

Running head: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

CHAPTER 7: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND CHANGE

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Running head: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

OUTLINE

- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 Critique of acculturation research
- 7.3 Indigenous contexts and acculturation
- 7.4 Acculturation, recognition/Treaty and reconciliation
- 7.5 Conclusion
- 7.6 References

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7.1 Introduction

In constructing this chapter the authors make a claim for an Indigenous perspective that is grounded in decolonisation, the struggle for social justice, cultural reclamation and the development of Indigenous knowledges. This offers the opportunity to view acculturation and the associated research through a different lens. In taking this stance, a critical psychology, Indigenous standpoint approach is adopted, while also acknowledging earlier scholars who have attempted to accommodate Indigenous experiences within acculturation theory and the associated research (see for example, Kvernmo, 2006). This chapter begins with a critique of the acculturation framework and practice in researching the acculturation experience of Indigenous peoples. The chapter then presents findings and application to two contexts: Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand. (Chapter 11 covers acculturation research in Australia and New Zealand and would thus be relevant to this chapter.) How acculturation research can be linked to cultural reclamation and reconciliation work is then examined.

7.2 Critique of acculturation research

Acculturation research, theory development, and application have a long and complex history evolving within and between many different social science traditions. Over time, various terms have been used synonymously by disparate disciplines with divergent theoretical and methodological foundations leading to blurred and often conflicting findings (Ozer, 2013). There has also been a lack of critical reflexivity on the part of the researcher to examine their ontological positions and clearly articulate the epistemological foundations of their own journey and consequently their role within the research endeavour (Ngo, 2008). Consequently, acculturation research occupies a complex and contested space which is further exacerbated

when applied uncritically to Indigenous peoples in settler contexts.

The original and most cited definition of acculturation emerged from anthropology and contends that “acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups” (Redfield, Linton & Herskovits, 1936, p. 149). While Berry’s acculturation framework evolved to incorporate the possibility of change in both groups, and emphasised the importance of including the change that occurs for both groups in contact (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 2006), it has largely been applied to focus on the minority or non-dominant groups to the exclusion of the dominant culture (Berry, 1997; Nikora, Levy, Masters, & Waitoki, 2004; Sakamoto, 2007). Such an approach is problematic in examining all intergroup contact outcomes but is particularly so with Indigenous peoples given their unique situation and position. Indeed Berry emphasises this point when he states that contemporary acculturation research evolved from a growing concern over the impacts that dominant (principally European) groups have enacted on Indigenous peoples (Berry, 2005).

The emphasis of existing research to date has been *on* Indigenous persons *by* non-Indigenous members of the dominant (and often colonising) group. In doing so, much of this research employs dominant positivist methodologies (Breen & Darlaston-Jones, 2010) which are often situated in the cross-cultural comparative traditions. Such approaches have been criticised for their ethnocentric overtones (Mazrui, 1968; Dudgeon, 2008) and failure to integrate Indigenous worldviews and perspectives (Tobin, Wu, & Davidson, 1989; Dudgeon, 2008) which are regarded by Indigenous psychologists as essential (Dudgeon, Darlaston-Jones,

& Clark, 2011). Furthermore, the existing literature tends to ignore the several external impositions that may distort investigation and thus understanding of Indigenous acculturation experience (Kim & Park, 2006).

Therefore, it can be contended that, in spite of Berry's more inclusive articulation of the theory (Berry 1974; 1980), in general acculturation research has: (1) not adequately questioned and critiqued the role played by the dominant group in permitting or shaping the potential outcomes for the minority; (2) omitted the possibility of positive change in the dominant group as a result of interaction; and (3) largely ignored the impact of the imposition of cultural expectations and normative practices on existing populations, specifically the impact of colonisation and settlement on Indigenous peoples. As a result of the limitations of acculturation research vis-a-vis Indigenous peoples, a new framework for understanding intercultural relations needs to be explored that is based on the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (United Nations, 2008) and which explicitly entails decolonisation processes on the part of the dominant group. Such an approach would offer the potential to achieving genuine multiculturalism based on mutual respect where the values, beliefs and subsequent attitudes and behaviours in each group are acknowledged as credible and beneficial.

There are a number of conceptual issues related to acculturation that require deconstruction. Broadly, acculturation theories can be categorised as either one-dimensional (e.g., Gordon, 1964), where the minority group is subsumed within the dominant group (assimilation) or bi-dimensional/interactional (more than one outcome where both cultural groups influence each other) which is most prominently represented by Berry's acculturation

model (Berry, 1974, 1980; Ngo, 2008) the most recent version of his model is presented in Chapter 2 of this volume. Consequently there are two distinct but interrelated aspects to acculturation: the degree to which the individual adjusts his/her values, beliefs and subsequent attitudes and behaviours to incorporate those of the dominant group; and the degree to which this influences the culture of the setting – and these processes occur for both groups in contact. However, the socio-political and economic contexts in which this interaction occurs are often implied (and/or ignored) rather than explicit, and yet it is this milieu that often dictates the potential course of any acculturative processes which eventuate.

Although research interest in Indigenous acculturation was ignited as early as 1955 as evidenced by the work of Hallowell (1955), much of the work in cross-cultural and acculturation psychology has involved examining the processes and effects of acculturation with migrant groups and latterly refugees (see for example, Park, 1928; Berry, 1997). Consequently, a disproportionate amount of acculturation research frameworks and instruments were devised, tested and applied mainly on these two groups. Yet there are intrinsic differences between these acculturating groups, and they differ across a number of dimensions (for a detailed discussion see Chapter 2 in this volume). For migrants, the decision to relocate is premised on the notion of empowerment and self-efficacy; without either of these concepts the person(s) would not contemplate voluntarily leaving their own context for a new/unknown setting. This is not the case with refugees, whose relocation is involuntary and occurs as a result of push, rather than pull factors often accompanied by the trauma of war, oppression or natural disaster. However, in common with voluntary migrants, refugees find themselves joining an existing context. For Indigenous peoples who live in settler countries where colonisation is

entrenched, there was no choice – the contact was involuntary and forced by a more powerful group (Dudgeon, Milroy & Walker, 2014; Darlaston-Jones, Herbert, Ryan, Darlaston-Jones, Harris, & Dudgeon, in press). This history of often violent and forced settlement impacting on the lands and cultures of the oppressed in many different ways at many different levels (Mikaere, 2005; Rixecker & Tipene-Matua, 2003; Sissons, 2005) plays a significant role in the subsequent relationships between these groups in contact. It is this relationship that has so far been largely ignored by acculturation research.

7.3 Indigenous contexts and acculturation

In discussing the Indigenous experiences of Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand together the commonalities between the two nations should be emphasised without negating the very important cultural and historical differences. Both countries have a shared history of colonisation leading to a settler experience and both have the experience of marginalisation of Indigenous persons and communities, however a key difference lies in the more favourable recognition of Indigenous people (Māori) in Aotearoa/New Zealand due to the existence of the Treaty of Waitangi. A more detailed discussion of the history of acculturation research in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand appears in Chapter 11.

In the Australian and Aotearoa/New Zealand contexts, the values that pervade the creation of the dominant-subordinate relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians as well as Māori and non-Māori New Zealanders can be traced back to settlement and the imported ideology of social Darwinism that viewed people of colour as inferior (Darlaston-Jones et al., in press). A subsequent series of Government (State and Federal) Acts reinforced this notion to such an extent that it has led to significant disadvantage for

Indigenous peoples (Armitage, 1995; Dudgeon, et al, 2011; Parker & Milroy, 2014; Zubrick, Holland, Kelly, Calma & Walker, 2014). Widespread resistance emerged as Indigenous leaders fought to protect their lands, culture and communities. Children were separated from their families, communities, and cultural roots to be educated in the beliefs and norms of the coloniser (Dudgeon, Wright, Paradies, Garvey & Walker, 2014; Durie, 1999; 2003; Hook, 2014) which in turn led to a Western hegemony based on assimilation and genocide (United Nations, 2007). Such early interactions set the scene for generations of race relations influenced by subjugation, abuse, and marginalisation, toward Indigenous peoples of Australia and New Zealand; and for superiority, power and control on the part of non-Indigenous Australians and New Zealanders. The founding beliefs of each value set were transmitted from one generation to the next through word and action and it is this dialogical aspect of acculturation that is often missed in cross-cultural or acculturation research (Rosa & Tavares, 2013).

In Australia, Indigenous Australians were not recognised as citizens in their own land until the 1967 referendum; this was the first official document and political movement that provided the *bona fide* right to vote (Dudgeon, Wright et al., 2014; Mercer, 2003; Shannon, 2002). However, Indigenous peoples are still not recognised as such in the country's Constitution despite attempts to have the situation addressed. More than 30 years since the referendum though, Indigenous Australians are still to achieve equal status in their own country, and often struggle to maintain their own complex cultures and spirituality in the face of the cultural dominance of the settler (Paradies, Harris, & Anderson, 2008). Such an outcome has been termed *cultural racism* which is defined as “[t]he cumulative affects of a racialised worldview that privileges the dominant racial group over others” (Dudgeon & Walker, in press).

This worldview is embedded in every aspect of society and transmitted via “institutionalised structures, ideological beliefs, and personal everyday actions of people and passed on from generation to generation” (Jones, 1997, p. 472). In Aotearoa/New Zealand, while Māori are recognised as indigenous people, their position in society is inequitable with the dominant cultural group. The systemic racism and structural violence represented throughout health, economic, education and political systems are manifested in ways that parallel the inequitable position of Indigenous Australians.

It is this invisible yet powerful context within which interaction occurs that is missing in acculturation research particularly in relation to Indigenous peoples because this is the unspoken fabric of society that influences, and potentially dictates, the type and form of interaction that occurs between groups (Rosa & Tavares, 2013). It is the unquestioned ethnocentric and hegemonic view that Western normative practices are the ‘right’ or ‘correct’ ways of being and that Western knowledge, including norms of scientific enquiry are superior (Huygens & Black, 2007; Bulhan, 1985; Naidoo, 1996). This last point is significant in understanding the role of acculturation theory in colonised contexts because it is psychology as a discipline that is creating the “very forms of thinking that it attempts to identify” (Augoustinos & Walker, 1995, p. 283). Many Indigenous (Dudgeon, Abdullah, Humphries, & Walker, 1998; Dudgeon, 2008; Smith, 1999) and non-Indigenous authors (Bowskill, Lyons, & Coyle, 2007; Ngo, 2008; Ozer, 2013; Sakamoto, 2007) have identified the ethnocentrism inherent in psychology research; and specific critiques of methodological and epistemological approaches in acculturation specifically have been made (Cooper, Rickard, & Waitoki, 2011; Lawson-Te Aho & Liu, 2010). Indeed, Berry (2013) recognises that psychology is culturally bound and culturally

blind and that a way forward to achieving a global psychology needs to include a critical approach to dominant mainstream psychology and developing local (indigenous) knowledge.

While contemporary relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians has its origins in the first days of European contact in 1788 (Dudgeon Wright et al., 2014) it is only in recent times that researchers have turned their attention to the acculturation processes associated with this contact (Sang & Ward, 2006). Consequently, there is scant literature investigating Indigenous acculturation especially when compared to that of immigrants and refugees. For the most part, acculturation was researched in different combinations, and at various degrees of importance/priorities with other significant facets of Indigenous life, for example, health including social/emotional/physical wellbeing, and mental health (Dudgeon, Rickwood, Garvey, & Gridley, 2014; Hunter, 1995; Kruske, Belton, Wardaguga, & Narjic, 2012; Ou, Chen, & Hillman, 2012; Paradies & Cunningham, 2012; Priest, Paradies, Stewart, & Luke, 2011), education (Darlaston-Jones et al., in press; Dudgeon et al., 2011; Ford, 2012; Keddie, 2011; MacGill, 2012; Maxwell, 2013; Nakata, 2010), housing and welfare (Habibis, 2013; Morgan, 2000), and the justice system (Bartels, 2010; Blagg, Morgan, Cunneen, & Ferrante, 2005; Day, Howells, & Casey, 2003; Snowball & Weatherburn, 2006).

Acculturation needs to be viewed as not happening in a vacuum, but rather as a result of changing, multifaceted, multidimensional socio-cultural-political environments where complex intra- and inter-group relations operate and where the processes of acculturation touch every facet of life and each person within the context (Berry, 1992; Darlaston-Jones et al., in press; Dudgeon & Walker, in press; Rosa & Tavares, 2013). Acculturation, as Berry contends, occurs both at the societal and individual levels, and involves various factors and processes

(Berry, 1980; 1997; 2009; 2013). While the research evidence is scarce, what literature exists focuses on the involuntary nature of the interaction between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples (Berry, 1970; Dawson, 1969; McCoy, 2009; Short, 2003; Sommerlad & Berry 1970). This is particularly so with Indigenous scholars concerned with self-determination, social justice and cultural reclamation for their peoples (Gee, Dudgeon, Schultz, Hart, & Kelly, 2014; Paradies et al., 2008; Langton et al., 2006). These authors recognise the historical and political determinants that are necessary to any discussion of Indigenous wellbeing and as such are developing their own paradigms which incorporate these aspects. This approach contrasts with early research which was often conducted within an unrecognised ethnocentric perspective that leads to potentially racist outcomes. For example, in an early study, Dawson (1969) looked at the effects of urbanisation on Aboriginal attitude change and unresolved attitudinal conflict using three Aboriginal samples selected for varying degrees of exposure to contemporary influences, with one regional/remote Arunta sample, one semi-urban Wallaga Lake sample, and one urban Sydney sample. The outcomes reflected and perpetuated the prevailing ethnocentric and assimilationist attitudes of the time, and concluded that the “extremely permissive Aboriginal socialization process” (Dawson, 1969, p. 101) and lack of political stratification had hindered the degree of acceptance of Western attitudes and values. This apparently also influenced levels of achievement motivation among all three samples. Inherent within these findings is the unspoken assumption that Western traditions and systems are superior to those of the Indigenous communities examined. Also, that there was a clear progression from uncivilised to civilised states of being, depending on Western immersion. There was no scope for Dawson to conclude that the nature of Aboriginal governance for instance might offer

something of value. Rather it was concluded that this must by necessity be detrimental because it compared unfavourably to the assimilationist Western norm which the author unconsciously applied. This example demonstrates the comparative nature of cross-cultural psychology that contributes to this racist perspective of deficit because the researcher fails to understand his/her own position relative to the person(s) under scrutiny. Consequently, the power imbalance that exists in the context of the enquiry is reflected within and reproduced by the research that emerges from that context (Sakamoto, 2007).

The situation is similar in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The mono-cultural, hegemonic lens applied to lives and cultural practices of indigenous peoples was critical, damning and accepted by unsuspecting and uncritical audiences. In 1961, Ausubel wrote,

Catastrophically defeated a century ago by British colonists, the New Zealand Māori withdrew into isolated villages and thereby resisted acculturation. Although culture contact has increased markedly since World War II, Māori adolescents are currently handicapped in implementing their academic and vocational aspirations because their elders still cling to traditional non-achievement values (Ausubel, 1961, p. 218).

Notwithstanding the one-sided account of the Aotearoa/New Zealand's Land Wars, Ausubel concluded that Māori adolescents were not fulfilling their vocational aspirations because their elders clung to traditional non-achievement values. The mono-cultural worldviews inherent throughout this statement ignores racism and segregation and makes invisible the role of elders who, with the benefit of wisdom, must have recognised that Māori were not on equal footing with the majority of New Zealand society and so needed to retain their identity and cultural systems.

More recent work, however, is attempting to redress this imbalance and to recognise and value the belief systems that underpin Indigenous Australian and Māori communities. For example, Tonkinson and Tonkinson (2010) investigated the cultural dynamics of adaptation of Mardu Desert people of Australia. Various challenges and difficulties confronted the Mardu people in adapting to Australian dominant culture. Their traditional values such as kinship and ritual obligation override any desire to adapt to Western values in relation to work, education, law and housing. These values have enabled the Mardu to survive for thousands of years, and it is likely that work, education, and housing could be changed and adapted to include Mardu cultural terms of reference. A similar call has been made in Aotearoa/New Zealand with researchers calling for integration of Māori culture and identity (Rata, Liu & Hutchings, 2014). The existing literature suggests that overall the acculturation experience of Indigenous peoples has been a negative one, accompanied by multiple losses both to communities and the individuals within those communities (Armitage, 1995; Durie, 1999, 2003). At the collective level, it is the loss of cultural identity, language, the sacred ruwi (land), traditions, values, familial ties as well as communal cohesion. At the individual level, experiences of acculturative stress, identity confusion, racist incidents, poor health, decreased wellbeing, and over representation in the criminal justice system are all reported (see for example, Baxter, Kingi, Tapsell, Durie, & McGee, 2006; Berry, 1970; Bodkin-Andrews, Ha, Craven, & Yeung, 2010; Cawte, Biancki, & Kiloh, 1968; Dudgeon, Wright et al., 2014; Gracey, 2000; Kvernmo, 2006; O'dea, Patel, Kubisch, Hopper, & Traiandes, 1993; Parker & Milroy, 2014; Shannon, 2002; Snowball & Weatherburn, 2006). As Berry (1992; 2013) proposes, acculturation, when occurring involuntarily and in an unsupportive environment, is unlikely to result in positive outcomes. The

relative power imbalance between Indigenous peoples and their non-Indigenous counterparts is also illustrated in the way that the existing literature thus far has predominantly mirrored the dominant group's interpretation of the acculturation experience of Indigenous peoples.

Therefore, it is not surprising when Indigenous Australians and Māori indicated a feeling of being over-researched by various non-Indigenous professional groups, including sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists, medical researchers, and other mental health practitioners with minimal benefits derived by these communities (Dudgeon Paradies et al., 2014; Dudgeon, Wright et al., 2014).

Limitations of the current literature extend to how it has generally subsumed all Indigenous peoples in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand into one homogenous group, readily ignoring any variations that may be present within them, and that may make their acculturation experience different. Rather than being viewed as a single group, which is the tendency of non-Indigenous peoples, it must be recognised that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders represent over 500 different language groups, each with distinct systems of governance, law, culture language and beliefs (Dudgeon & Walker, in press; Rose, 1996). There is a lack of research that exhaustively investigates the acculturation experience of Indigenous peoples, bringing all factors under scrutiny, not just the psychological acculturation processes (e.g., changes/adaptation levels), but also the moderating factors (prior to and during acculturation) and how acculturation has taken place, both at the societal and individual level. Perhaps more importantly though is the lack of investigation into the acculturation processes of the dominant group and the degree to which the attitudes and beliefs held by non-Indigenous Australians and non-Indigenous New Zealanders across the social spectrum contributes to the

levels of marginalisation experienced by many Indigenous peoples.

Such disparate outcomes for Indigenous peoples across the spectrum of social, economic and health measures has been documented extensively with repeated calls for action and redress. In 2008, one such report called for a united approach arguing that:

The opportunity for every government in this country to seriously tackle the entrenched disparity and unacceptable outcomes in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, through strong national leadership, should not be missed. It is time for a long-term approach that secures all of our futures — Indigenous and non-Indigenous — together, as a healed and healthy nation. The time for genuine partnerships is now; that is, partnerships that strengthen us all in mutually respectful and sustaining ways. The commitment to act now — to guarantee a future where Indigenous health inequality is a thing of the past — requires concerted, tangible and immediate action (Mackean, Adams, Gould, Bourke, & Calma, 2008, p. 555).

More recent evidence (National Mental Health Commission [NMHC], 2015; Waitoki, Nikora, Harris, & Levy, 2014) demonstrates that little has changed, with high rates of mental health problems underpinning other health and social disadvantage for Indigenous peoples. This is exacerbated by a lack of appropriate services, particularly in regional and remote areas; a lack of coordination between services and across levels of government; as well as a poor understanding of the policy frameworks that would assist individuals and communities to attain self-determination as a foundation for redress. Specifically, the Australian NMHC report called for the *National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing 2014-2019* to be utilised as the foundation for planning, developing and implementing dedicated Indigenous services. Arguably, it is the lack of awareness, and therefore scrutiny, of the position of the dominant group in understanding the

dual legacies of colonisation that contributes to the poorer outcomes for Indigenous peoples (Darlaston-Jones et al., in press). Current acculturation and cross-cultural research contributes to the maintenance of this blindness by not examining the acculturation processes of the dominant group in contact.

7.4 Acculturation, recognition/Treaty & reconciliation

Incorporating an explicit statement acknowledging the Traditional Owners of country in Australia, and acknowledgment of the Treaty of Waitangi or Te Tiriti o Waitangi in New Zealand (Dyall, 2000; Kawharu, 1989; Orange, 1996) has become an accepted cultural norm in social, political, and academic contexts as a means of demonstrating respect for Indigenous peoples. While such acknowledgement is a relatively recent development in the Australian context, it is a welcome inclusion that positions Indigenous peoples as the original inhabitants and custodians of the land, and therefore recognises the unique cultural and spiritual relationship that exists. It is somewhat paradoxical then that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are not afforded the same measure of respect by being recognised in the Australian Constitution. Recent community consultations in relation to constitutional change have highlighted the challenges associated with redressing the two hundred and more years of dispossession and marginalisation that was a part of colonisation (*Report of the Expert Panel on Recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in the Constitution*, FaHCSIA, 2012).

The purpose of Constitutional Recognition for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is two-fold. First, it offers an important symbol of acknowledgement that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the First Nations peoples of the land. Constitutional recognition therefore enshrines the inherent sovereignty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander peoples and offers the opportunity for self-determination and governance. This in turn provides the foundation for negotiated treaties between individual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clan/language groups with each of the States, Territories, and the Commonwealth (Barwick & Coombs, 1988; Brennan, Gunn, & Williams, 2004). Such recognition is an essential component of a decolonisation project that allows Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, Māori and non-Māori to acknowledge past injustice and move into a new space based on mutual respect. It also provides a framework within which genuine restitution might be offered because it removes the power for government to discriminate against Aboriginal peoples (Wood, 2012), and it is this consideration that is at the heart of the social justice element of the debate. From the perspective of acculturation, it provides a framework within which a renegotiation of attitudes and beliefs that underpin the actions and behaviours within and toward each group can occur. This is an essential component of the acculturation process because it calls into question the existing belief systems and offers the opportunity for change at both the individual and collective levels (Rosa & Tavares, 2013).

An example from the criminal justice system illustrates the important contribution that legal recognition can play in the acculturation debate. In contrast to normative frameworks that reproduce hegemonic colonial dominance that continually require Indigenous peoples to legitimise their indigeneity (Smith, 1999, 2000), the provision of parallel Indigenous legal options in itself authenticates Indigenous laws and customs and so offers the opportunity for self-determination (Engle, 2010). Such structural reform is a necessary co-requisite to the symbolic nature of Constitutional recognition, and invokes the link between the 'practical' and the 'symbolic' as leading to sustained change for indigenous peoples (Durie, 2003). The

legitimacy afforded to Indigenous forms of justice has provided the necessary space for such systems to adjust and evolve to reflect the contemporary realities that various Indigenous communities experience (Mikaere, 2005). This means that so called 'traditional' retributive forms of justice have been able to evolve into restorative models that reflect international human rights (Sieder, 2012; Jackson, 2007). Hence emphasising the interaction that Berry's acculturation framework allows for, groups in contact can influence each other at a collective and an individual level as long as the broader socio-political context permits such mutual transmission. Similarly, the USA and Canada are able to support the benefits associated with self-governance, at least to some extent, without undermining their existence as independent nations. Williams (2012) cites the conservative former President George W. Bush in relation to his government's interactions with Native American tribes, as saying "my government will continue to work with tribal governments on a sovereign to sovereign basis..." (p. 10). More recently, US President Obama reinforced the "government to government relationship" between Native American tribes and the Federal government, acknowledging Indigenous tribes as "sovereign self-governing political entities" (Williams, 2012, p. 10). Australian Constitutional lawyers also argue that Constitutional recognition establishes the fact of Indigenous sovereignty while also supporting the nation state (Castan, 2013; Davis, 2012; Williams, 2012).

Unlike Australia though, the other major settler nations (e.g., Canada, USA and Aotearoa/New Zealand) have all entered into some form of Treaty arrangement with Indigenous peoples. Despite the existence of such treaties, Indigenous peoples in those countries do not have comparable status to the dominant cultural groups. For many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Treaty remains unfinished business (Davis, 2008) and

represents an important part of the reconciliation process. Unfortunately, as with the issue of sovereignty, misunderstanding around the definition of the term 'treaty' creates confusion and sometimes resentment. In the case of New Zealand, the Treaty of Waitangi resides in a contested space where Māori are often forced to remind the dominant other of their responsibility to act in good faith and to uphold the spirit and intention of the Treaty. The dichotomy of power is inherent as Māori are the voice that in terms of social justice, 'must' be heard, but at the same time that voice must be silenced. The voice of Māori as the unacculturated, assimilated other, who *has* to challenge the imbalance in power does so out of fear, concern, and frustration, as their way of life is continually up for dismissal by those who are the dominant, acculturated-into-a-society-of-their-making other.

A final critical element must also be addressed in the acculturation equation and that is the widespread lack of historical and civics knowledge on the part of non-Indigenous Australians (Davis, 2008) and New Zealanders. In order to end the entrenched racial discrimination that is characteristic of both countries but particularly entrenched in Australia and to protect Indigenous peoples from further harm, it is essential that the black history of these countries' past be faced and acknowledged. Such processes marked the end of the apartheid system in South Africa, with the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* being credited with the successful transition to Indigenous governance. To reap the full benefits of such restorative justice approaches though calls for an acknowledgement of the historical and contemporary wrongs and a commitment to move beyond this that allows each party to occupy a different space (Braithwaite, 2004; Gade, 2013). Again, this echoes the *psychological* change aspects in acculturation theory and its link to the *cultural* change component (Nairn, 2007).

It is essential for the successful outcome of any referendum on Constitutional recognition that the electorate have a solid understanding of the issues associated with the question because as history demonstrates, the tendency to “vote no if you don’t know” has defeated all but 8 of the 44 referenda held in Australia (Davis, 2008, p. 7). Consequently, a range of education and community participation models is required to genuinely engage the broader population in conversations that not only inform the electorate in relation to the process and purpose of the referendum but would also offer the opportunity for (re)education about the legacies of dispossession and institutional racism. The importance of this being nested within a broader decolonisation project that has the capacity to result in a new era of Nationhood based on mutual respect cannot be overstated (Castan, 2011; Morris, 2011; Williams, 2012).

Australian society is recognising that a different approach is required to bring about change for Indigenous peoples and the Constitutional Recognition movement represents this shift at a national level. Similarly, but operating at an institutional level, *Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs)* offer a mechanism for organisations to shift behaviours and attitudes to recognise the important contribution that Indigenous peoples play in contemporary Australia. Under the auspices of *Reconciliation Australia* organisations can develop individual RAPs that are specific to the context and purpose of their organisation. A relevant example of this in action is in psychology where the Australian Psychological Society (APS; 2011) developed a RAP to facilitate greater acknowledgement and commitment to the role that psychology plays in promoting positive outcomes. In doing so the APS acknowledges the harm that poor acculturation outcomes have for individuals and groups. For Indigenous Australian peoples and the dominant

Australian society, cultural survival and reclamation is an essential condition for healthy Indigenous acculturation or better, reconciliation. When Indigenous peoples have their rights and cultures restored, genuine reconciliation or healthy acculturation can take place. Without cultural survival, Indigenous acculturation sees only two options, one of assimilative nature that repeats oppressive policy from the past two centuries, and one of living in the fringe of two worlds, resembling and reflecting the case of marginalisation (Dudgeon, Milroy & Walker, 2014). Despite positive intentions by the Australian Government, Indigenous Australians today are still in the midst of their struggle for self-determination rights, or the right to be able to govern their own affairs on cultural, political, economic or legal grounds (Calma, 2008). Although New Zealand is regarded as a multicultural and harmonious society, the back story of crippling neo-liberal policies and cultural hegemony dominate the everyday lives of Māori and continue to wreak havoc on their potential to live well (Hodgetts, Masters, & Robertson, 2004). Cultures are not static and a cultural reclamation will not only involve revitalisation but will continue to include western elements by choice.

As discussed earlier, Australia has a long and shameful history of brutality and bloodshed, of dispossession and dispersal of Indigenous peoples from their land, and under the guise of protection, further oppression and assimilation practices on Indigenous peoples. While the landmark National Apology was made in 2008, and some changes have been put in place, more than two centuries of oppression has placed most Indigenous Australians today in disempowered positions reaping trans-generational results. Racism persists as the foundation to multiple forms of disadvantage. Contemporary racism operates not only at individual, but also institutional and cultural levels; and contributes to the reproduction of continuing

impoverishment. Such disadvantages are exhibited in almost every aspect of Indigenous life, yet most clearly in the domain of mental health and wellbeing, social and/or economic outcomes, educational achievements and over representation in the justice system (Dudgeon, Rickwood et al., 2014). These are the everyday challenges for Indigenous peoples in their struggle for political equity and self-determination, their struggle to reject negative White stereotypes, and most importantly, their struggle to strengthen and reclaim culture.

7.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, a critique of the current literature on the acculturation experience of Indigenous Australians and Māori was provided, arguing that it has failed to adequately reflect their experience given a number of inherent limitations. Application of migrant and refugee evidence to Indigenous populations is fraught with danger due to the divergent foundations to the contact between groups. Perhaps the most important aspect though is the lack of attention to the acculturation experience of the dominant groups in a settler context. By ignoring the legacy of power and privilege that accompanies the coloniser and their descendants in settler societies, research can never fully understand the acculturation experiences of Indigenous populations. It is the interaction between the power and privilege of the settler versus the marginalisation and dispossession of the Indigenous person/community that provides the context in which the groups interact. Failure to examine and critique the epistemology and ontology that underlies the attitudes and culture of each group means that the fabric of the interaction is missing and only partial understanding can emerge which by definition will reflect the assumptions of the person(s) undertaking the research. Consequently, far greater research effort is needed to enhance understanding of the actual acculturation experience in settler

contexts which places equal scrutiny of the settler. Acculturation, as Berry (1997) contended, is not a single dimension resulting in assimilation or absorption into the dominant society, but rather a sophisticated and multi-linear phenomenon and as such research needs to reflect and incorporate this complexity. A further argument is that Indigenous voices need to lead such an agenda within the intellectual framework of Indigenous psychologies. Mechanisms such as the *Task Force for Indigenous Psychology* which was formed by the American Psychology Association, the Australian Indigenous Psychologist Association (AIPA) and the National Standing Committee on Bicultural Issues (NSCBI) in Aotearoa/New Zealand offer the potential for a global movement by which Indigenous psychologists can reclaim the cultural knowledges and contribute to a new global culturally inclusive psychology. Collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous psychology researchers is an essential element of a decolonisation agenda that constructively/critically challenges the hegemony of Western psychology, that develops psychological knowledge with Indigenous peoples themselves and has the potential to play a significant role in assisting the discipline and profession of psychology to achieve its potential.

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