] don’t realise at the time.

Svarstad (2010: 104) supports this association between identity and trajectory, suggesting that “hiking provides a sense of continuity not only in a long-ago, historic perspective but also [in an individual’s life]”. The connection to ‘bush’ also continues as family situations change, and literature on the effect of abandoning such activities suggests that continuation is not incidental.
or insignificant (Lovelock et al. 2016). Svarstad (2010: 105) suggests “hiking provides a means to reduce alienation by creating links of belonging … [it also] provides opportunities for people to create a sense of continuity and belonging in their own lives and with their close family”.

Family relationships often constituted an important part of the experience. Participants tended to progress from their own early walking experiences, to taking their children or grandchildren walking.

... we went a lot as children ... So we grew up soaking up the environment, I guess. [I] still go walking. But not big walks anymore. ... because our daughter's only nine still, we're starting to think about doing some bigger ones now. [It's something I'd like her to grow up with], if she wants to. (Marie)

Encompassing different familial roles, bushwalking provides a consistent performative element of family life. The emphasis here is not on how identity changes as the role changes, but on consistency from the past to the future.

Participants also reflected upon bushwalking as marking time in the self-narrative. Broadly, bushwalking connects people to external time cycles such as seasons; a particularly Tasmanian example is travelling to see the 'turning of the fagus', the autumn display of Australia's only native deciduous tree, *Nothofagus gunnii*. Bushwalking also marks personal time, ordering events that are particular to the individual such as work, injuries or retirement.

I guess in my teens, early teens, I went walking with my dad quite a lot ... I dropped out a bit in my 20s when I was doing uni and things ... I'm 52 now, I guess since my late 30s has been when I've been [bushwalking] possibly the most, and it's been the most important to me. (Ben)

Several participants also identified an 'anticipated future', when they would have more time to bushwalk. By expressing temporal shifts in bushwalking frequency, participants demonstrated that outside events were dealt with reflexively by the act of bushwalking, and a sense of self (narrative) formed through control of time. This temporal control was often an embodied experience, particularly in the latter stages of the trajectory - aging.

[I have] the sense of my own infirmity, because I'm 72 years old and I have to be careful where I go ... I can't climb as well as I did, I'm just not as mobile as I was. (Leon)

While such sentiments were often cloaked in humour, these participants demonstrate, through bushwalking, that the self-narrative has moved from the past (an active youth) to a reflexively embodied present and future.

**Reflexivity**

Concessions made for injury and aging demonstrate a reflexive embodiment, where decisions are made on the basis of where the self (and the body which 'houses' the self) is 'at' in life. Svarstad (2010) is explicit in her use of ‘reflexivity’ as a conceptual frame for understanding hikers' motivations, and the interviews conducted as part of this research encouraged participants to reflect upon their own decisions about risk, preparation and health.

In the creation of self-narrative, improvement and experience is seen as being gained through confrontation with acceptable risks (Giddens 1991). This requires reflexive engagement with possibilities of harm, and participants' bushwalking often involved the assessment of risk and benefit. Depending upon experience and conditions, bushwalking can be an objectively dangerous activity, and participants engaged in preparatory behaviours to mitigate threats. Past experiences of danger and risk were reflected upon (“[injuring my ankle has] made me a bit more cautious” (Claire)). Despite the risks of bushwalking, clearly the participants have deemed it a worthwhile activity. Many seem to base this choice on the conviction that bushwalking is 'good for them' (a
motivation also found by Svarstad 2010), and walk more often for this reason. This is “reflexivity of the self extend[ing] to the body” (Giddens 1991: 77), where (mental) health is evaluated and prioritised by the individual. Such a decision also appears to further demarcate time for the participants, who went bushwalking in order to ‘top up’ on the benefits in order to get through everyday life. After going for a long walk, Claire says:

… the following week at work I feel completely clear-headed … I find if I go on a bushwalk [my working memory is better]. And I just feel so much more chill, and just like, not on-edge but you know, a lot more relaxed about just working, even.

In order to gain this benefit, participants optimised their experience by engaging in safety precautions such as carrying navigational equipment, or registering their walk with authorities. Advice about weather conditions was heeded:

… my grandmother and grandfather always said you never go into the bush when it’s windy, so I don’t do that because it’s just too unsafe. (Diane)

The preparation of appropriate food was also often identified as an essential step in being ‘properly prepared’; as Harper (2015: 419) states, “food acts as [a] central element of bushwalking practice and of a distinctive bushwalker identity.” These bushwalking habits are reflexive practices which speak to Giddens’ “project of the self” (Giddens 1991: 5).

The relationship bushwalkers have with the natural world is shaped by wider conditions of their social lives. With increasing globalisation, social mobility and, arguably, disembeddedness from the natural environment, bushwalking offers an avenue for a stable, place-based sense of self. Bushwalking is an important means of establishing constancy, stability and belonging; it is an under-researched, but I suggest important, influence upon the development of environmental attitudes and self-identity.

References


Trans in the Top End: Sistergirls, brotherboys, and transgender people living in Australia’s Northern Territory

Stephen Kerry

Charles Darwin University

Abstract

Transgender people who live in remote areas of Australia, such as the Northern Territory, experience issues which may not be significantly distinct from those living elsewhere, however, these issues are aggravated by geographic and demographic factors. This paper presents the findings of a three-year research project and argues that the lived experiences of trans Territorians can draw attention to the dilemmas of all trans Australians living remotely. The first common issue participants spoke of was social isolation, which can take the form of lack of peer support and difficulties with dating. Access to health care can be difficult not only because of the distances involved but also because the hospitals in Darwin and Alice Springs are regarded as teaching hospitals, thus staff are either transitory and/or know little about trans issues. To date, no substantial research has been conducted into the lived experiences of transgender Indigenous Australians, also known as sistergirls and brotherboys. This paper also presents those issues facing sistergirls and brotherboys which, in addition to the same issues facing trans Territorians, also include racism within transgender communities and transphobia, in the form of violence, murder, and the ‘custom’ of payback, within Aboriginal communities.

Keywords: Transgender, Northern Territory, Sistergirls, Brotherboys, Aboriginal, Health

Introduction

In a review of the extant Australian trans literature, the author (Kerry, 2014) argued that trans Australians experience a range of issues, such as economic instability, social exclusion, mental illness, and abuse. This paper presents the findings of the author’s three-year research project into the lived experiences of trans people living in the Northern Territory (NT) and trans Indigenous Australians, also known as sistergirls/brotherboys (see also Kerry, 2017; 2018). While trans Territorians and sistergirls/brotherboys experience issues which are comparable to those reported in the literature, they are aggravated by geographic and demographic factors. For example, 245,000 people live in the NT (ABS, 2013) and over half are spread out across an area twice the size of France. Three failed attempts to colonise the NT has left a ‘frontier’ mentality and in Dino Hodge’s (1993: i) ethnography of gay and homosexual men in Darwin, he observed the city ‘boasts a tradition of being a frontier town’ and it is ‘rough and male dominated’. This is supported by the fact that more men than women live in the NT (ABS, 2013) and Flood and Hamilton
(2005) have also suggested that the NT is one of the two most homophobic states/territories in Australia. Moreover, traditional Indigenous cultures remain prominent; 28% of the population are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island (ATSI) people (ABS, 2013). The NT’s population is also highly transitory; many short-term workers in the mining industry are colloquially referred to as ‘fly-in-fly-out’ (FIFO) workers. As will become clear in this paper, these features come into play in the lives of trans Territorians and sistergirls/brotherboys.

**Methodology**

Between 2014-2017, the author conducted an online survey, in-depth interviews, and analysis of first-person narratives. Ethics approval for the online survey was obtained in mid-2014 (Approval Number H14020). The online survey was hosted by Survey Monkey and consisted of approximately 70 closed and open-ended questions sorted into five categories: demographics, relationships, health, transgender status, and life in the NT. Between April 2014 and July 2015, 13 people completed the survey and the results subsequently published (Kerry, 2017). The success of the online survey as well as the informal positive feedback the author received from the community lead to the decision to extend the project to in-depth interviews. Ethics approval was obtained in 2015 (Approval Number H15002) and the in-depth interview schedule relied less on predetermined questions and focused on an open conversation style based on the themes of family, relationships, health, and being transgender. Both the online survey and in-depths interviews employed the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10) test. A Facebook page was set up and a media release was sent out by the [university’s media centre]. Subsequently, the author was interviewed by local, national, and international print, radio, and television news media. Between May 2015 and February 2017, 13 people were interviewed; 7 in-person and 6 via phone/Skype. A full report of the findings were published this year (Kerry, 2018). A limitation of the project was that only 4 of the 26 participants identified as ATSI. Therefore, the author extended the project to include an analysis of sistergirls/brotherboys’ first-person narratives as told in print, television, and online. These first-person narratives honour the oral traditions of Australia’s First Peoples which have been largely overlooked by the literature. Additionally, it is argued that the views expressed by these 18 sistergirls/brotherboys provide further insight into the issues facing sistergirls/brotherboys and thus complement those expressed in the online survey and in-depth interviews.

**Discussion**

**Social isolation**

The two most prominent issues raised were social isolation and difficulties accessing health care. Social isolation came in the form of not having another trans person to talk to. Pflum et al. (2015: 282) noted that transgender people ‘seek support from similar peers to normalize and validate emotional experiences related to discrimination’. Belinda (transsexual woman, 37) struggled on her journey alone: ‘you end up having to work on yourself and end up finding specialists on your own. It doesn’t help when you are struggling mentally as well’. When asked specifically about her needs, Hamilton (FtM, 37) stated ‘to be around others like me - queer, weird. I feel like a fish out of water around “straights”’. Sianne (transgender woman, 43) was of the view that ‘you don’t see a lot of transgenders around’. This was because ‘there is nothing here. The ones that do stay are

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1 Online survey participants were anonymous and a gender appropriate named was assigned by the author based on participants’ responses.
2 Some in-depth interview participants chose to have their real name associated with the research while others chose to remain anonymous and a gender appropriate name was assigned by the author based on participants’ responses.
3 When a participant is mentioned for the first time, their transgender identity and age will appear in parentheses following their name.
4 Hamilton prefers to be referred to by feminine gender pronouns.
usually the ones who are born here and have that connection’. More significantly, especially when it comes to the idea of peer support, Sianne also thought that those who come to the Territory are ‘married or living a straight life’. Leah (transwoman, 52) and Patricia (transwoman, 65) have tried to find support groups with no success. Patricia elaborated on this by stating ‘we haven’t got any transgender support network up here’. However, Felix (transman, 29) and Ivan (transman, 47) spoke of informal support networks in Darwin. Felix described it as ‘small private groups of trans friends that catch up to offer support’ and Ivan said: ‘I have lots of FtM friends in the NT and we’re all doing well here’. In early 2017, Nicole (transwoman, 22) said that the day following her interview she was going to attend a newly established LGBTQI youth called Prism at Headspace (one of Darwin’s mental health services), however, she emailed the author afterwards to say there were no other sex/gender diverse people at the group.

The literature reveals that many trans Australians are single; the Mental Health Study (Hyde et al., 2014: 16) reports that almost half of participants were single. Therefore, it is not surprising that another key feature associated with social isolation is dating. At the time of the author’s interview with Starlady (transfabulous, 38), she was thinking of leaving the NT because ‘it’s fucking impossible to get a date in Alice Springs because of the stigma around dating trans people’. She went on to elaborate that there is a stigma attached to straight cismen who openly date transwomen: ‘people are shaming them for being attracted to transpeople. Not only are we being shamed but the people who are attracted to us are shamed’. Julia (transgender woman, 29) agreed: ‘a lot of guys are ok with you, if you’re discrete. Not many would openly date transwomen. They’d happily sleep with them’. Brianna (sistergirl, 32) was also of the view ‘it can be very hard for trans women to even date, to find somebody to love. Finding a partner who identifies as a cisgender straight male who doesn’t care’. She goes on to say that ‘a lot of men don’t want to be seen with transwomen in public or people knowing about it. They keep it hidden. I think they are afraid of being judged’.

### Accessing health care

The second most common issue trans Territorians discussed was difficulties accessing health care. Kelvin (transman, 28) said one of the reasons he hasn’t started medically-assisted transition is because of the ‘lack of resources in Darwin’. Similarly, Julia said: ‘I feel like there’s not enough resources here. And I’d be better off going to [southern capital city] for that’. This limited health care is a push factor for many people to leave the NT. Trans Territorians are forced to make the choice between living in a place they love and living in their affirmed gender. This dilemma is all the more dire for sistergirls/brotherboys, for whom family, community, and place are essential aspects of identity, spirituality, and health and wellbeing. Crystal (sistergirl, 45) says: ‘everybody has a title, everybody has a name, everybody has a country and a song and a place of birth. That’s what make Aboriginal people tick’. When trans Territorians do access health care, they may have one of two types of encounters. First, they may encounter medical professionals who have not heard of trans. Thus they must educate their doctors before they can access health care. Mary (transwoman, 20) was of the view that most doctors in the NT ‘had not even heard of the transgendered let alone knew how to treat them’. Patricia had experienced ‘a couple of incidences where I went to the hospital and people didn’t know what to do’. Belinda also had observed that ‘they know nothing what you’re talking about or the next stage to go to. It’s a serious issue’. This was also experienced by ATSI people, Catherine (sistergirl, 30) noted there are ‘hardly any doctors [who] deal with sistergirls’ issues’. Some indicated that once their doctor understood, they were helpful. Amelia (transwoman, 20) said: ‘once she got what I was saying, she was like, ok, I’m going to help you do this’. Nell, agreed, and while she said the ‘doctors are sympathetic of my circumstance and situation, it’s me still educating my doctors’. Similarly, Starlady said: ‘you have to go advocate for yourself every time and you have to educate, and as a client, that’s
The second type of encounter trans Territorians experience is transphobia. Kelvin was of the view that what is needed is ‘finding gender-friendly medical help’. In an incident in hospital, Patricia described how: ‘they sort of looked at me … they just didn’t know what to do […] They just didn’t know how to sort of approach me. They just didn’t know what to do’. Mary described psychological services as being unhelpful and ‘often deny that you are transgender or worse, attempt conversion therapy’. Hamilton similarly had experienced ‘some doctors [who] have also been transphobic’ or ask inappropriate questions. She went on to say: ‘I saw a doctor about a tooth ache and was asked whether I had had phalloplasty surgery. The relevance escaped me’. When Leah first approached a doctor about being transgender, she ‘spilled my guts out with him’. However, he responded by saying: ‘why would you want a big hairy guy on you?’.

Difficulties accessing health care are aggravated by the fact that Darwin’s and Alice Springs’s hospitals are training hospitals. During the incident mentioned above, Patricia went on to say that ‘they had to get the main doctor who they were training under and get him to come and see me and explain to him what was happening’. Sianne agreed, saying that Darwin is ‘a training city for doctors. It’s continuously rolling over and new ones coming in all the time’. Thus, especially when it comes to counsellors and psychiatrists she said: ‘you put all your emotions into a counsellor, and within 3-6 months they’re putting their resignation in and going onto the next level’. As a result, according to Sianne: ‘you’ve got to go through the whole life story again. And for someone who is going through that, it’s just horrific. Always going back, restarting’. Belinda viewed the hospital in Alice Springs in a similar way: ‘that is something else here in Alice Springs, they made this hospital here a training hospital, and it really shouldn’t be […] it shouldn’t be a continuous training facility’. Not unlike the mining industry, the medical profession in the NT relies on FIFO workers. Brianna stressed that it would be good if health professionals ‘are here long-term and get some training in diagnosing a transgender person’, if this was the case then sistergirls/brotherboys wouldn’t have to travel ‘thousands of kilometres down south to get it. A lot of them don’t want to leave their community’. Accessing health care is important because of the high rates of mental illness. The literature has consistently found that trans Australians experience higher than average levels of mental illness (Leonard et al., 2012; Hyde et al., 2014). Of the 20 participants who completed the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10) test, eight were either likely to have a ‘mild mental disorder’ (2), likely to have a ‘moderate mental disorder’ (5), or a ‘severe mental disorder’ (1). Yet there were some discrepancies. For example, while Erik (brotherboy, 38) self-described his mental health as ‘fair’, according to his K10 results he is likely to be experiencing a ‘moderate mental disorder’. Similarly, Gabriel (genderqueer, 31) is ‘likely to be well’ according to his K10 results, yet, he stated: ‘I have been diagnosed as depressed in the past and suffer from undiagnosed anxiety’. Thus, it is likely that some trans Territorians are experiencing unreported or unacknowledged mental illness.

Sistergirls and brotherboys

As indicated above, many of these issues also impact sistergirls/brotherboys. However, Australia’s transgender First Peoples experience other issues unique to being transgender and being Aboriginal. Racism has been a primary concern for sistergirls/brotherboys for some time (see Costello and Nannup, 1999). When prominent brotherboy advocate Kai Clancy (2015: 112) attempted to challenge an incidence of racism in the trans community, a transwoman questioned his Aboriginality. He was shocked by this: ‘and this is in the trans community!’ (2015: 112). In addition to questioning their Aboriginality, some questioned whether they are ‘really’ trans. In her interview with the author, Sianne stated that: ‘the whole sistergirl thing, it’s not even transgender, they’re just little gay boys who dress up in their community. Sorry for being so rude […] it’s really got nothing to do with transgender’. Contrary to this, Brianna (Curtis, 2015: 44) stated in Colouring the Rainbow that she doesn’t often experience ‘discrimination or abuse
from non-Indigenous people’, rather ‘the majority of it does come from Indigenous men. And that experience is pretty common with other sistergirls as well’. Thus, another unique issue faced by sistergirls/brotherboys is the transphobia within traditional Aboriginal communities. Many sistergirls/brotherboys are often rejected by family and community, consequently they face the dilemma of choosing between being trans and being Aboriginal. Kai asked himself: ‘would I lose my culture for this transition?’ (Clancy, 2015, p. 109).

Crystal’s story is also an example of transphobia within Aboriginal community. Although she was elected to the Tiwi Island Shire Council in 2012 (the first sistergirl and transwoman to be elected to Australian public office) for many decades Crystal and her family were subjected to the custom of payback; they were verbally harassed, physically assaulted, and raped because she is a sistergirl. Although Crystal’s father knew that she was a sistergirl she was forced to go through initiation. Her mother, while she was respected in her community, was bullied, spat and pissed on, and bashed and her brothers were also raped during men’s business. In her interview with the author, Crystal said: ‘when you go on men’s business, you’ve got no clothes. They cut me in the head, my brother got stab marks all over his body’. Crystal and other sistergirls/brotherboys challenge this custom and demand their human rights. In her interview, Crystal said: ‘I see people suffer everywhere, right around the world, and I am suffering in Australia, land of opportunity. Where was human rights for me? Where was the gay movement for me’ . She went on to say that ‘silence is not the way to go because people die from silence. Silence is a killer’. As a result, she welcomes the opportunity to talk to people about her experiences: ‘these things have to be told and document. I document my life’.

Conclusion
This paper is not an exhaustive account of the lived experiences of trans Territorians and sistergirls/brotherboys as revealed in this research project, rather its goal has been to briefly highlight a few features of the two key themes: social isolation and difficulties accessing health care. The author does not argue that these issues are unique to trans Territorians and sistergirls/brotherboys, however, it is possible that what makes them region specific are the NT’s geographic and demographic features, subsequently they may assist in understanding the lived experience of trans people living in other remote areas of Australia. Moreover, Indigenous Australians also experience their own unique difficulties such as racism in trans communities and transphobia, in the form of payback, within traditional Aboriginal communities.

References


The School of Humanities and Social Sciences, The Faculty of Arts and Education, The Alfred Deakin Institute of Citizenship and Globalisation at Deakin University are all happy to invite you to the 2018 TASA Conference at our Burwood Campus in Melbourne.

The theme of next year’s conference is Precarity, Rights and Resistance.

The pressures that neoliberal capitalism is placing on people and the planet has led to a heightened state of precarity, particularly since the Global Financial Crisis and new climate of austerity. At the same time, while the mid-late 20th Century can be categorised as a cosmopolitan era, in which great advances were made in affirming the rights of women, children, LGBTIQ people, cultural and religious minorities, and animals, an aggressive anti-cosmopolitan turn has occurred in the early 21st Century. This is evident in a rise of narrow nationalism, far-right parties, Islamophobia, and climate change denial, with previously dominant groups fighting to maintain their supremacy over ‘others’ and the lifeworld. Resistance to this precarity and anti-cosmopolitanism has emerged in numerous social movements’ and scholar-activists’ calls for new ways to live well together, recognising our interdependence on one another and the natural world. Our conference will focus on these themes, and we call for critical analysis of these pressing issues currently confronting all of us.

Staff across the sociology discipline at Deakin University represent broad interests in the areas of globalization, gender, migration, risk, religion and caring. The Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation (ADI) is an internationally recognised and highly regarded social sciences and humanities research institute. ADI researchers create cutting-edge knowledge about citizenship, diversity, inclusion and globalization, which informs scholarship, debate and policy.

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