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Section B: Research

Indigenous Research, Differing Value Systems

Dennis Foley

Oxenford, Queensland

Introduction

The collective aim of many of this Journal's readers is to provide Indigenous Australians with a sound education to allow us (Indigenous Australia) to take a more active role in Australian society. My personal research interest is in business studies, training Indigenous Australians in management and business principles. I continually face the question of am I training my kin in a Western science that is often at the opposite end of the spectrum to Indigenous thought and practice?

In business studies when we begin to analyse the phenomenon that is the Indigenous Australian entrepreneur who is present in contemporary Australian society, we are dealing with people operating within a system of values of at least two distinct cultures. The main two cultures are the dominant Western capitalist culture/democratic society that is Australia, and we have the minority culture of Indigenous Australia – a culture that is extremely complex and intricate to the non-Indigenous observer. The extent of the complexity of this culture and its subtle attributes often result in the Western researcher (or educator) misinterpreting (or ignoring) the cultural values. Western researchers, by their epistemological application, view Indigenous values from within a structured ethnocentric model.

The dominance of the ethnocentric approach to Indigenous research is currently being examined by the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations (CAPA) and the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU). The debate concerns the exclusion of Indigenous Australian pedagogical approaches to research and the inability of academia to acknowledge the differences between the two cultures (NTEU, 2000).

My previous research has indicated that entrepreneurial activity can have a traumatic effect on the Indigenous Australian who engages in self-employment within the two cultures that include the dominant ethnocentric Australian culture, and their own minority Indigenous Australian culture (Foley 1999). Since the first contact with the British colonial power in the process of subjugating Indigenous Australian social practice, the differences between the two cultures have resulted in conflict, misinterpretation and the total dominance of one culture over the other.

An illustration of the differing values within the Indigenous/non-Indigenous society is

graphically illustrated in an historical incident involving one of my ancestors. In November 1790 a Gai-mariagal man Bangai was allegedly swindled whilst engaged in the entrepreneurial activity of trading fish with the colonists in exchange for trade goods in the military stockade now called Sydney. On December 28, 1790, Bangai, took some potatoes as final payment in exchange for the fish that he had not been previously paid for. Arthur Phillip retaliated by ordering his marines to punish the perpetrators, which resulted in the mortal wounding of Bangai from musket shot (Willey 1979:127). Such is the dichotomy of the two cultures. Indigenous Australia looks at honesty and honouring 'fairness' in the pluralist 'value' of the entrepreneurial exchange. This is a process that has been formalized over 100,000 years of trading and cultural interaction between trading groups. In simple terms, under Indigenous law which is very similar in some respects to the Westminster 'Common Law of Contract', if an agreed value is accepted by all parties then on the transfer of ownership of the goods, the seller has right for full payment on the exchange. Bangai was not paid; he took goods of equal value in restitution of the initial agreement and was subsequently murdered by the British Marines. Not exactly a fair exchange.

From an Indigenous perspective it can be argued that ethnocentric Australia allows for the socio-political values of its society to determine outcomes, often in total disregard for the initial details of the original commercial agreed exchange.

This case study highlights the complexity of issues that Indigenous Australians face when they go beyond the comfort of their Indigenous social framework. When the Indigenous Australian ventures into the ethnocentric world of small business and entrepreneurial activity, they enter a society that is dominated by non-Indigenous peoples (contemporary Australian society). This is a society in which Indigenous Australians comprise less than two percent of the total population. In business activity they are in effect a minute percentage of the overall small business operators in this country, far below 2 percent. Verbal advice received from ATSIC staff indicates that it may be less than a thousandth of one percent. Accurate figures are not available.

Before we proceed any further, when the Indigenous social framework of Indigenous Australia is referred to, it is the social framework that many classify as urban Australia taking into consideration both inner and outer urban fringes and large centres in rural Australia. This paper will not refer to the idealised and often patronised image of the remote semi-traditional or traditional Aboriginal Australian. The paper is specifically looking at contemporary Indigenous Australian society in the 'urban' context'. The vast majority of Indigenous Australia lives in the towns and cities of the eastern seaboard and the south east of Australia. More than half of our population lives in New South Wales and Queensland alone, with nearly twenty percent residing in Brisbane and Sydney (Commonwealth of Australia, 2000).

Unwarranted social assumptions in regard to the fantasised 'traditional' culture will not be discussed. Indigenous Australians have differing cultural and social values, be they deeply urbanised with lifestyles similar to the non-Indigenous Australian or the rural remote (Commonwealth of Australia, 2000). It is acknowledged and accepted that current statistics also reveal that approximately 32 percent of Indigenous Australians reside in rural communities with populations of less than one thousand people. The lack of commercial enterprise in such small communities also precludes this group from this discussion.

The purpose of this paper is not to define or categorise what these scales of values are

between the urban and rural remote Indigenous Australian. Rather it is to highlight the differences in value structures between the non-Indigenous entrepreneur and the Indigenous entrepreneur in contemporary Australian society. To achieve this, the research methodology of human behaviour as applied to Indigenous peoples will be used in discussing the concept of culture, the effect of religion and the role of the family. This paper is limited in its discussion and these three areas should not be interpreted as being the total subjects in the cultural variables of Indigenous Australians. The topic is large; we are only briefly touching on three aspects.

Explaining Human Behaviour (i.e. Indigenous Australian Behaviour)

To record the values of Indigenous Australia, researchers often observe from an anthropological application. Their previous training or current academic thought may influence this. Observation is considered in the construction of an inclusive system. Emic and etic approaches are often considered in the explanation of human behaviour.

The emic approach to observation is an anthropological method with its origins in the Boasian school of thought (Pelto, 1978) stemming from Franz Boas' teaching in the 1940s.

The criticism of this methodology is that by Boas' own admission 'the very rigidity of definition may lead to a misunderstanding of the essential problems [data] involved' (Boas, 1943:314). To record value systems of the Indigenous Australian entrepreneur with the emic method is to assume that there are formal patterns of mechanical models within the kinship system. In its extreme application it ensures that most members of a given society display cognitive semantic homogeneity (Pelto, 1978). The assumption of the excessive idealistic application of human behaviour of homogenencity *versus* heterogeneity has been criticised by notable researchers such as

Marvin Harris (1975), Goodenough (1965) and Pelto (1978).

Indigenous Australia's ideology and belief systems cannot be denied, neither can the varied content of their different beliefs be simply qualified in the emic approach.

Adequate description of value systems involves careful consideration of variables that include non-language factors, material conditions and influences on the individual or family group, social relationships and the impact of technology and/or the cultural 'moderninity' of contemporary Australian society. Such variables would have to be included in a frame of reference in understanding the value systems.

Any assessment instruments or 'value scales' used by a surveying party (or observer/ analyser) in a Western country such as Australia, would be subject to standardised and Western conceptualisations. The emic approach is a biased assessment, as the instruments of comparison and their inherent classifications are inadequate to recognise the complexity of the Indigenous group (Wright and Kaluai, 1994).

Marvin Harris, one of the most outspoken critics of emicists, proposed a new ethnography of his own in the study of human behaviour. Harris looks at the effect of multi-environmental factors on body motion, which may be in contradiction with or be above the threshold of the observer's auditory and visual senses (Pelto 1978). The eticists understand that unlike the emic approach you cannot rely on verbal behaviour as evidence to determine culture outcomes. The etic research methodology must be intense, allowing for complex observation on all the cultural variables of human behaviour to determine the outcomes of the behaviour. The variables in such areas of study as authority as an example require inordinate time commitments of observation. Confirmation of this can be obtained from previous research in this field by Del Iavenon,

Erickson, Johnson, Silverberg and others (Pelto, 1978). Yet the outcomes of this research are culturally limited, the results cannot be generalised and applied to homogenous groups due to the cultural variables in the study groups. This is despite the large allocation of resources applied to this research.

From the Indigenous Australian's research perspective, the crucial difference between the emic and the etic data is the applied cultural sensitivity of the researcher and the outcomes of the research purpose. In the gathering of field data, if structured interview schedules are applied based on verbal responses rather than other forms of observation then the interview process is emic in its application. The data recording is done in an ethnocentric anthropological application. How does the researcher allow for the theoretical definitions of reality (from the Indigenous Australian perspective) of indices of modernisation, of cosmopoliteness and technology? Your case study may often be the first member of their family to seek self-employment, divorcing themselves from the subjugating cycles of 'safe' public service type jobs or at the other extreme, 'welfare dependency'.

The soundness of the methodology supporting case study analysis needs to ensure that rigour is not sacrificed by emic approaches stifling the interpretation of data to only one dimension of evaluation. The etic method of behavioural observation, identifying systems and patterns of behaviour through qualitative analysis must be based on the cultural generalisations of the observed, not the cultural standards of the observer.

The researcher must elicit the terminology, the cultural domains and the societal values of the individual being examined and realise that these qualifications may be different for each and every Indigenous Australian group encountered.

A previous case study that is relevant to these issues concerns a family group in Cherbourg, Queensland. Within this one small family group there are several opposing cultural variables of Wakka Wakka, Gurang Gurang, Birra-Gubba and Gubbi Gubbi language groups that make up the family structure. Siblings within this family group depending on their association with certain family members, their gender, age and their contact with external environmental factors, can and do display different behavioural patterns of cultural association. These behaviours may have a direct influence on the extent of their interaction within contemporary Australian culture.

In addition, consider the family members of the group who have been removed (stolen generation), or have suffered intervention by family welfare agencies with children being fostered or becoming state wards. Within this case study we also have participants who have suffered long-term hospitalisation at distant locations away from their family support networks. Others have been incarcerated and have since rejoined the family. We also have family members who married young and have since returned to their community after an absence of one or more decades. The dysfunctional societal interaction of these individuals that is a result of their situation has a direct influence on other family members. This is not an isolated example amongst Australian Aboriginal families.

The dysfunctional characteristics may include (and are not restricted to):
• alienation
• welfare dependency
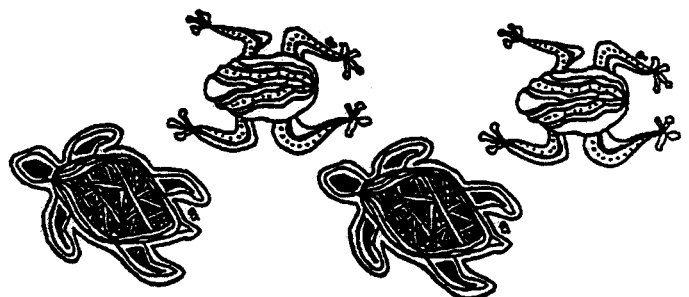
- low levels of education
- poor health
- long-term unemployment
- cultural loss
- low self-esteem
- substance abuse
- mental illness
- incarceration
- poor interpersonal relations in marriage, with their children, and with people in general outside of their family network.

Note: no implied generalisation is to be interpreted in a blanket stereotype application to all Indigenous people. These dysfunctional characteristics are applicable to one family unit case study. It is agreed that similarity may appear in other family groups of similar socio-economic backgrounds, but at the same time we may find other family groups who do not experience similarities.

These negative characteristics of certain individuals have a direct influence on other family members. In the field research situation, the writers cultural connection is Gai-mariagal/Wiradjuri. To the novice or Anglo-Australian researcher this may appear culturally acceptable in that an Indigenous researcher is involved in an Indigenous case study.

This could not be further from the truth!

The researcher's dominant culture is matriarchal, whereas the group being studied in this example is patriarchal. We also have a complex cross issue of salt water lore of the observer and freshwater lore of the observed that must be considered. The Indigenous researcher must accept their often-inferior status in dealing with participants who are older or of law. Gender situations will also alter the interview relationship, with complex intermediary situations being established with the participants and the interviewer. Common perceptions of 'Insider / Outsider' theory are not applicable in these instances. Indigenous researchers need to establish support systems

and relationships clearly defining their research goals and the lines of 'relating' which are specific to the research project. These may be different from their own family networks and values. In effect, Indigenous researchers, through our culturally complex backgrounds, are often outsiders within an insider methodology (Smith, 1999:137).

Within Australia we have over four hundred and fifty individual Aboriginal nations, perhaps six hundred and fifty pre-European contact. One Indigenous Australian interviewing another does not create a homogenous situation. Such is the complexity of Indigenous Australia, a complexity that has been misinterpreted and misunderstood by non-Indigenous researchers since research and observation began in this country two hundred and twelve years ago.

It is not the intention of this paper to explore in detail the reasons why, rather it is important that the non-indigenous reader be aware that research on Indigenous Australia must come from the Indigenous Australian perspective. Accept the Indigenous view and method-ological approach of holistic observation and interaction, otherwise your research will become another ethnocentric paper, culturally inept and ethnographically flawed.

To some degree Pelto reached a similar conclusion in that emic studies or other semantic analyses can provide guides or indications of realistic Indigenous definitions of observation; however, the cross-cultural (etic) concepts of the non-Indigenous researcher result in general propositions about human behaviour. The evident problem from the Indigenous perspective is that such general propositions are based on non-Indigenous researchers own value systems or stereotypes from within their own ethnocentric society. Any perceived shortcomings of this argument are supported to some extent by Gestaltist Theory and existentialism in that if we are to look at value systems, and try to understand them within Indigenous society, then the

research must be undertaken at a level of commonality. Human embedment in a social system such as Indigenous Australia cannot be compared, judged or calibrated in a Western model.

Far too often Indigenous Australia has been the private zoo of social anthropologists and other scientists, which is an extension of the Western model of one group being superior over another. This same superiority often results in a missionary attitude displayed by the ethnocentric researcher. Indigenous communities are increasingly becoming annoyed at being the subjects under the scientists' microscopes. Any study should be of benefit to the Indigenous group (Diener and Crandall, 1978). Vine Deloria, in *Custer Died for Your Sins* (1968), is very critical of anthropologists studying native Americans and not helping them develop. Similar situations exist in Australia; however if such 'help' is in the missionary context or is given from pity, then is it help or a guilt payment re-enforcing the dichotomy of value systems between the ethnocentric and Indigenous community?

Debbie Wright and Tracie Kaluai, in their comparative studies between American and Pacific Islander studies in 1994, highlighted that the researcher should be aware that the assessment instruments or 'value scales' used by them [in the non-Indigenous researcher application] are subject to standardised and Western conceptualisations; they are biased assessment instruments (Wright and Kaluai, 1994).

Not only has the majority of research to date in Indigenous cultures and values been done from an ethnocentric pedagogy, its epistemological application is also within this same idealistic realm, without mechanisms to differentiate the Indigenous values. The epistemological application to research in general does not allow for Indigenous pedagogy or Indigenous epistemology to be considered.

The occurrence (or development) of the phenomenon that is the Indigenous Australian entrepreneur, in the Western model results in a dichotomy of values; the Indigenous and the ethnocentric, two very different cultures. Interventionist research and resultant observation can only be from within the Indigenous pedagogy, Standpoint Theory from the Indigenous perspective and as mentioned previously, Insider/Outsider Theory. Interventionist research crosses the gap of cultural difference. A summation or interpretation of culture needs to be established before we proceed further.

Culture

An internationally accepted definition of culture as espoused to the writer by several Native American and Native Hawaiian scholars, is the definition that Kroeber and Kluckholn articulated in 1952 that was based on several hundred definitions of culture.

> Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioning influences upon further action Kluckholn, 1962:181).

Culture consists of traditional ideas and especially attached values. These 'attached values' are the unknown element in the argument.

Western thought, particularly in sociological studies, since the establishment of the Frankfurt School of Thought, has been absorbed in contextual values that have been argued by Marx, Weber, Durkheim, and recently by Gouldner and Becker (Jury and Jury, 1995). These arguments do not allow for the Indigenous critique of 'value'. The

dominating literature being Western conceptualisations. This is a biased assessment, as the instruments of comparison and inherent classifications are inadequate to recognise the Indigenous group (Wright and Kaluai, 1994). Nor does it allow for variances and evolution from external factors over a given period of time. Barnett's work in 1953 contributed to the understanding of cultural change in his work, *Innovation: The Basis of Cultural Change.* Barnett recognised that culture and cultural values could change with innovation (Shook, 1992).

The western world has witnessed a re-awakening of Indigenous cultures. The United States and Canada in the sixties and seventies. Hawaii, New Zealand and Australia in the seventies. This renaissance or revitalisation of culture in Australia began with the 1967 referendum, the street marches of the sixties and early seventies, the tent embassy and culminated in the Whitlam years of social reform in the early 1970s. Cultural values within Indigenous Australian society have seen the recent revitalisation of cultural autonomy, yet it has also had to grapple with technological advancements and mainstream societal innovation.

Thirty years ago our children were sent to school (or taken from us and placed in institutions) to obtain an understanding of the three Rs (Reading, Writing and Arithmetic). These were taught in English only; now, some of our people in outback areas are taught in their traditional language with English taught as a second language. Via landlines or satellite communication they have access to multimedia and search the Web, exposing them to cultural variations that their parents could only dream about. The 'Coca Cola' culture of the modern world is having a definite effect on our children, be they city based or rural remote. Technological innovation is changing Indigenous values.

Several authors have characterised this process in slightly different ways. Bulhan

(1980:105-106) articulates a theory that is in political terms. He talks of 'cultural in-betweenity'. The three stages that reflect the reactions of the Indigenous group to the domination of others are:

• capitulation (to the new culture)
• revitalisation (of the Indigenous Culture)
• radicalisation (a new synthesis of both cultures).

Bulhan's work is simplified to the point that it can be applied to almost any situation.

Atkinsen, Moreton and Sue (1979:194-197) outline a similar model to Bulhan that not only lists the stages, but also considers the attitudes that accompany the stages and makes recommendations about the individual differences of the subjects at each stage. The model is designed for understanding issues in the mental health fields; however, it can be adapted to many other social science applications. It is more detailed in application than Bulhan's socio-political model that suffers from oversimplification.

Victoria Shook (1992) has developed a model that is possibly the most applicable as seen by the writer to date. Her model was developed in her initial research and subsequent doctorate in studies regarding social phenomena within Native Hawaiian society, and American (Hawaiian) Pacific Islander society. Interestingly the model has been subsequently used in applications to other ethnic minority groups in Hawaii such as American Chinese, American Japanese, American Vietnamese, American Philippine, American Maori and several other groups. During a research visit to the University of Hawaii, Manoa Campus in August 1999, discussions with Ms Lilikala Kame'eleihiwa, the Director of the Centre for Hawaiian Studies, confirmed that within these groups, there are cultural anomalies not experienced with mainland American members of the same group. As an example the cultural strengths of American Japanese were more aligned to traditional Hawaiian

culture in Hawaii that in say California, where the cultural attributes of the same group were more closely associated with Anglo Japanese values. The point here is to consider the effect that the demographic location of existing culture has as a variant on a minority group within the cultural domain of another cultural group. This is the exact opposite in most, if not all applications in contemporary Australia. With the exceptions in Broome, Darwin and the Torres Straits, Australian Japanese have little or no cultural interaction with Aboriginal Australia. Ethnographic studies will show a cross cultural connection with the Japanese in the Pearling Industry and the Chinese in the Gold Rush periods; however nothing exists in Australia on the same scale as the cross cultural interaction and acceptance of cultures existing in Hawaii. To a student of cultural studies Hawaii is a 'Pandora's Box' due to its richness and complexity of issues. The sobering aspect of this is that what is evident in Hawaii cannot be applied to the Australian context without careful scrutiny and testing.

The previously mentioned Victoria Shook's model is titled 'the Minority Identity Model'. It is comprised of five stages:

1. conformity (characterised by a preference for the dominant culture)
2. dissonance (when confusion and conflict reign)
3. resistance and immersion (rejection of the dominant culture and complete affirmation of the minority culture view)
4. introspection (the search for individual autonomy and discomfort with complete adherence to the minority stance)
5. synergistic articulation and awareness (an integration of personal and cultural identity

allowing for individual flexibility and also rejection of any form of oppression of one group by another) (Shook, 1992:37).

This model is very inviting for the researcher to analyse, to look at its applicability to the Indigenous Australian entrepreneur. Perhaps the results of future case studies can be applied to the model to test its validity. In examining its attributes it would appear that it is a plausible structure, worthy of consideration.

In the application of the model to previous field research (Foley 1999), the majority of 'failed' Indigenous businesses fell into groups 2 and 3. Successful Indigenous Australian entrepreneurs previously studied would appear to be in grouping 5. Contact is currently being attempted with Dr. Shook to ascertain any synergy that this model may hold with the writer's possible application of it.

All models are simplifications; this model however captures a possible relativity to the social change of Indigenous groups, in particular the family of the Indigenous Australian entrepreneur. Further examination of the model is justified.

Earlier in this article a preferred definition of culture was given together with discussion on cultural values. Differing models that allow some measurement of change to minority cultures have also been discussed. What is missing in this discussion are the empirical studies that isolate cultural values which are determinants of the level of entrepreneurship within a society. Per Davidson and Johan Wiklund (1995) have stated that there are few studies in this area. Whilst it would appear that there have been some studies in national culture, which is dominated to some degree by Hofstede (1979), there is little empirical information on regional cultural variation in its relation to new firm start-ups. Davidson and Wiklund (1995) looked at regional economic development within a dominating culture that displayed cultural variances to other intra-national regions. They did not

look at minority cultural variations, however their work is important for it displays somewhat of a macro view within a region which may possibly be a measure for the Indigenous Australian micro view within a similar corresponding region.

Their literature confirmed that there is widespread belief that cultural variation can be a powerful determinant of regional or national variation in the 'supply' of entrepreneurship. Empirical research on the issue is scarce; however there are the debated attempts by Weber (1930) and McClelland (1961) at large scale sociological explanations of economic development. Hofstede (1991) suggested similar explanations to the economic development of East Asia post WWII, and Lynn (1991) gives support to a relationship between certain aspects of national culture and economic growth. None of these studies look at minority cultural issues nor did they explicitly study new venture formations specifically related to cultural variations as an attribute of their formation. Earlier research by Jackson and Brophy (1986), Bellu, Davidson and Goldfarb (1990), McGrath and MacMillan (1992) and Scheinberg and MacMillan (1998) viewed culture and entrepreneurship in start-up ventures but lacked the study of attitudes and motivators within differing cultural groups in relation to the general population.

Davidson and Wiklund's (1995) research is concerned with the comparison of values and beliefs amongst the general population in different regions. However, this is superfluous to this paper, as such findings would have no bearing on minority groups such as the Indigenous people within mainstream population studies.

Hofstede (1979) espoused a theory of cultural differentiation based on the two constructs of 'values' and 'culture'. A value was defined as 'a broad tendency to prefer certain states of affairs over others' and culture as 'the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes

the members of one human group from another' (Hofstede, 1979:389). The culture definition is succinct in comparison with Kluckholn's (1962) previously quoted definition. In cultural writings Hofstede's work is quoted on a regular basis. In reality, however, it has little application to understanding cross-cultural issues within or between countries which have dominant colonial influences over traditionally based populations. A simplification of his work is that it is a comparative study looking, in forty countries, at societal characteristics including individualism *vs* collectivism, the power differences in society, masculine *vs* feminine, and the uncertainty avoidance index. There are many inconsistencies in his work. He challenges ethnocentric research and states that 'there are some classical sins in research approaches which help to account for the deplored lack of synergy' (Hofstede, 1979:390).

Hofstede criticises ethnocentric research in cross-cultural applications in a similar vein as given in this paper, yet he then proceeds to apply it in his studies. For all his noble rhetoric, his work suffers the same flawed or tainted results that other ethnocentric research achieves. To illustrate Hofstede's stereotypical application of ethnocentric concepts he makes a statement over the individualistic generalisation of hunter-gatherer cultures (1979:401). The works of Eugene Hunn and Nancy Williams (1986) postdate Hofstede's initial work. However, anthropological thought in the social strengths of Indigenous peoples in their pluralist application to sharing and maintaining the pluralist family (and extended family) networks is not a new concept. It has existed for some one hundred thousand years or more. Modern interpretation has been slow, however the concepts of Williams, Hunn and their colleagues have been espoused since the 1930s. Hofstede's work is flawed; it is oversimplified and has little or no application to modern cross-cultural research, especially cross-cultural research within a former colony.

Cultural arguments can continue almost indefinitely. It is important to understand external environmental issues which influence values within the cultures experienced by the Indigenous Australian entrepreneur. The following section looks at the possible effect that religion may have on the Indigenous entrepreneur.

Religion

Western religion has had a profound effect on Indigenous Australian culture which, depending on the situation, may have a flow-on effect to the Indigenous entrepreneur. The influx of European Christianity was a vocation instrumental in the 'salvation of the souls of the condemned people' (Stevens, 1994:2). The Christian faith was considered as the great lynchpin around which civilised life revolved in nineteenth-century Europe. The accepted cultural superiority of Europe, with its scientific vindication under Social Darwinism (Stevens, 1994) ensured that Christian missionaries had unrestrained access to Indigenous Australia. It is rather ironic that some of these saviours' (such as the Wesleyans and the Lutherans) zealous enthusiasms were rather displaced, as they were persecuted in their own lands (Stevens, 1994).

The legacy of the effect of the missionary industry is highlighted in the religious zeal displayed in the Torres Straits of Northern Queensland. The London Missionary Society with the *Coming of the Light Ceremony* has changed the cultural interaction of these people forever. Similar illustrations can be found around Australia.

Has the civilisation that is aligned with Christianity had an effect on the Indigenous Australian entrepreneur?

It is accepted that religion both shapes and is shaped by society. It supports power structures; it gives meaning and shape to societal ethical structures. It has the power and influence to reward, punish and by its existence justifies social institutions and social roles (Berger and Berger, 1972). Research has indicated however, that levels of religiousness are lower amongst entrepreneurs (Dodd and Seaman, 1998). This argument is fueled by the truism that entrepreneurs suffer from a paucity of time, which limits participation in religious interaction. In the Indigenous Australian example this has also been indicated following case study analysis showing reduced social interaction in 'cultural' activities by Indigenous Australian entrepreneurs (Foley, 1999).

There are strong links evident between social enterprise, the business ethic and religion. The close association of church bodies and the successful Mondragon co-operatives in Spain are examples. In the European context from an Indigenous Australian researcher's perspective, the Christian Church was the conquering military might that instrumented by force cultural constraints controlled by religion that to survive required economic activity to generate wealth. This was initially begun by the Roman Empire, and cemented by the spread of Catholicism. French, British and other colonial power conquests have shaped the Fourth World Indigenous groups as we now know them today. Colonialism incorporates Christian religion dominating the traditional beliefs of the traditional landowners.

An example of sectarian development of entrepreneurial ability within the colonial power is illustrated in the Quaker chocolate dynasties of Cadburys, Rowntree, Fry and Terrys. Calvin, in the concentration of watch making in Geneva, is another example (Dodd and Seaman, 1998). The cluster development of the world diamond industry in certain areas of Europe controlled by Jewish interests is yet another example of entrepreneurial activity associated with a religious enclave.

Small business is often seen as the embodiment of the Protestant ethic of hard work, integrity, thrift, straight dealing and independence
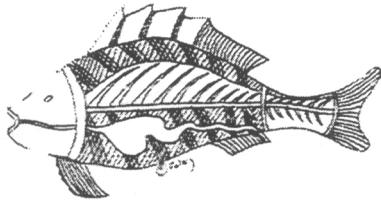
(Dodd and Seaman, 1998). Is the spread of entrepreneurial activity the result of religious idealism, or are the entrepreneurs capitalising on the social network found within a religious society? The latter appears to be the appropriate answer.

The importance of personal and professional networks as foundation elements that determine the success of entrepreneurial activity is well researched. Aldrich and Zimmer (1985), Johannison and Johnsson (1988), Birley, Cromie and Myers (1991), Blackburn, Curran and Jarvis (1990) are a small selection of researchers who provide confirmation to the importance of networking. Networks from religious contacts provide the entrepreneur not only with a primary source of contacts, but also with a level of identification, almost a substantiating accreditation of ethical, 'business honesty' (Dodd and Seaman, 1998). The rise to prominence of the Amway Corporation in middle class America based on relationship (Network) marketing within certain religious groups is an example of the utilisation of religion-based networks rather that religion itself being the reason for success.

Acceptance of a religion is not a prerequisite in the social order of being in business; however, if you are a member of a large religious organisation, and you achieve a relatively high profile, research would indicate that you are in a position to successfully market your entrepreneurial concept. In the Indigenous Australian entrepreneurial situation, we are a minority. Within the Indigenous Australian religious networks, a sustainable population does not exist that would provide a marketing base for potential entrepreneurial activity.

The Indigenous entrepreneur would have to look outside their minority network. If the entrepreneur is excluded from mainstream society (as are Indigenous Australians), access to professional advice and services through the wider religious network may be invaluable (Dodd and Seaman, 1998). Perhaps within the wider religious contact base increased opportunity exists for networking and support. However, this is provided from another cultural base. The dilemma arises again; the Indigenous entrepreneur must be able to manage an existence within two social and cultural realms, with resultant exposure to differing value concepts.

Dodd and Seaman (1998) concluded that the entrepreneurship literature does not provide any consistent support for the development of an understanding of the level of religiosity in the entrepreneur. The findings of their qualitative research revealed that the level of religiosity for entrepreneurial samples is inordinately close to that of the non-entrepreneur.

Family

The relationship of family bonds in certain cultures can be a tremendous resource to the aspiring entrepreneur. Casual observation of Mediterranean migrants to Australia post WWII has displayed a trend amongst Italian, Greek and Maltese families (as examples) to work as a tight family unit in small business concerns, often sponsoring other family members to come to Australia, then providing a network of support for them. A cycle of entrepreneurial activity develops and continues within these cultural groups.

Hofstede (1979) often refers to Mediterranean families as collectivist societies (Georgas *et al.*, 1997) which is in agreement with previously mentioned studies.

Other examples can be found in Asian communities. In Australia and the USA, following the fall of South Vietnam in the early 1970s, large groups of South Vietnamese refugees were accepted into these two countries. Within the Australian and American

environments, entrepreneurial activity amongst the Vietnamese refugee community was clearly evident.

The creation and establishment of a chain of family owned 'hot bread' shops in Sydney's western suburbs by a Vietnamese family is an example well known to the writer whilst employed at the Midland Bank. Finance was provided for the grandfather, father and the eldest son into an established shop in Cabramatta, Sydney NSW. Within two years the success of this business resulted in five other stores opening with five of the six remaining brothers being financed into their own ventures. The grandfather and father stood down from active participation at this stage in the development and took on more of a managerial function within the 'family' businesses. This culminated in a seventh store being financed, which was for a son-in law. Such is the support and the extent of family involvement in the entrepreneurial aspirations of a family that was once classified as 'boat people', due to their refugee status. The collectivist attribute of the family culture ensured that they developed a capital base or wealth accumulation by collective interaction.

Tight family groups develop a capital base from pluralist activity maximising income and minimising expenditure so that the family nucleus becomes the core element of the business. The patriarch/matriarch and older children become the unskilled (or semi-skilled) workers, with second generation siblings learning the skills of the new culture, its language and cross-cultural exchanges through the host country's educational programs.

The family is perhaps the most vital element of society (Winch 1971). Without the family we do not have social order. Within Indigenous society this is even more profound with respect to kinship structures. The transmission of culture, of 'values' is achieved and re-enforced within the formal (and informal) family structure. The social development and social behaviour of the individual is achieved within the family (Georgas *et al.*, 1997). The context of family dynamics, its ability to adapt to social change, and in the case of Indigenous families to environmental change, effects the psychological differentiation of its members. It is perhaps the most important influence on a potential entrepreneur, especially an Indigenous entrepreneur.

Georgas *et al.* (1997) look at the concept-ualisation of family bonds to be used as context variables in their proposed design and analysis of the cross-cultural study of psychological variables. This has relevance to study of Indigenous families, for Georgas *et al.* (1997) looked at the kinship network across cultures. The ultimate aims in application to family cross-cultural research were to enable them to:

• study the variation of family structure and functions across cultures

• explore the interrelationships between societal changes in the family system

• test existing cross-cultural models (e.g. Kagitcibasi's model).

The results indicated that the 'family bonds' within cultural groups can be conceptualised as a multidimensional construct which reflects the cognitive, emotive, and behavioural elements of a family. The three dimensions of the study that involved emotional closeness, geographic proximity and extent of interaction produced no correlation in relation to the nuclear family *versus* the extended family. This was also evident in Kagitcibasi's model. The results indicated sociological myths were more evident than reality in many of the previously determined relationships between the nuclear and extended family (Georgas *et al.*, 1997).

As the study looked at only five European family structures, its findings were doomed from the outset, due to the ethnographic similarity which exists in many European countries. The findings of the research confirmed other theoretical considerations and

findings on family structure and functions, including Bengtson and Schrader's (1992) dimension of effectual solidarity, family structure and association solidarity.

The research indicates that family bonds can be used to assess the strength and forms of interdependence between individual entrepreneurs and their family network. The family structure and function across cultures may provide attributes conducive to entrepreneurial activity (Georgas *et al.*, 1997). Previous research (Foley, 1999) has indicated that family bonds in providing for children is an instigating factor to success and application in entrepreneurial activity amongst Indigenous Australians. Future research should revisit the context of extended family support in the entrepreneurial activity. Initial research indicated that extended family support was negative and in fact it was the bonds within the nuclear family that were strongest. Perhaps this is an environmental situation due to the oppression faced by Indigenous Australians within Australian society; external pressures may negate wider-family support due to poverty levels and preconceived wealth-sharing concepts of the wider Indigenous community (Foley, 1999).

Conclusion

This paper began as a discussion paper looking at value systems in Indigenous research arguing differing concepts in the etic and emic approach to explaining Indigenous behavior and the shortfalls in ethnographic research. Concepts of Indigenising research have been considered with its resultant complexities. Culture and Religion have been discussed touching on family issues in their respective approaches to Indigenous research. Literature considering some of the problems in these areas has also been reviewed, and I believe indicates that further research is needed in these areas by Indigenous Australian researchers.

Perhaps this paper raises more questions than it has answered. If I have stimulated debate or disagreement then I have succeeded in raising these issues. This short paper discusses only a few of a myriad of unanswered questions concerning Indigenous research, be it in entrepreneurship, education, health or some other field. In recent months I have been fortunate to read the works of some immensely talented Indigenous researchers, Ms Victoria Shook, Ms Linda Tuhiwai Smith and Ms Aileen Moreton-Robinson, to name a few.

When an Indigenous person reads research on our people undertaken by non-Indigenous experts a shroud of shame and pain often descends on us. Perhaps we become angry, depressed or even pity the ignorance of the non-indigenous researcher. Ms Moreton-Robinson (2000: 186) gives us strength in her words:

> whiteness needs to be interrogated as a specific form of privilege ... Indigenous women will continue to resist this dominance by talkin' up, because the invisibility of unspeakable things requires them to be spoken.

It is time for Indigenous researchers to speak out as a common voice, then we can control the ethnocentric academic mistruths that haunt our existence.

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