Race matters: (Re)thinking the significance of race and racial inequalities in community development practice in Australia

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Abstract

In Australia, discussions of race, racism and racial inequalities remain contentious debates. The dominant discourses around these issues focus on and often seek to silence racism or diminish its occurrence in the society, in other words: deflections and denial of racism dominate. Such denials and deflections belie the lived experiences of racism among racial(ised) minorities. Perhaps not surprisingly therefore, within such a context, there is a paucity of research on how community development practice engages with issues of race, racialisation, racism and racial inequalities. Little is known about how community development practitioners work with/in racially diverse communities or the extent to which Australian community development practice employs a 'race lense' in its practice. The discussions in this paper therefore emanate from an understanding that 'colour (race)-blind' practice still dominates community development work in Australia. The main contention is that unexamined colour-blind practice has the potential to reproduce systemic racism or systems of racial inequalities. The question informing this paper therefore, is: what is the significance of race in community development practice in Australia? To address this question, the paper centres "the experienced reality of lived racism" (Essed, 1991, p. vii) by black African migrants in Australia - which highlight the pervasiveness of racism in their everyday lives - to argue the need for conversations and considerations about race and inclusion within the field of community development. In the end, the discussions in this paper will raise important questions about the significance of race in community development practice in Australia and the consequences of race-blind practice and colour-mutism when working with/in ethnic and racially diverse communities. Perhaps more importantly, the paper contributes to 'courageous conversations' about how community development practitioners can work effectively across ethnic and racial boundaries without (re)producing systemic structures of racial inequalities.

Keywords

Introduction

> It is remarkable that, despite the salience of 'race' and ethnicity in public policy debates, at least at the level of communities if not within government, and the growing threat of racism – in all its manifestations: nationalism, chauvinism, fascism, ethnic cleansing, genocide, modern slavery – across the world, there is only one major book about community development, and that 35 years old, which took as its main focus working with black and minority ethnic (BME) groups… (Craig, 2018 p. 1)

Craig's statement above, written in reference to the British situation, is highly pertinent for this paper because it also precisely describes the Australian community development scholarly space within which this paper is written. There remains a paucity of Australian community development literature that explicitly and consciously centres 'race' and racism or that deliberately employs 'race' as an analytical lens for nuanced discussions of racial inequalities and intersections of race in disadvantaging some communities in Australia (see for example, Lathouras & Ross, 2018).

Generally, discussions of racism in Australia still remain contentious. On the one hand, racism against 'black and racialised minorities' is rife (see for example: Taylor, 2017; Majavu, 2018; Mapedzahama, Rudge, West and Kwansah-Aidoo, 2018; Kwansah Aidoo and Mapedzahama, 2018a among others). On the other hand a 'denial of racism' still dominates public and popular discourse on race relations, in spite of Australia's history of racism and discrimination etched in its racist colonial policies such as the 'White Australia' policy. There are usually subtle and not so subtle attempts to silence those who want to speak boldly about racism within Australian society (see, for example Mapedzahama & Kwansah-Aidoo, 2017). A review of literature suggests that there are two dominant sets of discourses around the subject of racism in Australia. The first set of discourses focus on and often seek to silence racism or diminish its occurrence in the society (see, for example, Augoustinos & Every, 2007, 2010; Babacan, 2008; Dunn, Pelleri, & Maeder-Han, 2011 for discussions on denial of racism). The second set of discourses seek to draw attention to the fact that Australia is racialized space. These discourses assert that Australia should viewed as white space and white washed space wherein racism should be seen as something that is inherent in the regular functioning of a system built on racism rather than an anomaly and something out of the ordinary (see, for example, Hage, 1998; Mapedzahama & Kwansah-Aidoo, 2014; Stratton, 2006). Of the two sets of discourses, the discourses that seek to silence racism or diminish its occurrence in the society dominate, in other words: deflections and denial of racism constitute dominant discourses on 'race' and racism in Australia.

It is not surprising therefore that within this context of the paradoxical simultaneous existence and denial of racism, a thorough review of Australian community

development literature reaffirms the gap in literature that Craig articulates above: Australian community development writing and practice is, in the main, also silent on 'race' and racism. There is very little direct reference or dedication to issues of 'race' and racism in community development work literature, theory or practice (see for example: Todd, 2011; Bowler, 2018; Lathouras and Ross, 2018 for an example of the discussions I am advocating). In the editorial for New Community Journal's special edition on refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, Boulet cites 'racism' and related intolerances as an example, or part of the reason why "things have become worse" in the community development and advocacy space (2017, p. 5). However, this (brief) discussion does not interrogate the significance of race or racism for community development practice. Moreover, while the 'racist nature' of some community development programs (such as the work for the dole program), especially as it pertains to (remote) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities has been the subject of some popular discourse, 'race' as an analytical lens is not often explicitly or purposefully employed in how community development social work engages with racially vulnerable communities (see also literature on working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, for example: Price-Robertson & McDonald, 2011; Lathouras and Ross, 2018 and non-indigenous communities, see for example: de Vries, Roman and Briskman, 2018). In such discussions, 'culture' or 'cultural diversity', or cultural competence are often used as metonyms for 'race'. Though culture and race are undeniably linked, they are not the same, and 'cultural' diversity analyses (useful as they may be), do not and cannot address social problems of racial inequality. As Arshad notes, these approaches can be criticized for "focussing exclusively on cultures and being preoccupied with exotic aspects of cultural difference thereby ignoring the effects of racism […] [these] approaches assume people start from an equal base when that [is] clearly not so" (n.d., n.p). In fact, I would argue further, oftentimes such discussions are advanced to silence productive discussions of racism.

Still, some might argue that the 'absence' of race critical discussions in Australian community development work signals that race is a non-issue in this space. However, I would propose that the silence is a reflection of colour-blind/colour-mute approaches in community development theory and practice, and is not a reflection of the "racial reality" (Bowler, 2018, p. 43) of some of the communities that community development workers engage with in their work. It is undeniable that the racial landscape within which Australian community development social workers now operate is not only increasingly diverse, it is also often subjectively and objectively 'violent' to racially vulnerable communities (see Zizek, 2008 for a discussion of subjective and objective violence in a racialised world). Within such a context, I argue that colour-blind approaches are concomitant to colour-blind racism because they invisibilise "whiteness as a privileging social system … [and] leaves white standards out of critique" (Bowler, 2018, p. 43). Moreover, 'race' within

these contexts, always intersects with other forms of social disadvantage and vulnerabilities to further marginalise groups that embody these intersectionalities.

Suffice to mention, at this point, that for purposes of this paper, I must necessarily clarify what I mean by (as well as my use of the term) colour-blindness since it is at the core of my central thesis (claim). I define colour-blindness as a form of racism that not only advances temporal denials of racism (i.e. sees racism as a thing of the past), but also maintains that it is no longer necessary to consider 'race' because all races are equal. I call this the 'fallacy of racial equality'. In a racially unequal world, this fallacy has negative consequences because it precludes critical analysis of how historical racial inequalities persist or have continuities in contemporary contexts. Colour-blind approaches in Australian community development work advance the idea that Australia has "'good race relations' and that there is 'no problem' here'" (Arshad, n.d, n.p). To advance my central thesis that the lack of race critical discussions belie the lived realities of racialised minorities in Australia, I present some findings from my own work within the African community on their experiences of racism and racial discussions, and the coping strategies they engage to navigate these experiences. Findings from several research projects I have undertaken reveal that racism is pervasive in the lives of this community (see for example Mapedzahama, Rudge, West and Perron, 2012; Mapedzahama and Kwansah-Aidoo, 2017, Kwansah-Aidoo and Mapedzahama, 2018a; 2018b; 2018c; Mapedzahama Rudge, West and Kwansah-Aidoo, 2018).

It is not my intention here to imply that community development social work in Australia is deliberately complacent or apathetic when it comes to matters of 'race' and racism in its practice. Indeed, I acknowledge that some 'multicultural' and cultural diversity and inclusion efforts may (inadvertently) incorporate anti-racist agendas in confronting issues of power and justice. Harmony Day celebrations are a good example of what I am talking about here. Some Harmony Day activities in Australia have an anti-racism outlook, particularly when celebrated as a support for the Australian Human Rights' *Racism. It Stops with Me* campaign. However, my argument - which I discuss in detail below - is that community development practice in racially diverse context, must necessarily centre anti-racism as an agenda or framework alongside other practice priorities, rather than it being a by-product of some other agenda. In so doing, the role and implications of "white standards" (Bowler, 2018, p. 42) in how community development social workers practice can be interrogated and understood.

The organisation of this paper proceeds in four significant ways. First, I present a brief overview as well as the rationale for the theoretical understandings/lenses that inform my thinking in this paper. Next, I expand my discussion on my conceptualisation of the 'absence' of race critical discussions in community development social work. The ensuing discussion then presents a snapshot of some of my findings on the pervasiveness of racism in the lives of black African migrant

bodies in Australia. Although this paper is about how community development practice in Australia engaged with or addressed issues of racism (or not) in their work, I use these excerpts from my work to illustrate my central thesis about this silence constituting colour-blindness. The final section presents my case for the need for anti-racism as a framework for addressing racism and associated inequalities in community development social work practice.

Theoretical understandings

In order to make sense of, and explore the questions raised in this paper, I adopt a 'theoretically pluralist' approach in my writing. The discussions in this paper are therefore informed by understandings from several theories and scholarship both within the field of community development and the broader field of sociology.

One could argue that overall, conceptually, this paper is informed by my positioning as a Critical Race Theory (CRT) scholar. For example, my underlying conviction that racism is endemic; my central thesis about colour-blindness and my emphasis on the centring of subjective/experiential knowledge about racism (both mine as a writer of colour and that of the racialised communities that community development workers work with) are all key tenets/themes of CRT. All these concepts are valuable in unpacking how unexamined social constructions of race function to maintain white privilege, white solipsism and the systems of power that community development practice may seek to dismantle. For purposes of this paper however, another CRT tenet that is particularly helpful in informing my thinking and reflexive process is the 'unique person of colour thesis' (Delgado and Stefanic 2001). The voice of colour thesis holds that:

> … because of their different histories and experiences with oppression, black, Am Indian, Asian, Latina/o writers and thinkers may be able to communicate to their white counterparts matters that the whites are unlikely to know. Minority status in other words brings with it a presumed competence to speak about race and racism. (Delgado, and Stefanic 2001)

I write as the 'different voice of colour', with 'experiential expertise' in racism, and therefore whose 'message' (unlike that of racial outsiders) 'is [not] easy to reject' (see McCorkell and Myers, 2003 p.225). As a racial minority researcher, I bear a "presumed competence" to discuss matters of race and racism' (Horsford and McKenzie, 2008, p.445). My "racial reality" (Bowles, 2018, p. 43) affords me the "racial literacy to engage critically with [the topic of racism]" (ibid) because I am critically aware of Australia as a society "where the privileged status of whiteness operates as the primary marker of the everyday norm" (Bowler, 2008, p. 42).

My interest in the subject matter discussed in this paper therefore did not arise out of a naïve curiosity. Rather, it is informed by my own positioning as a black continental African migrant body in Australia. Needless to say, I am part of a

community that oftentimes finds itself on the 'receiving end' of community development practice, that is to say, increasingly, in Australia, community development practitioners are working with black African migrants. Yet this community of which I am a part of is often constructed as a 'problem' – i.e. it is constructed with/in deficit discourses that habitually paternalistically imagine the black African migrant body in terms of 'lack', welfare, refugeehood and only ever needing 'help'. A self-reflexive narrative approach within an interpretive phenomenological framework is therefore crucial to my thinking and writing in this paper. I am also a sociologist researching and writing about 'difference', that is: about social constructions of racialised others and particular, subjective experiences of black embodiment and racialised difference. I am (now) also a social work student with a keen interest in community development social work. These multiple identities (and interdisciplinary positioning) feed my curiosity into how (and to what extent) community development practice in Australia engages with or explicitly addresses issues of racism in their work. A self-reflexive narrative approach thus allows me to draw on my embodiment and lived experiences as a black African migrant, an academic and a social worker in the making, to bring a unique person of colour voice and counter-narrative that explores and make sense of the 'silence on race' in Australian community development scholarship.

Finally, to make sense of why critical race analyses and centring the voices of racialised minorities is imperative for Australian community development theory and practice, scholarship on bridging social capital provides useful insights (see for example, Hawkins and Maurer (2012); Nieman, 2006, Cheung and Kam, 2010). According to Hawkins and Maurer (2012) "bridging social capital occurs in relationships between people and groups of people who are dissimilar in some demonstrable fashion such as age, socio-economic status, race/ethnicity, education, etc." (p. 359). As a type of social capital then, bridging social capital "links people across a cleavage that typically divides society […]. It is associations that 'bridge between communities, groups or organisations […] [it describes] associations between people with shared interests or goals but contrasting social identity" (Claridge, 2018, n.p.). Unlike bonding social capital (which "occurs within a community of individuals, such as a neighbourhood" [Larsen et al, 2004, p. 65]), "bridging capital is deemed to be associated with more heterogeneous but weaker ties" (Zhang, Anderson and Zhan, 2011, p. 120). Here, Mark Granovetter's seminal work on the strength of weak ties is useful for nuanced understandings of the significance of bridging social capital (see Granovetter, 1973). For purposes of this paper, this scholarship is useful for example in informing my thinking about how community development social workers can develop intercultural and (inter) racial literacy. How community development practitioners promote and facilitate relationships between and with people/ groups that may be different from themselves is crucial for racial justice. Suffice to mention here therefore, that the

discussions I present in this paper are not intended to advance an essentialist position of community development social work in Australia. Like Todd (2011), I do not present the arguments in this paper as a "conclusive, generalizable, and all-encompassing critique of community organizing" (p. 121). Similarly, like Todd,

> [by] suggesting that community work can inadvertently function to shore up white privilege, I do not want to suggest that community work is a project that is shaped or practiced only by white bodies acting on racialized bodies (2011, p. 120)

Rather the paper is an attempt at recasting the utility of the experiential lens and positionality of non-white social work subjectivities positioned outside of whiteness, for community development theory and practice model that is critically aware of the ways in which "community development discourses tend to secure white privilege, even while working to disrupt whiteness" (Todd, 2011, p. 118).

For community development social workers, a bridging social capital framework not only allows for productive exchange of ideas and information between themselves and those they work with, it "promotes innovation and builds consensus among the groups representing diverse interests" (Claridge, 2018, n.p.). It would facilitate engagement with racially vulnerable communities "in educational processes that explore a socio-cultural reading of how their worlds are racialised" (Bowler, 2018, p. 44). In the end, the utility of this theoretical lens for me is that it allows for a focus on how community development social workers can bridge 'difference' without (re)producing systems of power inequalities, i.e. how they can become truly anti-racist in their practice.

Community development practice in Australia and 'non-racist' approaches to practice

> [B]ecause of the insidious ways racism and white supremacy work systemically, the opposite of racist isn't non-racist; it's actually "anti-racist" as […] Angela Davis explained in a speech in Oakland in 1979: "In a racist society, it is not enough to be nonracist—we must be anti-racist." Because in an already always racist society, there's no such thing as the absence of racism, only tireless action to counteract/correct it. (Allred, 2017)

My central thesis that the silence on 'race' critical analyses in Australian community development work is a reflection of and constitutes colour-blind approaches stems from the conclusions I make from my reading and understanding of the community development literature in Australia: that (much) community development practice in Australia takes a non-racist position. Following King (2016), I define non-racism as "the **passive** [emphasis mine] rejection, opposition and disassociation from

behaviours, discourses and ideologies that are considered racist" (p. 63). Admittedly, a non-racist position has its place in confronting racism: it is a good starting point. My argument here is that its usefulness in driving change is grossly limited. As Rood (2016, n.p.) notes, "herein lies the difference: according to Webster's dictionary, 'non' means 'not doing; not involved with', while 'anti' is defined as 'one that is opposed'".

For me therefore, the limitation of non-racist ideologies /positions is that non-racism:

> Situates racism as **extreme overt, highly visible behaviours** [my emphasis] that consist of irrational and independent actions of individuals. Non racism marginalises the historical legacy and contemporary renderings of systemic racism in contemporary society. **Non-racism accepts colour-blindness and racial neutrality** [emphasis mine], which centres on non-discriminatory intentions and assumes the possibility of racial innocence of people, policies and ideas. (King, 2016, p. 63)

Not surprisingly, it is now widely accepted that being non-racist is not enough for combating racism. Rood for example, notes that this position (articulated in King's statement above) does not make "a good anti-racist ally. Being a true ally requires action, accountability and choosing to give up … White privilege" (2016, n.p.). I concur with Hodgson (2016), that "being non-racist is an admirable first step, but it fails to produce enough change in others [or oneself], and worse, risks legitimizing the oppression of others" (n.p.).

Furthermore, Critical Race Theorist Eduardo Bonilla-Silva's articulation of colour-blindness in his book: '*Racism without racists: Colour-blind racism and the persistence of racial inequality in the United States'* also provides a very useful framework for understanding how colour-blindness (a tenet of non-racist ideologies) is a 'problem' that perpetuates new racisms in contemporary society (see Bonilla-Silva, 2010). Bonilla-Silva's work addresses a paradox in contemporary society wherein racism persists in a context where few would claim to be racists (in other words: where claims to non-racism abound) and where most whites would claim that race is no longer relevant (see also: Green, n.d.) for a discussion of colour-blindness and anti-racism).

Case study: Racism and its impacts on communities – exemplars from the African community in Australia

> It is essential that all in Britain, including community workers, accept the fact that racism is a dynamic force in this society, which unchecked, will continue to exploit and subordinate black people. Once these premises are accepted, they have serious implications for community work. If not

accepted, they have dire results for the community workers' understanding of race issues which inevitably will lead to diversionary initiatives which do not address the fundamental need of the black community to be free from racism (Manning and Ohri, 2011 p. 147)

To establish the basis for my underlying conviction in this paper and also to stay true to one of CRT's tenets that racism is endemic, I provide three examples of racism from a study I undertook on the experiences of racism by black African migrants in Australia (see Kwansah-Aidoo and Mapedzahama 2017 for a summary of this study and its methods). For purposes of this paper, I present this data to not only support my contention that racism/racist experiences lie at the core of the experiences of racialised minority communities, but also to make the case for the deliberate centring of subjective experiences of racism as well as analyses of systemic racism in community development practice and theory in Australia.

All participants in our study spoke about regular incidents in their lives they perceived as racism. The excerpt below sums up the sentiments of the black African migrants we interviewed:

> Racism plays a role in our lives as a black person [sic] more than I think many communities or many other ethnic groups. It may manifest itself directly or indirectly and I don't think people understand what goes through the African mind on a daily basis. It's a storm in our minds sometimes that comes in; you know; daily chores because you encounter whether directly or indirectly elements of racism. (V2, Focus group 6 – Sydney)

Below are a few more excerpts from our data which highlights and exemplifies the pervasiveness of racism in the lives of racialised minorities that community development social workers need to be cognisant of when working with racially vulnerable communities.

Example 1: Everyday racism

The most common form of racism that participants talked about is what Essed (1991) calls 'everyday racism. According to Essed (1991, as cited by Beagan, 2003), everyday racism is about the "inequitable practices that infiltrate everyday life and become part of what is seen as 'normal' by the dominant group, even in the context of formal commitment to equality" (p. 853). The focal point of Essed's theorising is upon everyday manifestations of racism and racial prejudice. The excerpts below exemplify this:

> V4: [F]or example if you walk into a shop and you are standing there looking for somebody to attend to you for 15 minutes and everybody seems to be busy and then somebody, white person comes in and then suddenly a worker is available because they probably they think this black person is not going

to buy anything, he is just going to waste our time. You could also be standing there at the bar and somebody decides not to see you at all they ask somebody behind you if they have been served. . . .

V3: Like the instance you were talking about; like you are standing in queues. I was in a store, I was buying meat, and I stood there for a long time. People come in they serve them; people come in and they sell to them and I just stood there quiet I never reacted until they were fed up.

Moderator: And then they came to you?

V3: And then they came to serve me . . . (Focus Group 7 – Rural NSW)

We have discussed this elsewhere as the paradox of in/visibility that racialised minorities often face: the simultaneous hypervisibility (due to their visible racial difference) and invisibilisation (see Mapedzahama and Kwansah-Aidoo, 2017, p. 8).

Perhaps more relevant for purposes of this paper, is how racialised minorities may experience being 'helped' as highly racialised, disempowering encounters:

V1: The longer I'm staying in Australia the more annoyed and irritated I become because each situation I'm in; I'm treated the same way - that you don't know anything; you know it's because of the skin [points to her skin]. Everybody; because I'm a woman it's a little bit different, people are trying to help me but they are so condescending; I think that's the word, so condescending in a way that; I'm like, I think I'm better off not being helped, you know I'm better off trying to figure out things for myself than you trying to help me in this particular way.

V2: It's horrible; treating me like an idiot. You are repeating these things in mono-syllables; that's the worst ever. Especially for a person sometimes I think you people you don't even know my IQ can be off the charts compared to yours. Just stop it. (Focus group 5, Sydney)

The excerpts above highlight how everyday racism is experienced in the familiar, often small, but nevertheless significant way in which non-white people encounter racism in the 'normal' ordering of day-to-day interactions with dominant white groups (Henry, 2004). Whereas racism in its extreme, overt form is easily recognised, everyday racism is overlooked, undermined, easily dismissed and, more importantly, invisible "to the perpetrator and, oftentimes the recipient" (Sue, 2005, as cited in Sue et al., 2007, p. 275).

Example 2: Systemic Racism

Much of the racial discrimination experienced by racially vulnerable minorities occurs in formal workplace settings and is even more subtle:

> Once you are black or you are of a different skin not the European skin or Australian skin, British skin, or American skin; you are judged already on not performing, or not able to perform. And those things are there—stereotype, and once you are stereotyped it doesn't matter who you are, it will take time for the person to know "Oh you are a principal researcher from so and so." But how can someone know of your title when your skin alone has been stopping [them]; you get what I mean? (V1, Focus Group 8 – Rural NSW)

This kind of systemic racism is also experienced by significant others:

> My wife she works with sort of the social people so she gets a lot of white people come to her. That's where she has some of these issues. She has had instances where people come in and they meet a black person and they don't want to work with a black person. Some would actually come to the office and they pass comments like "you people are taking our jobs. You people came to take our jobs". Normally when she tells me when they come very strongly she tells them "I'm not dealing with this person" and that's it. Even if they sit there in her office she is not going to deal with them. (v6, Focus group 3 – Melbourne)

For some, systemic racism is about the failures of government (at a national policy level) to address issues of racial justice and racial harmony. One participant commented for example:

> I think the government can always do better to force better race relations among white Australians and I guess migrants. As to speak [sick], clearly in our history you can understand that you know that the treatment of Aboriginals and those alike, has always allowed this type of animosity between whites and those that are non whites. The government on that front has failed to deliver its promises of integration and the like, and that extends to us as Africans. I think policies which try to integrate other ethnicities into the community have not worked. Let's be frank about that, because they fail to understand where that background of that person: and issues that they need to address. (V2, Focus group 6 – Sydney)

Example 3: Manifestations of everyday racism

The manifestations of everyday racism are often varied but profound. They culminate in what we have called elsewhere 'the burden of blackness' (see Mapedzahama and Kwansah-Aidoo, 2017, for a more detailed discussion). This 'burden' incorporates for example, the "burden of racial "two-ness" (ibid, p. 9). This feeling, as Upegui-Hernandez (2009, p. 138, cited in Mapedzahama and Kwansah-Aidoo, 2017, p. 9) further explains, arises from black people's "understanding of the so-called incompatibility between themselves and the world of white[s]" (p. 138) in racial matters. The excerpt below is an example:

But you know what; I mean most of us who have applied for jobs here and there, each time you get knocked back what comes to your mind is that I'm black. At a meeting if you suggest something and nobody is listening to you, you feel, oh because I'm black. So, you got to be conscious that is it because I'm black really or it's because . . . (V5, Focus group 2 - Victoria rural)

Of significance for community development social workers to note is that often, individuals from racially vulnerable communities minimize or even 'deny' their own experiences of racism as a coping strategy:

You have to [minimise racism] for your own peace of mind, for our own emotional wellbeing, because if you keep on […] So you see people misbehaving so much, you see people saying things, I tend not to look at it, I tend not to listen to it. I have got to protect myself, it's my way of coping because I am here and I have made this place my home and I am going nowhere, so it's either you accept me for who I am or you get out of my face. I don't give a damn that's just me. (V5, Focus group 2 - Rural Victoria)

The case for anti-racism in Australian community development practice

Anti-racist work and true community development are indeed natural bedfellows (Craig, 2018 p. 327)

Considering the preceding discussion about the endemic and pervasive nature of racism, it is clear that what is needed when working with racially vulnerable communities are not 'non-racist' approaches, but rather, *anti*-racist approaches. Unlike non-racist ideologies (see discussion above), anti-racism is about action: anti-racism is a 'doing' word that requires 'standing up' to racism. Pollock (2008, p. xx, cited in King and Chandler, 2016, p. 8) proposes four basic principles for anti-racist education, "which involves rejecting false notions of human difference, acknowledging lived experiences shaped along racial lines, learning from diverse forms of knowledge and experiences, and challenging systems of racial inequality".

In racially and ethnically diverse communities anti-racism and anti-racist approaches can be "seen as alternatives to multiculturalism in that they embrace an analysis of the issues of power and justice … [they] argue for basic changes in the power structure of society" (Arshad, n.d., n.p.). Rood (2016) also notes that anti-racism "demands deliberate action to develop policies and fix our industrial complexes such as poverty, redlining, prisons, etc to OPPOSE racism. It demands that we ALL work towards an egalitarian society where everyone has an equal opportunity" (n.p). My contention here is that addressing racism in the context of inequality is about advancing an anti-racism agenda in community development work, and that this is imperative for moving towards greater equity overall.

My case for the need for centring of anti-racist approaches is threefold. First, anti-racist approaches recognise the need for not only empowering racially vulnerable communities, but intentionally centring their voices in racial narratives. In contexts such as Australia, characterised by the denial and silencing of racism which privilege 'white' majoritarian stories; centring voices of racially vulnerable communities is a move towards shifting power over racial narratives to people who experience racism. Majoritarian stories are not only mono-vocal master narratives that silence the voices of people of colour, they also mask "the power of white privilege in constructing stories about race [… moreover…] because majoritarian stories generate from a legacy of racial privilege, they are stories in which racial privilege seems 'natural'" (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 28; see also, Love 2004, p. 229).

Within such a context then, centring the voices of racially vulnerable communities is imperative for creating racial counternarratives central to addressing racial justice. Racial counternarratives are (and can only be) "grounded in the experiences and knowledge of people of colour" (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002 p. 23); and so they can "expose race neutral discourse to reveal how white privilege operates within an ideological framework to reinforce and support unequal societal relations between whites and people of colour" (Merriweather Hunn and Guy, 2006, p. 244). At their core, racial counter narratives trouble and complicate 'false' majoritarian narratives' on race. In other words, racial counternarratives debunk myths of racial equality and the unproblematised 'way we do things'.

Second, anti-racist ideologies in community development work expose, challenge and seek to combat structural racism. An anti-racist stance, as King and Chandler note, "is an active rejection of the institutional and structural aspects of race and racism" (2016, p. 3). According to Hollinsworth, anti-racism

> differs from cultural awareness in that it focuses on dominant, taken-for-granted values, assumptions and practices rather than minoritised communities [it also…] differs from addressing disadvantage (eg. Close the Gap) in that it focuses on advantage and privilege and the structures and processes that maintain them (n.d., n.p)

A structural racism lens within community development therefore allows practitioners to see "more clearly how our nation's core values—and the public policies and institutional practices that are built on them—perpetuate social stratifications and outcomes that all too often reflect racial group sorting rather than individual merit and effort" (Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change, 2004, p. 11).

Finally, when viewed through a bridging social capital, anti-racism within community development allows for genuine collaborative efforts with racially vulnerable communities in addressing social injustices and inequities.

Conclusion

> Community development now has also to work in the local context of the arrival of both migrant workers and refugees and asylum seekers, usually in fairly hostile environments, where there is competition for basic resources, where there frequently has been little history of previous migrant settlement and where little development work has been done with local residents before substantial numbers of such migrants arrive (Craig, 2018, p. 11)

This discussions in this paper arose out of my quest for nuanced understandings of the extent to which Australian community development practice and theory engages with issues of 'race' and racism. A review of community development literature in Australia revealed that there remains a dearth of literature on this. Based on my reading of the literature and interpretation of the gap therein, the paper has argued throughout that community development practice in Australia is informed by non-racist ideologies which accept colour-blindness and racial neutrality. The intention here was not to undermine the progress made by community development practitioners in addressing racial injustice, but to propose that given that such injustices still persist and are very 'real' and 'present' in the lives of racially vulnerable communities, a shift to deliberate and intentional anti-racist informed community development practice is needed. Non-racist ideologies alone no longer suffice: they are not 'change-focussed' because they do not actively attend to the implications of problematic racial differences in a colour coded society such as Australia (even if it presents itself as a racially harmonious space). In so doing, non-racist ideologies indirectly contribute to the very (racial) injustices they seek to combat. The quest for genuine, and effective 'equality for all' in community development practice in a multicultural society must necessarily centre and pay more than lip service to racial justice and equality. The gap between rhetoric (lip service) and reality is very apparent to racialised minorities, as one participant in my study that I cite above noted:

> by way of legal protection we are equal and we have got equal opportunities to live as citizens in Australia […] [but they] segregate [us] because of colour and where we come from and that. (V9, Focus group 1 – Melbourne)

Considering that one of the core values of community development work is respect for difference and diversity (Craig, 2018 p. 327) a racial lens in practice is therefore imperative. This lens also necessarily interrogates of (the role of) whiteness in community development practice. Whiteness is the "default setting on race" in Australia (Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change, 2004). Yet, as

Bowler (2018) notes, whiteness is "a system of privilege that keeps alive racial logics, maintains social division and leaves critical conversations about intercultural futures outside of mainstream planning" (p. 42). I concur with Bowler that as a privileging social system, whiteness "perpetuates unequal relations of power and identity and this requires exposure" (2018, p. 43) within the field of community development. It is important therefore, that anti-racist community development social workers are critical of how the "discourse and performance of community work [can] secure whiteness, not as an explicit act of maintaining privilege, but as an accepted, unnoticed, and even helpful way of seeing and acting in the world" (Todd, 2011, p. 118).

Ethics Approval

Swinburne University of Technology Ethics Committee granted ethics clearance for this study whose findings are presented in this paper.

Funding/Supporting bodies

The study presented here was supported by a grant from Swinburne University of Technology.

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