This thesis is presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Murdoch University 2007
I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

.................................

Natalie McGrath
Abstract

Sustainable development is becoming institutionalised across culture and geography as a framework in which to address ecological and social crises that are increasingly apparent and manifesting in diverse ways across local spaces. It is however, dominated by binary thought which is uncomfortable with ambivalence and separates self from nature and ‘the other’ of Indigenous people. Indigenous people are beginning to use the discourse of sustainable development but approach this from relational and holistic perspectives. The negotiation of representational structures and responsibility for implementing strategies towards sustainable development must account for these cultural differences and will require dialogue. This thesis explores how institutional practice and discourse frames Indigenous representation and responsibility and how this either enables or disenables dialogue with Indigenous people.

A case study approach informed the research, and included two consultancy participatory projects in 2001-2004. The case study was located in the Western Desert of Western Australia and involved the Martu people in addition to people working within institutional structures. The first project required extending community development strategies and strengthening Martu representation to take responsibility for a housing development. The second project, titled *Dialogue with the Pilbara: Newman Tommorrow*, involved encouraging Martu representation in a process based upon deliberative democracy. Reflections from the fieldwork form a considerable part of the analysis. The research also included analysis of a number of interviews with local institutional actors in Newman. Two major themes are outlined: power and representation; and culture. The research is reflexive and involves the use of an autoethnographic story technique which enables a better understanding of the researcher’s implicit and changing perspectives. The lessons that emerged from the reflections from the case study are insightful for sustainable development.

The thesis involves two layers (and is structured accordingly): the first relates to a case study and the second to the theory and practice of sustainable
development. The concluding section combines these two layers and emphasises the need for greater attention to Indigenous participation and autonomy in order to achieve Indigenous sustainable development. This thesis argues that diverse and hybrid Indigenous voices require considerable amplification within the discourse of sustainable development in order to provide relational and holistic perspectives. Particular focus is required upon the negotiation of representative structures to allow for Indigenous voices to be heard, and thus permit for the negotiation of responsibility across culture (an important consideration of sustainable development). This requires ongoing dialogue, creativity and reflexivity in context.
Some of the work in this thesis has appeared in the following publications

**Book chapters**


**Refereed Journal Articles**


**Fully Refereed and Edited Conference Papers**


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Chapter One

Indigenous Sustainable Development in an Age of Ambivalence

1.1 Introduction

The current processes of globalisation are resulting in unprecedented complexity and are creating significant challenges for human societies at the global and diverse local levels. Mebratu (1998 p. 493) states that there is now a “labyrinth of complexity, we have a myriad of systemic dysfunction, each with its own ecological, economic, and social dimensions without simple cause or solution”. Change in this new era is rapid, and appears to be ever accelerating as new technologies allow for faster communication and information flow. The very nature of institutions is changing within a network society which is witnessing the flattening of hierarchies and expanding international social coalitions questioning the legitimacy of institutions such as government and industry. Boundaries that determine representation across geography and cultures are no longer accepted without questioning and the issue of responsibility itself is becoming more complex.

The wellbeing of present generations and likely survival of future generations, human and non-human, will depend greatly upon how the global human community responds to the environmental, social and economic challenges and opportunities that are being presented today. The concept of sustainable development offers a practical philosophy in which to systematically analyse and determine the solutions required in the development of a more just, equitable and peaceful global order. There are many positive examples where this is occurring. However, the use and abuse of sustainability is also now widespread. Risk and financial management have become a common approach to this term, as opposed to the more egalitarian interpretations. Industrial practice has incorporated the use of sustainability in marketing, and triple bottom line reporting by both
government and industry tends to be dominated by the economic and quantitative elements conducive to this accounting style. Holistic approaches to sustainable development that recognise diverse ways of knowing, being and doing are necessary to redress this.

This thesis argues that diverse Indigenous perspectives are required within the discourse of sustainable development to counter the current dominant Eurocentric perspective. This perspective relies upon binary distinctions which draw fixed boundaries between western people and their others (including Indigenous people) and between people and nature. The ambivalence of ‘the other’ and of nature, which was never in fact external, is no longer possible to ignore as witnessed in widespread evidence of ecological destruction and social dysfunction. Indigenous sustainable development has much to offer the wider discourse of sustainable development, but focus upon the negotiation of representative structures is necessary to better allow for Indigenous voices to be amplified within policy frameworks and institutions such as government and industry to encourage dialogue across culture. These representative structures should also allow for the negotiation of responsibility across culture, which is also an important consideration for sustainable development.

Thus, this thesis has a strong policy focus. A case study approach is used within it to explore how institutions such as government and industry frame Indigenous representation and responsibility and how this either enables or obscures Indigenous voices and hence dialogue across culture. The case study is based in the Western Desert of Western Australia and involves studying the representations of the Martu people, an Indigenous group who share a common language. The case study analysis is focused mostly upon local government and industry employees and also examines the relationship of State government to the case study context. The research of the thesis was made possible by the author’s role as a consultant to the government in facilitating two consultancy participatory projects. Both of these involved a State government minister, their respective bureaucracies and local government agencies in addition to representatives from BHP Billiton, a major resource company. Involvement in the two participatory consultancy projects provided a window into the inner
workings of government and industry. The interviews used in the case study were conducted independently of the participatory consultancy projects and form a central aspect of the thesis research. They complemented data that was collected during the enactment of the two participatory consultancy projects.

The meeting between the thesis analysis and the theoretical literature review is centered upon three themes: the first is power and representation; the second is culture; and the third is sustainable development. For me personally, the research was reflexive and involved the constant negotiation of my own subjectivity. This was necessary to better understand my own implicit and changing perspective about Indigenous representation and responsibility. Over the period of the thesis I found that a number of lessons emerged from the case study that are of relevance for the sustainable development discourse.

There are thus two layers within this thesis. The first layer relates to the case study and provides a ‘glocal’ context, which is inclusive of Indigenous perspectives, in which to draw lessons for sustainable development in regards to issues of representation and responsibility across culture. The second layer relates to the theory and practice of sustainable development in an increasingly complex world in which boundaries of representation and responsibility are questionable. This thesis is only one text that could be written and aims to connect and contrast the many stories, including my own, that arose over the length of the development of this research. It is necessary to remind the reader not to freeze the narrative that follows as it is the retelling of stories that opens up possibilities for the future. Clandinin and Connelly (2000 p. 167) write “the written document, the research text, like life, is a continual unfolding in which the narrative insights of today are the chronological events of tomorrow”.

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1 This term was first used by Robertson to indicate global-local dialectics, and thus the diverse local intersections with globalising processes (Robertson 1992).
1.2 Conceptual Background

This section provides a necessary background to the thesis. Sustainable development is used as a framework within the case study and also influenced the writing of this thesis. The ambivalence of sustainable development is outlined in Section 1.2.1, while in Section 1.2.2 the ambivalence of modernity outlines a transition from a first modern society to reflexive modernity (or second modern society). First modern society is based upon control and certainty resulting in firm binary distinctions in which typically non-European people (the other) and nature were externalised. The transition to reflexive modernization is occurring due to increased complexity and uncertainty about the boundaries separating the other and nature. First modern society’s inability to recognise the externalised ambivalence has in fact created complexity. The blurring of borders has generated confusion about representative structures (including questions about the legitimacy of the nation state) and how responsibility is determined. This is particularly complex across culture. The concepts of representation and hybridity are introduced in Section 1.2.3. Indigenous sustainable development as outlined in Section 1.2.4 is the discourse that has provided a means for Indigenous people to question the boundaries of first modern society. All these perspectives set up the background for exploring the research questions of the thesis and my personal position which are outlined later in this chapter.

1.2.1 The Ambivalence of Sustainable Development

Sustainable development has in a matter of decades become discursively dispersed. It is no longer just a fashionable term and is institutionalised across both geographical space and cultures (Frazier 1997; Pezzoli 1997; Mebratu 1998; Castro 2004). The growing body of literature about sustainable development has led to what Frazier (1997 p. 182) describes as a “complex and interminable polemic in a variety of disciplines”. There is a divergent use by specialists from different fields and backgrounds who focus on some aspects whilst ignoring other elements or points of view. According to Pretty (1995 p.
sustainable development is a “complex and contested concept…precise
and absolute definitions…are impossible”. Definitions continue to propagate
however through continuing meiosis. This holds possibility for broad political
debate but can also dilute the significant structural change that is likely to be
required for the implementation of sustainable development.

Definitions and frameworks of sustainable development most often share in
common the inter-weaving of three broad principles, which are either perceived
to be complementary or not. Ambivalence is often discursively associated with
sustainable development in the west. For example Lotz-Sisitka and Raven (2004
p. 68) describe sustainable development as “a three-tiered ambivalent ‘balancing
act’ of ensuring social development, ecological sustainability and economic
development”. In 2004, I attempted this ambivalent balancing act by defining
sustainable development as:

a framework of principles, a philosophy of practice that engages multi-
levels, places and cultures in a systematic approach towards better
environmental and social health whilst simultaneously allowing the
economic improvement that this may require. Sustainability emphasises
the importance of the local, of knowledge and action, but relates this to a
broader global perspective in which interrelationships are recognised
(Marinova and McGrath 2004 p. 1).

Most definitions, including the one above, should lead (but often don’t)
immediately to a number of difficult questions including: What does/does not the
definition include? Who decides, at what scale and how? These questions are
generally answered by capitalists, administrators, scientists and technocrats who
have been influenced over the last few decades by neo-liberalism. Political and
power struggles around these questions are treated as taboo (Frazier 1997). For
many, this is a necessary strategy in order to maintain the dominant and
oppressive ideology that continues to exploit and extract for the benefit of a few
and avoids redistribution from the few to the many (Shiva 1992; Robinson
2004).
The contested nature of the concept thus represents a battle for influence over decision making about boundaries of resources, representation and responsibility. The question of development has been particularly contested. Debate has focused upon the narrow translation of economic growth, who receives the benefits and/or bears the costs, and whether growth is possible at all given its ecological and social consequences. Mitcham (1995 p. 311) describes the ambivalence of two key camps by writing that “the strengths and weaknesses of this concept rests in its ambivalent bridging of both pro-growth developmentist and no-growth environmentalist concerns”\(^2\). The integrative aspects of sustainable development can be seen as a strength and weakness. Power is a necessary consideration and thus so is the balance between compromise, conflict and collaboration.

The boundaries of sustainable development are however mostly overly-determined by the global self-described elite and ambivalence is produced as a result. The institutions of the ‘west’ (wherever they are wandering) function around boundaries separating the subject from object, mind from matter, nature from society, the self from its other, and so on. It has been well documented that this separation has allowed for the perpetuation of an anthropocentric and instrumental view of the other (both humans and nature) and subsequent exploitation. This dualistic approach has been useful for development and progress following the Enlightenment. However, there is now a substantial body of literature linking this separation to the global ecological and social crisis, the unfolding of which is being felt in local places in diverse ways.

The emergence of postmodernism has thrown this approach to boundary drawing into question and has provided an opportunity to explore the contradictions of modern society more generally. However, the consequential emerging “new

\(^2\) The confusion about sustainable development has been compounded by the emergence of an alternative term, sustainability. Robinson (2004) states that government and the private sector have tended to use sustainable development whilst non-governments organizations and academia instead use the word sustainability. Sustainability is seen as being more distant from the association of development with economic growth and thus to better align discussion to the environmental limits of human society. I will follow the example of Robinson by using the term sustainable development as a means of emphasizing the ambivalence that arises from this term.
The separation of social, economic and environmental dimensions that often is depicted by sustainable development discourse and methods is artificial and fails to present the hybridity of reality. Swanson (2005 p. 88) writes that “no social practice is purely economic, cultural or political … the search for root or singular causes … is abandoned in favor of concrete explorations of the specific and numerous processes constituting and enabling any phenomenon”. The modern segmentation of social, economic and environmental spheres contrasts to Indigenous traditional worldviews in which nature/culture and social/economic/political are seen to be inseparable. Applying sustainable development from the west may in fact be counter to the wellbeing of Indigenous societies. It also represents a missed opportunity for cross-cultural learning, which is an important consideration in sustainable development.

This thesis starts from the premise that an immediate focus of sustainable development discourse should be upon the spaces between cultures, disciplines and geographical places. Sustainable development is often, in practice, used uncritically to cross boundaries. Its use tends to assume a common understanding, a unilateral discourse in addition to a unified frame of values which in actuality is rarely the case. The power of definition and implementation through discourse and other institutional frameworks is an important consideration and this thesis will explore perspectives about Indigenous sustainable development through the lens of power (Chapter Four) and culture.

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3 This method categorises and measures social, environmental and economic costs and benefits separately.
Necessary questions include: Who is inside and outside, who is between? Who is putting who/what outside? Who is responsible? Such questions often remain unanswered and fall between the spaces.

1.2.2 The Ambivalence of Modernity

Ambivalence also features in discussions about modernity as conceptualised by Bauman\(^4\) who argued in 1991 in *Modernity and Ambivalence* that the modern search for order leads to a perception of ambivalence as a waste and a weakness, and it is thus experienced as discomfort. Bauman (1991 p. 15) writes: “if modernity is about the production of order then ambivalence is the waste of modernity”. The modern approach to ambivalence is to continue to apply technology and managerialism in which to contain and control the discomfort of ambivalence. Hamdi and Goethert explain the modern tendency to control, model, predict and make certain, inhibit instead of promoting, weaken instead of supporting (Hamdi & Goethert 1997). This approach to problem-solving produces further problems in the form of ambivalence. According to Bauman:

The struggle against ambivalence is, therefore, both self-destructive and self-propelling. It goes on with unabating strength because it creates its own problems in the course of resolving them. Order and chaos are thus modern twins (Bauman 1991 p. 3).

Ambivalence functions in between and above polarities. However, ambivalence is only a problem for the modern world because of decision making processes that involve establishing boundaries defined through internal and external characteristics.

Bauman argues that the rupture of post-modernisation has been overstated and reflects a process of periodisation typical of modernity. He writes:

The appearance of sequence is, to be sure, itself an effect of the modern knack for neat divisions, clean breaks and pure substances. The postmodern celebration of difference and contingency has not displaced the modern lust for uniformity and certainty. Moreover, it is unlikely ever

\(^4\) Bauman provides a considerable contribution to the discussion of this section.
to do it; it has no capacity of doing so. Being what it is, postmodern mentality and practice cannot displace or eliminate or even marginalise anything (Bauman 1991 p. 255).

Postmodernity does however provide the opportunity to explore the ambivalence of modernity and sustainable development by throwing a spotlight onto boundaries that create ambivalence.

In 2001, Bauman draws attention to the individualisation of ambivalence and states:

> Like so many aspects of contemporary society, the dangers of ambivalence have undergone a process of deregulation, and the task of coping with the results … has been privatised. Ambivalence may be, as before, a social phenomenon, but each one of us faces it alone, as a personal problem (Bauman 2001 p. 69).

This individualisation is a result of what Bauman calls a second ‘liquid modernity’ which is described as a ‘light’, or ‘liquefied’ modernity – as distinct from ‘heavy’, and better still ‘hard’ and ‘solid’ modernity of yore: ours is not the ‘constructed’, administered and managed, but a diffuse, all-permeating, all-penetrating, all-saturating kind of modernity” (cited in Beilharz 2001 p. 339). Responsibility has become both diffuse and complex. The de-structuration of modernity has also been termed ‘reflexive modernity’ (Beck et al. 2003).

The discussion to follow outlines the transition to reflexive modernisation and is drawn mainly from the work of Ulrich Beck. Other primary authors include Lash, Bonss and Lau, Giddens (who prefers the term late modern) and Lyotard, (a post-modernist who prefers to use re-modernisation). The work of Bauman also supports this analysis, and is referred to by these authors but there is, to some extent, debate between them⁵.

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⁵ With the aim of providing a succinct summary, the discussion focuses upon the commonalities rather than differences.
**First modern society**

First modern society is based upon a number of premises. Beck et al. write that these premises include:

- the foundations of its self-description, the explicit or implicit assumptions expressed in the actions and self-understanding of citizens, the goals of politics and the routines of social institutions (Beck et al. 2003 p. 4).

They have developed over time gradually and the following six points provide a succinct summary of this social form. The first three are structural and systemic whilst the last three focus upon the self-description of social action (Beck et al. 2003).

1. The relations of first modern societies are contained within territorial boundaries defined by the nation state. Institutions are generally based upon this relationship.

2. Individualisation is a feature of first modern societies, in which individuals are free and equal and can associate voluntarily. However, individuals are bounded by patterns of collective life that resemble pre-modern structures and are determined by status at birth, e.g. gender.

3. Work and gainful employment structure first modern societies to the extent of being fully employed, with minimal unemployment. Participation in the economy determines one’s status, consumption and ability to apply for social security.

4. Nature is perceived by first modern societies as exploitable. It is both central and marginal, and appears as outside and separate from society. Nature is perceived as neutral, which is and should be accessible without limits. This is a prerequisite of industrial societies in which endless growth is normalised and where externalities are displaced and appear to originate elsewhere.

5. First modern societies are guided by scientific rationality which emphasises instrumental control. Rational progress is assumed to
continue without limits and involves demystification. Scientisation is assumed to perfect the control of society over nature.

6. Development is understood and managed according to the principle of functional differentiation.

The premises of first order modernity were integrated as foundational and tacit assumptions. Beck et al. (2003) argue that this process was a prerequisite for developing a number of social structures which are self-described by first order modernity as natural and unalterable. These include the nation state; the territorial organisation of production; the sexual division of labour; the nuclear family; class identities; the separation of social subsystems (economy, politics, technical management, culture and science) which became distinct and hierarchal; the restructuring of social knowledge in which theoretical and supervisory knowledge became superior to experiential and occupational knowledge; and the creation of knowledge gap between experts and laypeople based upon the expertise of professionals (Beck et al. 2003).

The ambivalence of first order modern society is described as the transition to second order modernity or alternatively reflexive modernisation (Beck et al. 2003).

**Second modern society: Reflexive modernisation**

The theoretical argument of reflexive modernisation (or second modern society) is based upon the radicalisation of first modern society, ‘the modernisation of modern society’ (Beck et al 2003 p. 1)⁶. Reflexive modernisation is seen to involve a ‘meta-change’, a change in the experiential and theoretical coordinates as well as the basic institutions of first modern society. This has resulted from what Beck et al. (2003 p. 2) describe as “a critical mass of unintended side-effects … the host of consequences resulting from the boundary-shattering force of market expansion, legal universalism and technical revolution”. The term

⁶ Modernity is not equated here with industrial capitalism, which Beck (1997) argues is a failure of most theories of social change.
‘reflexive’ indicates the unintended and unplanned for changes created from these side-effects and is an inherent feature of the modernisation process. Latour (2003 p. 37) explains that “second modernity is first modernity plus its externalities: everything that had been externalised as irrelevant or impossible to calculate is back in – with a vengeance”. He cites the ecological crisis as the most obvious example as there is no longer an outside to where externalities can be relegated and ignored. Re-drawing boundaries is however complex but essential for negotiating the ambivalence of sustainable development.

A first modern society perspective rests upon the faith that progress was infinite and linear, that the environment would assimilate problems or renewal would emerge from technical innovation. Risks in first modern society were seen to be marginal ambivalence and not to threaten the foundations of this social form. Reflexive modernity is by contrast a risk society (a term coined by Beck), where the unintended side effects of first modern society are unavoidable and intractable. This is also a society which is non-linear and complex. Reflexive modernity requires a focus upon: the globalised, complex and non-linear side-effects of modernity; the unintended, uncontrollable and circular consequences of these side-effects; the new asymmetries of risk arise and conflicts over responsibility become complex. Control and linearity can no longer justify the progress of first modern society (Beck 1994; Beck 1995; Beck et al. 2003; Latour 2003). This has important ramifications for sustainable development discourse which was both born within (see Appendix One), and is arguably dominated by, this approach.

Advocates of first order modernity do admit that there are problems but argue that they do not undermine the first modern system and that it is possible to continue towards increasing differentiation and complexity whilst maintaining control over nature. A substantial body of the sustainable development literature shares this argument. This is itself a feature of first modern society which inherently self-describes as the end and totality of history and as a social form that will continue infinitely. Such belief leads to words such as ‘ambivalence, ambiguity, perplexity and contradiction’ which are used to describe the unintended side-effects of first modern society (Beck et al. 2003). The side-
effects can be traced to a number of processes currently underway, including (Beck et al. 2003):

- Globalisation which is undermining the belief that society is described by the nation state and also the economic foundations of first modern society.
- Globalisation is also changing the relation between the local and global and thus has political and cultural dimensions.
- Individualisation and the multiplication of post-traditional social bonds and post-national imagined communities.
- The process of individualisation has transformed gender roles and has dissolved the sexual division of labor;
- A breakdown in the full employment society is occurring as a result of flexible employment practices and also because status, consumption and social security choices have become independent of income and of labor force participation.
- A perception of a global ecological crisis and discourse about limited resources are prompting questions about nature as a neutral and infinite provider that exists outside human society.

Reflexive modernity occurred whilst first modern people were occupied with rationalising in accordance with first modern premises. This method of analysis became obsolete before first modern people were aware (Beck 1994). Latour argues that in fact we have never been modern, that modernity’s self-representation has never been adequate to describe its practice (Latour 1993; Latour 2003). Latour states that this is:

because the moderns took themselves to be so thoroughly disentangled from the shackles of the past that they were so efficient at entangling themselves, and all other nations, with everything on earth and beyond … efficacious estrangement from their own practice which allowed them to do the exact opposite of what they were saying (Latour 2003 p. 38).

Thus, first modern society’s estrangement from the past and future and from its own unfolding consequences created the ambivalence of reflexive modernity.

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7 This point is heavily debated.
The modern focus upon the future has led to the creation of a society which is placed within a continuous history. Beck et al. (2003 p. 10) write “from the beginning, modernity is about the end of the end of history”. Each new moment is unique and this change is continuous. First modern society is thus set within a particular relationship of space and time and is based upon the idea of a continuous self-reproducing present. The future is an expected otherness (Beck et al. 2003). This argument is particularly valuable to reflect upon Indigenous issues.

Beck et al. (2003 p. 10) write that “(t)he concept of ‘modernity’ thus combines an historical break with the creation of history … break and continuity, stability and change are both inseparable sides of the same modern coin”. Ambivalence exists in that both sides of this coin have modern meanings. First modern society is bounded by not only an independent time zone, a present that extends both into the past and future, but is also contained by a determinate space, the nation state. Beck et al. (2003 p. 11) state “suddenly the beginning and end of modern society was identified with the past and future of the nation-state, as if there was nothing modern before it and nothing modern that could come after”. The historical metaphysics of this rests on three characteristics: the homology of space and time; the national identity of space and people; and the equivalence of past and future. However, in the dimensions of both space and time the contradiction between the expected otherness of the future and the unfolding global future is widening the difference between what is expected and what has been experienced (Beck et al. 2003). Ambivalence is in fact growing in response to a first modern approach.

Giddens (1994) argues that the process of globalisation is disembedding traditional institutions. Institutions are rapidly changing in response to a changing environment in which rules are becoming constitutive rather than regulative, and may become unrecognisable as institutions (Lash 2003). First modern society was initially met by a counter-modern base. However individualisation which is a pillar of the modernisation process has put pressure upon counter-modern tendencies to justify their form. The radicalisation of modernity however continues to affect all spheres. In this regard, reflexive
modernity encapsulates the whole breadth of the modernisation process. Giddens describes this as detraditionalisation (Giddens 1994). Lash (1994 p. 114) writes that full modernisation occurs “only when further individualisation also sets agency free from even these (simply modern) social structures”. What the result will be is unclear and is likely to require significant institutional experimentation coupled with critical learning.

The process of individualisation has important ramifications for changes in subjectivity. In first modern society the subject was perceived as possessing limited sovereignty and agency. An essentialist worldview depicted individuals building lives in pre-given and unalterable boundaries, decided at birth. In reflexive modernity the individual becomes a quasi-subject, the producer and the result of boundaries and networks (Beck et al. 2003). Roles become de-normalised, the subject is nomadic and must find their own rule (Lash 2003). Beck et al. (2003 p. 25) write “paradoxically, the individual remains, and may become more than ever, a fictive decision maker, the author of his self and his biography”. Thus, the pre-given boundaries of first modern society are pluralised and become flexible; the possibility of both inclusion and exclusion is multiplied. The location of the individual within a collective is no longer given within pre-given structures, but can only be answered by the individual (Beck et al. 2003). This influences the determination of individual identities in spaces of dense cultural interaction such as the Australian society, continent and history where Indigenous people have prominent presence.

1.2.3 Representation and Hybridity

Discourses about Indigenous people have included the anthropological, the romantic and the racist (Muecke 1992). All three result from a relationship of difference and dominance and share similarities (Subhabrata 2000). Indigenous people have been typified as the ignoble savage, particularly as colonialism gathered strength (Attwood 1992; Langton 1993b). This representation is time bound and reflects the socio-cultural and political context in which it is found (Wilson 2003). It can construct ‘the other’ to suit an ideal image and is based
upon a desire; this extends only as far as we want to know and control. Producing ‘the other’ is seen to be ‘the burden of the fittest’ (Kapoor 2004).

Said’s (1979) Orientalism provides a framework as to how the Orient, or ‘the other’ is only seen through western eyes, which has allowed other processes of domination to follow. His analysis has been subject to criticism based upon the flattening of history and geography, which is subsumed under the homogenous and essentialist ‘other’ and leaves no space for counter-voices to be heard. The other remains undifferentiated and unchanging. Said states that Orientalism creates its own truth and it is not possible to know reality outside of this truth. He also implies that Orientalism is a representation and not the truth. Said however fails to provide any indication of how an alternative reality may be accessed and how counter voices can be heard (Mohan 2002).

A second strand of postcolonial thought focuses on these criticisms. Authors such as Bhabha (1983) and Spivak (1988) have challenged the notion that colonialism was hegemonic. Hybridity through a ‘productive’ process such as mimicry can open up spaces of radical possibilities for political agencies. It is a subversive form of resistance, as “mimicry is at once resemblance and menace” (Bhabha 1983). A Marxian attempt at recovering marginalised voices is the work of the Subaltern Studies Group. It seeks to move the focus from elite perspectives to those of the marginalised, which may open up the possibilities for new social forms (Mohan 2002). Howarth (2004) inserts a hyphen into re-presentation to allow for the relational, contested and ongoing nature of re-presentation. This accounts for the agency of the other and also for the argumentative nature of discourse.

The response to the criticisms of postcolonialism has been twofold. The first (often by the older, senior people) has been to reject the critique. They either deny that their scholarship is political or that their research is subjective. They express concern that Indigenous criticisms of intellectual colonialism translate into a monopoly over ownership of the past and definitions of Indigeneity. There is also a concern that debate about epistemology will paralyse knowledge. The second (often by the younger, less senior people) has been that the relationship
between power and knowledge in representation requires considerable reflection (Attwood 1992). I self-describe to this second group.

The Subaltern Studies Group raises a number of questions concerning intellectual representation and ‘speaking of’ or re-presenting – constructing accounts and writing texts, and ‘speaking for’ – advocating and mediating (Bhabha 1983; Spivak 1988; Mohan 2002; Kapoor 2004). Is it possible to have non-Indigenous knowledge about Indigenous people or is it the case that all knowledge involves interpretation which distorts worldviews and experience (Attwood 1992)? The response to these questions by some Indigenous people and non-Indigenous revisionists has been negative, or that it should be limited to particular occasions and subjects, or in reply to Indigenous people when spoken to. Attwood (1992) argues that this has overlooked that the problem may actually be how and what non-Indigenous people speak about. He draws three conclusions:

1. Non-Indigenous scholars will continue to speak about Indigenous people but should not speak for them. This creates a common ground for dialogue and exchange of information which involves speaking and listening.

2. Knowledge should be committed and whilst one finds another viewpoint of value, one should remain committed to the viewpoint with the most value.

3. Knowledge should be oppositional and useful in its attempt to overthrow Aboriginalist structures of power and knowledge (Attwood 1992).

The writing of this PhD thesis attempts to follow Attwood’s three conclusions outlined above. It is not the intention to speak from a Martu perspective but instead to reflect upon how I was positioned and how I positioned myself within the participatory projects. It is also the aim of this PhD research to reflect upon how institutional discourse and practice, including my own, represent Martu people.
1.2.4 Indigenous Sustainable Development

It can be argued that sustainable development has been and continues to be an inseparable practice and ethic of Indigenous traditions. Jull (2002 p. 18) states that sustainable development has been “a daily lived reality, an organic part of evolved and evolving indigenous economies, societies, cultures, and self-identifying political communities” and “integral to indigenous oral knowledge and sheer survival”. Mebratu (1998 p. 496) writes that “traditional wisdom has much to offer in terms of living in harmony with nature and in society” and that “this is one of the fundamental tenants of the concept of sustainability”.

Despite this long tradition, the discourse of sustainable development has remained largely western and has ignored Indigenous efforts to articulate and self-determine their own holistic development efforts. There is still inadequate attention given by western institutions to what Indigenous people have to offer sustainable development. Indigenous concerns were accorded a high profile in the Brundtland report in 1987 (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987) but subsequent international sustainable development conferences have not met this standard (Havemann and Whall 2002).

The discourse of sustainable development has however given Indigenous people a language to rearticulate long standing claims about Indigenous rights, self-determination and relationship to country (Kinnane 2005). This language is powerful despite the fact that some culture is lost in translation, and government and industry can pick and choose elements of Indigenous sustainable development (Jull 2002). Jull writes that sustainable development:

> has been the driving force and core of broad indigenous resistance to the assimilation of their homelands into the industrial economy, while providing also an ethic and rationale for the small-scale local control, knowledge, and cultural distinctiveness which indigenous societies represent” (Jull 2002 p. 22).
Indigenous involvement with sustainable development discourse leads to a necessary rethinking of other movements within this discourse and subverts the unity of interests model (Kinnane 2005). This is particularly necessary as the global environmental and social challenge is a crisis of values, ideas, perspectives and knowledge (Cortese 2003). Albert Einstein argued that the significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we used when we created them (in Calaprice 2000). Alternative epistemological models are required to address the problems created by first modern society. Hoff (1998) writes that the concept of sustainable development should ideally raise questions about the dominant western cultural paradigms and values. This must include critical questioning about the assumptions and activities of modern economics, science and technology (Hoff 1998). It is important that Indigenous people are included in this questioning. Additionally, there are significant lessons for society as a whole about the difficult choices Indigenous people face daily in regards to which aspects of western society to incorporate and which aspects to resist.

Indigenous sustainable development is only sustainable when it accords with social, cultural and spiritual elements of Indigenous worldviews (Kinnane 2005). This must allow for responsibility to future generations and to country (Clarkson et al. 1992). Approaches to Indigenous sustainable development must also allow for the changing nature of culture, for the hybrid cultural positions of Indigenous people and thus for diversity.

A radical framework is needed in order to engage Indigenous people (Jull 2002; Kinnane 2005) and allow for the autonomous space of Indigenous free choice. In Australia, the last decade has witnessed a policy approach termed ‘practical reconciliation’ which provides a conservative framework that seeks to close Indigenous autonomous space. Difference is seen as undesirable in this policy approach, which is likened later on in this thesis to a first modern society perspective (see Chapter Three for Federal and State government policies and Chapter Four and Five for a comparison with the case study practice and discourse).
Against this background there is a need to study how western institutions deal with Indigenous people, in particular how people within these institutions represent Indigenous people. This was the primary aim of the thesis.

1.3 Research Questions and Structure of the Thesis

It is essential to define the boundaries of research and this section outlines the research questions (in Section 1.3.1) and the structure of the thesis (Section 1.3.2).

1.3.1 Research Questions

The research within this thesis was open and cyclical which allowed themes to emerge throughout the journeys between the field and the University library and to capture the subsequent layers of reflection. It was therefore not desirable to approach the research with rigid aims. Initially the research aims and questions focused upon the use of participatory methods with Indigenous people in Australia which lead the author to accept consultancy work for the government to facilitate participatory projects. Involvement in these projects provided data for the thesis research, although the researcher had little control over the design and content of the projects. In the first participatory consultancy project it became clear that there was little space for Martu voices to negotiate with government and industry. This finding was reaffirmed through the author’s involvement as a consultant in the second consultancy participatory project. A number of interviews were conducted as part of the thesis research at the local case study level to understand the ramifications of this finding. In addition, an ongoing literature review about the importance of Indigenous inclusion in policy for sustainable development was occurring. A clearer outline of the research process is provided in Chapter Two. Thus, over the length of the thesis two research questions emerged which frame the story that follows in subsequent chapters.
Research Question One:

How do Australian institutions frame Indigenous representation and responsibility?

Research Question Two:

What lessons relevant for sustainable development emerge from a case study approach to Research Question One?

The research questions correlate to the two layers of research within this thesis. The first question relates to the layer of research relating to a policy analysis of national policy and also to the layers of research relating to the Western Australian case study and the empirical information that emerged through involvement in the two consultancy participatory projects and through the interviews. The case study provided an important context in which to examine institutional perceptions about Indigenous responsibility and representation in a local context. Lessons from this case study are likely to be relevant to other contexts where the processes of colonialism continue between imported and imposed structures and the populations that existed prior to this imposition. The Western Australian government and industry structures are considered by the thesis to provide an example of the Australian institutions that exist elsewhere. Similarly, there are probable lessons that can be drawn from a close examination of the Western Australian institutions and their interactions with the Martu people. The use of the word Indigenous in the first research questions is to acknowledge the potential of the lessons from the case study in this thesis for other contexts.

The consultancy participatory projects in the case study context also provided an opportunity to explore participation as a method across culture, and in particular how institutional perceptions about Indigenous people influenced the use of this method. The lessons from the case study have implications beyond the local context, as it is necessary for sustainable development to examine how boundaries of representation and responsibility are negotiated between cultures.
The second question is based upon drawing useful lessons from the case study for the layer of research about sustainable development. Chapters Three, Four and Five relate mostly to the first question whilst the second question is relevant primarily to the content of Chapter Six.

1.3.2 Structure of the Thesis

The second chapter of the thesis explains the research methodology which covers four stages and an ongoing process of literature review and reflexivity. The methodology is based upon two participatory projects (Stages 1, 2 and 3) which took place within a case study located in the Western Desert and involved the Martu people, their common identity determined in this instance through a shared language. Both projects also involved different Western Australian State government Ministers, their respective bureaucracies and also local government agencies in addition to representatives from BHP Billiton, a mining company. A Stage 4 of fieldwork involved interviews with local agencies and BHP Billiton and sought stories about cross-cultural experience. Quotes from the transcripts of the interviews are used throughout the thesis and are distinguished by an indented italic style. The methodology was driven by reflexivity, and the negotiation of my own subjectivity was ongoing. This was enabled by a method which I have termed an autoethnographic story technique and which is explained in this second chapter. Reflections from the participatory projects, the discourse from the interviews and my own stories are found throughout the thesis.

Chapter Three provides an overarching ideological framework necessary for the discussion that follows in the subsequent chapters. A brief genealogy of Australian policy from the time of colonisation is provided in order to frame the current discussion. An introduction to discourse and the generation of storylines are presented, and two storylines about Indigenous sustainable development are also outlined. The first outlines an essential Indigenous storyline depicting Indigenous aspirations and the ideology that underlies these. The second depicts the Federal government storyline, which fails to recognise many of the claims of
Indigenous people. The Federal storyline provides the overarching umbrella for policy relating to Indigenous people in Australia. These storylines are compared through four categories: participation, identity, governance and economy. The analysis shows that there is substantial discursive confusion about Indigenous sustainable development.

Power and representation are the primary themes within Chapter Four. It begins by outlining theories of power, which provides a theoretical backdrop for the discussion further in the chapter. The case study discourse from the interviews is compared to the four categories outlined in Chapter Three. A summary of how local case study discourse compares to the Federal storyline and the essential Indigenous storyline is provided in a discussion section. The remainder of this discussion is based upon themes that have emerged from reflections from the participatory projects and also from the interviews relevant to power and representation. This includes an analysis of regional narratives (the context of the case study), power and knowledge in the case study projects, representation of Martu people and an exploration about the determination of boundaries that include and exclude.

Culture and the politics of difference are discussed in Chapter Five. It explores firstly local perspectives about Martu cultural change and how Martu culture is perceived as different. The discussion demonstrates that power and representation within local discourse create boundaries that contrast essential differences between Martu people and people who are not Martu. This reflects negatively upon Martu people who are seen to belong to only two categories: traditional or damaged and lost. Gender is discussed in Section 5.4, and is included as a separate category reflecting the bias that I took into the first participatory project. The politics of difference about Martu people is explored through four categories that emerged from the research: community, individual, family and leaders. A discussion is provided which reflects upon Martu hybridity, politics and cross-cultural communication.

Chapter Six relates mostly to the second research question. It explores why Indigenous perspectives are necessary for sustainable development in an age of
ambivalence. Lessons of hope for sustainable development relate mostly to the reframing of culture and also the reframing of power and politics. The reframing of power and politics is necessary to allow space for alternative voices other than the dominant culture. A deliberative cosmopolitan democracy is proposed as a mechanism for this. Institutional change as explained and outlined in this chapter is necessary to better allow for the building of relationships across culture and for hybrid forms of governance in context.

A summary of the thesis and conclusions are provided in Chapter Seven which also identifies areas of further research.

1.4 My Personal Historical Position

Moreton-Robinson (2000 p. xv) writes that “(t)he protocol for introducing one’s self to Indigenous people is to provide information about one’s cultural location, so that connection can be made on political, cultural and social grounds and relations established”. Following this advice, I provide an introduction to myself in this section. My aim is neither to culturally appropriate an Indigenous tradition nor to suggest that I have been accepted into Indigenous tradition. Instead I hope to introduce myself in order to provide some historical background to the self that I brought to this thesis. I analyse my changing subjectivity over the course of the fieldwork through an autoethnographic story technique, described in Chapter Two.

I am from a middle-to-upper class background. I currently live in Perth, the capital of Western Australia. My early childhood was spent with my parents in Papua New Guinea. Memories of that time are sentimental and we often reminisce as a family. We did not have a television and I read widely. I remember the climate as balmy and carefree. Relatives of the ‘nationals’ (the term commonly used to refer to the first nation population by mostly Australian expatriates) often came to visit the property to my parents’ dismay, although they were always welcomed. I remember spending afternoons on the dirt floor in the hut beside our house sharing food and laughter. My sister and I were
occasionally looked after by ‘national’ women who worked under my father at the Commonwealth Bank.

We returned to Perth for my high school and I have never quite settled since. Prior to this thesis I had little previous daily contact with Indigenous culture in Australia. Most of my adult life had been spent at University. I had for most of my life considered myself a feminist and have struggled with what this might mean in my own culture since my teenage years. I have also had a passion for the environmental movement since my mid teenage years, in addition to my compassion for what I have often heard termed ‘the marginalised’.

I came to University in the early 1990s jokingly classified as a ‘hippy’ by my middleclass high school friends. I undertook an environmental science degree hoping to follow in the footsteps of Jane Goodell, played by Sigourney Weaver in *Gorillas in the Mist*. Throughout my science degree I also completed a number of economic units, which allowed inter-disciplinary thought. I remember strategically planning subversion with the discourse of economics as a tool. I subsequently finished both my Environmental Science and Economics degrees and enrolled in an Honours degree in Economics. Despite achieving high grades in my Honours units, I was hesitant to undertake a thesis in a discipline that failed to describe adequately the depth and breadth of the issues with which I was concerned, primarily, the use of participatory methods across culture. I subsequently moved to the Institute for Sustainability and Technology Policy where I finished my Honours degree relating to participatory development and started this research.

Since beginning this thesis in 2001, I have worked extensively at the Institute for Sustainability and Technology Policy. This has included lecturing, tutoring and research work. I have helped to coordinate and lecture in a unit called Global and Regional Sustainability and I have lectured in units such as Indigenous Sustainability, Overseas Aid and International Development, Introduction to Sustainable Development and Reinventing Australia. I have also been involved in a number of large research projects including the first participatory project for the Department of Housing and Works, the second participatory project titled
Dialogue with the Pilbara: Newman Tomorrow, the Pilbara Regional Sustainability Strategy and an AHURI (Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute) project titled Indigenous Access to Public and Community Housing. It has been impossible to separate this work from my PhD. The experience from the case study has provided a necessary context to the theoretical ground of University and enriched my teaching and research, and in turn theory has helped me to conceptualise the issues that arose in the field. Most importantly, my time in the field was necessary to reposition my own representations about Indigenous people, and also to realise that this task will be ongoing.

Thinking both across disciplines and cultures throughout this thesis has provided no shortage of challenges to not only my intellectual limits and stamina, but also to my emotional and physical strength. The learning has been steep and I hope will continue.
Chapter Two
Reflecting upon Methodology: Dialoguing in the Desert

2.1 Introduction

Methodology is an important aspect to this thesis and is explained and reflected upon within this chapter. The principle aim of the methodology adopted for this research is to enable a reflexive and layered approach building on participatory projects. This is considered necessary in a cross-cultural environment that is dominated by western instrumental hegemony, and allows little space for Indigenous voices. A number of different methods are utilised to better understand the multiple and layered perspectives within institutions. These are detailed within this chapter.

The research is based upon a case study located in the Western Desert. The thesis research involved reflections from two consultancy participatory projects that involved a Western Australian government department, local government agencies, a mining company BHP Billiton and Martu people (an Indigenous group). The first consultancy participatory project is divided into Stage 1 and Stage 2 for the purposes of analysis in this thesis. The second consultancy participatory project is titled Stage 3. A Stage 4 of the research involved interviews with local government agencies. A brief chronological overview of these stages of fieldwork is provided in this chapter in addition to the initial major reflections from each of the four stages. Negotiating my subjectivity was an important aim of this thesis due to my participation within the projects and the close involvement with the people from the case study. This is achieved through an autoethnographic story technique, an original approach that developed early in the thesis (also detailed in this chapter). The reflections from the practice of participation within the projects, the discourse from the interviews and my stories are found in the chapters to follow.
Section 2.2 outlines a phronetic approach to research (based upon practical knowledge and ethics) that was utilised within the case study approach. The background to the case study is also explained. The participatory and reflexive methods employed in this thesis are detailed in Section 2.3. Section 2.4 presents chronologically the four stages of fieldwork.

2.2 Phronetic Research: A Case Study Approach

A number of social thinkers, including Weber, Foucault and Habermas, point to the change in western epistemology since the Enlightenment, whereby value-rationality (Wertrationalität) has been increasingly over-shadowed by instrumental rationality (Zweckrationalität) which has been the main driver of first modern society discussed in the previous chapter. This is termed the Rationalist Turn by Flyvbjerg (2004), who links it to the rise of the risk society. Flyvbjerg argues that an Aristotelian focus on value rationality in balance with instrumental rationality is necessary. He states (2004 p. 53) that “(p)roblems with both biosphere and sociosphere indicate that social and political development based on instrumental rationality alone is not sustainable”. The dominance of instrumental rationality means for Flyvbjerg that the methodology of social science requires reformulation to reintegrate values and extend current understandings of rationality. He is particularly interested in Aristotle’s intellectual virtues, Episteme, Techne and Phronesis (2001 p. 57):

Episteme Scientific knowledge. Universal, invariable, context independent. Based on general analytical rationality. The original concept is known today from the terms ‘epistemology’ and ‘epistemic’.

Techne Craft/art. Pragmatic, variable, context-dependent. Orientated towards production. Based on practical instrumental rationality governed by a conscious goal. The original concept appears today in terms such as ‘technique’, ‘technical’, and ‘technology’.

Based on practical value-rationality. The original concept has no analogous contemporary term.

Thus, episteme is focused upon theoretical knowledge, techné is concerned with technical knowledge and phronesis relates to practical knowledge and ethics. Aristotle is very clear in that no one virtue can be replaced by another, for example phronesis by techné, which often occurs today. Flyvbjerg (2001) argues that social science must better incorporate phronesis into the production of knowledge to allow for values and context.

Flyvbjerg believes that the Rationalist Turn has over-shadowed alternatives to a society dominated by instrumental rationality. He (2004 p. 54) observes that “(t)he Rationalist Turn has been so radical that possible alternatives which might have existed previously, are beyond our current vision, just as centuries of rationalist socialisation seems to have undermined the ability of individuals and society to even conceptualise a nonrationalist past and future”. By contrast, Indigenous people around the world have resisted the international colonial forces driven by instrumental rationality for centuries. However, the gaze of the Western individual falls upon the past, present and future as well as other cultures and obscures the possible emergence of other worldviews.

This thesis was positioned to incorporate a phronetic approach to the research process. It is worth therefore briefly outlining the methodological criteria for phronetic research set by Flyvbjerg, and followed throughout the research. These include (Flyvbjerg 2001):

- A focus on values
- Placing power at the core of the analysis
- Looking at practice before discourse
- Studying cases and contexts
- Asking both: How? (understanding) and Why? (explanation) through narrative
- Joining agency and structure
- Dialoguing with polyphony of voices.
The remainder of this chapter expands upon these criteria by discussing the methods that were utilised by the research process.

### 2.2.1 A Case Study Approach

A case study approach is appropriate for phronetic research as it provides context. Flyvbjerg (2001) writes that human action and judgment cannot be reduced to principles and theory, phronesis is considered to be context dependent. A case study approach is located within the post-positivist tradition and is combined with a story telling methodology approach to envisage “the universal in the particular, the world in a grain of sand” (Sandercock 2003 p. 183).

A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Yin 1994). Case studies provide explanatory power, help to illustrate abstract concepts, and are useful to explain holistically dynamics that work over time (Fook 1986). They are important for the research of sustainable development as they provide the context to better reveal transdisciplinary understandings that lead to or result from process-orientated change through a praxis which relates theory and practice.

There is some debate about what actually constitutes a case. It is generally considered to be bounded or limited to the extent by which the study is both manageable and meaningful (Stake 1995; Punch 1998; Babbie 2004). The case

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8 Transdisciplinarity has evolved from the earlier research fields of multidisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity. Multidisciplinarity is defined as research that studies a topic not only in one discipline but in several at the same time. Interdisciplinarity concerns the links and the transfer of knowledge, methods, concepts and models from one discipline to another. Transdisciplinarity instead involves what is between the disciplines, across the disciplines and beyond the disciplines. Multidisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity remain within the framework of disciplinarity which is concerned with one level of reality, or fragments of that one level. Transdisciplinarity is interested in the dynamics of simultaneous action of several layers of reality (Nicolescu 1997).
study in this thesis introduced in the following section refers to the relationships between the Western Australian government and BHP Billiton and the Martu people of the Western Desert in Western Australia. A particular focus was upon how such institutions represent the interests of Martu people. I was involved in two separate consultancy participatory projects between 2001 and 2005. The first project is titled Stage 1 and Stage 2\(^9\) in this thesis. The second project is titled Stage 3. Each of the projects was initiated by a different State Minister and involved their respective departments. The mining company BHP was involved in the second project. In both projects other agencies were also present. A number of interviews that followed up the developments related to the two projects were conducted as a Stage 4 of this research. These stages are tabulated in Section 2.3.4 and a brief chronology of the overall case study is provided in Section 2.5.

Institutional ethnography was used as a method within the case study to explore in detail the relationships between cultures and geographies\(^{10}\). This involved an interpretative approach and was based on the premise that: people are interpretative; knowledge can be gained best through a process of participation and involvement; reality is multi-layered; perception and behavior are context dependent; and that data gathering involves multiple sources and methods (Healy 1996). Hence, participant observation, interviews and reflection were largely employed (Nason and Golding 1998).

The research within the case study was exploratory and open-ended. It followed the three principles of data collection outlined by Yin namely: multiple sources of data and theory utilised for triangulation; a case study data base and a research journal helped to establish a chain of evidence (Yin 1994) necessary to address issues relating to validity and reliability (Anfara Jnr et al. 2002). Table 2.1

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\(^9\) Stage 2 depended upon Ministerial approval of the Stage 1 report.

\(^{10}\) Institutional ethnography was developed by Dorothy Smith to understand the everyday experiences of women by uncovering the power relations that influence those experiences. This method uses the personal experience of individuals to reveal the characteristics of institutions including power relationships. It is thus a useful method for phronetic research as it uncovers forms of oppression that other methods might overlook. Additionally, it links the micro level of experience with the macro level of institutions (Punch 1998) and thus overcomes the agency-structure dichotomy.
outlines the three principles of data collection outlined by Yin and relates them to the research process in the thesis.

**Table 2.1: Three Principles of Data Collection for the Case Study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principles of data collection</th>
<th>Relevance to this research</th>
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| Use Multiple Sources of Evidence and Triangulate: broader range of historical, attitudinal and behavioral issues and development of converging lines of inquiry | • Reflections from two different consultancy projects across a temporal frame helped to triangulate reflections.  
• I shared my work with supervisors and colleagues. A wide literature search was conducted to explore reflections from the same or other locations  
• A literature search in the areas of sustainable development, participatory development, community development, post-colonialism, modernity, governance, development economics, citizenship and deliberative democracy  
• A number of different qualitative methods with an emphasis upon participation and narrative were used |
| • Data source triangulation: does the phenomenon or case remains the same at other times, in other spaces, or as people interact differently  
• Investigator triangulation: get other researchers to take a look at the same scene or phenomenon.  
• Theory triangulation  
• Methodological triangulation                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Create a Case Study Database (distinction between data base and report)                       | • Consultancy reports from fieldwork Stages 1, 2 and 3  
• Other historical consultancy reports related to the case study context  
• Other historical literature relevant to the case study  
• Field journal for participant participation  
• Academic articles written about the fieldwork  
• My autoethnographic stories  
• Interview narratives                                                                                                                                 |
| • Case study documents  
• Case study notes  
• Tabular materials  
• Narratives                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Maintain a Chain of Evidence                                                                  | • Enabled by the case study database and a research journal.                                                                                                                                                            |

Sources: (Yin 1994; Stake 1995; Anfara Jnr et al. 2002)
Criticisms of case studies include bias, generalisability and the time that is required (Yin 1994) and are generally set within a positivist paradigmatic frame (Fook 1986). In regards to bias, it is easily argued that ‘objective’ scientific experiments are also biased. Babbie (2004) states that it is now believed that objectivity may in fact conceal as much as it reveals. However, objectivity and subjectivity are both useful for the research process. This thesis recognises that the research process is subjective and utilises self-reflexivity as a means of gaining alternative self-perspectives over time (objectivity).

In response to the criticism of generalisation, Yin states that:

Case studies, like experiments, are generalisable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes. In this sense, the case study, like the experiment, does not represent a “sample”, and the investigator’s goal is to expand and generalise theories (analytic generalisations) and not to enumerate frequencies (statistical generalisations) (Yin 1994 p. 10).

Time in the field is important for research that involves analyzing power and culture, as it is only with time that the dynamics of power in decision-making unfolds clearly (Srivastava 1994).

Coding, memoing and concept mapping were conducted at the end of each stage of the research. The approach to the coding was thematic. As outlined in Table 2.2 Nudist 6 software was utilised to code the interview material in Stage 4. The use of software allowed for cross-interview analysis across the codes that were generated and also for one section of a transcript to be multi-coded. The coding framework suggested by Neuman (2000) was used at each stage.
Table 2.2: Coding Sequence for each Stage of Fieldwork

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage of coding</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Open coding  | • Categorise and code data broadly  
|                 | • Memos whilst reading  
|                 | • Concept mapping |
| 2. Axial coding | • Use and review initial codes and concepts  
|                 | • Analyse cause and consequence, conditions and interactions, strategies and processes  
|                 | • Categorise themes and explore linkages |
| 3. Selective coding | • Last scan to select interesting cases or contrasting themes |

Source: (Neuman 2000)

2.2.2 An Overview of the Case Study

The case study took me into the borderlands that cross into what Rowse terms the Aboriginal domain. Rowse (1992) defines the Aboriginal domain by quoting John von Sturmer’s (1984 p. 219) description of places and spaces “in which the dominant social life and culture are Aboriginal, where the major language or languages are Aboriginal, where the system of knowledge is Aboriginal; in short, where the resident Aboriginal population constitutes the public”. He also introduces another term, the Aboriginal enclave which are the parts of Australia where Indigenous people are the majority. Rowse considers that the Aboriginal domain flourishes in the parts of Australia that are found within the Aboriginal enclave (Rowse 1992).

The geographical case study of this thesis is the central east Western Desert area of Western Australia, which was traditionally occupied by the Martu people. The Martu people today number between 600-800 people and speak mainly Manyjilyjarra and Kartujarra dialects (Bird et al. 2005). The Martu territory and language groups are shown in Figure 2.1. The first consultancy participatory project was based in Newman which actually falls west of the traditional Martu homelands but now includes a Martu community (otherwise typically referred to
as a town reserve) known as Pampajinya. The second consultancy participatory project involved travel into the heart of the Western Desert which could be considered to be part of the Aboriginal enclave characterised by the Aboriginal domain. The interviews were conducted in Newman.

Figure 2.1 Martu Territory and Language Groups

Source: (Bird et al. 2005)

It was necessary to gain an historical picture in the initial stage of fieldwork in order to better understand the context. The discussion that follows is based upon anecdotal evidence from Stage 1 and is supported by background literature.
Martu History: The Western Desert

It is recorded that Indigenous occupation of Newman and the Western Desert area dates 26,000 years. The Martu people are comprised of approximately a dozen language groups that extend across the Gibson and Great Sandy Deserts. The Martu homelands extend into the Western Desert. Jigalong, 100 kilometers from Newman, is where the Martu settled in the early 1900s, reliant upon rations from the depot of the Rabbit Proof Fence. The location of Jigalong is shown in Figure 2.11). Jigalong became a Protestant mission in 1945 where the Martu provided labor to the missionaries for rations. The 1950s missile testing program encouraged Martu people to move into settlements and to newly emerging pastoral stations. In the Western Desert regions to the east and north east of Newman, groups of Indigenous people were still coming into first contact with Europeans as late as the 1960s. Since the 1970s, Jigalong has received substantial capital expenditure. Outstations further into the Western Desert were developed by breakaway groups for the protection of homelands, to achieve independence, to deal with social problems (particularly alcohol) and to teach the young about their ancestral homelands (Tonkinson 1991; DuBois 1994).

Martu communities that exist today in Western Desert include Jigalong, Punmu, Parngurr, Kunawarritji and Irrungadjji. Jigalong and the outlying communities are all ‘dry’, which means that no alcohol is permitted within the boundaries of the community. The politics of alcohol in the Western Desert is captured in a newspaper article featured in Appendix Two.

Newman and Parnpajinya: A Recent History

Newman is the borderland of the Western Desert. Reflecting from my Perth office, Newman is both a remote dot on the map and also simultaneously a memory that can suddenly engulf me with color and emotion. Newman is in the centre of Western Australia, 1170 kilometers north of Perth in the East Pilbara region. It was established in 1963 by Mt Newman BHP, a large Australian
resource company which initially provided services and infrastructure. In 1981, ‘normalisation’ (a euphemism for the regularisation of municipal and community services and in this case transfer of control from BHP to local and state government agencies) occurred (McIwraith 1988). Newman exits today as an established town site. Figure 2.2 is a street map of Newman.

Figure 2.2: A Street Directory of Newman

![Figure 2.2: A Street Directory of Newman](image_url)

Source: (East Pilbara Shire 2001)

Although Newman falls outside of the traditional homelands, the Martu have had a long history with the area. Old Parnpajinya is the name of a water hole close to the station where the Martu and Nyiyaparli, the traditional owners, worked together throughout the twentieth century (see Figure 2.3). After Newman was ‘opened’, Indigenous people began to camp at the current Parnpajinya, close to the infrastructure of Newman. Water was taken by the campers from a leaky pipeline, toilet facilities were not available, and washing was not possible. Nevertheless, a group of permanent residents settled.
The late 1980s and 1990s witnessed varying Government interventions at Parnpajinya. Consultations relating to housing, alcohol management and employment, education and training were conducted in 1989\textsuperscript{11}, 1991\textsuperscript{12}, 1992\textsuperscript{13}, 1994\textsuperscript{14} and 1997\textsuperscript{15}. Recommendations included sustained, co-ordinated and committed policies and programs to support and encourage ‘self-management’ and ‘self-help’ initiatives. The provision of housing, temporary and permanent, was a priority in all consultation reports. Figure 2.4 depicts a photo of Parnpajinya taken in the early 1990s.

In August of 1993, the site was excised and vested in the Aboriginal Lands Trust. In the early 1990s, basic infrastructure and services were provided by the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority (AAPA), BHP Iron Ore, Homeswest - Aboriginal Housing Board and the East Pilbara Shire. A Community Coordinator and Aboriginal Liaison Officer were funded by AAPA to coordinate

\textsuperscript{11} Pierluigi – Parnpajinya Aboriginal Community, Newman
\textsuperscript{12} Memmot – Western Desert Housing Study
\textsuperscript{13} Gallant – Training Plan
\textsuperscript{14} Anthony M. Lee & Associates – Stage One: Pumujina Aboriginal Community Project
\textsuperscript{15} ATSIC Western Desert Regional Council – Environmental Health Needs Survey
Government services in the 1990s, but the funding for these positions was not long term.

**Figure 2.4: Parnpajinya Early 1990s**

The infrastructure on the site was bulldozed after flooding and damage caused by cyclone Vance in February 2000\(^{16}\). The aftermath of the cyclone can be observed in Figure 2.5. The residents were moved into public housing in East Newman (refer to Figure 2.2) and thus at a distance from the higher priced housing in South Newman. Many residents stated their preference to stay on site. The move was encouraged by Government agencies. Parnpajinya became known as a wet camp (a place for drinking alcohol) for the homeless and transient.

The redevelopment of the Parnpajinya site was initiated by the Minister for Housing and Aboriginal Affairs. The layout plan/report was completed in November 2000 with limited community consultation and was to be immediately implemented with construction of 12 houses, a wet camp and a visitors’ area to be complete by mid 2001. Following the election of the new Labor State government in 2001, work on the proposed redevelopment was suspended by the new Minister for Housing and Works. It is at this point in time that the story of this thesis begins.

\(^{16}\) Cyclone Glenda missed Newman but events like this are likely to be more common with the advent of climate change.
Current Government, Industry and Martu relations

Newman and the Western Desert Martu communities fall within the boundaries of the East Pilbara Shire. Newman is home to the Council offices and is also the centre of government service provision in the Western Desert. It has limited mainstream services including health and education services. The Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA) was closed in 2002.

The Martu are the native title holders of a 136,000 sq km area of land in the Western Desert. An exploration agreement, White Lakes (Martu People) Agreement (1998), exists which relates to provision of heritage protection and commitment to ongoing consultation (Agreements Database 2002). A native title agreement also exists between the Martu and BHP called the BHP Area C Agreement (2000/2001). This is composed of three agreements with three different native title groups: the Martu Idja Banyjima claimants; the Innawonga Bunjima Niapaili claimants; and the Nyiyaparli claimants. The company paid all costs of negotiation, under the condition that the costs would be deducted from the payments resulting from the agreements. The agreements include
employment; heritage and culture protection and compensation of $3 million each year to the Martu and Innawonga for the life of the mine (payed to the claimants and to community trust funds) (Agreements Database 2003).

The BHP mission statement in relation to Indigenous affairs is contained within the company’s publication, *New Directions in Aboriginal Relationships 2000-2005*. This document states that relationships with Indigenous communities deliver value to shareholders through:

- Ensuring timely access to resources;
- Enabling Aboriginal people to fulfil their needs; and
- Being recognised as responsible citizen (Dames and Moore 2000).

A BHP Aboriginal Affairs Department was established in 1992. This Department manages the Investment in Aboriginal Relationships. BHP provides $500 000 per annum to support Indigenous initiatives. A key aim is to increase Indigenous employment levels, currently at 3%, to 12% by 2010. Two key initiatives to advance Indigenous employment include: the Leaders for Indigenous Employment; and a Memorandum of Understanding with the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business. Recently introduced activities include work experience placements, clerical and apprenticeship intakes and workplace mentoring of staff. An Indigenous traineeship scheme has also been established (Australian Government 2004).

Employment opportunities offered to the Martu in actuality are limited. Currently, BHP employs a total of 700 people, 31 are Indigenous, none of whom are Martu. There are 5 Indigenous Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) apprentices on site. Of the 7 Indigenous people who have completed their CCI traineeship, only 1 is Martu and is not currently on site. The magnitude of the mine site is depicted in Figure 2.6.
The Life Skills program at Newman Senior High School is funded by the Graham (Polly) Farmer Foundation, and aims to support Indigenous children. Additional partners include BHP Billiton Iron Ore, the Federal government and the Pilbara District Education Office. A newspaper article about this program is included as Appendix Three. BHP supports other school programs including vocational training and sporting activities (Australian Government 2004). It also conducts cross-cultural training which employs the traditional Nyiyaparli (Australian Government 2004).

Despite the efforts of government and industry the situation for Martu people did not appear favourable. My intent in this research was to investigate how this could be improved for the Martu people in the Western Desert. This required a participatory and reflective approach which is outlined in the following section.
2.3 Decolonising Research through Participation and Reflective Narrative

Internationally Indigenous people are the most researched population in the world and have been consequently spoken for and about by non-Indigenous people in enormous detail (Muecke 1992; Wilson 2003). It was not until the 1980s that non-Indigenous people in Australia began to ask serious questions about the impact of research and who it is actually benefiting (Humphery 2000). There is a growing body of literature which calls for the decolonisation of research that is about Indigenous people and argues that the Western academy needs decentering (Mutua and Swadener 2004).

This literature points to the differences between the intent of researchers and the interests of Indigenous communities, which is cited as a concern (Ryan 1992; Boughton 2001). Research methodologies are set within a paradigm or belief system that is dominated by Western interests and has further contributed to Indigenous marginalisation (Henry et al. 2002).

This thesis does not intend to speak for Indigenous people. Its intent is to instead explore the multiple perspectives that can be found within Western Australian institutions and to examine how these represent Martu people as a case study of the relationship between western institutions and Indigenous people. This analysis is necessary to better understand how western hegemony can be decentered. Henry et al. (2002), in a wide literature review, state that a collaborative, cross-disciplinary (transdisciplinary within this thesis) and reflexive approach to research can help to explore contradictory positions within institutional frameworks (Henry et al. 2002). The use of participation and storytelling enabled a reflexive approach within this thesis.
2.3.1 Participatory Action Research

Participation is utilised as a method in the thesis and is a focus within the praxis that has underpinned the journey behind the story of the PhD that follows. The thesis research emanated from a consultancy project involving participatory practice in 2001. This project initiated a Participatory Action Research (PAR) process and has since involved another consultancy participatory project in addition to interviews and ongoing reflection upon practice and through theory. Participatory Action Research is a branch of co-operative inquiry (Reason 1988a) evolving from the theoretical traditions of critical and interpretative social science. It has been further informed by feminist and post-modernist perspectives (Henry and McTaggart 1996).

Participatory Action Research recognises that knowledge is a form of power that is socially constructed by changing social and historical processes, relations, perspectives and interpretations, and emphasises the need for multiple discourses, collaborative and non-exploitative relations, the placement of the researcher within the study and a praxis that is transformative and emancipative (Herron 1996; Schulz et al. 1998; Neuman 2000). Henry and McTaggart (1996) define participatory action research by three criteria: shared ownership of research projects; community-based analysis of social problems; and an orientation towards community action (Henry and McTaggart 1996). According to Wisker (2001), the interpretative and critical dimensions of PAR are characterised by: sustained and explicit examination of decisions, relationships, knowledge base of decisions, critical interpretation of evidence/data and learning from practice (Wisker 2001). PAR follows a cyclical sequence of action and reflection (Wisker 2001).

The PAR process within and between each of the four stages of the case study is as follows: plan – act – observe – reflect. This sequence is iterative, with the reflections from each stage influencing the planning phase of the subsequent stage. In this thesis, each stage of research was further refined by the observations and questions that emerged from the previous stages.
2.3.2 Reflective Practice and Self-Reflexivity: Story Telling

Reflection lies at the centre of this research and is important for the critical perspective necessary for interpretation and awareness of the political, ideological and ethical issues. This critical perspective provides for the development of insightful conclusions. Reflective research is based upon two characteristics: careful interpretation and reflection. Interpretation is at the forefront of the research process, which recognises the problematic relationship between ‘reality’, observation and the research text. Reflection turns the gaze inwards to society, including the research community, to dominant intellectual and cultural traditions and to the complexity of discourse and narrative. Reflection is considered to be the interpretation of interpretation (Alvesson and Skoldberg 2000).

Four levels of interpretation described by Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000) are central to the reflective research process, as are the relationships between them. These four levels include: interaction with empirical material; interpretation; critical interpretation; and lastly reflection upon text production and language use. Their use of the word reflexive indicates a relationship between the layers which influence the interpretation of each layer (Alvesson and Skoldberg 2000). Issues of reliability and validity are served by being reflexive (Rossman and Rallis 1997). The research process involved two inter-related paths. One of these was the PAR, which tended towards an emancipative and transformative practice. The second path was only reflective and circled around the PAR. Interpretation primarily occurred on the latter two levels. These two paths contained elements of, and were connected through, all of the four levels of interpretation.

Reflection within this thesis was based primarily upon story telling to interpret meaning. Reason and Hawkins state that:

Meaning is part and parcel of all experience, although it may be interwoven with that experience that it is hidden: it needs to be
discovered, created, or made manifest, and communicated. We work with
the meaning of experience of stories …(w)hen we partake of life we
create meaning; the purpose of life is meaning (Reason and Hawkins
1988 p. 80).

Self-reflectivity was necessary for the ethics and responsibility of narrating a
case study that involves other people’s stories. I do claim responsibility for these
interpretations.

A field journal complemented a more formal research journal by providing space
for me to narrate the emotional and intellectual turmoil that arose within the
field, which helps to give the context and thus analyse the intentions and
meanings of the experience (Denzin 1994). The field journal was also important
for the observation aspect of the PAR and was a necessary tool for reflection.
Alvesson and Skolberg in the foreword of their book write that reflection is:
above all a question of recognising fully the notoriously ambivalent
relation of a researcher’s text to the realities studied … interpreting one’s
own interpretations, looking at one’s own perspective from other
perspectives, and turning a self-critical eye onto one’s own authority as
interpreter and author (Alvesson and Skoldberg 2000).
The task of being aware of my perspective was ongoing and was necessary due
to my close involvement with the case study through cross-cultural participatory
action research (Rossman and Rallis 1997).

Self-reflexivity was enabled through a process of autoethnographic story telling
which was developed early in the thesis. This involved a telling and retelling of
my stories from the time in the field. In the chapters that follow this is indicated
as for example “(Story 1.1)” the first telling of the first stage of research, “(Story
1.2)” indicates the second retelling of the first stage, whilst for example “(Story
2.1)” indicates the first retelling of the second stage of fieldwork. Excerpts from
articles I have written are also included. Clandinin and Connelly support such an
approach, arguing that in telling and retelling our stories:
we meet ourselves in the past, the present, and the future … we tell
remembered stories of ourselves from earlier times as well as more
current stories. All of these stories offer possible plotlines to our futures.
Telling stories of ourselves in the past leads to the possibility of retellings (Clandinin and Connelly 2000 p. 60). The technique involved reflecting upon the empirical material and interim texts I had written including case study reports. Within the reflective phase after each stage of fieldwork I wrote a story about that stage but also retold a story about the previous stages. I moved inward, outward, back and forth which is typical of autoethnographic work (Ellis and Bochner 2000). Clandinin and Connelly (1994 p. 417) say that “(t)o experience an experience is to experience it simultaneously in four ways and to ask questions pointing each way”. Self-reflexivity thus involved unfolding meanings by moving in all four directions though space and time.

My supervisors helped with the task of ‘interrogating’ the stories by reading and providing comment. The aim of retelling the stories was to provide a mechanism to interpret my interpretations by critically reflecting upon changes in my perspective, self-identity and beliefs (Hill 2002; Mutua and Swadener 2004). The stories helped to connect the stages of the thesis (including consultancy participatory projects and interviews) and also an ongoing literature review. In relation to my changing identity, becoming a mother during the PhD research was a significant additional identity which has influenced other changes relating to addressing my own racism, and it became important to reflect upon such changes through the stories. A ‘persistent critique’ helped me with countervailing and contradicting my own interests. The story telling technique enabled me to also examine closely and facilitate the rewriting of my desire. Muecke (1992) contends that this is a necessary task in regards to the ambivalence within the field of Aborginality and enabled me to remember my responsibilities as a narrator across culture with the power to write. Reflection upon representation is a theme throughout the thesis and is a particular focus of Chapter 4. A story approach is integral to the thesis and is seen as an appropriate method for weaving together its multiple perspectives.
2.3.3 Interviews

The juxtaposition of different stories of practice was made possible through interviews conducted in 2004, titled Stage 4 in this thesis. The interviews added to the phronetic approach by developing descriptions and interpretations from a number of different perspectives. ‘How’ and ‘why’ questions within the interviews encouraged explanation and interpretation (Flyvbjerg 2001). The autoethnographical technique helped me to position myself amongst the interviews and question unconscious assumptions and ideologies by observing how I used the interviews to dramatise what I wanted to say (Gabriel 1998). A self-reflexive approach required that I not silence other voices (Fine et al. 2000) and descend into a “compulsive extroversion of interiority” (Clough 1992 p. 63).

The interview participants included Indigenous and non-Indigenous people employed in positions funded to work with the Martu people. All of the interviews took place in Newman. I did not interview any Martu people for the fourth stage of fieldwork as I did not feel comfortable recording Martu voices and subsequently representing and deconstructing Martu voices in the thesis. I interviewed 24 people in total, 5 of these were Indigenous Australians (only one had Martu connections) and 19 were largely Anglo Australian. Of the total of 24 interviews, 11 were conducted with people working for government, 9 were with people working for non-government organisations, 3 were with BHP Billiton and 1 was a Member of Parliament. The interviews were transcribed and, as described previously in this chapter coded with the use of N6 software. This enabled a critical examination of the Newman institutional discourse (which is the term used in this thesis to describe the 24 interviews) and a comparison of this discourse to the Federal and also Indigenous storylines. Critical discourse analysis was used for this task, and the theory of this is outlined in Chapter Three. Materials used for this analysis also include government reports, newspapers and my personal reflections. The interviews are identified throughout the thesis as being Indigenous or non-Indigenous, based upon how people self-
identified. My personal reflections are signified by the initials ‘NM’ throughout the thesis.

Time spent in the field in observation is considered to be appropriate before interviewing takes place (Silverman 2001) and helped with the approach to interviewing and sharing of experiences. In most cases the interviews were founded upon an established relationship that had developed over time and these relationships enabled me to approach the interviews as a conversation, a friendly ‘speech event’ (Neuman 2000). The interviews were semi-structured in all cases, and the interviewees either raised or spoke at length about issues when prompted. Recording of the interviews (which were later transcribed) allowed me to participate fully in the conversation, and I only occasionally jotted notes either in observation or to record a point I wanted to raise. The interviews were iterative, and a conversation developed with me as a conduit, as I subsequently raised issues that had arisen in previous interviews.

The objectives of the interviews were fourfold:

- Firstly, I wanted to explore in detail the subjective and intersubjective experiences within the stories.
- Secondly, I wanted to compare the different perspectives and discourse to my own journal, stories and changing perspective.
- Thirdly, I wanted to investigate how different discourse was or was not utilised to support differing perspectives about Martu representation and responsibility and compare these to Federal discourse. The discourse of Federal governments is outlined in the following chapter.
- Fourthly, the interviews helped to further my analysis about power and culture.

The analysis of the voices emerging from the interviews forms diverse postmodern threads throughout the weave of the thesis. Eckstein (2003) writes that stories not only bring order but that they also disrupt patterns of thought and action. The voices from the stories are found within the thesis to disrupt and contradict not only each other but also themselves.
2.3.4 A Summary of Thesis Stages and Methods

At the point of the thesis, it is useful to summarise briefly the stages of the thesis and how these relate to particular methods. This summary is found in Table 2.3.

**Table 2.3: A Summary of the Thesis Stages and Methods**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thesis Stage</th>
<th>Consultancy Projects</th>
<th>Geographical Scale</th>
<th>Data Produced</th>
<th>Methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage One 2001</td>
<td>Stage one of the first consultancy participatory project. Participants include WA Minister, WA Department of Housing and Infrastructure and actors in Newman)</td>
<td>-Newman</td>
<td>-Field journal -Stories -Reports</td>
<td>-Reflection from participation in process -Literature Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage Two 2001-2002</td>
<td>Stage two of the first consultancy participatory project</td>
<td>-Newman</td>
<td>-Field journal -Stories -Reports</td>
<td>-Reflection from participation in process -Literature Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage Three 2004</td>
<td>Second consultancy participatory project. Participants include WA Minister, WA Department of Planning and Infrastructure and actors in Newman.</td>
<td>-Western Desert -Was a component of the regional Pilbara Sustainability Strategy</td>
<td>-Field journal -Stories -Reports</td>
<td>-Reflections from participation in process -Literature review</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2.3 Continued: A Summary of the Thesis Stages and Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thesis Stage</th>
<th>Consultancy Projects</th>
<th>Geographical Scale</th>
<th>Data Produced</th>
<th>Methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage Four Interviews 2004</td>
<td>- Newman</td>
<td>- National</td>
<td>- Interview transcripts and analysis</td>
<td>- Interviews with Newman institutional actors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing policy analysis 2001-2006</td>
<td>- Relevant to all scales within Australia</td>
<td>- Themes to compare with interviews</td>
<td>- Discourse analysis of national government and national Indigenous leaders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing interpretative theory development 2001-2006</td>
<td>- Relevant to all scales within Australia</td>
<td>- Thesis chapters</td>
<td>- All of the above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3.5 Ethics

Ethics approval from a Human Research Ethics Committee is a requirement at Murdoch University. There was a number of research protocols\(^\text{17}\) to which I referred to. The NHMRC Guidelines for Ethical Matter in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research were the guidelines that Murdoch University required me to respect. Approval was received for each stage of the thesis. In both consultancy participatory projects I sought approval from the chairperson of the communities I was working within across the Western Desert. In Stage 4 an individual consent letter, clearly outlining the purpose and intent of the research, was signed by all interviewees.

\(^{17}\) Roz Walker provides a list of these in a AHURI publication Ethical Principles and Guidelines for Indigenous Research at http://www.ahuri.edu.au/attachments/Ethical2004.doc
The ethical dimensions of decolonising research were certainly where I felt the most discomfort. On reflection much of this discomfort what seemed as an insurmountable distance between the Martu people and the University establishment generally and in particularly Murdoch University in Perth. This is discussed further throughout the thesis and particularly in the conclusions.

My visit to Newman and to the Western Desert in 2004 coincided with a wave of anti-research sentiment across the Martu communities. Conversations conveyed a felt reality that information was being taken away and being mis-represented. A senior anthropologist was asked to leave one of the Western Desert communities with whom he had a lengthy relationship just before I arrived in Newman for the second project. This was the main subject of gossip in Newman at that time. As I reflect back now I wonder whether I was brave or naive to venture into the Desert during this period.

In any case I decided that it was not appropriate to try to represent the views of the Martu people in my thesis. Instead I decided to focus primarily upon the how Martu people are represented within the system of government at all levels, with a particular focus upon the discourse of Newman institutional actors, who are not Martu but who interact directly with Martu people.

### 2.3.6 Validity, Reliability and Objectivity

In what is titled the post-positivistic era of social science, there is rethinking of terms such as validity, generalisability and reliability and a recasting of the terms to suit the emergence of new methodologies (Anfara Jnr et al. 2002). The research process of this PhD was cyclical and non-linear, making it difficult to apply the same standards as conventional research (Srivastava 1994). Neuman writes that:

> From a strict linear path, a cyclical path looks inefficient and sloppy. But the diffuse cyclical approach … can be highly effective for creating a feeling for the whole, for grasping subtle shades of meaning, for pulling
together divergent information, and for switching perspectives….and is orientated towards constructing meaning (Neuman 2000 p. 143).

Table 2.4 is taken from Anfara Jnr et al. (2002) and all of the strategies in the right hand column were employed to best enable research quality and rigor. Creswell and Miller (2000) list eight criteria of quality and rigorous research, suggesting that researchers meet at least two of them. Seven of them are listed in Table 2.4 as used in my research which indicates an effort to achieve rigour and reliability (Creswell and Miller 2000; Anfara Jnr et al. 2002).

**Table 2.4: Research Quality and Rigor**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantitative term</th>
<th>Qualitative term</th>
<th>Strategy employed in this research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal validity</td>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>• Prolonged engagement in the field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Peer debriefing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Triangulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Member checks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Time sampling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External validity</td>
<td>Transferability</td>
<td>• Provide thick description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Purposive sampling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>Dependability</td>
<td>• Create an audit trail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Code-recode strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Triangulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Peer examination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectivity</td>
<td>Confirmability</td>
<td>• Triangulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Practice reflexivity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Anfara Jnr et al. 2002)

Triangulation with multiple voices of text from theory and practice in and outside of the case study was particularly useful for validity and reliability issues. Internal and external reliability was established through an extensive case study database and literature from other geographical locations (Neuman 2000).
2.4 Reflecting upon Stories: A Plural-Dimensional Narrative

This PhD is only one of a multitude of narratives and is bounded by space, time and the people that I developed relationships with. The remainder of this chapter presents a brief chronological overview of the four stages of my research which were mainly fieldwork, in order to provide meaning for the analysis in the following chapters. This outline tries to briefly depict the layers of reflection. Each stage has been deliberately narrated in its own fashion, in part to depict the temporal dimension to the PhD reflective process, but also to convey the deepening of my relationship with the people and places within the case study. Stage 1 and 2 from the first consultancy participatory project (Sections 2.5.1 and 2.5.2) and Stage 3 from the second consultancy participatory process (Sections 2.5.3 and 2.5.4) have been divided into earlier reflections and more recent reflections. Stage 4 (the interview process) is only described by recent reflections. The reflection which continues throughout the thesis is thematic rather than chronological.

I encourage the reader to begin a critique of the colonial undertone within the writing of Stage 1 and 2, a critique which I will continue throughout the thesis. This is abbreviated from a conference paper I wrote in 2003, a year after the fieldwork, that was later published as a book chapter (McGrath et al. 2005). Stage 3 is abbreviated from the first autoethnographic story written about this stage. Stage 4 as it is found here was written just prior to the writing of this thesis.

2.4.1 Fieldwork Stage 1 and 2

A participatory project in 2001 was initiated by the then Western Australian Labor Minister for Housing and Works. The project involved spending five months facilitating the development of governance structures to represent the Martu population of Newman, requested by the Minister as a precondition of approval for a housing development proposal in Parnpajinya. This reflected the
Minister’s desire to see Martu representative structures take responsibility for the management of housing and other supporting community development strategies. Murdoch University, my employer, reported to the Aboriginal Housing Infrastructure Unit (AHIU) within the Department for Housing and Works, the funding body.

Sustainable development was employed as a conceptual frame in which to structure practice and reporting. The project was divided into two stages which were termed Stage 1 (the first month) and Stage 2 (the latter four months). Approval by the Minister of Stage 2 was dependent upon a report produced in Stage 1. This terminology was utilised only by Murdoch, the Minister and the Department for Housing and Works. The terminology is retained in this thesis but refers instead here to the broader research process of the thesis.

**Participatory Methodologies for the Parnpajinya Housing Project**

Rapid Rural Appraisal was employed as the participatory research methodology for the first stage of the community development project whilst the second stage involved Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). A number of other participatory methodologies (see Table 2.5) were used to complement RRA and PRA.

Gender balance was provided by the team and sought from the community in all aspects of the project.
### Table 2.5: Participatory Research Methodologies used in the Parnpajinya Housing Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Definition and Aims</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapid Rural Appraisal</td>
<td>Developed in the late 1970s to enable researchers from different disciplines to understand situations from a local perspective, concentrate information that is appropriate for action and increase the timeliness of information (Bar-On and Prinsen 1999).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Analysis</td>
<td>A process that provides a framework for prioritising, gathering, analyzing and incorporating social information and participation into the design and delivery of development operations (Rietbergen-McCracken &amp; Narayan 1998).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder Analysis</td>
<td>Stakeholder mapping is useful for the identification of stakeholders’ interests in, importance to, and influence over the operation; the identification of local institutions and processes upon which to build; and lastly provides a foundation and strategy for participation (Rietbergen-McCracken and Narayan 1998).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficiary Assessment</td>
<td>A qualitative method of information-gathering which assesses the value of an activity as it is perceived by its principal users (Rietbergen-McCracken &amp; Narayan, 1998)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participatory Rural Appraisal</td>
<td>Evolved from RRA. PRA is a family of approaches, methods and behaviors to enable poor people to express and analyse the realities of their lives and conditions, and to plan, monitor and evaluate their actions (Chambers 1997).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action Planning</td>
<td>Similar principles to PRA. Involves identifying problems and opportunities; goals and priorities; options and tradeoffs; resources and constraints; project team and tasks; and implementation and monitoring (Hamdi &amp; Goethert, 1997).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Stage 1: Rapid Rural Appraisal

Stage 1 involved a month in the field from July to August 2001.

The RRA included stakeholder mapping and the compilation of a community profile. Community visions were tabulated in a Community Development Framework. This is summarised in Table 2.6.

**Table 2.6: Rapid Rural Appraisal used in Stage 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Set</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Tools</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data gathering</td>
<td>Stakeholder mapping</td>
<td>Conversational interviewing</td>
<td>To assess the housing, governance, institutional and community development capacity of the Martu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community profile</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviewing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Participant observation and field journal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Networking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Focus groups and group work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Timelines</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data analysis</td>
<td>Qualitative analysis</td>
<td>Triangulation</td>
<td>To provide empirical evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quantitative analysis</td>
<td>SWOT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prioritising and ranking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>Community visioning</td>
<td>Community Development Framework</td>
<td>To provide an overview of community needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Needs assessment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Stakeholder mapping**

This method enabled familiarisation in addition to the building of rapport and trust. It was also a necessary prelude to institutional capacity building in Stage 2 (Morgan and Taschereau 1996).
The key stakeholders are listed below in the order of their decision making authority within the bureaucratic hierarchy and thus in this case the control that they were able to exercise over the content and direction of the project.

- **The Western Australian Minister for Housing and Works**

The final decision on the housing at Parnpajinya rested with the Minister.

- **The Aboriginal Housing Infrastructure Unit (AHIU)**

The funding body and major advocate for the project was AHIU.

- **Local government and non-government representatives**

There was a diverse range of local government and non-government stakeholders ranging from the Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA), Western Desert Puntukurnupa Aboriginal Corporation (WDPAC), the Martu Baptist Church, Home and Community Care, BHP, Family and Children’s Services, a Hospital, Police, Schools, a College and the Shire Council.

These groups worked with the Martu in the face of crisis and uncoordinated chaos. The views within this group were diverse and ranged from support for the housing as a means of shelter for the homeless to the view that the housing would keep the Martu away from Newman. There existed general indignation and anger in response to the project, which was perceived as a political maneuver to delay the housing development.

- **The Martu community in Newman and Parnpajinya**

Newman has developed into the largest Martu community in the Western Desert, partly as a result of infrastructure and services provided. The Martu in Newman face increasing levels of dysfunction including alcohol abuse (Tonkinson 1991; Anda et al. 2001).
At any point the Martu in Newman include firstly, the ‘permanent’ residents and secondly, visitors, often related to the former. The first group either resides within public housing in East Newman or at Parnpajinya for those who have been evicted. The second group either camps with their relatives in East Newman or at Parnpajinya. These groups have different housing requirements.

- **The wider community in Newman**

There was little contact between the team and the wider community other than the Shire Councillors and at the BHP inter-cultural awareness training. Racism was obvious and poses a complex challenge. There were no existing cultural bridges to work upon and the construction of such bridges was beyond the time-scope of the project.

**Community Profile**

A community profile provides a descriptive ‘snapshot’ of the community within which the action research (planned for Stage 2) is taking place. This assists stakeholders to formulate an overview which describes the significant features of their context and is most appropriate to the aims of the action research (Stringer 1996).

- **Demography and housing capacity**

A total of approximately 220 Martu people were living in or around Newman. There are also, at any given time, a large number of semi-permanent and temporary residents (Anda et al. 2001).

The mismatch in the demography and housing availability was severe (see Table 2.7). This was evident in the overcrowding within the public housing in East Newman, with approximately 6 people in each 2-3 bedroom house. The lack of
shelter was most evident at Parnpajinya (33 people living in sub-standard and limited housing).

**Table 2.7: Demography and Housing Capacity of the Martu at Newman and Parnpajinya**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newman (East-Newman)</th>
<th>Number and Type of Dwellings</th>
<th>Number of people in the dwelling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33 Houses</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 Units</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Caravan</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Parnpajinya          | 2 Tin Sheds                  | 15                              |
|                      | 1 Mud brick ‘house’           | ?                               |
|                      | 1 Caravan                    | 3                               |
|                      | Rammed Earth house, car bodies and canvases | 15 |

Source: (Anda et al. 2001)

- **Institutional capacity: local service agencies**

There was a small monthly inter-agency meeting which the Murdoch team attended. No substantial evidence of institutional capacity to support the housing development was demonstrated.

- **Community development capacity**

The agencies provided services and infrastructure in isolation, mostly for crisis management. Most of the town services were culturally inappropriate. Community development was not evident, other than for gardening and cooking programs, the special housing assistance program and the BHP inter-cultural awareness program (Anda et al. 2001). The socio-political sustainability of the housing required greater attention to the coordination of culturally appropriate services.
• Governance capacity

The Parnpajinya Management Council was composed of an older, often unwell, section of the community who did not meet regularly.

Community Development Framework

Community visioning and needs assessment was the approach taken by the project team in investigating the preferred path of community development. This involved focus groups and timelines. Separate male and female focus groups were held and were considered to be important, as differences in power, resulting from gender, are often invisible and firmly entrenched (Kaufman 1997). This involved two female focus groups (the second was the initiative of the women themselves), one male focus group and one community focus group. The second female focus group involved cross-checking information and deepening participation, highlighting the importance of time in the field. The male and female focus groups were centred upon community needs and visions and were facilitated by the appropriate gender. The community focus group concentrated on cross-checking and developing the information particular to housing. Raising awareness of the complexities of the management and maintenance of the housing (particularly as Parnpajinya currently existed as a ‘wet camp’) and consensus building were the two primary aims of this meeting.

A situation analysis (SWOT - strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) was conducted upon the community visions by the research team. This analysis enabled a categorisation and ordering of priorities into a Community Development Framework, which was disseminated to all stakeholders for confirmation.

Identification of the primary issues relating to the proposed housing development

The complexities associated with the management and maintenance of the proposed housing at Parnpajinya were found to be diverse. Parnpajinya was
identified as a camp for alcohol consumption and for those who had been evicted from public housing. The most appropriate location for the ‘wet camp’ in the housing proposal was an important issue, given the management that it required.

The fragmentation of the Martu in and around East Newman and in East Newman itself not only posed a barrier to engaging the participation of the Martu but was a substantial obstacle to the on-going coordination of socio-political processes in the community. The development of the Parnpajinya site was affirmed by the Martu to be as much about ‘sense of identity’ and a community centre to practice culture as it was about housing. This did not detract however from the dire need for shelter by the population as a whole.

There was limited local institutional capacity to participate in the coordination of socio-political processes to support the viability of the housing proposal. The potential governance capacity of the permanent Martu community was difficult to ascertain.

A report was produced about Stage 1 and given to the Minister and Department. Following this report Stage 2 was approved by the Minister.

**Stage 2: Participatory Rural Appraisal**

Stage 2 was conducted between September 2001 and February 2002, with a suspension between December and January because of cultural activities within the Martu community. The following objectives for Stage 2 were developed on reflection from Stage 1 with the participation of the community, the Newman agencies, AHU and in accordance with the Minister’s brief:

- Compile and initiate a Community Action Plan with prioritised strategies;
- Improve governance, housing management capacity in particular;
- Improve local institutional support;
- Build co-ordination between and within the Martu community, Community Council and service providers;
A summary of the PRA process is tabulated below.

**Table 2.8: Participatory Rural Appraisal used in Stage 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Tools</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data gathering</td>
<td>Facilitation</td>
<td>To identify community needs and determine community and government roles and responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dialogue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meetings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focus groups and group work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diagramming</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mapping</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Timelines</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oral histories and ethno-biographies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Force field analysis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Analysis of difference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data analysis</td>
<td>Triangulation</td>
<td>To prioritise community needs and tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brainstorming</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prioritising and ranking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>Action planning</td>
<td>To present the identified and prioritised tasks for future community development coordination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Problem solving</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community Action Plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity building in governance</td>
<td>Facilitation</td>
<td>To build representative, decisive and accountable governance structures for the effective management of housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individual meetings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focus groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prioritising</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local institutional capacity building</td>
<td>Facilitation</td>
<td>To build a coordinated local institutional support structure for community development and housing management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individual meetings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focus groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brainstorming</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The approach of the PRA was to examine the broader picture, with housing as one component. It was necessary to transform the participatory mode from passive community dependency to one of interaction that included all stakeholders. An important aspect in this regard was to define the project team as ‘outsiders’ (Hamdi & Goethert, 1997) as opposed to stakeholders.

**Community Action Plan**

A Community Action Plan helps people to identify and agree on the different tasks that need to be done, the logical order for completing these tasks, who has the responsibility to do them and when the tasks should be done (Walsh and Mitchell 2002).

An initial meeting was held but was poorly attended. The project team then proceeded to meet with the Martu in public places such as the shopping mall, parks and, where an established relationship existed, at their homes. Two meetings with the elderly Martu people through a relevant agency were arranged, in part to cross-check historical data. It was not until late October, after the first of these meetings, that the team came to understand that the community was organised into family groupings, recognised by all of the Martu community. This was thus taken as the most appropriate means in which to further the Action Plan.

Four lengthy family focus groups were conducted. Group work was facilitated by the team to resolve issues relating to the housing proposal and also to compile a Community Action Plan to support infrastructure development. This included identification of community roles and responsibility to partner those of service agencies.
Capacity building in governance

Simultaneous to the facilitation of the Action Plan, a diagram was drawn up by the team and presented to community members. It demonstrated the circle of social capital (which was strong) and how this was necessary for governance (not so strong) which was in turn required to lead the community towards the economic and employment visions. This would in turn improve social life.

The community indicated that work with the Martu Council should wait until the Council elections in late October 2001. This was a major delay in the project. It did however allow time to reflect with the community on the importance of strong leadership and sound management structures prior to the elections.

After the Martu Council elections, other concerns dominated the agenda until the project suspension. In the suspension period the Minister approved the project. The time spent in the field in early February focused primarily upon group work and dialogue with the Council which included three lengthy focus groups. This required raising awareness in addition to facilitating a dialogue concerning the simultaneous resolution of housing and alcohol management. Initial ideas for this resolution were worked through and found to be flawed. Consensus was achieved. The location of the visitors’ camping area, the ‘wet camp’, was determined by the Council to be at a distance from the new housing. This presented two options: either the housing proceeds at Parnpajinya with a wet camp elsewhere; or a ‘wet camp’ proceeds at Parnpajinya with the housing proposal elsewhere. The second was preferred by the Council due to the current use of the site as a ‘wet camp’. There was no time or funding remaining within the project to facilitate the filtering of this decision to the community level.

Local institutional capacity building

The inter-agency forum had continued to grow throughout the duration of the PRA. Two workshops were facilitated by the team during 2001, with agendas determined by the agencies. The first workshop turned into an information
session regarding the PRA process whilst the second focused upon community
development priorities and appropriate mechanisms for local co-ordination.

**Co-ordination**

The above objectives are inter-related and mutually enforcing. The project team
facilitated these simultaneously through the PRA. A workshop was facilitated by
the project team between the Council and inter-agency group in February 2002.
This involved the Council presenting the endorsed Community Action Plan to
the agencies and a discussion regarding the Council’s decision on the location of
the housing and the wet camp.

It had become apparent to the local stakeholders that the lack of a Coordinator’s
position was a long term obstacle to the co-ordination of community
development and thus the sustainability of housing development.

**Negotiations**

The project team traveled to Newman in early March 2002 to facilitate meetings
between the Martu Council and AHIU and a separate meeting between the
community and AHIU as requested by the AHIU. The first meeting with the
Council went smoothly with the official participants from Perth surprised by the
conviction of the Council regarding the location of the housing and wet camp.
This required courage to risk losing the housing and the Coordinator who would
be tied to the housing, and was a sign that an empowerment process had
occurred. The AHIU informed the community that another site would be
unfeasible due to infrastructure costs, as the Parnpajinya site already had power
and water connections. The second meeting with the community was not as
successful, with divisions apparent between the non-drinkers and drinkers. The
homeless and drinkers who had been evicted from public housing wanted the
housing at the Parnpajinya site and thus contradicted the Council decision. A
third meeting was arranged spontaneously between the Council, community and
AHIU. The discussion continued about the site location with AHIU confirming
other details, including housing mix.
In April 2002 it was decided by AHIU and the Minister that the development of the housing and ‘camping area’ would occur at Parnpajinya, despite the Martu Council’s decision. A Coordinator was provided with a 2 year contract.

2.4.2 Reflections upon Stage 1 and 2

One of the primary lessons to emerge from my reflections about the first two stages of fieldwork was the differences between the individuals and groups within the Martu population in Newman. It also appeared to me at this time that the Martu people in Newman related to a regional Martu population. Added to this was the complexity of the relationships that not only exist across cultures but also between geographical spaces, within and between the local and the State. Reflecting in my office at Murdoch University in Perth I felt more confused about the relationships that I was hoping to understand in the field. Additionally, both stages of fieldwork involved significant emotional turbulence and ambivalence that I felt ill-equipped to negotiate or articulate.

Detailed analysis was enabled by a literature review of academic and policy publications. This prompted a clearer understanding of the broad differences between Martu and non-Indigenous knowledge and worldviews. Seven broad important observations arose from my reflections from these first two stages of fieldwork:

- National and State non-Indigenous policy discourse is vastly different from Martu language.
- Academic discourse is different from the Martu language and from government discourse but shares greater similarities with the latter in terms of worldview;
- The practice of governance, research and its institutions within Western Australia is founded on a worldview that is not amenable to the inclusion of Martu worldviews, knowledge or languages;
- This practice of research and governance both essentialises and individualises the Martu people. My observations instead found both
difference and diverse interconnected relationships existing within the Martu population;

- There is a desire by State government agencies for Martu people to take responsibility through representative structures;
- As a result of the above, the practice of research and governance is exclusionary and removed from the lived reality of the Martu people. Martu knowledge is not being included in sufficient depth and breadth within research and decision making institutions at any spatial level (local, regional, State or national);
- Institutional learning across culture for the sustainable development of Indigenous people and/or wider communities is limited due to perceived time constraints and institutional fragmentation.

All of the above seven observations required further time in the field to test the validity of each and where necessary investigate in further detail. I also wanted to further explore the complexity of relationships including the relationship between the Martu population in Newman and the Western Desert communities.

2.4.3 Fieldwork Stage 3

An opportunity to travel to Newman arose in 2004. This time the Labor Minister for Planning and Infrastructure initiated a deliberative event titled Dialogue with the Pilbara: Newman Tomorrow. This was funded in part by BHP, the major employer in Newman. In Western Australia, forms of deliberative democracy have occurred through the Dialogue process across the State since the year I started my PhD. Deliberative democracy aims to complement representative democracy. Deliberative forums provide space for a representative sample of citizens to deliberate and inform government decision making. The Labor government returned to office in that year and this resulted in the Dialogue approach being adopted.

The organisation of the Dialogue involved collaboration between a consultant to the Minister’s office, Murdoch University, a number of people employed by the
Department for Planning and Infrastructure and a local steering team. I was invited to better enable Martu participation. This provided me with an opportunity to extend my analysis to the regional layer, the Western Desert, and thus to visit ‘country’. This area includes a number of Martu ‘outstation’ communities. I was also able to extend my analysis of relationships to better include BHP and also observe a different State government department at close proximity. Sustainable development was again utilised as a conceptual framework. Another more personal reason to return to Newman was to proudly show the Martu community my now three year old daughter, Tahlia, who had been growing in my belly during Stage 1 and 2 of the fieldwork. In this thesis, the fieldwork within the Dialogue is titled Stage 3.

It was agreed that the outcomes of the Dialogue would become State Government priorities over the next two decades, and would be used to inform the Pilbara Sustainability Strategy, being developed jointly by the State Government and Murdoch University (where I was an academic staff member and part of the project team).

A steering team (comprising local organisation representatives, branches of government, and industry within the Newman area) guided the process in partnership with the Department for Planning and Infrastructure. A Martu representative sat on this steering team occasionally. The date of the Dialogue was set for September 30 2004. A number of methods were employed to advertise for the day: articles were placed in local newspapers; one thousand invitations were sent to a random sample of residents; participants were recruited in the local shopping centre; and invitations were sent to local organisations. Confirmed participants were sent case studies, fact sheets and a paper canvassing current issues confronting Newman. Figure 2.7 shows the advertisement for the Dialogue in the local shopping centre that was organised by the local steering team.
Tahlia and I arrived in Newman in late June 2004, which was over 3 months prior to the one day Dialogue event. It was, for a part of me, a returning home. So much remained the same but there were changes. A lot of the Martu people I knew had mobile phones. Six of the twelve houses were built at Parnpajinya and had tenants. I felt a shared sense of ironic humor with the Martu people I knew at the reason for my return. The new developments at the Parnpajinya site are shown in the following figures. Figure 2.8 shows the front of the Parnpajinya site, some of the new housing is shown in Figure 2.9 and the visitors’ site with ablution facilities is shown in Figure 2.10.

Reflections from the previous stages of fieldwork had led me to believe that a Dialogue with the Western Desert required an equal recognition of the regional level in which the Martu relate, in addition to the local differences that exist between the communities. A strategy arising from the Dialogue, outlining government service provision, would necessarily need to account for both of these levels. There were approximately two weeks available for the organisation of the outlying community meetings prior to the first meeting in Nullagine, which was not enough time. Punmu and Kunnarwariti community members were unfortunately not within the communities over this June/July period. The
communities chosen were based on consultation with local government agencies which service the Western Desert and who by now I was mostly familiar with, and with key Martu in Newman. The aim was to cover the most important communities to the Martu population.\footnote{Martu individuals are located in other communities but are not a significant majority.}

**Figure 2.8: Entrance to the Parnpajinya Site 2004**

**Figure 2.9: New Houses at the Parnpajinya Site 2004**

**Figure 2.10: Visitors’ Facilities at the Parnpajinya Site 2004**
Prior to visiting the outlying communities, formal consent was sought though a letter to the Council, which was approved in all communities. The objectives of the meetings were threefold: to inform community members of the participatory forum in Newman and to invite them to the forum through face to face contact rather than through formal documentation; to gather information in case people were unable to attend the event; and to initiate a community process so that the individuals who might be able to attend would feel more comfortable in speaking for the community from an already-stated community perspective. In terms of the latter two objectives, a number of questions were posed based on the proposed one day forum’s agenda. These included:

- What do you really want for the future for yourselves, your children and your grandchildren?
- What’s happening now - what is good and what is not so good?
- What are some of the important things we need to start doing now if we want to get to where you want to be?

A focus on the future of the communities’ children and grandchildren helped to cross the different temporal perspectives that might arise through cultural differences. Having my daughter, Tahlia, there provided a personal dimension to the meetings which I believe helped me to cross the differences between myself and the members of the communities. I was there with my heart (my child) running around with other children in the communities we visited.

Figure 2.11 is a mud map that I took into the Western Desert to help navigate the vast territory that I was to cover. I asked Martu people that I knew well to accompany me to the desert and this map was not necessary. However, it is useful now for depicting my journey through the desert. We traveled from Newman to Nullagine (north of Newman) and then returned to Newman for an evening. The next day we left for Jigalong and stayed for one night and then traveled to Parngurr. We returned to Newman from Parngurr in one day which was a long and tiring journey.
The Dialogue was held on the 30th September 2004 and was met with participation from approximately 150 members of Newman. This was by far the largest public meeting in the town’s history. Dialogue participants were seated at 20 tables of approximately 6-8 people with a scribe and a facilitator. There was considerable Martu participation, all from the Newman community. Three separate tables were assigned to the Martu, which was their stated preference. An opportunity to sit outside was declined. Computers at every table were networked, feeding the ideas of each group to a theme team who worked collaboratively to find the common threads emerging in the room. Facilitators were from local and regional government agencies and also from Murdoch University. Common themes were collated by the theme team and were projected on a large screen.

The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure opened the day. She was followed by the welcome to country by a Nyiyabarli elder. The Minister for Local and Regional Development also spoke. All sat at the VIP table at the front with BHP and local government representatives and most were very well dressed. As an
organiser of the Dialogue, I had placed a table designated for Martu people right behind them.

To ensure discussions were informed, presentations were given by some of the key stakeholders and researchers including: Stedman Ellis of BHP Billiton Iron Ore regarding the BHP Billiton Iron Ore Social Impact Study; Professor Peter Newman on the Pilbara Regional Sustainability Strategy; and Alan Cochrane and Robyn Crane explaining the Strategic Planning of East Pilbara and Pilbara Development Commission respectively. In addition, a series of three short videos, produced by one of my Murdoch University colleagues Susie Waller, was shown. These videos addressed some of the challenges confronting residents of the Pilbara. Using fictitious characters as a vehicle for dramatising the dilemmas, the videos were intended as a tool for identifying issues, and a catalyst for discussion within groups.

Throughout the course of the day, a BHP representative visited our table and answered questions about Martu employment at the mine. The Minister for Local and Regional Development also sat with the table for a short while.

The tables were given a series of questions relating to the visioning of Newman’s future, and the implementation of these visions. The questions required participants to think in terms of sustainable development, and the long term integration of economic, social and environmental elements. A series of discussion sessions were held asking:

- What are your key hopes for the future of Newman and its surrounds?

- Remembering your key hopes for Newman:
  1. What do we need to keep?
  2. What changes do we need to make?

- You have been transported to 2020. Describe how you would like Newman to be socially, economically, and environmentally.
• You are now in charge of this town. Your job is to head Newman in the direction of the 2020 vision. What are you going to do socially, economically and environmentally to ensure Newman thrives?

The techniques in the latter part of the day were difficult to facilitate at the Martu tables. By that time the three Martu tables had become two. I spent time between the tables. Techniques focused upon ranking preferences that were projected upon the front screen. It became the local agencies’ and facilitators’ (in some cases these intersected) responsibility at each of these tables to help one or two Martu through this process in addition to filling out their own sheets.

The day finished with a delicious barbeque that was sponsored by BHP. There was little to no cultural mixing. I flew home that evening with the Perth personnel.

The Institute for Sustainability and Technology Policy at Murdoch University analysed the Dialogue data and produced the final report. The contents of this report would generate some political discontent. In particular, the legitimacy of the vision of a Martu Western Desert Shire was contested by the East Pilbara Shire. This is discussed in Chapter Four.

2.4.4 Reflections upon Stage 3

The fieldwork in Stage 3 enabled me to study the same case study through a different lens. Reflections upon Stage 3 validated all of the above seven major conclusions from the first two stages of fieldwork. The refinement of previous reflections and additional reflections are as follows:

• Indigenous people are required by necessity to deal with Western ambivalence. Cultural hybridity is a result;
• Cultural hybridity has important lessons for sustainable development for societies characterised by first modern society;
• The practice of governance acts to control but not prevent Martu collective and individual agency;
• Communication across cultures is difficult;
• Cross-cultural communication is currently inhibited by inflexible and also culturally and geographically distant western style institutions;
• Representative democracy is not working for the Martu people;
• Deliberative democracy offers potential for decision making by crossing culture through dialogue to negotiate structures of representation to determine responsibility.

2.4.5 Reflections upon Fieldwork Stage 4

Stage 4 involved a series of interviews with local agencies as outlined previously in this chapter. Reflections from the interviews in 2004 include:

• Federal policy discourse is powerful and appears to be reproduced and resisted within the relationships at the local community and regional levels in the Western Desert;
• The Martu people’s individual and collective identity is positioned by national and State discourse;
• Dominant governance and decision making structure misrepresent the Martu people’s diverse identities;
• The concept of sustainable development is not used by any culture across the Western Desert, although there is a limited understanding within local government agencies;
• There is a cross-cultural desire for better communication with representative structures;
• There exists great ambivalence within the cross-cultural relationship, which is complex and messy;
• Many of the stories indicate the western desire to eradicate this ambivalence and reflect a first modern perspective;
• The stories themselves were ambivalent and contradicted not only each other but also themselves;
• There is an assumption that representative structures will simplify hybridity;
• Creativity appears within the interviews as a means to cross culture;
• Difference and politics are widely evident across all cultures. There is a desire to eradicate both within the interviews.

2.4.6 Final Reflections

Final reflections involved a final research phase of reflecting upon the research journey in total and thus stepping outside the PAR cycle. I had physically left the case study a number of times over the PAR process but had remained emotionally connected. To reflect in depth, I distanced myself from the subjective self that had been created in relation to the people and place of the case study. Of course this was not a complete separation, but an attempt to better position myself for self-understanding and also for critique. Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000) describe this as a breaking from a frame of reference that has been established and consider it necessary for the act of reflection. This enabled the writing of this thesis.
Chapter Three
Storylines and Discourse: The Australian Context

3.1 Introduction

The quality of life for Indigenous Australians is the second worst in the world. This contrasts strongly with the quality of life for non-Indigenous Australians who rank as the fourth best in the world (Jackson 2004). There has been little improvement in the disparity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians over the last 30 years. Improvements in Indigenous wellbeing have been slow or stagnant in absolute and relative terms and the wellbeing of Indigenous people in regional and remote areas (the Indigenous enclave) is the lowest (Commonwealth Grants Commission 2001). Improved Indigenous wellbeing is a shared goal of Indigenous sustainable development across Indigenous people, government and industry, albeit to differing extents.

This chapter closely examines how Indigenous sustainable development is framed by the discourse of the national Australian government and by national Indigenous leaders. The analysis is supported by the discourse of commentators such as academics. The discursive debate in Australia is primarily focused upon the negotiation of boundaries of representation and responsibility. Synott (2003 p. 218) states “(i)t is not just a matter of terminology, but at the core of the issues are frames of national history, identity and ongoing renegotiation of the boundaries between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians”. The focus in this chapter is primarily about how perceptions influence the determination of representation and responsibility for Indigenous people in Australia at the national level.

The approaches to analyzing discourse are outlined in Section 3.2. A genealogy of Australian policy about Indigenous people is provided in Section 3.3 and is necessary to historically frame the discussion that follows. Two essential storylines are depicted in Section 3.4: the storyline of the Federal government
and the storyline of Indigenous aspirations. Section 3.5 analyses the complex discursive terrain that lies within and between these two essential storylines. A discussion is provided in Section 3.6.

### 3.2 Storylines and Discourse

Discourse both frames and conveys knowledge across institutional space. It can be independent of particular actors but actors can also be constituted by discourse. Discourse is more than a reflection of reality; it can actually determine the nature of reality. Different discourses can result in very different styles of policy practice and prescription (Fischer 2003). The analysis within this and the following chapters is based upon critical discourse analysis (Fairclough and Wodak 1997) which aims to demonstrate “how institutions, practices and even the individual human subject itself can be understood as produced through the workings of a set of discourses” (Potter and Wetherell 1994 p. 47).

Brock et al. (2001) outline two primary approaches to the analysis of policy discourse. The first approach has been termed the ‘augumentative turn’. This body of work details how storylines establish the frame for who and what is included or excluded from policy deliberation (Fischer and Forester 1993; Rein and Schon 1993; Hajer 1995). It extends the discourse analysis of policy to also include the manner by which different actors are framed by policy as discourse (Brock et al. 2001).

A storyline is defined by Hajer (1995 p. 56) as “a generative sort of narrative that allows actors to draw upon various discursive categories to give meaning to specific or social phenomena”. Fischer (2003) explains that people do not draw on comprehensive theory for cognition but instead rely upon storylines. In this sense, storylines condense and structure information through assumptions and values. They emphasise some aspects of an event and downplay others which tends to conceal ambivalence (Fischer 2003). Hajer (1995) argues that storylines attain discursive power by drawing upon different domains to provide different actors with symbolic references that enable a common understanding allowing
communication amongst different or overlapping understandings. Brock et al. (2001 p. 6) write that this “is influenced as much by the trust people have in the ‘story-teller’ as the persuasiveness of the story in itself, and the acceptability of the story for their own identities”. According to Hajer (1995), different discourse coalitions with independent and differing practices come together through a common political project. Actors within these coalitions are constantly trying to make other actors see their point of view but also to position these actors. Discourses compete to shape, frame and promote a particular storyline. This accords with an actor-orientated perspective but also accounts for how actors are embedded within layers of discourse which frame policy issues (Hajer 1995; Brock et al. 2001).

The second approach to the analysis of discourse involves the analysis of text and speech through the deconstruction of terms within the language of policy. This analysis allows a deeper investigation of the terms, concepts and methods that are employed to frame the breadth and depth of particular storylines, enabling a greater understanding of how certain policies have gained and maintained hegemony (Brock et al. 2001). Methods that are used within policy to maintain hegemony outlined by Gapser and Apthorpe (1996) include: good/bad binaries to demarcate normative positions; metaphors and allusions; the use of nouns rather than verbs; normative rather than descriptive language; and the use of key words and slogans to brand ‘grand narratives’. Numbers and naming are employed to defend these strategies (Brock et al. 2001).

Both of these approaches are useful for this thesis. Of primary interest to the analysis of this chapter is a deconstruction of the ways in which western organisational discourse determines boundaries of responsibility and representation of Indigenous people to create a storyline of Indigenous sustainable development. This chapter provides an overview of Federal and State policies. It is also useful to analyse how Indigenous representatives (academics and other spokespeople) utilise discourse to negotiate these boundaries as a contrasting storyline. Firstly it is necessary to present a brief historical overview and thus context to the development of the institutional discursive terrain that exists today.
3.3 A Brief History of Australian Policy

White superiority exists in many places around the world (including Australia) as a result of a history of the scientific search for unified knowledge and the colonial project of subduing and appropriating. In this narrative, colonised people became the white man’s burden and it was his Christian duty to bring civilisation and progress to those trapped in outmoded forms of civilisation. The hegemony of this white narrative served to deflect attention from the economic and political interests which were motivating colonialism. It is likely that there are many assumptions which persist today and are repeated within individual and institutional racist practices. This results in Indigenous culture and identity being seen as different and often less valuable (Weedon 1999). These assumptions and perceptions remain hidden within the public silence that surrounds the history of Australia and its use and abuse of Indigenous people within the colonising process (Gilfedder 1988). Memmi’s historical ‘colonial drama’ continues to unfold and affect the relationships between the coloniser and colonised in Australia (Memmi 1990).

The history of invasion in the late 18th century and early colonisation (sometimes benignly referred to as settlement) have been recorded as brutal and repressive. Early invasion was met with sustained and strong resistance by the Indigenous population. Unlike in the United States, Canada and New Zealand, the colonisers did not sign a treaty with the first nation people, justified in a mythical belief of *terra nullius*19 (Broome 2002). This cleared a path for pastoralists, squatters and miners (Reynolds 1989) and cemented the ground for the storylines and the layered discursive terrain that followed in the coming century.

The perspective of the colonisers was separate not only from nature but also from the Indigenous people they encountered; both were included within the Australian Flora and Fauna Act. Nature and Indigenous people suffered alike (Allen 1988). Indigenous people were represented as pre-modern and backward

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19 Terra nullius is a legal term which means that land has no prior legal ownership.
which legitimised policies of extermination and exploitation (Langton 1993b). Dodson (1994) writes that representations were constructed not only to control and manage Indigenous people and their land but also were employed to reflect back to the colonising culture what it desired to see in itself. Representations have differed depending upon this desire. Dodson states:

> By our lack, we provided proof of their abundance and the achievements of ‘progress’; by our inferiority, we provided their superiority; by our moral and intellectual poverty, we proved that they were indeed the paragons of humanity, products of millennia of development (Dodson 1994 p. 8).

The theory and practice of representation are developed more fully in the following chapter.

Indigenous early resistance exacerbated the impact of widespread massacres legitimised by theories about biological determinism. Extermination failed and was followed by policies and legislation to manage the Indigenous population. This was initially characterised as protection and moved towards being overtly assimilative by the 1940s. Protectorates were established to manage ‘full bloods’ in reserves and ‘half-castes’ were removed from their families and sent to schools or convents. Indigenous people were encouraged to disassociate from their culture and assimilate. In Western Australian this can be observed by the *Native (Citizenship Rights) Act 1944 WA* in which Indigenous people could apply for citizenship if they forgo traditional connections to culture and country (Stephanie 2002). O’Donoghue (1997 p. 5) writes that “Aboriginal people had been the subject of bureaucratic intervention for much of the period of white settlement…our experience of those policies, designed to ‘protect’ and then ‘assimilate’ us, was overwhelmingly negative”. The repressive prejudice of what became mainstream society, exploitation of free labor, and the stolen generation (a term signifying policies according to which Indigenous children where forcibly removed from their families) are only a few of the influences which have impacted negatively but have not destroyed the self-identity and strength of Indigenous people in Australia. Indigenous people have now become one of the more regulated populations within the broader Australian population (Lawrence and Gibson 2005).
The mid to late twentieth century gave rise internationally to the postcolonial era. This period was witness to a new body of discourse, including self-determination, amenable to the rights of Indigenous people. Indigenous resistance in Australia, supported by the international arena, led to major policy changes in the late 1960s (McLaughlin 2001). This was most evident in the 1967 referendum which resulted in Indigenous people being included as citizens within the Census and thus considered to be the responsibility of Commonwealth authority and legislation. It marked a significant turning point in the tides of the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Australia. McLaughlin (2001) outlines the national Indigenous policy between 1967 and 2001 which can broadly be categorised into 4 separate periods. This is extended in this thesis until 2006 and is structured as follows:

- **1967-1972: Separate Development**
  An Office of Aboriginal Affairs and a Commonwealth Council for Aboriginal Affairs were established. Capacity building, increased economic independence, and improved health, housing, education and vocational training were considered transitional objectives until the Indigenous populace were integrated into the mainstream.

- **1972-1990: Self-Determination as a Political Strategy**
  The Labor Whitlam Government came to office in 1972 advancing the principle of self-determination. The Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA) was immediately established at the Commonwealth and State (with the exception of Queensland) levels. Growth of Indigenous political voices was funded through community-based organisations. A more conservative doctrine of self-management was endorsed in the Liberal term commencing in 1976. The Labor Government resumed office in 1983 and in 1990 the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) was established. This comprised of regional bodies to account for cultural and regional issues and to represent the regions at a national level. ATSIC has subsequently undergone a number of philosophical changes from activism to service delivery.
• **1990-1996: Social Justice and Reconciliation**

The Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation was established in 1991. Both the government and ATSIC agreed upon the establishment of separate political and administrative structures for Indigenous specific funding. In 1993, the Native Title Act recognised Indigenous right to country to a limited extent. Governance bodies such as prescribed bodies corporate and representative Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander bodies were established (Nettheim 1998).

• **1996 to 2006: Practical Reconciliation**

The Coalition came to office in 1996 and established targeted spending so as to improve the conditions of health, housing, education and employment, particularly for those in greatest need. This policy approach became known as ‘practical reconciliation’. The Federal government initiated changes to the Native Title Act which extinguished Native Title on pastoral and mining leases. In recent years, Federal attention has become focused upon agreement making with Indigenous communities, which is claimed to be a ‘new approach’. A comprehensive agreement process was initiated with an agreement by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in November 2000. Three priority areas were identified, namely:

- Investing in community leadership and government initiatives;
- Reviewing and re-engineering programs and services to deliver practical measures;
- The fostering of links between the private sector and Indigenous communities towards Indigenous economic independence and thus sustainability (Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs 2003b).

The COAG agreements aim to share risk and responsibility across not only government but also community organisations and industry.

This is more obvious in the Federal policy of *Shared Responsibility*. Australian State and Territory governments have agreed formally to work together towards these priorities in a whole of government approach through program flexibility.
and coordination between government agencies. This approach consisted of two basic principles:

- Responsibility for the condition and wellbeing of Indigenous communities is shared by the community, families and individuals with government – *Shared Responsibility*; and
- Communities and government change their current approaches by building their capacity to be able to deliver on the *Shared Responsibility* and build a *Shared Future* (Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs 2003b).

The Federal Government commissioned a review of the social security system in 2000 chaired by Patrick McClure and titled *Participation Support for a More Equitable Society* 2000 (McClure 2000). This report led to Community Participation Agreements located within the Federal government’s framework of welfare reform *Australians Working Together*. These involve a *mutual obligation* between Indigenous communities and Government within local and regional agreements, with the aim of identifying practical means by which people may contribute to the community in return for income support (Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs 2003b).

Terms such as ‘social justice’ and ‘self-determination’ have been dropped in Federal discourse and replaced by a discourse of mainstreaming service delivery for Indigenous people within a ‘practical’ approach. In April 2004 the Federal government decided to dismantle ATSIC. The mainstreaming of programs and projects has become a focus. Multi-agency Indigenous Coordination Centres (ICCs) have been established at the regional level, managed by the Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination (OIPC) within the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs. A number of bodies have been created at the national level to oversee the transition. These include the Ministerial Taskforce on Indigenous Affairs and the Secretaries Group on Indigenous Affairs, and the National Indigenous Council (NIC).
3.4 Two Storylines of Indigenous Sustainable Development

This section will outline two storylines in Australia that are broad and deliberately essential. One of the storyline summarises the Federal government’s discourse which provides the overarching framework of service delivery and funding to Indigenous people across Australia. The other storyline depicts Indigenous aspirations in Australia. The discussion here is brief, as the following section will develop more fully the discourse that runs within and between these storylines.

The storylines are depicted as deliberately essential to uncover the extreme ideological assumptions that underlie the discourse about Indigenous people in Australia. Ideology is defined by Oktar (2001 p. 13) as a “system of ideas, beliefs, values, attitudes and categories by which a person, a group or a society perceives, comprehends and interpret the world” and this description is well suited to the analysis to follow. The storylines depict essentialised ideological frames. Table 3.1 is sourced from discourse across a wide body of literature and depicts the two essential storylines.

The Federal government position is best described as the ‘Standard Story’ which is dominant and naturalised. This is defined by Nairn and McCreamor (1991) as the ‘common-sense’ way of conceptualising relationships between ethnic groups (Nairn and McCreamor 1991). This storyline is based upon neo-liberal egalitarian discourse that is difficult to undermine because of the use of principles of justice, freedom and equality of rights and opportunity. Wetherell and Potter’s (1992) analysis in the New Zealand context is useful for this analysis as it demonstrates how discourse is organised rhetorically to support the Standard Story.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Indigenous aspirations</strong></th>
<th><strong>Federal Coalition</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Terra nullius as a myth</td>
<td>Terra nullius as a fact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Sovereignty, Treaty and Constitutional recognition</td>
<td>Assimilation within a Nation State</td>
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<td>Equity and the right to be different</td>
<td>Equity based upon sameness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diverse relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hybridity and inter-connected</td>
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<td>Rights discourse</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holistic problems and solutions</td>
<td>Focus upon economic issues – jobs and education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperative of culture</td>
<td>Culture as secondary to the economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change of both Indigenous/non-Indigenous</td>
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<td>Multi-layered governance</td>
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<td>Cultural accountability</td>
<td>Fiscal accounting upwards</td>
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<tr>
<td>History matters</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Building upon strengths and Indigenous agency</td>
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<td>Symbolic and practical reconciliation</td>
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<td>Rights and responsibilities</td>
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<td>Reciprocity within multi-faceted relationships</td>
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<td>Obligation to country</td>
<td>Environment as separate and a resource for extraction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time and resources required for sustained dialogue</td>
<td>Discourse of crisis and control</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Wetherell and Potter (1992) identify 10 common rhetorically self-sufficient arguments which support accepted and ‘common-sense’ principles of liberal-egalitarian discourse. These include:

1. Resources should be used productively and in a cost-effective manner
2. Nobody should be compelled
3. Everybody should be treated equally
4. You cannot turn the clock backwards
5. Present generations cannot be blamed for the mistakes of past generations
6. Injustices should be righted
7. Everybody can succeed if they try hard enough
8. Minority opinion should not carry more weight than majority opinion
9. We have to live in the present century
10. You have to be practical (Wetherell and Potter 1992).

In Australia, there is a limited body of critical discourse analysis to support the findings of Wetherell and Potter. Augoustinos et al. (2002) demonstrate how the self-sufficient arguments listed above are used in a number of ways by the Australian Prime Minister to negate alternative storylines about Indigenous people in Australia. LeCouteur and Augoustinos (2001) show how the 10 self-sufficient arguments featured in letters on the internet about an apology to the Stolen Generations. They state that it is not the form of argument but the content that matters. These letters employed these rhetorical arguments for different ends ranging from liberal to illiberal. Other studies include the issue of the discursive problematisation of Indigenous identity (in Augoustinos et al. 1999 and Augoustinos et al. 1999). Rapley (1998) demonstrates how liberal discourse can be used to legitimise racial discourse and LeCouteur et al. (2001) analyse how membership categories restrict certain activities to either pastoralists or Indigenous people.

The Federal storyline is based upon “the ‘white settlement’ of a hostile and untamed continent, that lauds the values of European civilisation, of progress and modernity, and that glorifies the process of nation building” (Augoustinos et al.
The pragmatic orientation of the Federal liberal discourse is based upon a grand narrative of practical reconciliation and masks the underlying ideology of the associated storyline (Smith 2003). This storyline works to draw essentialistic and definite boundaries about space, time and Indigenous identity. Augoustinos et al. (1999) identified a number of interdependent arguments to support these boundaries. They include: a focus upon the past is not useful; emphasis should be upon similarities rather than differences across Australia; and that Indigenous disadvantage should be addressed through equality rather than difference (Augoustinos et al. 1999a). The importance of a shared similar identity bounded by the nation state (but not a shared history) and of a self-perpetuating present based upon economic progress casts the Standard Story as one that is framed by a first modern perspective. This first modern storyline has little respect for difference which is perceived as undesirable and inferior, as ambivalence. Jull states:

Howard himself would have little sympathy for Indigenous survival or sustainable development for their own sakes. He laments the fact that many Aboriginals live in isolation, maintain their cultures, and are not ‘fully integrated’, rather than assimilated into industrial society and the general workforce (Jull 2002 p. 11).

In contrast, the essential Indigenous storyline is based upon the inter-connection of the social, cultural, historical, economic and political worlds (Behrendt 2003) and seeks a holistic approach that is amenable to diverse Indigenous worldviews.

Arabena writes that the:

new arrangements are not about forging relationships with Indigenous peoples, but instead about resisting and minimising the recognition that is provided to our cultures, our history, our capacities to contribute and our ongoing connection with the land (Arabena 2005 p. 14).

Unlike the Standard Story, alternative perspectives based upon these diverse Indigenous aspirations point to the continuing relevance of a shared history, the
need for equality that recognises a diverse and changing Indigenous identity, the importance of recognising power and culture through multi-layered governance arrangements and the need for diverse economic opportunities that include recognition of a continuing Indigenous relationship with country. A dialogue is considered necessary for the process of negotiating these aspirations. Politically, the call for a dialogue continues to be met with silence. The essential Indigenous storyline in Table 3.1 also includes the perspectives of non-Indigenous people sympathetic to Indigenous aspirations.

Augoustinos et al. (2002) argue that racism is a collective practice through the sharing of discourse and thus blame cannot be solely accorded to the Federal government generally or to the Prime Minister specifically. However, it must also be remembered that political parties are in a unique position to access media and other mechanisms to shape public discourse (Augoustinos et al. 2002). Public figures thus have a particular responsibility as representatives of a diverse public, and not a perceived uniform mainstream.

The analysis in this chapter is based upon the spaces of policy and academic publications, available through the internet and large city libraries and is thus based upon a culture of literacy. It is difficult for local voices, particularly for Indigenous people in the Indigenous domain who do not have the cultural skills or readily available access to infrastructure such as the internet to participate in this ‘dialogue’. Indigenous representatives have exercised agency by ‘speaking’ in this domain but continue to advocate for greater space in policy platforms for forms of communication more amenable to the diversity of Indigenous people.

3.5 Discourse about Indigenous People in Australia

The aim of the analysis in this section is to provide a broad overview examining the perceptions about Indigenous sustainable development and the boundaries of responsibility and representation between national government and national Indigenous leaders in Australia. The following chapter will examine how the discourse of Newman institutional actors compares to the two storylines
developed early in this chapter. The analysis of discourse in this section is based largely upon policies emanating from the Federal Liberal party and the views of a diversity of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people leaders and commentators at the national level. This analysis is an important precursor to the chapters that follow as it provides a deeper understanding of the national storylines. These storylines are constrained to the case study interviews in the following chapter. This provides an interesting contrast given the geographical distance between the formulation of discourse (and policy) at the national level in centres such as Canberra and the ideologies that exist in the remote case study context. State intereactions with the local government, industry and Martu people in the Western Desert are examined through reflections from the two consultancy participatory projects.

The Federal Liberal party and Western Australian State Labor party both held office during this research. The analysis is presented through four discursive categories including: 1. Participation, 2. Indigenous identity, 3. Governance and 4. Economy. They correlate to what are commonly perceived to be central pillars of sustainable development. These categories are separated for the purposes of analysis but should in fact be considered to be inter-related.

It is particularly interesting and relevant to this thesis to first briefly compare the views of Noel Pearson (a well respected and published Indigenous leader of the Cape York Peninsular), with relevant contemporary contributions from Third Way Politics and the Federal Coalition government. The Third Way platform was put forward by the then Labor leader Mark Latham in the Federal election of 2004 in opposition to the ruling Federal Liberal platform. Third Way politics is an international movement which synthesises the left and right of politics to address issues of late modernity arising from globalisation, ecological crises and changing identities.

Pearson (2000) is critical of contemporary politics (primarily Australian Labor), which he sees as being inadequately ‘progressive’ and failing to focus upon reciprocity to overcome welfare dependency (a ‘gammon economy’) and substance abuse. Policy failure for Pearson is thus primarily an ideological issue.
For him, welfare dependency arises from non-reciprocal economic relationships; unequal governance relationships where power lies with bureaucrats; and an acceptance of the situation by all. Pearson advocates access to the real economy where reciprocity exists; transformation of governance based upon holistic policies and partnerships (including commercial); decision making by family and clan; disciplined local community development and tough measures against substance abuse (Pearson 2000).

It would be easy at first glance to conclude that Pearson, the Coalition and the Third Way have much in common. Pearson in fact has acknowledged some common ground with Third Way politics. He has also given credit to the Coalition’s policies without providing a full endorsement (Robbins 2003). Wooten (2004) writes that Pearson’s arguments pertaining to welfare policy echo current views held at the Federal level by both parties. Latham’s Third Way was based upon a strong economy complemented by a strong society, responsibility, incentives and devolution to community organisations. The Federal Coalition government as discussed above is committed to mutual obligation, work for the dole, individual responsibility, partnerships with the private sector and an intolerance to drugs, alcohol, violence and idleness (Wooten 2004).

The similarities, differences and thus ambivalence that exist across the discourse generally (including the discourse attributable to Pearson, the Coalition and the Third Way) are explored briefly here.

1. Participation

It is well documented internationally that the discourse of ‘participation’ leaves space for multiple and competing interpretations (Apthorpe 1996; Gasper and Apthorpe 1996; Brock et al. 2001). The Federal government deems itself to be responsible for a relatively benign consultation21 whilst communities are

21 Pretty’s 1995 typology is useful here and includes 7 types of participation. This includes manipulative participation, passive participation, participation by consultation, participation for material incentives and functional participation in which the participation of citizens is constrained by government or industry practices and frameworks. Interactive participation aims towards a reciprocal relationship and self-mobilisation is where groups claim power themselves.
mutually obliged to participate in predetermined structures and processes. Boughton (1998) argues that this approach positions Indigenous people’s non-participation in mainstream systems to be about correcting the Indigenous problem and removing barriers to participation in the mainstream.

Diminishing Indigenous participation is observed by both the McClure report and Pearson. Rowse (2002 p266) notes that both McClure’s mutual obligation and Pearson’s reciprocity “conceive society as being a network of mutual obligations among individuals and between individuals and larger entities…the network is flawed in that some people’s participation in it has fallen to critically low levels” (my emphasis). The answer for both is in rectifying the structure; for McClure this is based upon mutual obligation between government and communities, whilst Pearson’s reciprocity ascribes only a limited responsibility for Government (Rowse 2002b). The assumption of both approaches is that Indigenous participation can be monitored, measured and managed. There is a real possibility of such an approach privileging western forms of participation.

Important questions relating to participation include: where does the initiative originate? and who is required to change? The Department of Indigenous Affairs in Western Australia notes that the lack of participation within the policy framework by the Indigenous population is a problem as viewed by the communities themselves (Department of Indigenous Affairs 2002). Many commentators argue that institutions and processes, including the Federal Shared Responsibility, are prescriptively imposed upon Indigenous people by government with expectations of unequal change (Castejon 2002). Pearson, the Federal Government and Third Way politics all agree rhetorically that change is required in both government and Indigenous practices (Poroch 2005). An important distinction is that for Pearson, but not for the Federal government, this requires devolving power from bureaucrats to community structures (Pearson 2000). This provides Indigenous representative structures with the negotiating power to determine boundaries of responsibility and to continue to change the form of representative structures for the benefit of Indigenous populations.

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22 This was referred to earlier in this chapter.
The Federal government does not acknowledge that a power imbalance exists between government structures and Indigenous people. The “unfinished business” between Indigenous people and government (Dodson 1994) refers to issues of politics and power. This is related to the establishment of dialogical processes. Castejon (2002) comments that Indigenous Affairs is characterised by an imposed monologue rather than a dialogue. For many, this is witnessed by the dismantling of ATSIC without widespread Indigenous dialogue (Dodson 2004). Indigenous people continue to call for a conversation with government that addresses a diversity of Indigenous aspirations. Governments have responded by selectively incorporating Indigenous voices but have not made space for diverse Indigenous voices to contribute significantly to policy design (Humpage 2005). Noel Pearson is the most obvious example of an Indigenous representative that has been used selectively by government.

A diverse and collective voice is considered necessary by many advocates of the Indigenous storyline. Behrendt (2003) argues that effective participation promotes group association and improves social wellbeing through increased involvement in decision making processes. She recommends that Indigenous participation be increased through:

- Alliance building with other minority and excluded groups;
- Developing a strong political front and a well-defined agenda;
- Inclusion of members of minority groups in all aspects of decision-making processes through affirmative action programs (Behrendt 2003).

This indicates that for Behrendt participation is primarily an issue of developing collective political voice and agency. There is little mention in Federal discourse generally of building Indigenous diverse collective strength and agency to participate in the negotiation of boundaries of responsibility and representation. Participation is instead approached through the Federal government’s ideology of individuality.
2. Indigenous Identity

Indigenous academics discuss how the naming of Aboriginality identity has been used as an ideological tool by policy makers. Dodson (1994) argues that colonial and imposed definitions of Aboriginality have been used to control, dominate and assimilate. Both geographical and cultural boundaries continue to be drawn by government around Indigenous populations, which essentialise Indigenous identity and are overly fixed. Ambivalence exists in that Indigenous identity is framed both as individuals who exist within the boundaries of a nation state and in terms of essentialistic group identity determined by community boundaries.

Disadvantage is framed by the Federal storyline in terms of Indigenous traditions which hold people back rather than these traditions being seen as a source of strength and ability to change and adapt (Bradford, 2004b). Bradford (2004b p. 170) states that “(w)hen Aboriginality is perceived as inferior or deficient – and dangerous – there is no understanding that people wish to maintain and enhance that identity”. The discourse of Indigenous ‘disadvantage’ is supported by a discourse of crisis (Altman 2004) and a politics of despair (Poroch 2005). The focus of both Federal and State governments is upon economic dependence, chronic disease, addiction and violence. This has resulted in an emphasis upon outcomes rather than processes (Humpage 2005). Administrative and market rationality (practical rather than symbolic reconciliation) currently dominate the Federal and State platforms through ‘objective’ and ‘neutral’ discourse including ‘accountability’, ‘improved outcomes in key areas’, ‘benchmarking’ and ‘economic independence’.

Indigenous identity continues to be measured by policy. In the Australian context, Folds (2001) comments that bureaucracies aim towards statistical equality which leads to the blinding of officials to the local aspirations in Indigenous remote communities. Arabena argues that the Federal government’s recent publication Overcoming Disadvantage exemplifies this approach:

The challenge of ‘being Indigenous’ is a crucial issue for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people today. Who we are, and how we live, is framed by artificial, state-created identities…Aden Ridgeway has argued
that being defined as disadvantaged does not address long standing structural and systematic barriers and we are coopted into over simplified debates based on language benign in appearance but loaded in meaning. Some of the language used in the report is particularly potent…Implicit in the data sets are the political judgments and choices of what to measure, how to measure it, how often to measure and how to present and interpret the results. Reducing the complexity of our circumstances to measurable indicators is neither ideologically nor theoretically innocent; the process of simplification embodies both the expectations and the beliefs of the responsible technicians and officials (Arabena 2005 pp. 2-3).

The issue of equality has received substantial attention. It is argued that Indigenous people are seeking universalism and differentiated citizenship rights (Fleras 1999). Many commentators who support the Indigenous storyline claim that Indigenous people should not have to lose their culture to citizenship and are seeking unity rather than uniformity (Bradford 2004b). Some even argue that settler societies with liberal individual rights frameworks based upon equality and universality are reluctant to incorporate collective rights and citizenship (Havemann 1999a). Altman and Hunter (2003) state that the collective rights discourse was replaced in the discourse of Indigenous disadvantage by ‘practical reconciliation’. The use of the third self-sufficient argument has made this possible. For Michael Dodson this has been based upon fear, as Indigenous rights are a challenge to the liberal value of a uniform nation (Bradford 2004b). This can be traced to a first modern perspective which was shown in Chapter One to actually further produce ambivalence.

Collective Indigenous rights are related to a historical relationship of colonisation. Dodson states that Indigenous people have a particular relationship with government structures due to colonisation (in Bradford 2004b) which results in a need for collective recognition. Behrendt (2002) argues that the neo-liberal economic policy of governments in Australia is unsympathetic to the legacy of history and is thus blind to this shared historical relationship. Bradford notes that the Federal government has rejected the colonial nature of history in “a
‘simplistic, bipolar defence of Australian history and culture’, which drew sharp lines of distinction between unambiguous truth and unacceptable interpretation” (Bradford 2004b p. 169). Prime Minister Howard has been critical of what he sees as a ‘black armband approach’ to Australian history and has stated that “we must not join those who would portray Australia’s history since 1788 as little more than a disgraceful record of imperialism, exploitation and racism” (Howard, 1997 p4). The fourth, fifth and ninth self-sufficient arguments are used by the Prime Minister to support his ideological stance. For Bradford (2004 p. 170) this is because of “liberalism’s ‘deep psychological need’ to make a line between a past riven with rival histories and an unburdened future”. Again, a first modern perspective appears evident with a fixed temporal boundary separating the consequences of the past from the present.

The Federal government has focused upon practical reconciliation which has denied the symbolic aspects of reconciliation. Any of the ten self-sufficient arguments are used to support this stance.

3. Governance

The discourse that relates to Indigenous governance is diverse and ambivalent. Issues of responsibility and representation intersect with power. In particular, power determines the boundaries of representation and responsibility and who is inside and outside of these boundaries. Dodson and Smith (2003) state that good governance is the ‘foundation stone’ upon which socio-economic sustainability in communities will be built and is thus the most imperative issue for Indigenous affairs.

The discourse of sovereignty in relation to Indigenous governance is interpreted in diverse ways. Behrendt (2001 p. 102) writes that sovereignty “captures the essence of both a separate cultural entity and historical dispossession and the exclusion and lack of consent involved in the creation of the modern Australian state”. The discourse of sovereignty includes recognition in the constitution, treaty, exercise of autonomy, control over service delivery and freedom of lifestyle. Behrendt (2001) argues the need for greater community autonomy that
falls short of the separatism found within international law. Shared sovereignty is described by Fleras (1999) as both affirming and denying the concept of a sovereign state. This accepts the legitimacy of settler domain only after recognition of Indigeneity as an alternative source of authority and consent. Shared sovereignty throws into question the boundary (or the negation of this boundary depending upon the intent of government) between Indigenous people and the nation state in relation to responsibility and representation. Shared sovereignty provides an opportunity to explore boundaries through a political relationship that acknowledges power and cultural difference.

Commentators from the far right, including Keith Windshuttle and Gary Johns, argue however that sovereignty promotes disunity and separatism. The third self-sufficient argument is utilised to support this position. It is argued from an Indigenous point of view that it is completely naïve to assume that Indigenous people are seeking complete separatism, as Indigenous communities do not have infrastructure, resources or desire for separatism. Sovereignty has not been used or even recognised within the discourse of government, which has instead used the discourse of self-determination. However more recently a number of right wing commentators argue that self-determination is a social experiment that failed. For Albrechtsen it is:

getting harder to ignore the evidence of destruction wrought by a 30 plus-year experiment…allowing failed policies of separatism and communalism to continue unchallenged for too long. No amount of talk about reconciliation is going to take Aboriginal children away from petrol and get them into schools. Only reversing perverse incentives can do that (Albrechtsen 2005 np).

Self-determination for Albrechtsen is thus aligned to separatism and welfare dependency. The first self-sufficient argument makes an appearance here.

Dodson (1996) argues that for Indigenous people, self-determination is yet to occur. Policy rhetoric fails to grasp this. Instead Dodson explains that the language of self-management has typically replaced self-determination. Self-determination and its implementation have been rejected in recent years within the Federal government’s policy position, which does not support what is
considered to be implied separate nations or governments (Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs 2003a). Self-determination has instead slipped into the discourse of shared responsibility and mutual obligation within agreement making. The boundary that is created by the discourse of ‘self’ has been removed by a discourse of togetherness that is created through sharing and mutuality.

Within the discourse of agreement making, the Federal government has recently advanced the concept of social coalitions. The Prime Minister “describes a partnership of individuals, families, business, government, welfare and charitable organisations, each contributing their unique resources and expertise to tackle disadvantage at its source” (Robbins 2003). This partnership approach is easily aligned to Third Way Politics, as indicated by Latham (2001 p. 83) who states that “the true socialist principle of our time is the dispersal of economic, social and political power” (cited in Robbins 2003 p. 5). Pearson (2000) discusses ‘a paradigm shift’ in which social enterprise and high-level partnerships are inclusive of the private sector and replace the service delivery-centered model. The negotiation of responsibility is complicated by the inclusion of industry within representative structures.

The dispersal of power to collective Indigenous representative structures required for the sharing of governance and thus responsibility and representation is in fact limited by the current approach to agreement making. This topic has received substantial attention from Indigenous activists and academics. Langton and Palmer (2003) state that agreement making has emerged as an instrument of engagement in an environment that has denied Indigenous self-government. Within Indigenous discourse, partnerships in agreement making are primarily about this sharing of jurisdiction and thus governance (Humpage 2005). This sharing is not evident within Federal, State and Industry discourse. The issue of boundary drawing across sectors, geography and populations within a partnership approach is complicated. Howitt (1998) writes that there are risks in further marginalising Indigenous people by getting the scale wrong in agreement making. Regionalism is being explored across the discourse and presents opportunities for exploring collective Indigenous representation and even
sovereignty. These aspects are being actively avoided in government discourse relating to regional agreements. Regionalism also provides opportunities to explore representation and responsibility in context, which is particularly an issue in regional Australia where the benefits of resource extraction are rarely felt by Indigenous communities.

Bradford (2004a) outlines a number of different types of agreements in the Australian context. He proposes that the term ‘comprehensive’ regional agreements applies only to those agreements which are composed of all of the following elements: broad subject matter; a distinct process of equitable and direct negotiation; recognition of the Indigenous party as a political entity with inherent rights, as a people or as a nation; and the inclusion of (at least) an Indigenous person and a government, most appropriately the Commonwealth, as parties. Federal government agreements including the COAG trials have emphasised the importance of good governance and a whole of government approach whilst industry partnerships focus on the provision of employment and training. It is highly debatable whether either of these are comprehensive. Government has tended to ignore the issue of jurisdiction over land, whilst industry has demonstrated a greater willingness to engage on this issue (O'Faircheallaigh C. 1999; Bradford 2004a). Bradford (2004a) argues that the agreements within Australia that most resemble a comprehensive approach are emerging at the state level. The Federal and industry approach is counter to the holistic ethos advocated by the Indigenous storyline.

For Langton and Palmer (2003), the proliferation of agreement making requires a national agreement framework or a treaty process which would establish a standard for negotiation and ensure legal and constitutional recognition of culture, heritage and control over land by Indigenous people. This is a clever discursive maneuver as it links the Federal discourse about agreement making to the issue of treaty which has been ignored by the Federal government. For Castejon (2002 p. 28), a treaty implies “a possible recognition of sovereignty, as it is supposed to be made on an equal footing” whilst “an agreement can be made between two groups in the same country”. For Indigenous people a treaty is
necessary to protect Indigenous rights against government ideology, political pragmatism and bureaucratic stopgap solutions (Bradford 2004b)

There is some concern that without a national framework such as a treaty, agreement making might assist those communities that are well-organised. The distinction between Lawrence Mead’s desiring and undeserving poor is of relevance here and highlights the vagueness of mutual obligation policy (Braithwaite et al. 2002). Without improved governance capacity communities are unlikely to make informed decisions about the form of development (Dodson and Smith 2003). It is considered unfair by some commentators to ask Indigenous people to be responsible for representation without the knowledge, skills and capacity (as defined in negotiation with the communities themselves) to make decisions (Ah Kit 2002). Smith (2001 p. 42) states: “(t)he need for governance and capacity-building in Indigenous communities is much discussed, but has perhaps lagged behind other policy developments over the last decade”. Humpage (2005) writes that government policy discourse does not value Indigenous governance and capacity in its own right. Instead governance is seen as a means of eradicating the problem of disadvantage and fulfilling the terms of agreements, primarily the administration of service delivery. In this regard discussions about governance have been confined to corporate governance and capacity building, leaving no space for the examination of jurisdictional power (ATSIC 2002a).

The community governance institutions proposed by Pearson include a new statutory interface between communities and government to coordinate holistic planning, administration and service delivery, rather than the ad hoc and uncoordinated status quo. For him, responsibility must be allocated to this boundary (Martin 2001; Pearson 2001). Johns and Sanders (2005) comment that the ‘new mainstreaming’ in Indigenous affairs has much in common with Pearson’s arguments (Johns and Sanders 2005). In both, a boundary exists

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23 Lawrence Mead has been influential in the United States and the United Kingdom. He advocates a new paternalism which is conditional upon behavioral requirements and is both obligatory and enforceable. Mead argues that this is a new approach to welfare based upon firstly, its attempt to impart moral conduct and secondly, its effort to seek integration rather than exclusion through supervision within society. A combination of ‘help and hassle’ enables enforcement (Braithwaite et al. 2002).
between government and Indigenous communities. There are however important differences. For Pearson reciprocity, results from the moral authority of regional authorities. According to him, Indigenous constituents are more likely ‘obliged’ to these authorities rather than government (Rowse 2002b). Within Pearson’s arguments there is an implied jurisdictional devolution.

There are a number of complexities within mutual obligation and reciprocity. Rowse (2002b) comments upon the McClure report and its willingness to delegate responsibility for individual to non-government ‘community’ bodies or ‘brokers’. This is highly ambivalent in that mutual obligation is constructed upon an obligation between the government and the individual (Robbins 2003). Rowse doubts the legitimacy of governance structures in communities in light of Pearson’s descriptions of the dysfunction that results from welfare (Rowse 2002b). Cass and Brennan (2002) question whether it is possible that community organisations will maintain legitimacy and trust whilst handing out breaches.

Ambivalence also exists between the Federal government’s individual approach and the boundary that is drawn between whole of government and a whole of Indigenous community. There has been considerable focus recently upon capacity building government within a whole of government approach which is being influenced by international discourse (Humpage 2005). Sanders (2002) argues that this discourse is applied to Indigenous people without distinction. According to Rowse (2002), this approach is likely to be initiated from above and will reflect what government thinks is good for Indigenous people. Smith (2001 p. 38) has doubts about this approach and asks “whether it merely serves as a convenient placebo for lack of capacity to deliver on the part of government and its departments”.

Robbins (2003) argues that the processes of government need to be flexible to incorporate challenges and that this is yet to be seen. Humpage (2005) makes a number of criticisms about this approach, including that government continues to fund silos, that multi-year block funding is not being trialed, that the blurring of responsibilities leads to cost shifting, and a lack of clarity, and that the approach is underresourced. Arabena (2005) also comments upon the need for further
clarity and an Indigenous perspective on the government’s stated success from this approach. According to Humpage (2005), the whole of government approach is being used more as a management tool rather than a tool for governance, and a governance approach requires jurisdictional devolution.

In regards to a whole of community approach, it is argued that governments in Australia are trying to avoid dispersal of power or localisation of autonomy (Fleras 1999). The individualistic approach of the Federal government is counter to this. The abolition of ATSIC has prompted a continued recommendation for both national and regional bodies from within Indigenous discourse (Jonas and Dick 2004). As of yet only national representative bodies have been established, based upon Federal government preference. Despite the lack of dialogue about the dismantling of ATSIC, Indigenous discourse remains optimistic about opportunities (Dodson 2004). Of great importance is the diversity of Indigenous governance structures that the ATSIC structure (imposed by government) failed to account for (Dodson 2004). Bradford (2004c) comments however that there is little interest by governments in engaging with diverse Indigenous political entities. Dodson (2004) argues that a whole of community approach requires time and resources to determine participatory and representative structures at all levels that can account for diversity.

4. Economy

The economy category is perhaps one of the more intricate and the discourse here is highly ambivalent. This results from a perceived tension in the discourse between culture and the market economy and also a tension between communities and individuals. Howitt states that a focus is required upon:

rebuilding Aboriginal autonomy – caring for people, caring for country and building Aboriginal economies in order to strengthen, and in some places re-establish, the web of relations between Aboriginal economies, Aboriginal people and Aboriginal country (Howitt 1998 p. 32).

For Howitt, Indigenous economic development requires integration with culture. A number of authors comment that a diverse approach is necessary, as
Indigenous ‘disadvantage’ is complex and contextual and cannot be addressed by a uniform approach (Altman 2001).

It is argued however that Indigenous economic development is being addressed through simple blueprint solutions that are predetermined by government and removed from Indigenous cultural concerns. Pritchard and Gibson state that it has:

frequently been the case that governments have embraced grandiose visions for economic development authored by bureaucracies physically and socially removed from local contexts. As a result, a tendency has arisen in Australia’s north for ‘regional development’ to come to represent policies (and politics) associated with the promotion of large-scale investment, which is assumed to generate regional economic growth through local multipliers (Pritchard and Gibson 1996 p. 4).

As with the other categories, there is a tension between individual and collective cultural responsibility that creates considerable confusion. Wooten (2004) claims that in practical reconciliation this tension is ignored and Indigenous people are expected to become individual consumers and entrepreneurs. This tension is clearly evident in Pearson’s collective community structures and in the participation in the market economy that he advocates. For Ah Mat it:

results in many enterprise opportunities not being developed because of disputation or opposition on the grounds that the opportunity that is proposed to be taken up belongs to the community, not to the private individual (Ah Mat 2003 p. 6).

Lea (2000) argues that western organisational structures are foreign to some Indigenous people and require the adoption of Western thought and practice. He believes that these structures benefit the more educated and Westernised members of communities and not necessarily the group. Lea argues that the incorporation of communities into mainstream economic society and into the legal arena (in the struggle for political rights) is likely to result in subtle assimilationist pressures undermining traditional cultural life. He distinguishes between western participation, which is based upon choice and traditional
Indigenous participation based upon obligation, and the current generation is being torn between these. Lea advocates that disengagement from the legal arena and economic mainstream society may actually be the best option.

Spruyt comments that disengagement is insufficient and states that:

Claims that Indigenous involvement in economic activity will destroy Indigenous culture fail to recognise the destructive effects of poverty … ignores past Indigenous trading links and productive activity as well as Indigenous (voluntary) participation in Australia’s economic development (pastoral industry, tourism, performance, cultural products etcetera)… the remnants of land that Indigenous people have been allowed, the destruction of traditional economic and trade activity (as well as family and community links), and structural exclusion from the mainstream economy continue to undermine the potential for economic independence (Spruyt 2004 p. 5).

Daly and Smith (2003) also argue that economic exclusion could therefore be resulting in cultural compromise. They postulate that it may be:

the entrenched exclusion of Indigenous people from the mainstream economy which is actively undermining Indigenous culture and the wellbeing … more so than if they were actively included in it and experiencing its supposedly assimilationist influences (Daly and Smith 2003 p. 18).

This could result from poverty, welfare dependence, poor health and low levels of education and employment, which may be inhibiting the reproduction of relationships and roles.

The discourse of *opportunities* is widely used to promote economic independence. McClure (2000 p. 6) states that “(i)ncome support recipients will have a responsibility to take up the *opportunities* provided by government, business and community consistent with community values and their capacity”.

The question of freedom of choice here is questionable. Rowse (2002b) comments that McClure’s opportunities are not necessarily paid jobs. The difficulties of remoteness, limited local economies and exploitable economic
advantage are not addressed by government policy. Robbins (2003) points out that Pearson also does not elaborate on this. Government does not commit and take responsibility for providing Indigenous opportunities in the real economy and mutual obligation does not necessary prioritise the transformation of economic relationships. Instead government policy relies on the seventh self-sufficient argument according to which everybody can succeed if they try hard enough. Agreements between Indigenous people and the private sector have seen opportunities created in the market economy. In some instances industry is thus taking increased responsibility for providing Indigenous employment opportunities through agreement making.

**Welfare**

The discourse of welfare is at the heart of the Indigenous economic debate. There appears to be two extreme frames at play. One frame considers welfare as necessary for citizenship rights, the other frame argues that welfare is a drain upon national accounts. Albrechtsen (2005), arguing from the right, uses Pearson’s arguments to demonstrate that there has been ‘30 years of throwing money at people’. The first self-sufficient argument again makes an appearance.

Pearson however is difficult to place. He argues for a transformation from negative welfare and dependency to positive participation through reciprocity where Indigenous people are not seen as victims. Martin (2001) provides an analysis of Pearson’s conceptual framework. He agrees with Pearson that the current state of affairs is not sustainable. However, Martin points to a contradiction, for Pearson the government follows Indigenous initiative but the values that Pearson seeks to change may not be just from welfare dependency but from the complex interaction with a range of policies (not just welfare) and pre-existing values. Martin argues that Pearson ignores other avenues of change and that in any case Indigenous people may actively resist further change. The question of who is responsible for initiating change is unresolved. More important is the question of who determines that Indigenous welfare is an issue in the first place. Martin warns against assuming the pejorative view of
dependency. Dependency may in fact be considered a sign of strength in terms of capacity to command resources.

Pearson does accept that Indigenous people, particularly in remote areas, may continue to require transfer payments from government (Martin 2001). Jull (1992) also acknowledges that Indigenous people in remote Australia are not just in a transitional phase and will require ongoing subsidies. Arthur (1994) comments however that if subsidies don’t increase, the cultural autonomy of the Indigenous domain will probably not achieve statistical equality. There is considerable debate about whether Indigenous wellbeing is improved through both or either political or economy autonomy.

**Community Development Employment Program (CDEP)**

The Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) was established in 1977 and was administered by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. The CDEP has been characterised by two broad and inter-related objectives: firstly, community development through socio-cultural and income support; and secondly improving individual access and participation in the labor market. The relative weight given to either depends upon the context (Sanders 2004; Altman et al. 2005). The CDEP allows for the fact that Indigenous people may perceive that working for their communities, often in a voluntary capacity, is an occupation (Gelade and Stehlik 2004).

Both Rowse and Smith discuss how CDEP is an example of and precedent for McClure’s mutual obligation and Pearson’s reciprocity (Rowse 2002b). Robbins (2003) notes that both Richard Ah Mat (executive director of the Cape York Land Council) and Pearson find CDEP an unsatisfactory solution. For Ah Mat it

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24 CDEP was established to address concern that the social security benefits which had recently became available to Indigenous people in remote areas may cause 'adverse effects' and generate a dependency which was counter to the policy of self-determination at that time. It was that imagined that CDEP would provide a wage for employment that approximated unemployment benefits (Sanders 2004; Altman et al. 2005). In 1984 it was extended to regional and urban areas (Gelade and Stehlik 2004). By the early 1990s CDEP had expanded to become a major policy centre within the Indigenous affairs portfolio at the Commonwealth level. At this time the stewardship of CDEP was allocated to the newly formed ATSIC. The scheme has undergone some expansion but remains in essence similar to its original form.
does not provide for skills and confidence and for Pearson it is undermined by social security alternatives and a lack of purposeful activity (Robbins 2003). Rowse (2002b) comments that a contradiction exists for Pearson who calls for the reform of CDEP whilst also arguing for other programs to be better informed by the principles of CDEP.

The CDEP is supported by a number of authors. It is argued to be one of the few administrative structures for Indigenous people (Smith 2001). Arthur (2002) uses the concept of autonomy to analyse the CDEP and concludes that the scheme had a number of positive outcomes in terms of political autonomy and to a lesser extent economic autonomy. He finds that political independence is increased to some degree through a reduction in government interference in decision making regarding funding and employment, which is thus characterised as a form of negative autonomy. The CDEP may also result in improved economic autonomy to participants through increased work hours and wages. Arthur (2002) comments that CDEP establishes community organisations as employers and CDEP participants as employees. Altman et al. (2000) find that CDEP participants have higher levels of income than unemployed. They also find that the flexibility of CDEP allows organisations to develop enterprises and enter into contracts resulting in increased funding for the organisation. Pritchard and Gibson (1996) make the point that Indigenous money (such as CDEP) in remote Australia supports many non-Indigenous businesses.

In 1997 an independent review recommended that CDEP be more tailored towards employment outcomes. ATSIC believed that splitting CDEP into two, either geographically or between community development and individual employment outcomes, would impact negatively upon communities through the effect this would have upon the devolved regional, diverse and flexible structure of CDEP (Sanders 2004; Altman et al. 2005). This indicates the necessity of ambivalence within the CDEP program to cater for the diversity of Indigenous aspirations. It is not acknowledged by the Federal government.

With the ‘new mainstreaming’ of Indigenous affairs in Australia and the dismantling of ATSIC, CDEP has been transferred to the Commonwealth
Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR). Sanders (2004) predicted that CDEP will not sit well within this department because of the DEWR’s focus on employment, which could overshadow the other important aspects of CDEP. Sanders comments that CDEP will likely be a difficult program to mainstream and no government department will be able to administer its diverse objectives. Sanders challenges DEWR to allow CDEP to be its own policy centre which is regionally devolved and continues to provide diverse objectives. There is considerable confusion as to what the CDEP changes mean at regional levels, including in the Western Desert.

### 3.6 Discussion

There are two contradictory forces at work internationally that are of relevance for the Australian context and the discussion here. Globalisation has led to the emergence of a risk society as articulated by Ulrich Beck and discussed in Chapter One. Unlike first modern society, risks in reflexive modernity are incalculable, diffuse, non-linear and complex. It was shown in Chapter One that in fact it was the first modern perspective through the process of modernisation that created reflexive modernity. Braithwaite et al. (2002) notes that in the Australian context a simple analysis of social security entitlements over the last thirty years indicates that the state is now expected to cover an increasing diverse range of life risk. In reflexive modernity, responsibility is complex and increasingly institutions such as government and industry no longer hold themselves as easily to account. This can be witnessed by the Federal Australian government seeking to “re-individualise risk and responsibility, that is, to redefine the terms of the implicit ‘social contract’ between citizen and government” (Braithwaite et al. 2002). Neoliberalism however does not necessary mean less government but the responsibilisation in which citizens are expected to become responsible and autonomous agents who pursue services (Lawrence and Gibson 2005).

There is also a growing international discourse of collective group rights that are more sympathetic to Indigenous aspirations than the national government of
Australia (Havemann 1999a). The discourse of sustainable development and Indigenous sustainable development has also helped to strengthen Indigenous claims, in particular the benefits of connections and responsibilities to country. The Indigenous storyline has utilised international discourse to claim a right to take responsibility as articulated by Pearson. It is here that we can find an example of the ambivalence that exists between the spaces of the two storylines. Both Indigenous and Federal discourse are based around increased Indigenous responsibility. However, there is a range of complexities that result in the two storylines not necessarily being complementary in practice. A major impediment observed in this chapter is the inability of the Federal storyline to recognise the contextual and necessary tension between individual and collective rights, responsibility and representation.

Policy that affects Indigenous people in Australia continues to be characterised by broad uniform grand narratives that have been diagnosed to solve the ‘Aboriginal problem’ rather than the specific situational stated needs of Indigenous people. Indigenous identity is seen as a uniform individual or as an essential community, whose needs and identity are similarly reproduced geographically across Australia. Indigenous identity is demarcated by grand narratives into good/bad binaries based upon strategies of numbers and naming. Indigenous people are seen as disadvantaged and requiring solutions based upon bureaucratic measurement and management. They are expected to conform to bureaucratic expectations, for example hygiene and work, within the Shared Responsibility Agreements. Indigenous culture is seen to be lost or a cause of Indigenous disadvantage and is thus separated within a practical reconciliation approach that emphasises the economic progress of the nation state.

The aim of the Federal storyline is to achieve statistical equality across the Australian population. A focus only upon this end denies the significance of the means (to this end) and the differences that exist and remain important for Indigenous identity and wellbeing. Michael Dodson writes that:

Policy for and about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples has consistently asserted the dominance of the mainstream discourse over the voices of Indigenous peoples. This approach is predicated on fear of our
difference, on fear of what is unknown and strange. Such an approach reveals an inability to embrace our difference and be enriched by it (Dodson 1996 p. 3).

This indicates the first modern perspective of government at all levels within Australia. Borrows (2004) points out that difference can actually be exacerbated by ignoring it. Government is in fact creating difference by trying to suppress it and approaching it with mechanisms to further control and contain. Ambivalence however provides discursive windows of opportunity that can be used productively. Indigenous people have certainly been far from passive in discourse. The result has been widespread ambivalence at the interface of the cross-cultural encounter (Etherington 2001).

The bi-partisan nature of Federal and State politics adds to the discursive confusion. Similar discourse can be used across the parties with quite different intent. Cowlishaw (2003) states that the left-liberal discourse is silent and hypocritical whilst the populist right is hostile, ignorant and conceptually shallow. She comments that the:

   two apparently warring domains share discursive practices and a rhetoric of concern about Indigenous people, but there is no overall agreement about the social processes involved, much less affirmation of the same ‘problems’ or the same ‘solutions’(Cowlishaw 2003 p. 5).

In Western Australia, the current Labor government works with a Federal Liberal government. Government policy on the whole however, maintains the myth of a grand narrative typical of first modern societies.

The two essential storylines are shown within this chapter to discursively overlap. At times there exists only subtle difference, sometimes differences are distinct, and in many instances the discourse of one storyline is not used by the other. The discourse of sovereignty, self-determination and mutual obligation provides a useful example to illustrate this point. Sovereignty for Indigenous people is based upon recognition of historical justice and of collective and distinct rights as first nation people. Dodson states that “meeting our obligations and responsibilities” requires the “beneficial resolution of our status as the first peoples of this country and restitutions for the way our inheritance as owners and
custodians of the land have been taken from us” (cited in Bradford 2004b 2004). He argues that the government and Indigenous people are therefore “mutually obliged”.

Therefore a distinct difference between the storylines that this term makes clear is that for the Indigenous storyline responsibility is not possible without the recognition of rights (based upon a recognition of a shared history), and that this recognition is an obligation on behalf of the government. This recognition for many Indigenous people extends to a right to representation in a manner that allows for cultural expression. The Federal government avoids engaging with this claim by paying little attention to the term sovereignty. When this term is referred to, the ten rhetorical self-sufficient arguments are used to invalidate Indigenous aspirations and instead valorise the togetherness of a nation state. Behrendt (2001) states that the semantic block that this term has caused highlights how language can confine a debate in an environment characterised by lack of understanding, poverty of political and institutional language and of acceptable alternatives.

Self-determination is a term that has been used in both the Indigenous and Federal storyline. Self-determination was used in the 1970s to sweep away the history of assimilation (Fletcher 1999c) and appeared to have inherent value (Cowlishaw 2004). Stephen Schecter states:

> Self-determination is a concept that manages to combine individual and collective rights without mentioning either. It has a better press than collective rights, since the self makes us think of the individual (cited in Fletcher 1999b p. 107).

It thus also avoids (but does not foreclose) the tension between individual and collective rights and equality. The Federal government has used self-determination to promote liberal notions of self-reliance and self-sufficiency (Lawrence and Gibson 2005), but actively avoided issues of redistribution of power implied by sovereignty. Self-determination or self-management has created Indigenous bureaucrats who worked within the system under self-management (Behrendt 2001) and multiplied the numbers of white bureaucrats (Cowlishaw 2004). Self-determination and self-management have been replaced
within the ‘new’ arrangements by shared responsibility and mutual obligation which are distant from the ambiguity of self-determination. This is also linked to a storyline that problematises welfare, frames an unproductive Indigenous identity and argues the need to use the nation’s resources in a productive manner.

Policy can be conceptualised as ‘spaces’ that are characterised by power relations determined by discourse. The management of indeterminacy is incomplete and discourse coalitions can open up new space (Brock et al. 2001). Bradford (2004b) states that “dominant state discourses are never completely dominant. They merely paper over rather than destroy alternative views”. It is argued that Indigenous people have worked both within and against the state and are active in using discourse and government rhetoric (Havemann 1999a). For Castejon:

The government, by different means, has brought Aboriginal activists within the system and has diverted attention away from their aspirations… some activists have found ways to take advantage of the circumstances imposed upon them and have developed a dialogue from within governmental institutions (Castejon 2002 p. 27).

Discourse coalitions advancing a particular storyline thus utilise ambivalence productively. They can be composed of diverse individuals who are located either within or outside the government system.

The discourse of reconciliation has featured in policy discourse since the 1990s and has been influential in framing Indigenous identity in relation to mainstream Australia. There are diverse understandings as to what the purpose of reconciliation is. Castejon (2002) comments that Indigenous people perceive reconciliation as a priority for non-Indigenous people, whilst non-Indigenous people are told it was a priority for Indigenous people. For many Indigenous people it was perceived as a cover up that recognised history but did not incorporate this into the future of policy. Many Indigenous people speak about conciliation before reconciliation. The discourse of reconciliation has been used in different ways to either create or close space for the diverse aspirations that make the Indigenous storyline. de Costa (2002) comments that reconciliation provided government with the space to oppose Indigenous aspirations.
The Federal government has chosen to pursue a storyline that revolves around practical reconciliation. de Costa states that:

Howard showed tremendous skill in transforming the latent confusion over what reconciliation actually was into something that was easily constrained: practical reconciliation. Like economic rationalism (who wants to be irrational?) practical reconciliation became a fait accompli (de Costa 2002 p. 410).

This self-sufficient argument aims to frame an alternative storyline as ‘irrational’. The obvious need for improved service delivery for Indigenous people reinforces this argument. In this account, reconciliation is positioned as a top-down process with government as a hero (Augoustinos et al. 2002). Bradford (2004b) argues that the government should be delivering on practical reconciliation outcomes anyway. He writes that the discourse of ‘practical’ gives the impression of doing something differently to address the wrongs of the ideological past. Altman and Hunter (2003) demonstrate that despite governmental rhetoric about practical reconciliation, the statistical data suggests that Indigenous wellbeing since the introduction of practical reconciliation is no better. This is particularly worrying as during this period the macro-economy has been growing.

Practical reconciliation fails to recognise that overcoming this disadvantage is a complex task and extends far beyond the issue of improved service delivery. O’Donoghue (1997 p. 4) warns that “getting from A to B in indigenous affairs is not as simple as it might be elsewhere”. This contrasts strongly with the holistic approach that is advocated by the Indigenous sustainable development storyline and that recognises Indigenous collective agency. Altman (2004) argues that practical and symbolic reconciliation is a false dichotomy and reconciliation must recognise Indigenous collective and individual rights. Practical reconciliation draws a firm boundary between individual and collective agency for Indigenous Australians. The Prime Minister John Howard stated in a national reconciliation workshop that “individual responsibility on the part of Indigenous Australians is as much a part of the reconciliation process as is the discharge of government responsibilities” (cited in Lawrence and Gibson 2005 p. 8).
However, the discourse of symbolic reconciliation provides a window for claims based upon a more holistic and collective approach.

Policy makers like a good story and it is possible to enact a change by aligning to existing stories (Roe 1991). Pearson has provided the Federal government with a convincing story about responsibility that also advocates strongly for devolution of power to Indigenous jurisdictional governance structures. Policy can however just make superficial changes (Smith 1993) and be anchored in the past by assimilating the new to bring it under control (Joffe 1997). The Federal storyline has selectively incorporated Pearson’s ideas. For example, Pearson’s views about the right to be different and Indigenous rights including land and community self-government have not been successfully incorporated into government policy (Wooten 2004). It is argued that despite the rhetoric, the new approach in the Federal storyline, which is at times supported by the Western Australian State government, remains based upon applying band aids to a crisis. Johns and Sanders (2005) write that in Indigenous affairs there is more continuity than change.

Bradford (2004c p. 1) comments that the current “unsophisticated national conversation…does not allow consideration of the subtleties”. The lack of dialogue about the discursive confusion acts as an impediment to work with the discursive complexities that exist. Dialogue is required at both a personal level and also at the level of politics (Kirkwood et al. 2005). Humpage (2005) advocates this approach due to the lack of definition and complexity of problems and solutions. The Federal government’s refusal to enter into a meaningful dialogue in response to a continual invitation to do so by Indigenous representatives is a major impediment to learning how to better approach and respond to the dynamic nature of such complexities and thus to meaningfully build relationships and share responsibility. The drawing and redrawing of boundaries of responsibility and representation in respect of both difference and equality between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and between the individual and collective worlds of the Indigenous lived reality (that is required for policy decision making and implementation) requires an ongoing dialogue that is based upon critical reflection and is amenable to different cultural
worldviews. This dialogue must also include adequate resources required for negotiation to be directed towards the Indigenous population.

There are important lessons here not only for improved Indigenous wellbeing but also for a broader understanding of how to respond at a societal level to the conditions of reflexive modernity and thus how to use the ambivalence of sustainable development more positively. This thesis therefore argues that a diverse Indigenous voice should be amplified within politics and policy at all levels of government. This requires recognition of power and an ongoing and rigorous political analysis. This is the focus of the following chapter.
Chapter Four
Ambivalent Stories: Power and Representation

4.1 Introduction

Power and representation are essential considerations for analysis within a cross-cultural context. They are relational concepts and are determined by how people are structurally situated relative to each other within a system. An analysis of both must also account for how agency is exercised in relationships of power. This chapter reflects upon both power and representation of Martu people within the case study. It also closely examines the local government and industry discourse in Newman that was produced from the interview process.

Section 4.2 outlines three theories of power, all of which are useful for the analysis. This section is a necessary introduction to the chapter. An analysis of the local institutional discourse is given in Section 4.3 which is categorised in accordance with the categories in Chapter 3, namely: participation, identity, governance and economy. This allows for a comparison with the Federal standard storyline and the Indigenous storyline. Section 4.4. is divided into themes for discussion. They include: a summary of the local institutional discourse in Section 4.4.1; an analysis of the regional context of Western Australia, in which the case study is located in Section 4.4.2; power and knowledge in the case study projects in Section 4.4.3; the theory and practice of representation in Section 4.4.4; and how boundaries operate to determine the position of insiders and outsiders in Section 4.4.5.

4.2 Theories of Power

Misunderstandings about power are very common (Henkel and Stirrat 2002; Taylor 2003). Boulding (1990) argues that the concept of power straddles the disciplines of knowledge creation and has traditionally received little attention until recent times. Power is not generally a consideration within phronetic
research (Flyvbjerg 2001) and this thesis examines power within the Indigenous context in Australia.

According to Kaufman (1997), power in Western societies has been determined by uneven relationships based upon class, gender and ethnicity. This has resulted in a perception of power that is based upon an ability to control and dominate over other human beings or over nature. Kaufman argues however that there are alternative ways of experiencing power: to love, to fight oppression and to strive for justice. Integrative power described by these latter characteristics is considered by Boulding (1990) to be the most powerful and most important form of power. For him, threat and economic power (the other two forms of power) would not exist without the existence of integrative power.

Taylor (2003 p. 86) notes that the concept of power is contested and asks “(c)an power be ‘granted’ or must it be taken?” The three models of power described by Nelson and Wright (1995) provide a useful categorisation through which to clarify this question. The first model of power is termed ‘power over’. This involves gaining access to the political decision making arena and thus to resources and decision-making in the longer term (Nelson and Wright 1995). One group of theorists – including theorists embracing Marxist and structural feminist perspectives – argue that power is finite and is held by certain groups or forces in society. Another group of theorists, pluralists, agree that power is finite but argue that there is no pre-determined group or forces that have power. Instead power is dispersed and specialised in many ways and people, depending upon perspective. For pluralist theorists “it is possible to achieve change through rational discourse, the fostering of collective values and moral persuasion” (Popple 1995 pp. 40-41 cited in Taylor 2003 p. 87). Critics of pluralist theories argue that power is unequally distributed and discuss how powerful interests may create and sustain ideas. A summary of the first model, power over, is as follows:

1. the overt resolution of conflict in which A has power over B
2. A dictates the agenda and excludes B’s issues from the agenda
3. B internalises A’s conception of power which determines what is perceived as possible or not. Structures of power are accepted and internalised without question
4. A is not necessarily an identifiable and single group (Taylor 2003).

The second model described by Nelson and Wright (1995) can be called ‘power to’ and is related to human capabilities. Like human capabilities, it is believed that power can also grow and not affect the growth of another person. Power is seen to be generative and transformative. Empowerment in this model challenges the relations through which individual subjectivity is constantly reproduced and transformed. In terms of a spatial metaphor, empowerment is about expansion, moving out of a place of isolation, increasing the possible sites for participation and growing in confidence, capacity and wellbeing (Cornwall 2002). Rowlands (1995) believes that empowerment is considered a process that ultimately cannot be imposed by outsiders, although external support and facilitation may encourage and potentially speed up the process. Power is perceived as untapped potential within individuals (Nelson and Wright 1995). Taylor (2003) writes that this does not mean that power is available to everyone. She writes that:

power is still deeply engrained in society and perpetually recreated through ‘disciplines’ and ‘surveillance’ (Foucault), ‘thoughtworlds’ (Habermas), ‘mental models’ (Carley and Smith), and ‘circuits of power’ (Clegg) (Taylor 2003 p. 89).

The third model of power follows largely from Foucault. In this postmodern model, power exists within discourse, institutions, actors and events. They interact in an invisible manner that is only apparent in retrospect (Nelson and Wright 1995). Foucault states that:

Power must be analysed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localised here or there … Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation (Foucault 1980 p. 98).

Power is seen to be productive and positive and not just restrictive and negative (Flyvbjerg 2004). This third model of power contradicts the assumption of the first two models in which power is held by institutions in the centre. Foucault argues in Discipline and Punishment that the discipline of central institutions is an intensification of what occurs in everyday practice. Social control and the power relations embedded in society are internalised into the individual body,
into individual behavior, actions and perceptions (Foucault 1979). Power is found everywhere and every person is a vehicle of power: “Power is thus found in the creation of norms and social and cultural practices at all levels” (Kothari 2002 p. 141).

All three models of power are insightful for the analysis in this chapter. The following section details the empirical data from the local interviews in accordance with the categories found in the previous chapter. This is conceptualised by Section 4.4.1, which compares the local discourse to the discourse of the Federal and Indigenous storylines.

4.3 Discourse about Martu People

Critical discourse analysis provides a means to uncover how hegemonic storylines are resisted or reproduced through ‘infinitesimal’ practices at the fringes or at the micro-level of society through the fine-grain taken-for-granted assumptions (Kothari 2002; Taylor 2003). This section uses critical discourse analysis to examine the Newman government and industry voices following the categories developed in the previous chapter. The interviews were thus analysed to examine how institutional actors in Newman represent Martu people in contrast to the Federal and Indigenous storylines. This provides for an interesting comparison as the interviewed actors fall within institutional boundaries whose policy centers are remote from the case study context. These actors do share a geographical space with the Martu people as they live in the same locality. The aim of this analysis is to examine to what extent the Newman institutional actors convey in particular the Federal Standard Storyline, in relation to their representations of Martu people. It also aims to understand how these actors are influenced through their relationship with the Martu people and how this affects their discourse in relation to the Indigenous Storyline.

Actors can be understood through discourse (Fischer 2003) as this demonstrates the active reproduction or resistance of ideology. This analysis therefore provides an opportunity to look closely at the ideological undercurrents
within the western institutions in the case study context and how this reproduces or resists the Federal standard storyline and also the Indigenous storyline. A summary of this analysis is provided in Section 4.4.1. Case study interview material is used throughout this analysis with people referred to as Indigenous and non-Indigenous as they self-identified. My reflections are identified by ‘NM’. Transcript quotes are indented and in italics in this chapter and throughout the thesis.

1. Participation

In the previous chapter it was observed that in Federal and State discourses, *participation* is required of Indigenous communities, whilst in return government agencies provide *consultation*. This distinction in the terminology is also used in the Newman discourse. Federal, State and local discourse thus all stress diminishing participation in Indigenous communities. The assumption is that government is participating to a sufficient extent, despite limited discussion in Federal discourse about capacity building government. A major theme within the Newman discourse is about insufficient Indigenous participation in mainstream service delivery, although this term is not always used. The local discourse however also frames government consultation negatively. There is a strong sentiment across much of the Newman discourse that both Newman agencies and the Martu people are over-consulted by State and Federal government agencies. This points the analysis to a significant difference between Federal and State discourse and the Newman discourse.

A common complaint regarded the amount of money that is spent on consultation by government, in particular upon consultants who are perceived as outsiders. It is believed by a number of participants that there is significant knowledge at the local level which is not being sufficiently utilised by policy makers. One participant states:

*And everybody is doing a survey, you get the amount of money that has been spent on consultants, doing surveys and things like there. Whatever comes of it? Nothing comes out of any of them. Except from their going*
there, flying in and out, doing what they wanna do. Getting paid to do, slacking, stealing all the money that should be spent on the community so they can do a survey for what? Nothing? To be told what you could sit and tell in 5 minutes, well that is not going to work mate, that sort of thing (Interviewee 1, Indigenous).

In this quote the self-sufficient argument that money should be used productively is employed to critique Federal and State government. This argument was utilised a number of times, primarily to question the accountability of other levels of government.

It was argued in many of the conversations that I had during my fieldwork that government does not listen and thus consultation is meaningless. Consultation is seen as a means of maintaining the status quo and requires little change on the behalf of Federal/State government. A respondent discusses this:

Oh just with consultation, government uses that to keep people happy and it’s that, ‘oh well, we will send a consultant’. I think they can do all talking and everybody is seen, be seen to be doing something productive and at the end of the day when the consultant goes in there and makes a report to the Ministers, at the end of the day nothing gets done or the Ministers say, ‘well we had consultants out there we needed this and it wasn’t to government structure, it wasn’t to government standing, we don’t have the funding for it’, whatever, they can create excuses ...you might as well go back to old missions (Interviewee 2, Indigenous).

There was also significant criticism about the extent to which Federal/State government lives up to promises that are made during the consultative process.

My reflections early in the fieldwork expressed unease about the repetitiveness of consultation. I wrote in a story immediately after Stage 1 (Story 1.1):

The pieces of paper quickly filled. I had the sensation that all this had been done before... (NM)
There is a strong assumption in all Federal and State discourse that Indigenous people do not want to participate. This assumption is reproduced by the local discourse. The perceived lack of effort by the Martu people is used as justification for negative perceptions of them.

This is described by one participant:

*People like myself would never ever, weren’t bigoted until I arrived here and just saw the lack of effort so to speak that people want to put in* (Interviewee 3, non-Indigenous).

The difficulties of maintaining Martu participation in service delivery programs was certainly one of the major themes (if not the major theme) across the local discourse. However, the blame is assigned either solely to the Martu people or solely to government agencies, mostly at other levels of government. In the case of the former, Martu people are seen to get involved for a short time and then get bored because they are incapable of sustaining interest. Not one Indigenous person interviewed made this interpretation. All Indigenous people and some non-Indigenous people interviewed pointed to the inconsistency of government. This ambivalence was rarely juxtaposed.

I actually observed considerable ‘participation’ by the Martu people in my projects. In a story written immediately after the second project (Story 2.1) I wrote:

*I felt proud at the end of the day at the number of the Martu who had stayed. They had participated in yet another process...I had a number of people approach me who favourably commented on the extent of the Martu participation. It would have been easy for me to have been proud of myself but I noticed that not many people other than the Ministers approached the Martu. Of course, those agencies in the Martu’s intimate circle sat with them* (NM).
My pride at the extent of Martu participation mirrors my own ego. This probably reflects a need to achieve ‘success’ under the gaze of Ministers and is measured by the numbers of Martu who participated. It is interesting that people who were not Martu felt the need to comment almost in surprise to me about the extent of Martu participation and not to any of the Martu participants themselves.

As with Federal and State discourse there is a question about who is responsible for initiating processes and for changing in response to such processes. In the local discourse, as with the Federal and State, change was seen to be primarily the responsibility of the Martu people, with some responsibility on behalf of government to help the Martu change. Reflecting this perspective, one of the interviewees comments that they would:

...like to see some drive from within the group here...I think you’ll find just about every service provider in town would support some programs, activities coming from the Martu people themselves (Interviewee 4, non-Indigenous).

The direction of change was generally predetermined towards a liberal and autonomous identity that is capable of ‘participating’. One person states:

It doesn’t matter how often you or I in particular can say you need to do this. They are not going to do it unless they do it for themselves. We can’t make them do it...but we still have to try and break the mould that they are in at the moment to get them to advance further to be able to help them (Interviewee 3, non-Indigenous).

Another person saw a limited role for government to encourage some form of ‘meaningful’ participation:

I guess you can intervene at a certain level and you see maybe potential for things. Definitely not making people do stuff for the sake of it (Interviewee 5, non-Indigenous).
This can be related to the question of what meaningful participation may mean in terms of Martu employment in a model of mutual obligation.

There was considerable discussion about the need for ongoing dialogue in the Newman discourse. Dialogue was seen to be required with the Martu people and also with other levels of government:

*Everyone understands that you can’t strike a wish list and get everything. But there is no dialogue about why you can’t do that* (Interviewee 6, non-Indigenous).

Dialogue between local agencies and the Martu people was primarily framed in terms of improving Indigenous responsibility rather than increasing the responsibility of local agencies. One interviewee comments:

*...it needs to be a two way street for anybody and they need to say, ‘okay, well you want me to do all this but what are you going to give back, what’s going to be your input into that?’...some guidelines I guess to all of us to all the agencies to start off with...if we are going to work properly and cooperatively how do we do that cooperatively backwards and forwards, there are two people in there and two people involved?...allow people to take some responsibility as well, you have to do this and you have to do that and you need to take some responsibility* (Interviewee 4, non-Indigenous).

The two person analogy presumes a whole of government and a whole of community in which to negotiate Martu responsibility. This quote also presumes that local agencies are fulfilling their responsibilities in comparison to Martu people.

Only a few people saw the need for government to start accepting their responsibilities and to dialogue with Martu people. One person states:
I think they need to start accepting, they need to start admitting their responsibilities and being made accountable for all their actions...instead of us sitting here and deciding what’s best for people. Has anyone ever thought about going to ask them? (Interviewee 1, Indigenous).

It is unclear whether this person is speaking about local agencies or State and Federal government. This is perhaps where the contradiction lies. The Newman discourse mostly perceives a need for greater responsibility on behalf of both other levels of government and the Martu people. This places local agencies external to issues relating to responsibility.

Although this thesis is primarily interested in western organisational discourse, it is worth contrasting this discourse with Martu perspectives in this instance. The Martu meetings in both projects conveyed a strong desire for an ongoing dialogue with the local Shire council, service agencies and also industry, which aligns with the Indigenous storyline from the previous chapter.

A collective voice was perceived by the local discourse to be necessary, primarily for improved service delivery outcomes. There was little discussion about how this could be improved and was framed to be the responsibility of the Martu people.

2. Martu Identity

Within Newman there appears a desire to situate people on the other side of the highway, in Parnpajinya, and thus at a perceived distance from the town. According to Foucault, architecture and organisation of physical space can be utilised as a means of domination and control (in Cornwall 2002). This is evident in some of the local discourse. For example, once participant comments:

Because people don’t know how to live in Western style housing, and then it causes conflicts within the community. And whilst when some of them been in town for a long period of time and they are recognised as
being here for a long period of time, they are still the people who come from outer town and it is not good to have kangaroo tied to fans in the house and lighting fires in the middle of the room. Like I said, we have got a lost generation and people haven’t learned how to live in a house. And you go out to the communities, people don’t live in it (Interviewee 7, non-Indigenous).

This quote first raises the question of who was actually on that land first and what that might mean. An us/them binary is established by this quote. This boundary excludes ‘them’ or the Martu people who are thus excluded from the ‘community’.

The ‘lost generation’ that is raised by the above quote was a significant theme throughout the discourse. This is also raised in the following quote:

you really need to have a look at, what age group you are going to address it at, because in my opinion, okay, we have lost about 3 generations. Okay. That is every mob, just about. We have lost three generations and we have lost them through gunja, and a lot on gambling. Too much effort and too much money is funded into those generations okay and we are forgetting about our future. We need to address our future now. And our future is that age. Now BHP are looking at that, they are looking out into the schools and they are addressing, they are addressing these issues (Interviewee 1, Indigenous).

The self-sufficient argument about the productive use of money is utilised to frame this argument.

My daughter became the benchmark by which the boundary between the generations was drawn to determine which generations were lost. One participant, pointing to my daughter, comments:
Solutions start at this age. Where we get them into school and consistently get them to school and educate them...the ones that are 14 or 15 now, or even 10, are probably past it (Interviewee 3, non-Indigenous).

Discussions about the lost generations were reinforced by a perception that expectations about Martu people should not be high as they have just come out of the desert. Education was seen to be a solution for the younger generations, through which they could change the course of Martu culture. Often, education was associated with the fact that either/all of the Martu children’s parents, grandparents and siblings are lost and that the home environment is not healthy and nurturing. This of course implies a good/bad binary in which the Martu lifestyle is not appropriate for Martu children. It provides an indication of local perceptions about Indigenous identity and draws a boundary between generations, in which most generations became invisible.

In the local discourse there is a perceived need for the Martu people to be educated to live in white society, which contrasts to a desire to maintain culture. There is also an assumption that assimilation into schooling will act as a solution to counter the effects of the lost generations. The following quote separates culture from the Martu lived reality and relegates it to activities such as food and bush trips:

I think there needs to be more education programs...there’s not always going to be somebody to save them if they need it...if you’re going to live in white society there are some rules and regulations...there are certain protocols to living in Australian society or the mainstream that everybody needs to respect...but we still want them to retain their culture like going out on bush trips and then catching cultural food...that’s great stuff and we love them to participate in that and try to facilitate that happening, but at the same time, yeah I dunno (Interviewee 4, non-Indigenous).

Much of the quote appears certain that culture and mainstream education can be easily reconciled, but the last sentence reveals some doubt.
Boundary drawing was also evident between and within the Martu communities across the desert. Martu people were seen to either reside (but not always belong) in Newman or be positioned as visitors and thus ‘belong’ to the communities that lie outside of Newman. There is also an additional boundary drawn between drinkers and non-drinkers. I also drew these boundaries in my stories from the first two stages. The boundaries indicate a degree of difference within the Martu population that is not recognised by a boundary that essentialises the Martu population. Difference within the Martu people is mostly determined by characteristics that are seen as negative.

In terms of alcohol, Newman is perceived to be a town that includes a majority alcoholic Martu population. This is the most ‘vocal’ construct of ‘the Aborigine’ in Australia (Fletcher 1992; Langton 1993a). In Newman, this is linked to a lack of initiative by Martu people. In many instances this identity was extended to the whole of the community despite the distinction between the ‘drunks’ and other Martu people. The drunks are perceived to be very visible and to be responsible for the negative identity of the other Martu people:

> And they are predominantly alcoholics. They come into town and a lot of them have been married to wrong skin groups or they are the rejects or the lost, and they wanted to go back to the community and they probably wouldn’t survive in the communities because they are that alcohol dependent and need services. That is the core. We have got 80 people. A few of them have dropped off in the time I have been here (Interviewee 7, non-Indigenous).

Martu resistance is also often linked to alcohol. An essential identity is determined through this stereotype. One participant states:

> I know for a fact if you start weakening they will use that against you for their own games. But it’s usually not for good games and that is a problem, you know that happens and you feel sorry for them so we give them the bottle of wine they want (Interviewee 3, non-Indigenous).
The following newspaper article was written by a colleague and relies largely upon the views of one of the Indigenous local government people in town. These views counter the stereotypes about Martu people and invites collaboration.

Figure 4.1: Newspaper Article combating Martu Stereotypes

Source: (Colgan October 3 2001)
The Martu identity is problemitised in the local discourse through a perceived disadvantage as is indicated by the following quote:

*We have just got a whole load of problems going on that we don't know how to solve or what even is the way to solve them* (Interviewee 4, non-Indigenous).

The living conditions of the Martu people at the site in Stage 1 was an issue raised repeatedly in conversations with local agencies. Interestingly, this was not raised at any time by the Newman discourse in the 2004 interviews (Stage 4), perhaps because of the delivery of the houses between these two stages of fieldwork. I wrote in a story immediately after Stage 1 (Story 1.1)

*I visited the Parnpajinya site very early morning on Tuesday 24th of July. I had driven along the highway past it a few times but had not yet driven up. It was at this point in time the project became real for me. I was overcome by the desperate feeling of poverty and all-encompassing isolation that seemed to cloud the land. The site was larger than I had anticipated, probably made more so by the starkness of the facilities at the camp. Car bodies, apparently used for shelter, littered the site and were further decorated by cans, containers and wrappings (NM).*

There was not actually a lot of discussion about poverty directly despite the discourse about problemitisation and an identity that is lacking. This is perhaps a result of the frustration with the welfare model. There is a perception of disadvantage in the following quote:

*I thank god every day of my life in 35 years of knowing these people that I was born white* (Interviewee 8, non-Indigenous).

One of Indigenous participation discussed the internalisation of this:
...I always thought white was right, I always thought we were like nothing (Interviewee 9, Indigenous).

Another Indigenous participant discussed how the rapid turnover of people in government and industry positions in Newman means that new people are always coming to Newman and reinforcing status quo perceptions which focus upon disadvantage and the perceived negative attributes of the Martu identity:

Oh drinking, employment and I guess all we do is focus on all the negative that’s what it is if you go and just see negative and different people so you got a new manager of DCD or a new OC in the police station and they all come along with their, come on board with their new ideas and everybody is empire building, you got to remember in these areas a lot of new graduates come into the areas as well to do their stint (Interviewee 10, Indigenous).

There is some indication here that the Martu identity is constructed.

The issue of equality was not a direct major theme in the interviews. One participant discussed the sentiment of the general population in Newman regarding Indigenous specific services:

In some ways I think Australia has a part of apartheid. Because the Indigenous have their own services, medical services, health services, legal services, transport, and that sometimes frustrates me. Particularly people in Newman, because they see a lot of times the agencies come down and working with Indigenous people. They don’t see them working, because it is not as noticeable. They don’t get racist, they get frustrated because they can’t get the same level of service that someone like an Indigenous person can. Like if they need to go somewhere, they seem to get more help than others. And that is getting feedback from the other way that they feel like there is a difference (Interviewee 7, non-Indigenous).
It is interesting that people can see the agencies that work with the Martu but do not actually see the agencies working.

There was some discussion about history, which ranged considerably in content. This reflected primarily a concern with Martu people and did not discuss how history has affected the western identity. One person states:

...everything the white people have done, how can they trust us (Interviewee 11, non-Indigenous)

Another participant comments:

They are angry now definitely you know and it’s sort of like wanting to blame people for their situation...you know their land...I guess it has even been tried where you give them land (Interviewee 12, non-Indigenous)

The implication here is that Martu history is not in fact shared and that land rights is a finished issue. Land rights were not discussed in any depth except to a limited extent by Indigenous participants.

I was in Newman the week of NAIDOC\(^\text{25}\). Some of the discourse centred on how this was primarily a week that was organised by and for non-Indigenous people. This supports the Indigenous storyline from the previous chapter.

One Indigenous interviewee comments:

...when that comes up, I just don’t want to have anything to do with it. It is not something I do once a year, I live it as a daily thing. And I don’t understand why we have to celebrate...our culture is our life...you recognise

\(^{25}\) This acronym originally was used for National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee. It has since become a term to describe a week long national celebration of Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander cultures.
other people’s culture…that’s something you do you’re supposed to do naturally anyway (Interviewee 10, Indigenous).

There were a number of suggestions that NAIDOC week should be based around events such as BBQs and other social gatherings for the Martu people themselves.

Neither of the terms ‘practical’ or ‘symbolic reconciliation’ were utilised in the local discourse. However, the ideological undercurrents of both are evident across the discourse. The ideology of the Federal storyline and practical reconciliation is reproduced to a much greater extent within the Newman discourse. This is discussed further in Section 4.4.1.

3. Governance

The majority of participants did not discuss issues of sovereignty, self-determination and a treaty. The discussion about governance remained confined to improved representation within a service delivery framework. There was certainly a view across the discourse that a Martu representative ‘voice’ needs to be better incorporated within this framework. One person comments:

...who their representative contact is, participate in some of the service provider stuff (Interviewee 4).

Only one Indigenous participant used the term independence and linked this to culture and land:

If they are saying you really wanna be independent at the government level and the government is willing to give them that, there is still going to be problems...when you talk about independence the resources available to people are culture and land (Interviewee 13, Indigenous).
The discourse mainly indicated a strong desire for structure based upon a single and recognisable representative voice. A strong Martu Council was seen as necessary for improved communication and coordination:

*...there’s a community where people are hopefully if they get their governance right, it’s a option for other government agencies to be invited and talk about what they can offer and also for government agencies to listen to what they want* (Interviewee 14, non-Indigenous).

The discussion of governance was primarily related to predetermined outcomes. The following quote relates leadership to improved education outcomes. One participant predetermines the role of Martu leadership:

> We need to probably get more of the Aboriginal leaders themselves to stand up and say ‘we don’t want alcohol in the communities. We don’t want people that are not going to take their kids to school. We wanna get these kids to school’. Cos it is no good us white people or different colored people telling them that. Because it doesn’t wash. It needs their own people to show them (Interviewee 3, non-Indigenous).

There is considerable evidence in the discourse to suggest that the agencies did not know the individuals on the current Community Council. One person states:

*...I am not even sure who the chairperson at the moment is* (Interviewee 4, non-Indigenous).

Additionally, the agencies do not appear to approach the Community Council for advice or direction, despite their desire for a representative voice. It appears instead to be the responsibility of the Martu Council to approach service delivery agencies and industry. There is a perception that the Council exhibits a lack of initiative for not doing this. I actually over time observed a great deal of initiative not only in the Council but also across the Martu population. There were many instances where individuals, who were either on the Council or not, called a meeting with me for discussion. At times my discourse exhibits a
condescending tone about the Council’s efforts. In a story (Story 1.2) written after the first stage I wrote:

I was very pleased at the progress of the Council. They were undertaking decision making in a responsible and considered manner (NM).

This contrasts with my initial impression of minimal governance capacity on the behalf of Martu people. This is apparent in an article I wrote about Stage 1 and 2 that was abbreviated for the methodology chapter in this thesis.

There was minimal discussion about the lack of support given to the Martu Council. This is despite the emphasis in the discourse about the need for a ‘strong Council’. This also appeared at times to be condescending. One participant comments:

I really do believe that we have let go of their hand too early (Interviewee 15, non-Indigenous).

Generally there was no discussion about the need for devolution of funding and authority to the Martu people despite the strong undercurrent running through the discourse regarding the need for Martu governance to be playing a more active role. A minority view discussed the inhibiting role of white administrators.

In terms of local Shire Council representation, Indigenous people are perceived by many as just not capable of participating. There is little thought given to how this participation may be encouraged or to investigate how this may be improved. The issue of better Martu communication with the Shire appears to have been resolved, in the perception of the Shire. Anecdotal evidence suggests that there have been 2 Councillors in 9 years.

One of the interviewees comments:

We have had them come, and had tried to become Councillors which is difficult trying to understand the situation, people had to be pretty well-
educated, but didn’t grasp the need to come on a regular basis. I think personally they saw it as a way of getting more money, travel allowance, Councillor’s allowance. At times they would turn up no petrol, in a vehicle, we had to give them money for fuel, we’d feed them and the family, it is how it works. I don’t know if they expect it, because, at the moment they attend lots of things and get paid (Interviewee 7, non-Indigenous).

This quote pre-determines a Martu identity that is capable of participating in the local Shire, an identity that is educated. It is interesting asking for money is viewed negatively and reinforces perceptions of Martu welfare dependency held by this person and others that are described in the following section. Given the existing perceptions of Martu identity, it is accepted that one Martu person is able to represent the whole community, despite the potential cross-cultural difficulties for that person. There is also no recognition in this quote about the cultural difficulties of representation that are experienced by Indigenous leaders in Australia. This is discussed more in Chapter Five.

Improved Martu participation in the Shire was at times considered to be the responsibility of the Martu. A non-Indigenous participant states:

We have asked on a number of occasions that someone from the Indigenous area be represented…. I think councillors are largely there to represent some of the Indigenous issues because no one put their hands up or got elected. Now if they get themselves organised they can certainly elect someone onto the Shire and he is the direct link, you get them to stay there or to go that the consecutive meeting is another issue. So even if they can elect someone, their ability to maintain their presence just drops off (Interviewee 16, non-Indigenous).

At the time of the interviews, there was a white Councillor on the Shire (the bottle shop owner) which appears to be sufficient for some of the interviewees. Some interviewees raised concerns regarding the conflict of interest that this may
pose (regarding the sale of certain liquor). There appears to be some sensitivity around this issue.

An improved relationship with the Shire was a central theme in the Martu meetings during Stage 3 (the Dialogue) and the community development plan in Stage 2. Interviewees (mostly from outside of the Shire) discuss the difficulties of Martu participation in the Shire, but note that the Local Shire has some responsibility. One person comments:

You have got other Council representatives of non-Indigenous people in that group...I think it is a really good opportunity to encourage a check on local government, an ideal time. Because there is no representation on the Council of real grass roots people. They did have, I must say they did have a Councillor that didn’t turn up (Interviewee 17, non-Indigenous).

The East Pilbara Shire’s 2003-2007 Strategic Plan states that in regards to Indigenous welfare, the Shire’s goal is to “participate with others to work towards resolving a range of issues facing the Indigenous members of our community” (East Pilbara Shire 2003 p. 13). This is detailed as the encouragement of greater Federal, State and non-government organisational involvement in addition to the clarification of the roles and responsibilities of local government. There was very little discussion about agreement making in the interviews.

In the Indigenous background paper for the Pilbara Regional Sustainability Strategy (McGrath 2004) I wrote:

An immediate goal of the East Pilbara Shire should be to follow the example of many other local governments in Australia and establish a meaningful agreement with the Martu. This should include Martu representation on the Shire and may require modification of Council procedures, for example bush meetings (which have been suggested by the Martu). Other arrangements would need to be negotiated with the
Martu. Cross-cultural training should be a pre-requisite of Council employment (NM).

The issue of responsibility across cross-cultural governance appears difficult and complex within the interview material. The question of government intervention across culture is particularly complex:

*You know, how far does it go before the ruling family has neglected the other people, commits a crime...in terms of neglect, in terms of old people and children* (Interviewee 13, Indigenous).

Another participant discusses the need for government to take greater responsibility:

*that is their responsibility to deal with this problem okay, when they say it is too hard for us or decision is made up there...hiding behind bureaucracy* (Interviewee 1, Indigenous).

Jon Ford, who was also interviewed, wrote in a paper:

*We should not transfer responsibility from the government to an impoverished community* (Ford 2003 p. 4).

The need to redistribute resources towards improved capacity on behalf of Indigenous communities is emphasised in this quote.

A whole of government approach was seen to be desirable. The local discourse perceived government to be ‘silooed’ through departments which have their own programs and outcomes to meet. This is discussed by one participant:

*I would go and visit these agencies and it’s like, each one doesn’t know what the other one is doing. They have got no idea between themselves. They constantly seem with odds with each other...well come to Newman and bureaucracy has gone mad...each agency has its own protocol and*
its own, you know, mandate of where it intends to go (Interviewee 8, non-Indigenous).

Another participant discussed the geographic demands that working in the regions places upon agencies:

..and the boundaries, the barriers are there...the siloeing effect...the timing that you can’t meet with people when they are available because you are not necessarily available...the spread of people in town...then you have the geographic demands...like the one person has to cover a huge geographic area (Interviewee 6, non-Indigenous).

This same participant assumes that the Federal and State government are achieving collaboration:

...collaboration is not filtering down (Interviewee 18, non-Indigenous).

There is a definite dominant perception that government needs to work together better. There is some support for the inter-agency effort which runs sporadically in Newman. However, there appears to be considerable criticism of the inter-agency meetings despite a strong desire in the discourse for a whole of government approach. This was framed in terms of lack of funding, time and outcomes. The following quote conveys this sentiment. It also relays a sense of burn out at the local level and perhaps consequently a sense of collectivity in comparison to outsiders, such as myself:

It gets me frustrated when you’re at the ground level you get very burnt out and unfortunately the only people to suffer are the Martu...you go to so many meetings, so many inter-agency meetings...and they have been going for years...we are still addressing the same issues, same things are being brought up in six years, it’s unbelievable ...it comes back to money...we all know that you can’t get funding, so let’s, it’s not much point, people keep coming and telling us what we need which we already know...so why send people? (Interviewee 17, non-Indigenous).
It is also felt that the Martu people should participate in this initiative despite or perhaps because of the lack of outcomes. Some of the participants had not themselves attended the inter-agency meetings and were waiting for an invitation.

One participant discussed the compromise between communication and coordination compared to ‘working on the ground’ to achieve outcomes. The former is not always perceived to be necessary to improve the latter. A number of participants discussed the need for a coordinative role to be better funded and evaluated. The need for a Community Development Officer was discussed at many of the interviews. This role was seen to be able to coordinate government, keep government accountable and also work for the Martu people. Emphasis was placed on the assistance that could be given to government.

There was minimal discussion about the demise of ATSIC. ATSIC was mostly viewed in a negative light. Opportunities for new governance structures were primarily seen in terms of mainstream participation, including within the Shire.

4. Economy

The local discourse reproduces the ambivalence of the Federal and State discourse in this category. At the local level this ambivalence relates mostly to a perceived tension between culture and the mainstream economy. The following quote captures this ambivalence:

*We can impose, say, the economic framework over and according to our assessment they live in poverty, suffering all the conditions that the stats show that people on low incomes face. We don’t take into account that when pay day comes and they have spent their income on various things, how they live the rest of their fortnight like hunting and falling back on their culture. So they will utilise the economic framework to suit themselves and there is still this culture. And I think that we need to recognise that culture and make it strong because the economic*
framework is something that is going to be imposed. And who says that is the best framework to evaluate things by...

Well you can say the way forward is to integrate into the western system and to get an education for the kids, and let me make a go in our competitive system, that seems to be the way because the old culture has been challenged, threatened and strangled in a number of ways. It would probably take a thousand years to work it out...we have technology and all these modernistic kind of viewpoints of the world, there is one way. Industry and technology is going to fix it up. This is seen through military advancement. We are so superior in our ways of approaching things that we can show you something ...you just didn’t recognise their skills, their cultural skills, their will to survive, their language, their law and all those kind of things. But on the other hand, because they are outnumbered by a big group that does have connections to the rest of the world to trade and all the other bits and pieces that connect us with the world, our culture seems so powerful that how can indigenous culture challenge it when their lands are being taken over and they are relegated to places that don’t allow them to be in their culture? It is like they are on the chess board and they are surrounded, you know (Interviewee 19, non-Indigenous).

In this quote modernistic society is critiqued in terms of a superior worldview that is based upon industry, technology and military advancement. On one hand, in the first paragraph Martu people are seen to be able to straddle these separate worlds with culture as support. On the other hand, in the second paragraph a minority, culturally threatened and thus consequently less powerful Martu culture is assumed to exist outside of this modern worldview. Taken together within the two paragraphs, there exists both a desire to recognise and strengthen culture and a sad resignation that the only path forward is assimilation into the mainstream economy for the Martu people. It is interesting that autonomy is related to the land. Time is emphasised strongly, which is a feature across the discourse.
Most of the discourse did not address this tension so openly. Much of the local discourse reproduces the integrative aspects of the Federal storyline. One participant postulates:

—I see it as people working amongst society (Interviewee 4, non-Indigenous).

There is considerable confusion as to why the Martu people do not desire the material lifestyle that is assumed to drive the mainstream economy. This is expressed by one person:

—I sit them down I ask what do you want? What are your dreams? And, um, they don’t know themselves they don’t know what they want. Would you like a nice home like everyone else, nice things in your kitchen, a nice TV bits and pieces? They don’t know, they can’t answer me, so I don’t know. If they don’t know, I don’t know (Interviewee 20, non-Indigenous).

BHP has a quota for Indigenous employment but there are differing opinions as to what the exact quota is. The interviewees also raised the question of who is deciding what the quota should be and how this is legitimated. This is framed in two ways, as evident in the following two quotes. The first quote assigns greater agency to the Martu people whilst the second quote assumes that BHP is placing pressure on the ‘powerless’ Martu people. Much of the discourse is aligned with the second quote and assumes that traditional culture is incompatible with working on the mine:

—While BHP need their 13% the mob really doesn’t need the 13%. They’re going well below it forever, you know how they legitimise to government is beyond me (Interviewee 13, Indigenous).

—to do that you have to meet the white man’s criteria, with all the strict rules that are up there. And they are quite strict, those rules. A lot of white men have trouble meeting the rules, let alone the aboriginal people...even doing a mine induction is a scary thing you know...who has
the power to decide that we had to have 8%? Why did the company in all its hierarchy and system decide that they had to put that pressure on the people?...Why is that necessary if the people themselves are finding that difficult to achieve? (Interviewee 8, non-Indigenous)

Both quotes raise the issue of who is responsible for deciding change and then for initiating it.

Despite a common assumption that Martu culture and the culture at the mine are incompatible, there is also some sympathy within the local discourse about the lack of opportunity that is provided for the Martu people. This was aligned to a discussion about other Indigenous people filling the BHP quota. The following participant again frames the Martu people as powerless:

So people who were powerless are becoming more powerless because they are faced with other tribes coming in and taking their space (Interviewee 8, non-Indigenous).

The need for different programs to prepare the Martu people for working at the mine was raised in many of the interviews. This ranged from a need for Martu people to learn how to wash and dress themselves to meet the mine standards, to issues of work safety. These programs were mostly aligned to a pre-determined outcome of mainstream employment, as opposed to models such as welfare or CDEP. For example:

Use BHP as an example they .... they need to have something different for to include the Martu people, something that starts from really basic stuff and works itself up...use that money with businesses and contactors whatever in town based...if you utilise that money with businesses and contactors...where they can set up special traineeships...gain employment at the end not necessarily with the company...not remain on CDEP (Interviewee 17, non-Indigenous).
However, not all of the discourse was sympathetic towards the Martu people. A boundary is drawn here between Martu people and other Indigenous people who have been educated and want to work. An essential identity exists on either side of this border. The assumption in the following quote is that the Martu people do not want to work:

*BHP are employing Aboriginal people, but they are not employing Martu people, they are employing Nyoogars from the south and they’re not part of this land. But if the people aren’t educated or don’t wanna work, BHP aren’t going to employ them. Because you employ to do a job. And I mean you can’t employ someone if they don’t wanna work and do the job that they’re employed to do. It is a simple as that* (Interviewee 3, non-Indigenous).

In a small town such as Newman there also exists some resentment that Indigenous people are provided with too many opportunities in comparison to other non-Indigenous people in town. In the following quote the self-sufficient arguments of treating everyone equally, of utilising money productively and that everyone can succeed if they try hard enough are used to frame the argument:

*It’s causing disharmony in the broader community because they’re getting fast tracked and getting apprenticeships where other people are missing out. And they’ve lowered the standard...because they’re favoured, you know they have the standards and they’re pushing the Indigenous people through, it’s getting people’s noses out of joint as well. And I can see that, that is just human nature....apprenticeships are scarce. If you had your quota filled with the broader community on that standard and then you said look, there were three spots that weren’t filled, then put them into those spots, that would work better because no one is being disadvantaged...8 out of 10 will not complete their traineeship....one might last and the other one definitely won’t last...So he’ll waste two years of everyone’s time and then bail out. And it is a strain, and I can talk from our own organisation, of how much time I spend with a trainee to give that person to a, just turn up for work....it is*
a strain on other members of the organisation...because, they question, well hang on, why is there a standard for this one? (Interviewee 16, non-Indigenous).

One participant talked about the need to investigate job sharing and raised a model that occurs in Japan. This participant also talked about the need for BHP to employ a cultural expert. Another participant discussed the need for government to catch up with resource agencies in terms of Indigenous employment. This participant saw change in this category to also be the responsibility of government to decide and initiate.

Culture was often used as an excuse for Martu people’s failure to assimilate into the mainstream economy. This frames culture as a deficit and constrains a discourse of diverse opportunities. One of the participants comments on the Martu people’s:

inherent lack of seeing anything through...they don’t go by the clock, they are not born into the world where you get up in the morning and you go to work (Interviewee 16, non-Indigenous).

The conversations with most of the Indigenous people revealed a perception of the changing nature of culture. The Indigenous interviewees discussed how their parents, and older generations, used to work. One of the interviewees discussed how government keeps changing the rules. An Indigenous person interviewed argued that culture is not an excuse for not seeking employment:

I reckon stop pussy footing around and wrapping people up in cotton wool and get on with it, I mean you look, I am just going back to my, you know, like our old people, my old people. I mean in those days they had to work for their money, you know they had to go to work and get their money so they did and they did work because that was the culture, if you want to earn a living for your family you went and worked and that has changed, we need to get back to that (Interviewee 10, Indigenous).
There was a view amongst some of the participants that Martu people are caught between individual needs and collective obligations to the community. The latter was seen to act as a disincentive for employment. There was minimal recognition of ways that Martu people contribute to their own lives and communities beyond the market economy. Interestingly, the people who advocate creativity through their discourse tend to be more comfortable with the idea of integrating culture and economy and allowing time for this to occur.

**Welfare**

Welfare featured heavily across the local discourse. The two frames that are evident in the Federal and State discourse also exist in the local discourse to differing extents. The frame that welfare is not working and is a drain on resources was clearly evident. Only one Indigenous person discussed welfare as a right, despite the amount of money that is being utilised is discussed in the following quote:

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..if it was one of those African countries where people are starving it doesn’t matter how much money World Vision will pump in, they will continue to do so, if they reach their goal or not...there’s nothing being done and people are still being left behind (Interviewee 2, Indigenous).
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This interviewee however also discussed the need for Indigenous people to overcome dependency and be strong, as welfare may not always be an option. This relates to Pearson’s arguments about transforming the model from negative welfare to positive participation. The following quote relates economic independence to cultural activities such as boomerang and spear making, and tourism:

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Yeah, I believe there’s somewhere along the line that the missionary attitude I call it where Aboriginal people say, ‘well you got to give me, you got to give me more now you got to do this because your employed to help us or whatever’, so it’s the missionary value has got to stop and say ‘now I’ve got to start doing something for myself, for my family’, because
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of somewhere along the line it’s going to stop and there is not going to be any dole or pension or whatever we have to start encouraging our own people in saying, ‘oh OK we got to do it for ourselves not governments do for us or agencies do it for us’. We got to stand up be strong cause if they are not strong in doing for ourselves how can we be strong for our family and how can we be strong for the next generation? You know are we breeding a next generation of kids that are going to be reliant on social welfare? And so I agree that we must stand up and start doing it ourselves and start looking at programs that will bring in money, tourism, making boomerang spears or whatever (Interviewee 2, Indigenous).

The difficulty of such activities in remote locations was not discussed in the local discourse.

Most of the local discourse related welfare and dependency to a weakness within the Martu population. Additionally it is argued that the welfare model provides no incentives to be strong and responsible. This argument equates strength with responsibility and reciprocity. This perception is clearly evident in the following two quotes:

So many aboriginal people they think they get money for nothing and its their life…I don’t think the hand-out culture has helped them. I don’t think it has at all. You know I think it has really done some damage and I guess stopped some of that personal responsibility stuff that most people could have taken on board (Interviewee 4, non-Indigenous).

We are talking about the welfare dependent. It is hard to gather self-esteem when you are so down there…Somedays you feel that they do get much there is no incentive to get up in Australia in general. Our welfare system in Australia, people get looked after very very well. Cheap medical, cheap rent, it is not a good situation to be that poor, but there is no incentive to try and dig yourself out of there. And once you’re there,
to get that incentive it’s a long drag and you have gotta be really really strong and determined (Interviewee 7, non-Indigenous).

The above quote denies Martu agency. Martu people are seen to be weak and well looked after through State care. Two assumptions are made: firstly, that Martu people are not actively choosing to remain on welfare for a variety of reasons (including potentially to protect culture); and secondly, that welfare does provide an adequate safety net in any case and one that is able to easily cross culture. In contrast to this second assumption, one person talked about the humiliation for the Martu people in approaching bureaucracy.

Within the local discourse there is evidence of Pearson’s arguments as well as the Federal government’s and Third Way’s frames. However the local discourse appears to see reciprocity as being needed from individuals in the community to government. This compares to Pearson’s arguments in which reciprocity is seen to be required from individuals in the community to community governance structures. In this instance the local discourse aligns more with the Federal government’s position than with Pearson’s.

The need for time, patience and money, but only on the government’s behalf, was a common theme across the local discourse. This was tinged either with sadness or frustration. Welfare was definitely perceived as a transitional model that should not continue indefinitely. There was considerable confusion as to whether Martu people are given not enough money, too much or whether there is ever enough. Local organisational perceptions align more with the latter two. This ironically meets with a definite perception in the discourse that more services and infrastructure are required to be channeled through government to the Martu people.

Community Development Employment Program (CDEP)

The Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) arose as a topic of discussion in most of the interviews. The participants were largely critical of the model. A common perception was that CDEP was failing to prepare Martu
people for work. The role of CDEP was also seen to be transitional path to mainstream employment. This is discussed in the following quote:

*I don’t think it teaches people work ethics...The first concept, the original concept, is to get people off the dole, to get them into a work environment. Teaching them a work ethic and to go and do you hours and wear your proper clothing... and it is supposed to be a stepping stone there for mainstream. It is not a stepping stone. People are going there and using it, because they know that they can go there, they can turn up, 2 hours a week, and still pick up their pay... and in the guidelines of CDEP that’s how it should be. You set up can have your arts and crafts and there is provisions for sporting and everything...Community development and employment, it is not community employment; it is community development and employment. They should be preparing people if that is what it is set up for* (Interviewee 1, Indigenous).

Frustration was very often expressed at the fact that people were not working whilst still being paid. One participant discussed how it got ‘under her skin’ that people were counted as employed whilst they were on CDEP but not working. Ambivalence exists in the discourse as there is also a perception that people are not paid enough. There is also confusion about whether CDEP negates other government subsidies. The frustration about CDEP relates mostly to structure. Re-structuring was a common theme. It is argued that the guidelines need to be stricter and also enforced. There was however also a perception about the need for diverse programs within the CDEP program in any one location and across locations. There was conflicting views as to whether centralisation or decentralisation leads to better outcomes.

One Indigenous participant discussed how Martu people can easily survive on CDEP or welfare as they also go hunting (Interviewee 13, Indigenous). There was some discussion about the need for different activities to support Martu culture including arts and crafts, hunting, sports, and tourism. Another participant discussed how these activities could not be supported, as there was
not enough funding (Interviewee 14, non-Indigenous). A different participant questioned whether cultural activities were going to put ‘bread and butter on the table’ (Interviewee 20, non-Indigenous).

There exists confusion about CDEP also at the Ministerial level which was discussed by one participant:

*I took him out to Jigalong, just to get a feel for a community out there and he proceeded to argue with the CDEP manager about why they don’t want to pick up rubbish ... what the manager out there was saying, what I want is real jobs and sustainable jobs that give my people opportunities ... it’s that you don’t want them picking up newspaper ... you know the Minister in his defence he comes from an environment that’s totally alien to people out here...you do have the problem that it is used in a useful way and funding positions in communities that need some sort of administrative people and skills to run those communities* (Interviewee 21, non-Indigenous).

There was not a great deal of recognition within the local discourse about the possibilities of funding community positions in Newman. The CDEP was seen instead to be a means of mainstreaming people. There was only minimal discussion about community control. Staff quality, particularly management, was a topic that recurred in the interviews.

### 4.4 Themes for Discussion

This section provides a thorough analysis of power within the consultancy participatory projects and in the Newman institutional discourse. Section 4.4.1 provides a summary of the analysis of Newman institutional discourse and examines how the Federal Standard Storyline is reproduced, rearticulated or resisted. It also examines to what extent the Newman institutional actors are influenced through their relationship with the Martu people to align them more closely to the Indigenous storyline. The empirical material that was presented in
the previous section is used to understand how the discourse is framed at the local level. A closer examination of the context of the interviews and case study (regional Western Australia) is outlined in Section 4.4.2 and in particular how this context is dominated by a neo-liberal ideology. A participatory approach to regional sustainability strategies is seen as necessary to counter this. Section 4.4.3 provides a detailed account of power and knowledge particularly within consultancy participatory projects. A summary of the representation of Martu people in relation to reflections from the consultancy projects is given in Section 4.4.4. Section 4.4.5 examines boundaries which determine insiders and outsiders.

4.4.1 Discourse and the Power of Storylines

Policy can be conceptualised as ‘spaces’ with power relations that are related to discourse (Brock et al. 2001). It is therefore useful to analyse and compare how ‘local’ spaces intersect or contradict with the policy spaces of Federal government. This allows for the micro-politics of knowledge construction as well as the macro and allows for a necessary focus upon policy implementation. An instrumental view of policy tends to focus only upon formulation (McGee and Brock 2001). This section provides a summary of the local western institutional discourse and will compare this to the Federal and Indigenous storylines.

Gramsci’s concept of hegemony is useful for exploring how ideology and politics intersects with discourse. This is discussed by Fairclough (1992), who comments that hegemony is seen by Gramsci to be domination in the economic, ideological, cultural and political domains. It refers to the power by an economic class over others in society in political alliance with other social forces. Hegemony is not a stable equilibrium and requires strategies in politics to sustain power, including the ideological incorporation of subordinate classes. Gramsci refers to an ideological complex which relates to conflicting, overlapping or intersecting formations that operate to structure or restructure ideologies (Fairclough 1992). Hegemony as understood by Gramsci relates to the first model of power outlined in Section 4.2 of this chapter.
Providing a connection between hegemony and discourse, Fairclough (1992 p. 93) states that “discursive practice, the production, distribution, and consumption (including interpretation) of texts, is a facet of hegemonic struggle which contributes to varying degrees to the reproduction or transformation not only of the existing order of discourse, but also to the reproduction of existing social and power relations”. Oktar (2001) supports this and argues that discourse is able to express, change and reproduce ideologies. A post-structuralist understanding of discourse takes the analysis beyond power that is held by elite classes and ideological rhetoric to maintain this. Post-structuralism relates to the third model of power in Section 4.2, in which discourse is a system of meaning that crosses institutions and social practices. This understanding of discourse and its relationship to power better allows an explanation of how certain storylines become hegemonic. Hegemony is thus not only useful in terms of analyzing discourse as a matrix in terms of the social practices within which discourse belongs. It is also useful in terms of analyzing how post-structuralist discursive practice itself is a form of hegemonic struggle (Fairclough 1992).

Three aspects of the constructive effects of discourse described by Fairclough (1992) are used to structure the analysis here. The first is the construction of social identities and subject positions for social subjects and types of self (Identity). This is used by storylines to position certain actors. The second constructive effect relates to social relationships (Relational) and the third is the systems of knowledge and belief, or the construction of ideology (Ideology). Fairclough (1992) writes that all three categories coexist and interact. All three are useful for analyzing how Newman actors represent Martu people in their discourse.

- **Identity**

This relates primarily to the construction of Martu identity. There is a focus in the interviews upon Indigenous disadvantage and equality in terms of uniformity rather than difference. Martu disadvantage is mostly seen to require mainstreaming and is justified by the need for improved ‘practical’ outcomes
including education and employment. The term ‘lost generations’ featured in the local discourse is associated with a need to focus upon education for the younger generations only. However, within the local discourse there was a very strong desire to also see the maintenance of culture. Culture is thus seen both as a deficit and as desirable. This ambivalence provides opportunities for an ideological reconfiguration towards the Indigenous storyline and is a probably consequence of the actors’ relationship with the Martu people.

The Martu identity is both essentialised as a group and is also determined by boundary divisions including: generational, geography and alcoholism. This mirrors Federal efforts at drawing boundaries and essentialising Indigenous identity. The Martu identity is framed by stereotypes including alcoholism and apathy, and this justifies the exclusion of Martu people from local governance in some instances. The overlay of boundaries, when seen as a whole as in this analysis, provides a glimpse that the Martu identity can in fact be differentiated rather than uniform, despite the fact that representations are constructed negatively.

There was little recognition in the local case study discourse of a shared history with Indigenous people, or specifically with Martu people. There is some recognition of the historical effects of ongoing colonisation upon Martu identity but not upon western identities. The one week NAIDOC celebrations are seen by some to be insufficient for the recognition of culture. Both provide an opening for the relational consequences of colonisation. This is made possible by the relationship that exists between the Newman actors and Martu people.

There were a few participants at the local level who did not comment to any great extent upon the Martu identity. One participant pointed to the Martu identity being positioned by new people coming to Newman. This also indicates possibilities of hope for better relational understandings through cross-cultural interaction over time and through relationship.
• **Relational**

This describes how social relations are enacted and negotiated, and relates to the categories participation, governance and economy. In regards to participation, the local discourse reflects the discourse of Federal policy. There is a common assumption that Martu (or Indigenous people) do not want to participate because of an identity that is negatively positioned. There is also an assumption made in the Newman discourse that the institution they represent is participating in a manner that is meaningful for others, including the Martu. Only a few voices questioned this. However, the local discourse also critiques the over-consultation by other levels of government which maintain the status quo. This ambivalence was not explored by the local interview participants and this analysis highlights an opportunity to do so.

The responsibility for initiating and sustaining change relevant to Martu people was seen to belong to the Martu. However, the direction of change was generally predetermined and the Martu people are expected to act in a certain way. Local discourse does however reveal a desire for dialogue with other levels of government as well as with Martu people. These two points better align with the Indigenous than the Federal storyline. There is, in particular, a sentiment within the Newman discourse for improved Martu representation through dialogue.

*Governance* is seen within the Newman discourse mostly in terms of improved structure (rather than process), which is described as a ‘strong’ representative voice for the Martu population. This is set within a mainstream service delivery framework which accords with the Federal position. There are differences in the discourse about Martu representation in the Shire and whether the responsibility to encourage this lies with the Shire.

Governance is related to pre-determined and ‘better’ outcomes which also replicates the Federal management model. Another similarity with the Federal position is that there is very little mention of capacity building through increased resources, despite the heavy expectations upon Indigenous governance structures. At the local level this is instead seen to be the responsibility of the
Martu people. There is some confusion however in the discourse about responsibility generally and when government should intervene. This confusion depicts doubt about authority of both government and the Martu.

There is a desire within the local discourse for a whole of government structure. However, there are issues of time and money which are seen to be in short supply at the local level. This reflects some of the concerns discussed in the previous chapter. In the local discourse, coordination is valued and also seen to be made possible by the employment of a Community Development Officer. One person is seen to be able to coordinate a framework that includes Martu people and local agencies. The demands of this position were extensive and are primarily orientated to enhancing coordination between government programs and services.

Within the local discourse there is an ambivalent desire to mainstream Indigenous people into the economy but to also maintain culture (which was sometimes positioned as a separate practice). Both CDEP and welfare were mostly seen as transitional and requiring better reciprocal arrangements between individuals and government. Ambivalence exists here with the collective structure of the Martu Community Council that is also seen to be a requirement in the local discourse.

In terms of economic opportunities, a tension exists in the discourse about equality and whether this implies special treatment of the Martu people. This intersects with an ambivalent perception in some individuals and across the discourse that the Martu people are either powerless or are seen to exercise power. Martu agency to exercise power is however framed as negative. Culture is generally perceived as an impediment, although Indigenous discourse demonstrates a different understanding. In terms of CDEP, a tension exists between diversity and the need for improved surveillance and reflects the discursive debate on this issue at the national level.
- **Ideology**

The Newman stories can be seen as an ideological mosaic. Hence, this analysis has put this mosaic together which tells a story and provides a means to investigate what the whole story depicts. This allows an exploration of the contradictions within the Newman ‘story/ies’ and the contradictions in comparison to the Federal storyline. It also allows for a better understanding of how discourse reproduces ideology through a fluid interpretation of power. Demas and Saavedra (2004 p. 217) write that this understanding of power “offers a venue for revealing the multiple locations of power, as well as the inconsistencies in dominant discourses”. This approach enables the analysis of the history of enlightenment and modern thought; rejects Western constructs of truth, dualisms, reason, progress and grand narratives; defies definitions and welcomes ambivalence; blurs the boundaries between disciplines and culture; and challenges the construction of the other (Demas and Saavedra 2004).

Oktar (2001 p. 314) argues that “an ideology is a self-serving schema for the representation of us and them as social groups, and reflects the fundamental social, economic, political or cultural interests of, and conflicts between, us and them”. The Newman discourse draws boundaries between the local agencies (who are included within a non-Martu wider community) and Martu people. It also draws a boundary between Newman people (non-Martu and Martu people) and the State and Federal government. Within the local discourse, government is thus not perceived as an ideological whole, despite substantial reproduction of the Federal ideology. The local agencies align more closely with Martu people in comparison to perceptions of other levels of government, particularly in response to perceptions of over-consultation and the lack of commitment to the local level by the ‘higher’ levels of government. This is likely a result of the relationship between the Newman actors and Martu people. Elements of the Newman discourse are aligned to dialogue similar to that called for by the essential Indigenous storyline. This is seen to be required in government, and between government and the Martu people.
There is however substantial reproduction of the Federal Standard Storyline, and includes the ambivalence of this storyline. In particular, there are perceptions that Martu people need to assimilate individually into the mainstream economy whilst also collectively providing service delivery structures with representation which will enable service delivery efficiency. Issues of improving welfare and CDEP were seen to be transitional only and the difficulties of building diverse economies beyond mining are not recognised within the local discourse, or by the Federal discourse.

The Newman discourse about culture provides considerable opportunity for exploring the contradictions in the discourse more generally. Most of the local participants perceived Martu culture as desirable and in need of support to be further maintained. This is most likely a result of the relationship between the Newman actors and Martu people. However, many of these same participants also perceived Martu culture to be lost and damaged. Culture was also seen as an aspect of the Martu lived reality that could be compartmentalised. There are considerable contradictions around the subject of culture that are reflected upon by the interview participants and provide a window in the future to further explore the ideological positions of western institutional people.

4.4.2 Regional Narratives: Sustaining Development?

This section aims to provide some context to understand the globalising force of neo-liberal ideology in regional Western Australia. Neo-liberal policy is based upon industrial wealth, geographical expansion of resource use, and the incorporation of new places into a frame of neo-liberal ideology. Accountability is framed by the national government primarily in economic terms. The Federal Standard Story aligns with corporate colonialism to put the national interest before Indigenous rights (Banerjee 2000).

Resources are developed for a greater good which is defined by either the state or at the national level, and according to Kinnane (2005) this is based upon imperial and colonial assumptions. In this narrative, history is forgotten and blaming the
victim is prevalent (Mowbray 1994). In this ahistorical frame, there is an assumption that colonialism has ended, and any traces are rewritten as progress and development. This distances the neo-liberal Federal storyline from any consequences (Banerjee 2000) and thus aligns with first modernism. Howitt observes that in the:

> dominant regional narrative, ‘history’ begins only when a locality is linked by industry to the wider world. Regional development narratives are then constructed by and around the complex processes of company decision making, government approvals, and industrial employment, which in turn contribute to nation building and national development (Howitt 1995 p. 380).

Esteva (1992 p. 9) argues that this reduces “global hegemony to a purely Western genealogy of history, robbing people of different cultures of the opportunity to define forms of their social life”. A region such as the Pilbara is situated as the epicenter of first modern society in which there is no history and no future consequences. This narrative does not consider that, for Indigenous people, catching up in a rapidly changing global economy is almost impossible (Altman 2001). Nor is there respect for diversity and thus the creation of diverse opportunities (including for Indigenous people) is not generally a consideration, given the homogenising tendency of neo-liberal policy.

Neo-liberal power thus works to discredit and marginalise other ways of knowing, being and doing. Government and industry have tended to be developmental, neo-liberal and economically assimilationist, and thus do not generally account for Indigenous aspirations and values (Altman 2002b). Australian governments often see Indigenous people as getting in the way of development (Jull 2002). Howitt writes that:

> social, economic, political, and cultural life in resource localities are silenced as everything is subsumed into the story of the mine…(d)iverse voices are replaced and displaced by a generalised and homogenised interpretation in which diversity is devalued in favor of the common currency of jobs, revenue, and trade as measures of success” (Howitt 1995 p. 390).
At the national level diverse regional stories, including the multitude of Indigenous stories and the stories of the landscape are rendered silent by a dominant story based upon economic progress.

The following analysis is structured thematically to demonstrate that in fact in Newman there are many other stories than the simplistic economic story of neoliberalism.

**Martu stories**

Martu culture was discussed in the Newman interviews, as outlined in the previous section. It is also possible to see evidence of Martu culture in and around Newman. For example, Figure 4.2 is taken from the local Newman directory and gives the interpretation of street names in Newman that are in Martu language. Also included on this page is a map of the heavy industrial area which provides an interesting contrast, and a contrast that is easily found in Newman.

**Figure 4.2: Street Names in Newman in Martu Language**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NEWMAN STREET NAMES INTERPRETED</th>
<th>(Tjilla is Snake) (Jila)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tjilla Street</td>
<td>(Tjilla is Snake) (Jila)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilara Street</td>
<td>(Wilara is Moon) (Wirarra)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windamarra Street</td>
<td>(Windamarra is Mulga Tree) (Wintamarra)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boonara Street</td>
<td>(Boonara is bloodwood tree) (bunara)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boree Court</td>
<td>(Boree is Shade) (Puri)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gandawarra Court</td>
<td>(Gandawarra is Yellow Ochre) (Karntarwara)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyluri Drive</td>
<td>(Kyluri is Djuj) (Karlka)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keedi Road</td>
<td>(Keedi is Wax from Spinifex) (Kiri)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kodala Place</td>
<td>(Kodala is Star) (Kurtalya)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koolvoox Street</td>
<td>(Koolvoox is Wait Potara) (Kulyu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maroo Street</td>
<td>(Maroo is Stone Axe) (Marti)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marloco Street</td>
<td>(Marloco is Kangaroo) (Marlu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narba Street</td>
<td>(Narba is Hair Belt) (Nanpa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyabalee Street</td>
<td>(Nyabalee is Local Language) (Nyuyaparri)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poonda Street</td>
<td>(Poonda is Hollow Area) (Punta)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yaiberee Street</td>
<td>(Yaiberee is South) (Yuriparri)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelle</td>
<td>(Kelle is North) (Nyarparr)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mulgubah</td>
<td>(A Bloodwood Tree) (Malykanpa)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (East Pilbara Shire 2001)
Figure 4.3 is a newspaper article published in *The West Australian* about a kangaroo that was made from stones on Radio Hill in the centre of Newman. This was discussed in many of the interviews and was remembered favourably. The symbol of the kangaroo was chosen by one of the Martu elders. It indicates the strong interest in supporting Martu culture by other cultures in Newman.

**Figure 4.3: Newspaper Article about NAIDOC week in Newman**

A well-attended camp dance in 2001 demonstrated strong interest within the town of Newman in Indigenous culture, and allowed an expression of this culture in a form that was chosen by the Nyiyaparli and Martu people. Greater opportunities for this expression are necessary in order to provide space for Martu representations.

**Stories of the landscape**

In the interviews the surrounding environment received much attention and was discussed with pride. One participant comments:

*We have got waterholes like you never did see. Three pools out here have a continuous running water, fresh water all year round. Even when*
it is 48 degrees in the middle of February when the rest of the whole of the world thinks is parched and crinkling burning hot, you can go to three pools and sit in fresh running water...and that is just an hour from Newman (Interviewee 8, non-Indigenous).

Other participants discussed the isolation and the sacrifice involved in foregoing services that are only found in cities. One participant commented on how in the south west of the State, people’s attitude is “Why would you want to go to Newman?” (Interviewee 22, non-Indigenous).

My stories also encapsulate the contradictions of felt remoteness and connectedness. In Stage 1 there is much to convey a sense of my happiness of leaving the city for the vastness of the Pilbara. The following is an excerpt from a story from Stage 3 (Story 3.1).

I did not want to venture into the desert without a Martu companion. The vastness and timeliness of the desert commands respect. Only life that is strong, knowing or lucky survives, or at the very least two of these...we drove through sacred space to Nullagine. The landscape was endless and enormous. Rocky outbreaks rose and fell blanketed by spiny spinifex that was forgivingly deceptive as it shone soft in the sun. I discovered on our driving smokos that it will try to bite your feet as you crunch red stone (NM).

This excerpt depicts my perceived romantic otherness of the land, within which I experienced both fear and awe. Such perceptions are conveyed across many of my stories.

Figure 4.4 is a photo of spinifex on rocky outcrops.
The reminder of this section will focus upon sustainable development, the issue of responsibility and also regional sustainable development.

**Sustainable Development**

Sustainable development provides a framework through which to analyse the intersection between the environment, the economy and society in regional Western Australia (McGrath et al. 2004). It is also a framework for determining who is responsible and how responsibility can be shared across space and time. Sustainable development as a topic was never once raised by the participants in the conversational interviews, except by me. After being raised by me, it at times became a word that the participants would themselves use, more often as a verb rather than a noun and framed in terms of economic participation of Martu people. Mostly, the local discourse of sustainable development in Newman appears aligned to Federal discourse with an emphasis upon economic and infrastructure aspects. None of these participants had heard of the State Sustainability Strategy\(^\text{26}\).

\(^{26}\) This strategy was drafted in 2002, published in 2003 and is currently being revised
The responses to a question posed by me about sustainable development did vary to some extent. Some participants had no knowledge at all of sustainable development:

*Sustaining What?* (Interviewee 15, non-Indigenous)

The majority of responses focused upon the economic and infrastructural elements:

*Sustainable development in relation to the town of Newman, without BHP Billiton or with BHP Billiton?* (Interviewee 8, non-Indigenous)

*The key to sustainability, you gotta have the income continuing. So you can budget for improving. We’ve got 30 year old infrastructure, but there is no money in the budget to do that. And that’s the problem, that’s sustainability set it up with the money depreciating or disappearing all the time and then you gotta update it, modernise it, change it or replace it. And there’s nothing in the system to do that to replace anything* (Interviewee 16, non-Indigenous).

Several of the respondents who were relatively new to Newman and had been University-educated in the last 5 years, had a broader understanding of sustainable development. One person talked about the integrative aspects of sustainable development:

*I think sustainability covers the whole spectrum, like the cultural, social, economic and what arises from those. I think it is right across the board really* (Interviewee 19, non-Indigenous).

The complexities of difference in regards to sustainable development were raised by one participant, who argued that such development was:

*...problematic because everybody’s so different you know* (Interviewee 13, Indigenous).
Indigenous sustainable development was not raised within the local discourse. There was little discussion about the need to cross culture in sustainable development and the complexities of doing so. Only one participant discussed the need for sustainable development that is culturally appropriate (or allows for difference), which is seen in this case as something that has a life of its own. Responsibility appears to lie outside government.

**Responsibility**

Newman is currently at an interesting turning point. The town was until recent years experiencing a downturn. Its close relationship with mining activities determines not only economic ups and downs but also impacts upon social aspects. However, in very recent times Newman has begun preparing for expansion. China’s economic boom has spilt over into Newman with an increased demand for iron ore. The responsibility of BHP to provide for regional sustainable development is debated within the local discourse. Industry, despite the power of deterritorialisation, does face low legitimacy in the public arena and depends upon public trust (Beck 2001). One person comments with cynicism:

_They have to have a corporate image...it’s all token_ (Interviewee 17, non-Indigenous)

The BHP company is responding to issues of legitimacy by committing to give one per cent of its pre-tax profits back to the community. It has undertaken a community consultation process to determine how this money should best be spent. Community concerns focused upon infrastructure and services, with little mention of environmental issues. A report published in 2000 stated that BHP does recognise the need to contribute to wider regional economy and not just the mine (Dames and Moore 2000). It is thus very important to recognise and negotiate with Indigenous people who have long term commitment to the story of the country, unlike industry and government which come and go (Jull 2002). This requires a holistic approach to sustainable development in accordance with the Indigenous storyline explained in Chapter Three. Sustainable development
however for BHP appears to be based upon the Corporate Social Responsibility model of the balanced score card in which financial, environmental and social are separated, measured and compared (Dames and Moore 2000). Much of BHP’s literature is also geared towards access to resources as an overarching justificatory umbrella.

Within the local discourse, there was little discussion about partnerships between industry, government and Indigenous people which would better allow for diverse representation in the negotiation of responsibility of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous wellbeing. There was however much discussion about the normalisation process in Newman, which is soon coming to a close. Normalisation began when BHP Billiton sold the town to the government and committed to a certain period in which the company would remain financially responsible for infrastructure maintenance. This can be aligned to another theme within the local discourse relating to the poor standard of services and facilities in Newman and the outlying Martu communities. There is much ambivalence within the discourse about the role of BHP and government in terms of maintaining and improving services and infrastructure. Most of the discourse perceived this to be the responsibility only of government, with the predominant view being that BHP already contributes a significant amount to the town of Newman.

One participant states:

_BHP Billiton is purely a resource company. It is not meant to be the political or the social sustainability in a town like Newman. Even though the town of Newman in itself was formed by Mt Newman mining company...how dare they say the company is responsible for the resources?_ (Interviewee 8, non-Indigenous).

Another participant observed that it is difficult to tell the difference between BHP and the government:
...government basically allows BHP to come in and take whatever they want (Interviewee 15, non-Indigenous).

A minority view revealed little faith in BHP, believing that little of the resource wealth actually reaches the local level.

The drawing of boundaries of definition and responsibility for the sustainable development (and Indigenous sustainable development) of regional Western Australia is certainly complex. The world economy is now a meta-power as it can change both national and international rules. This changes the rules of the game as it is played in digital space. Industry threat of not investing has increased the power of trans-national companies who are able to go somewhere else. Beck (2001 p. 2) writes that “global capital has to be localised somewhere and so it is imperialistic at the same time… this is a kind of imperialism whose subjects, even if they don’t like it, vitally depend upon it”. Deterritorialisation has changed the traditional understanding of power and authority. Recognition of the power of BHP is evident in the quote above.

In terms of increased government responsibility, one participant commented:

Newman is probably seen as an outpost. And it is ‘fly in fly out’ for the government agencies. They are just not here (Interviewee 7, non-Indigenous).

However, there is also recognition of the regional responsibilities that are faced by the agencies in Newman, whose staff spend considerable periods of time traveling. O'Donoghue (1999) writes that the tyranny of distance in regional Australia results in minimal services in remote regions. There is also a perception that the staffs of government agencies are not paid enough in comparison to mine workers. Burn out and the high rate of staff turnover is seen to be indicative of limited resources. This appears to be exacerbated by the pressures of working across culture with the Martu, as expressed by one participant:
Well what happens is you get Coordinators or people who run the indigenous issues only last a year or so and they disappear. I think they get burnt out pretty quick. Now the turnover is hugely high and the only people who stay are the ones with partners working for the resource companies. The rest do their time and get out (Interviewee 16, non-Indigenous).

The Newman agencies commented favorably upon regional staff, who provide a layer of representation between State and Federal governments and who have a clearer understanding of the local context.

**Regional Sustainability**

The Western Australian State Sustainability Strategy strongly emphasised the importance of regional sustainability. The Strategy (2003 p. 64) states that “sustainability means most when it is applied at a regional scale”. Regional Sustainability Strategies that include a story approach based upon Indigenous stories and history, the history of country and the history of other cultures are considered by the Strategy to be essential for the implementation of sustainability (Government of Western Australia 2002). Definitions of regions differ considerably and Regional Sustainability Strategies are seen to provide a mechanism to better analyse the contradictions and overlaps that exist.

I was involved in the development of a Pilbara Regional Sustainability Strategy (PRSS) which was a methodological trial that was coordinated by the State Sustainability Roundtable. The Dialogue (the second consultancy project and Stage 3) gave a means of providing space for citizen participation in this Strategy and thus for diverse voices to be heard and contrasted to the dominant story of the mine. Both BHP and government were involved in the organisation for the Dialogue and the PRSS. Information was distributed to participants and experts presentations were given in order to ensure the discussion was informed. The Dialogue provided a means of re-telling the story of Newman to decision makers. This re-telling emphasised social and environmental responsibility in additional to economic development, and contrasts with the community
consultation process described above. This emphasises the importance of dialogue rather than consultation and there are lessons here for regional Australia more generally. BHP has subsequently committed to the development of a number of infrastructure improvements and service programs.

The analysis in the following section focuses particularly upon the consultancy participatory projects in relation to the workings of power and knowledge.

4.4.3 Power and Knowledge in the Consultancy Participatory Projects

In both consultancy participatory projects a bureaucratic agency, the respective Minister, local government and industry were involved. The first consultancy project was based upon the participation of local agencies primarily, which enabled a context to be developed for the conversational interviews. The analysis of vertical slices is recommended by Nelson and Wright (1995) to examine how power operates institutionally and this was found to be insightful for the research. Both consultancy projects involved a participatory approach and were framed around a sustainable development framework.

It is becoming increasingly recognised that participatory approaches are generally not very good at analysing local power relations (Mosse 1995; Kothari 2002), particularly across culture. It is instead the case that communities are essentialised and the results of participation are seen to be relevant for all individuals. This is further complicated by different understanding of power across culture. Capri (2003) states that relationships of power are culturally defined through a culture’s rules, both informal and formal. Rowse (1992), in the Australian context, supports this by stating that cultures differ greatly in their understanding of what power may include. He comments that for Indigenous Australians it is likely to also includes ‘spiritual’ aspects.

The concept of space is particularly useful for analyzing power relations within a participatory approach. It is interesting to investigate how spaces are created, the
places and levels of engagement and whether power is visible in space (Gaventa 2004). Cornwall (2002) suggests a continuum of spaces which include:

- Closed spaces: this includes decision making spaces which are accepted as closed.
- Invited spaces: whereby people are invited to participate. This ranges from regulation to one-off consultations.
- Claimed/created spaces: these are considered by Cornwall to be organic spaces which emerge autonomously from common concerns.

Participatory space exists in a dynamic relationship and is opening and closing through struggles for legitimacy, resistance, cooption and transformation. Power that is gained in one space can be utilised in others (Gaventa 2004). In both of the consultancy participatory projects I attempted to give power to through invited space. However, power equalisation is by no means an automatic result, because participatory space is never neutral. Cornwall (2002) argues that it is important to analyse the form of participation in a particular space, at the intersection of the geographical, cultural and temporal.

In the first consultancy participatory project, the invited space became closed space during the decision making phase. At the completion of the first project, a decision was made by the newly elected Community Council to separate the housing development from the ‘wet camp’. This was justified by the perception that the Parnpajinya site was seen by many as a drinking camp for the Western Desert. The Council also requested that they receive a coordinator to help Martu people work through perceived social issues. This reflected the Minister’s desire for serious consideration of the complexities of the issues: recognition of the impossibility of ‘managing’ infrastructure and simultaneously containing the effects of alcohol, which is commonly perceived to be a contributing factor in infrastructure destruction. This decision, which was the culmination of the consultancy participatory project, was perhaps considered by decision makers at the State level but was not enacted. Factors such as cost and the difficulties of obtaining another site which was already linked to power and water were given by the Department of Housing and Works as reasons why separate land could not
be made available for the housing development. However, less visible was perhaps the Department’s desire to start the building process before the Minister changed his mind. I communicated with the Council about the Department’s concerns and they were thus aware of the risk of not only losing the housing but, more importantly in the Council’s view, the associated coordinator. This represents an attempt by the State government to exert power over. Decision making involved only a few actors including the Minister and senior bureaucrats in the capital city of Perth. The local agencies as well as the Martu are excluded from forums of decision making, which is seen as State government power over local agencies and community members operating at the local level. However, in my observations local agencies are better able to influence decision making than Martu, a likely result of being included within the machinery of government and sharing a similar culture.

In the second consultancy participatory project, the Deliberative Democracy process opened up space in which people in Newman and the Western Desert were invited to participate. There was however an attempt to close this space for the Martu people by the local Shire. The local Shire was active in response to the Final Dialogue Report. One explanation for this interest is that it was generated through ‘sensitive’ issues included in the report. My analysis of the Martu consultations had prioritised the desire for a Martu Western Desert Shire and also emphasised the need for improved communication between the East Pilbara Shire and the Martu. Although the latter issue had been raised at the Dialogue forum as a theme, the former had not. After reading the Final Report, the East Pilbara Shire wrote to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure demanding that these elements be removed from the Report. The Shire claimed that these issues had not been prioritised at the Dialogue forum. Additionally, it was argued in the letter that this was the viewpoint of only a few Western Desert people. Moreover, they stated the Report would re-invigorate dissent within the community, as the issue of a separate Martu Shire had already been dismissed. The first issue had been raised in almost every meeting that had taken place within either of the consultancy participatory two projects.
Writing to the Minister represents an attempt by the local Shire to assert control and power over the Martu domain. Control comes down to one actor or group exercising power in order to limit the possibility of one or others acting otherwise (Bonell 1999). The local Shire was trying to speak for all of the Martu whilst disclaiming the right of Martu leaders to do so. Dodson (1994) argues that the trend towards accusing Indigenous people of essentialism is a modern version of the control over Indigenous knowledge that has been present since colonisation. He argues that this form of essentialism draws upon “our sense of our Aboriginality, be that our blood, our descent, our history, our ways of living and relating, or any element of our cultures”. For Dodson, this is an act of resistance, rather than domination and control. On this note, I agree with the observation that sites of power within Indigenous society are trivialised (Rowse 1992) by people within western institutions. However, the Dialogue did make transparent the local Shire’s attempt to exert power over the Martu people.

In both projects the holistic visions presented by the Martu people were boxed and responsibilities were accorded to separate government departments. This was the approach that I took in formulating the community development plan in the first project. Coordination between State level departments was not considered in either of the projects. In the second project, the Department for Planning and Infrastructure undertook this analysis. The first draft of the generated spreadsheet did not include any of the Martu consultation material that was not presented in the day of the Dialogue. The result was that the Martu visions became swallowed by a majority voice, which raises issues of equality in deliberation, and requires further investigation.

Participatory methods are based upon the foundational assumption that knowledge and power are intertwined (Mohan 2002). Flyvbjerg (1998) observes that power ultimately determines what constitutes knowledge and rationality. To have power is therefore to determine the nature of reality. Scoones and Thompson (1994) argue that deciding what is included and excluded, and deciding who knows this is an act of power. In the current system Martu knowledge becomes:
subjugated knowledge… disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated; naïve knowledges, located down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientifically (Foucault 1986 p. 82).

The disqualification of Martu knowledge can be seen as to be power over.

The knowledge that is recognised by western institutions is based upon what these institutions can and cannot do. Technical and financial requirements with deadlines have little to do with the people on the ground. A number of participants talked generally about the management approach of bureaucratic agencies. This was discussed by one participant:

_A lot of agencies won’t step outside the square because it is so structured and rigid and it’s like being in the military you know, you will have it this way which is the only option you’ve got you know we are not going to give or take and it’s wrong_ (Interviewee 2, Indigenous).

Another participant states:

...for some people I think they are just ticking boxes (Interviewee 5, non-Indigenous).

One person talks at length on this topic:

...there will be times where people will be trying to do something because it looks good on paper, or stats wise or whatever. When actual fact for the community of Newman it’ll be better to stand still or go the other way...well someone on the local ground, the people of Newman who are just ordinary folk, need to see something tangible happen in the community that is good for the community of Newman and not for the good of some government agency...but it becomes just another feather in the cap of another agency who write another little booklet and produce stats to say look it could be what we are and look what we have achieved
The dominance of rational scientific knowledge underpins policy analysis and planning and is now asserted through new managerialism. Political technology depoliticises discourse by relocating a political issue into the arena of science or economics. Discourse plays an important role in reproducing this ideology. The use of concepts such as ‘stakeholder mapping’ (in the first project and described in the methodology chapter) indicates my reproduction of this managerial ideology. Therefore, neo-liberal reforms have not resulted in less government. The practice of government is instead more subtle and diffused (Taylor 2003). The third model of power is evident here.

Frustration is felt by many of the local agencies at the lack of outcomes. This is related to the perceived lack of accountability on behalf of government, at all levels. Ambivalence exists however in that local discourse also depicts stories of frustration about spending valuable time upon paperwork trying to meet funding criteria or other reporting requirements. The frustration here mostly relates to the fact that these criteria are generally determined in Perth, the capital city of Western Australia. The following quote raises the issue of balancing outcomes, process and accountability, which is not necessarily recognised by the participant:

There is no real outcomes, there is no real change process…a band aid approach to the issues without really taking things forward…I don’t think you can afford to just respond to crisis…You have got to get out of putting out bush fires and create a vision…but you have got to have a checking procedure to make sure things are being done (Interviewee 19, non-Indigenous).

There is a need for a focus upon reconciling outcomes with accountability mechanisms that go beyond managerialism. Accountability based only upon managerialism and measurement ensures the expansion of bureaucratic and
technical apparatus and survival of bureaucracy (Kapoor 2004). This is observed by one of the local government industry participants:

Everything is the same... never ever tackle a problem, because if they did, they’d be out of a job. Right, so it is not in their best interest to deal with a problem because if they dealt with a problem, they’d have no income. They’d be sacked, or they’d have nothing to do any more. They’ll just go and stick a band aid over it instead of curing it...

It is like having a fire that is fuelled by a leaky fuel line. But the main tank is way over there. But the fire, the damage that has to be put out is over here, everybody is concentrating here, they don’t worry about the source. Don’t go and turn the tap off up over there to stop that from happening, no, we will just keep on pouring water over here, and that is wrong...

This is the problem here. Yes we do have a problem... because the people over there are hiding behind ‘oh no no, this is not our responsibility’ (Interviewee 1, Indigenous).

The responsibility of government was a major theme within the interviews. One of the participants comments upon the need for accountability mechanisms that better legitimize government agencies:

Lack of legitimation in bureaucracy...it’s a concern because...no doubt a lot of people are saying ‘where’s all the money going...you’re paying these guys to do their jobs and what are they doing?’, you know (Interviewee 13, Indigenous).

Appo and Hartel (2003) observe that if public servants whose job depends upon looking after the ‘Aboriginal problem’ solve the problem, their career will end. They also argue that people who rise up the bureaucratic system have a set of skills which reinforce the system. The University of Sussex’s Robert Chambers (1997): argues that the core-periphery structure of knowledge and knowledge
generation in normal professionalism encourages actors in universities, government and industry to move geographically to larger urban centers, to specialise rather than to diversify, and to move upwards through hierarchies of power and privilege whose apexes decide which and whose knowledge counts. Accountability is also channeled only in an upward direction from Newman and the Western Desert. This is evident by the amount of written reporting that was done about the Parnpajinya housing prior to the initiation of the first participatory consultancy project, whereby there was little to no indication of appropriate form of communicating to the Martu people. Caution must however be exercised in not completely dismissing the role of bureaucratic knowledge. In addition I acknowledge Cowlishaw’s (2003) warning to be careful not to deny all hard and heartfelt work by bureaucrats in Australia. It is instead the case that current understandings of what constitutes valid knowledge and accountability require re-balancing. The institutional recognition of the phronetic knowledge of the people that work in relationship with Indigenous people, such as the Newman local institutional people with the Martu people, would help towards this.

4.4.4 Representation in the Consultancy Participatory projects

In the consultancy participatory projects, representation is both quite simple but is also incredibly complex for me. Indigenous people in Australia continue to be spoken about in their absence. Mainstream government and industry structures require that non-Indigenous people speak for them. In both projects, I was required to meet with or write letters to decision makers and provide advice. It was not necessarily expected in these forums that I would speak from a Martu perspective, but this did deny Martu representative structures the right to dialogue directly with decision makers. The most extreme example was when I was asked by the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure to respond to the local Shire’s critique of the legitimacy of the Martu vision of a Western Desert Shire that was raised in the second consultancy participatory project. I felt extreme discomfort at the exclusion of Martu representation and denial of possible Martu agency.
The minority status of Indigenous people in the mainstream governing structures results in an Indigenous voice being filtered through a non-Indigenous perspective. This was discussed in detail by one of the leaders of a community in the Western Desert. He explained how people come to the communities and take away knowledge which they put into their words. This is then given to someone else who puts the knowledge into their words and then it finally gets to Perth in a different form that it had ever been intended. This was an important point for me at the time, having been a filter across so many different junctions of culture. This is seen to be an attempt by government to maintain power over.

In neither of the consultancy projects was a Martu person employed. This was a missed chance of offering learning opportunities across culture. In future, this would be a minimum prerequisite for me. The tools and techniques were not negotiated with the communities and on reflection are relatively Western. Kothari (2002) argues that participation can be seen as a stage, in which techniques and tools are chosen by practitioners and the results are seen as reality. This is particularly questionable in a cross-cultural situation. For the second consultancy participatory project, the Dialogue, I had tried to arrange to have an Indigenous person with Martu connections in the theme team. This was a goal but did not eventuate. Significantly, a Martu person was not involved in either the analysis or report writing. It is likely that a Martu person would have developed different categories, concepts and criteria which may have not been expressed in a literate form. The reports in both consultancy participatory projects were written more for decision makers than for the Martu people. Walsh and Mitchell (2002) comment that the standard in Australia is non-Indigenous people writing about Indigenous people for non-Indigenous people in a form that is inaccessible to Indigenous people. The analysis from the projects was not made available to the Martu community in an accessible and user-friendly form, which is a typical experience for Indigenous Australians (Henry et al. 2002). It is important for non-Indigenous people to consider Attwood’s conclusions, as outlined in Chapter One, to provide more space for Indigenous self-presentations to emerge and for the re-presentation of non-Indigenous perspectives.
Power operates to determine boundaries that delineate who is inside and outside, and generally privilege those that have the power to draw the boundaries in the first place. In all spaces I felt to some degree that I was an insider for certain periods. At the same time, I never really lost the character of an outsider because of my association with academia. At times, my association with State government influenced the relationships at the local level. However, I need to consider that how I felt and how I was perceived would undoubtedly be different for the diverse individuals that I encountered over the length of the PhD research.

There is some confusion in my stories about the ambivalence of being both inside and outside. My position as a “consultant” afforded me immediate status as an insider to bureaucracy for the period of the consultancy. However, this was not sustained after the period of consultancy was over. This at times posed difficulties for my PhD research. I felt like an insider on the ground after spending some time (approximately 5 months) in Newman through the first project, but this has only become clearly apparent to me recently, after again experiencing a feeling of being an outsider after considerable time away from the field.

During this first consultancy participatory project I remember a felt need to define myself as an outsider which is evident in an excerpt from a story about Stage 2 (Story 2.3):

*It was particularly important not to start anything that I knew with certainty that I could not finish. In this regard I thought that it was important to continually define ourselves as outsiders in the longer term. We would be leaving even though we were staying longer than most outsiders (NM).*
This raises interesting questions about reciprocity and responsibility. It is particularly interesting that I felt responsible for initiating the process but not for sustaining it or for its consequences.

In the second consultancy participatory project, I felt like an outsider at first but experienced an insider relationship with some individuals within a short time because of established relationships. I wrote in my diary in Stage 3:

*I am also sitting in a different place. I am more of an observer on this trip, both openly and subtly, the interview process makes me feel as an observer, yet because I am not working with the government I feel as though people are treating me as more of a person in my own right. Martu people seem happy to see me. X says they have been talking about my presence (NM).*

In my stories I questioned the compatibility of consultation, facilitation and my uncomfortable position as a sometimes advocate for Martu people whom I was required to speak for. Rahnema (1997) states that it is possible to use free spaces within organisations to subvert them from within. Pettigrew (2003) argues however that a change agent needs to be distant from any power base. I believe that in becoming an insider in the policy realm I was more difficult to ignore. This is supported by Taylor (2003). This assigns some agency to my ambivalent position. However, my identity as a white academic needs to be considered and in particular, how this may have influenced policy.

Flyvbjerg (2004) suggests that researchers should bracket themselves in the case study. My role as a facilitator involved the greatest effort towards attempts at bracketing. Kapoor (2004) warns however that trying to conceal privilege in such a position can actually exacerbate it. Kapoor also writes that Spivak is critical of Westerners who position themselves as outsiders and rely on native informants who can wear ethnicity as a choice, essentialise and romanticise identity, and privilege the few at the expense of the subaltern. She believes that this denies complicity and puts the onus of responsibility on the native informant and the subaltern.
One of the participants suggests:

*I think you really have to get within the Martu people, and I think the research has to be done from within them, using them as researchers because otherwise we have just got a white focus on it and we can come up with questions, but they are our questions and our ears are going there, but I think the way to it, is to get from a close relationship with the Martu people who are fluent in both dialogues who can help form questions, and really get in there. Because they know the lifestyle, because sometime you ask questions, and you will get the answers you want back from them without getting the truth* (Interviewee 19, non-Indigenous).

This quote emphasises the importance of better enabling an Indigenous worldview. However, as the literature suggests there is a tension in that this approach can essentialise Indigenous identity (and thus entrench the interests of the powerful at the local level) and deny the responsibility of ‘outsiders’ across constructed boundaries.

Indigenous people were for some time kept under the power and authority of the Federal government through force. This has had a significant impact upon the Indigenous power, control and decision making. The relatively recent policy of self-management (sometimes disguised as self-governance), with the carrot of service delivery, has required that Indigenous people form a representative body which government agencies can communicate with and devolve responsibility for resources to (Crawford 1989). Empowerment that is given to one group by another, either as power over or power to, typically hides an attempt to maintain control (Nelson and Wright 1995). Indigenous representation is both framed as inside and outside government. A boundary is drawn by Federal and State governments which delineates responsibility to Indigenous representation but denies Indigenous representation in decision making. This was certainly evident in the first project, where the Housing Department required the community Council to take responsibility for a predetermined decision about housing.
development. This is however not necessarily a disadvantage, as spaces can be created for one purpose but used by those who exist within them for something quite different (Cornwall 2002). The community Coordinator that was assigned to assist with housing management also works across a broad portfolio.

Interestingly, in the second consultancy participatory project, the Jigalong community chose not to participate, although the chairperson of Jigalong in Newman was interviewed as part of the process. This interview was enabled through a relationship with the chairperson’s kin in Newman. The interview took place accidentally, as a result of a personal visit to the family in Newman. The vision for a Western Desert Shire that was suggested in the Martu meetings in the second project was rejected by a number of government actors. This denies the use of essentialism for cultural and political reasons, which can also be empowering in resistance movements (Banerjee 2000). A number of authors comment upon the maintenance of the Indigenous domain which is not necessarily a result of European segregation but is also an attempt by Indigenous people to resist cultural domination and to position western people as outsiders (Trigger 1986; Rowse 1992; Sullivan 1996).

Resistance is central to re-presentation (Howarth 2004). The subversive and autonomous power, the reflexivity and subversion by some actors is often ignored (Cohen 1985; Wood 1999; Kothari 2002). Resistance accounts for some of the agency for change within mainstream systems of prejudice and may also result in people choosing not to take part in government programs (Crawford 1989). The very act of inclusion is sometimes viewed as a form of control. For Woods (1999), resistance occurs in part because of ‘adverse incorporation’ in which the act of inclusion is not necessarily of benefit to the group who were previously excluded. Cohen (1985) supports this by stating that inclusion can often result in forms of control which reduce spaces of conflict and are thus more difficult to challenge. Exclusion can therefore be empowering and the means of challenging hierarchical structures (Cohen 1985; Wood 1999; Kothari 2002). Indigenous people also exercise agency in determining boundaries and positioning themselves as outsiders.
Remoteness is generally framed in negative terms which do not allow for the agency of Indigenous people in distancing themselves from western spaces. The following quote is an example of this:

*People living in those disadvantaged remote communities and when I say remote, remote you know physical remoteness but also socially remote* (Interviewee 21, non-Indigenous).

The above position centers and privileges western spaces. Crawford (1989) writes that a perception of Indigenous communities as being remote reflects the mind-sets of policy makers and service delivers which are Perth-centered, urban and mono-cultural. bell hooks (1990 pp. 341-343) addresses this position by writing of marginality “as much more than a site of deprivation. It is also the site of radical possibility, a space of resistance … It is a place I choose” (cited in Cornwall 2002). She rejects the insider/outsider distinction and writes that “to be on the margins is to be part of the whole but outside the main body”. She goes on to write “I was made “other’ there in that space… they did not meet me there in that space. They met me at the centre” (1990 p. 342). The margins can therefore also be seen as a claimed or created space in which Martu agency is actively exercised.

Within the local discourse there was very little recognition of Martu agency for resistance. This can also be observed in my writings. For example, below is an excerpt from a conference paper I wrote about Stage 1 (McGrath and Marinova 2003):

*If Stage 2 was approved, I believed it would involve a different approach from Stage 1, the equalisation of power structures within the project frame and the transformation of the nature of participation to encourage community interaction and ownership of the process. In the event that Stage 2 was approved, conscious attention was also required in Stage 1 to avoid the development of dependency relationships within the community (NM).*
As discussed in Section 4.3, when Martu agency was acknowledged it was framed in negative terms. For example:

...and I think they are pretty good at working the system themselves (Interviewee 16, non-Indigenous).

The insider/outsider distinction also applies to other levels of government, according to the perception of local agencies. There was an implicit boundary that was drawn by the local government between the local level and other levels of government. This is of great relevance to a whole of government discussion. One participant comments upon the local government relationship with Perth:

We go two steps forwards and three steps back and so yeah, it’s the missing link between us and them (Interviewee 2, Indigenous).

Another participant sees the State level as separate. This participant comments that funding cycles and criteria that are determined in Perth do not meet with the lived reality in Newman:

Local to State often become so engrossed and lost in their own circular world that there’s no cross over...a lot of the funding has got so much boundaries on that you have really got to bend and shape yourself to meet that criteria. Funding, no meeting what the needs are, that is a bit of trouble. You might have a need in September but the program closes in July, so you have to wait for the next round (Interviewee 19, non-Indigenous).

There is a very strong perception within the local discourse that there is not enough communication primarily with Perth (State government) where decision making occurs. This raises an insider/outsider distinction in terms of governance and places local government outside in regards to power. This discourse reveals

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27 This term was discussed in Chapter Three
a perception of power over by the State government. For example, one person states:

*So you’ve got service providers trying to make the best of a decision made by Perth* (Interviewee 4, non-Indigenous).

As discussed previously in this chapter, regional structures of governance were seen as necessary to provide a necessary medium to negotiate the inside/outside boundary in terms of *power over* between the local and State levels.

**4.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has analysed power and representation between Martu people, government and industry. Three models of power were outlined in the beginning and were used throughout the chapter for the analysis. The first model of power (*power over*) considers power to be contained and exercised by centralised institutions. The second model (*power to*) relates to empowerment strategies to counter *power over*. The third model is based upon the work of Foucault and power is considered to circulate across people and institutions.

The Newman institutional discourse was compared to the storylines that were outlined in Chapter Three. The third model of power was useful for analyzing the reproduction and resistance of the Federal Standard Storyline and also how the Newman discourse aligns to the Indigenous storyline. There is substantial evidence within the local discourse of the Federal storyline. Particularly evident is ambivalence about the need for collective community representative structures whilst advocating that Martu individuals mainstream into the economy. The local discourse also essentialised the Martu identity. However, a significant conclusion in this chapter is that Indigenous people in government and industry tended to better account for diverse Martu identities and also to recognise Martu agency. This is a likely result of the relationship that exists between the Newman institutional actors and Martu people and allows for alignment with the Indigenous storyline outlined in Chapter Three. Another conclusion is that the
analysis of the Newman discourse revealed a strong desire for dialogue which is currently being ignored by Federal government and is also a major theme within the Indigenous storyline. This chapter concludes that Martu culture is an important theme within the local discourse in terms of the ambivalence it produces. Opportunities exist at the local level to utilise culture as a means of reflecting upon perceptions about Martu people and particularly how representation and responsibility are negotiated across culture.

The context of the case study, regional Western Australia, appears initially to be dominated by a neo-liberal perspective tending towards first modernism that accords with the Federal Standard Storyline. A focus upon economic progress tends to render invisible the stories of Martu people (and all Indigenous people in Australia) and the environment at the national level. This chapter has however demonstrated that evidence of both can be found in the case study, in the local discourse and also was a theme of my stories (and thus observations) in the case study context. In addition it demonstrated that participatory methods (in the first consultancy project) and deliberative democracy (in the second consultancy project), set within a framework of sustainable development, are useful for strategies that aim towards power to, as this allows for stories other than the economic to be amplified.

Power and knowledge were analysed in regards to the consultancy participatory projects. Martu knowledge tends to be obscured by a rational, instrumental and managerial approach. This can be seen as an attempt to exert power over the Martu people. The second project (Stage 3) made transparent the local Shire’s attempt to exert power over Martu people in particular to Martu future visions of a separate governance structure that was called the Martu Shire.

In both consultancy projects, the Martu people were represented by non-Indigenous perspectives to State government decision makers. Greater inclusion of Indigenous people in government is necessary, as is the re-presentation of non-Indigenous perspectives. In the local context, greater effort needs to be invested by government and industry structures to create space for ongoing dialogue with Martu representative structures. This was a significant theme in all of the Martu
meetings in both consultancy participatory projects and mirrors the desire for dialogue within some of the Newman discourse itself. Re-presentation should not only better align non-Indigenous perspectives to those self-presented by Martu people but should also create space for this self-presentation.

There is significant confusion about who is inside and outside of government. It was observed in this chapter that all levels of government place Martu people inside in terms of responsibility (e.g. for infrastructure) but also place Martu people outside in regards to decision making. There is little recognition at the local level of the agency that is exercised by Martu people in determining boundaries of inclusion and exclusion in which to protect the Indigenous domain in the Western Desert. However, the local agencies also place other levels of government as outside of context and appear to sympathetically align to Martu people, particularly in regards to perceived over-consultation of Martu people by other levels of government.

The drawing of boundaries across and between cultures is the focus of the following chapter. Chapter Five considers in closer detail local perspectives about cultural change and difference. This chapter also considers the politics of difference across culture in the Western Desert.
Chapter Five

Hybrid Spaces: Culture, Representation and the Politics of Difference

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is primarily about the politics of difference across cultural spaces and geographical scales and explores how boundaries are imposed upon the Martu population through institutional practice and discourse. The discussion about power and representation in the previous chapter gives an important intersection to culture. The border zones provide a space where different institutional modes (Nederveen Pieterse 2004) meet and this requires consideration of representation and responsibility. Section 5.2 presents a discussion about local organisational perceptions about Martu cultural change. The perceptions about cultural difference between Martu culture and non-Martu culture (all other cultures in Newman, a binary distinction defined within the Newman interviews) are discussed in Section 5.3. Section 5.4 explores perceptions relating to gender and also examines how gender was approached in both of the consultancy participatory projects. Differences other than gender within the Martu population, including community, individual, family and leaders, are discussed in Section 5.5. A summary of important themes including difference and hybridity, politics and communication is provided in Section 5.6.

5.2 Martu Cultural Change

Culture, like power, is a word with multiple understandings (Ivanitz 1999). It is important to deconstruct how institutional discourse frames culture, and how representations of cultural identity intersect with power in Australia. In Newman the institutional discourse framed Martu people by culture into two groups: those that have retained their culture (and are traditional) and those that have lost
culture. In Newman, Martu culture is mostly viewed within the discourse as being damaged and lost. When Martu people incorporate aspects from other culture it is mostly represented as a loss of culture. Strong traditional Martu people are seen to live in the outstations of the Western Desert, not in Newman. A common institutional perspective in Newman was that Martu people are held captive by their culture, which is fixed in time, and thus Martu culture is seen as traditional and static or breaking down.

The interviews were touched by a tone of sadness when conversing about Martu culture. This often led to conversations which focus upon the younger generations who are ‘torn between two worlds’ (Interviewee 16, non-Indigenous). One participant reflects at length upon Martu culture:

But really the question is: can the culture sustain itself, with the influences that are around it? ... the young ones turn on the TV and see all the clothes and they are picking that up, and the moment they do that they are leaving culture behind. But at the same time because we are only a generation from living a culture that is still very strong, there are a lot of the older people that are really grieving the loss of it. But with westernisation I think it becomes all or nothing. Either you compete in the economic system, in the social system and all the other systems we have, or you get left behind and discarded (Interviewee 19, non-Indigenous).

This assumes that Martu people are caught between distinct traditional and modern worlds and do not encapsulate the changing nature of culture. The above quote implies that for Martu people the only means of reconciling this struggle is to assimilate. Much of the Newman discourse beyond this quote mirrors the Federal discourse in this respect. This understanding of cultural change does not account for the fact that all cultures change and are constantly incorporating aspects from other cultures. Wootton (2004 p. 17) states “we all have to live in a changing world not of our choosing, and assimilate to its requirements, Aboriginals no less than others”. Much of the Newman discourse reveals a perception that denies the transformative nature of Martu culture. Indigenous and
non-Indigenous populations do not exist as homogenous nor isolated entities but are themselves diverse and in flux (Crawford 1989; Martin 2003).

The three broad definitions of culture described by Jolly (2002) are useful for this analysis. The first definition is where culture is understood as the cultivation of the arts, mind and civilisation. Elite culture is assigned intrinsic value and representation and power are unquestioned. In the second definition culture is understood as a way of life, meanings and values. The focus in this definition is upon differences in culture rather than power. The self-representation of people being researched is investigated but the researcher’s representations of these people are not examined. Both of these definitions have typically established hierarchies between Western and Indigenous cultures. In the first definition, the cultures of elites are more valuable than of others whilst in the second definition, other cultures are assumed to be native and primitive (Jolly 2002). There has been considerable research done about Indigenous people based upon these two definitions of culture. Dunn (2003) states that both definitions are based upon the old cultural geography in which culture is seen as an unchanging container.

More recently, a new cultural geography has emerged in which culture is understood to be contingent and constructed (Dunn 2003). This leads to a third definition which views culture as being experienced by everybody and influenced by a number of factors. These include:

- Internal and external factors: a ‘glocal’ relationship between looking inside and out;
- Power: different cultural norms and influences impact differently upon class, gender, race, sexuality, disability;
- Representations: constructed by influences and power in addition to reflecting these. Representations affect how people view themselves and others (Jolly 2002; Nederveen Pieterse 2004).

In this third definition, culture can be seen as the web or collective matrix of influences that shape the lives of groups and individuals. This includes social institutions, systems of norms, beliefs, values and worldviews. The third
definition of culture is a postmodern view which results in power-culture dynamics that are unstable and shifting. The intersections and influence between cultures will depend upon the forms of power in each context. The intersection of difference with power and representation cannot be ignored. Agency, variation and contested meaning are a focus (Williams 2004). Nyamnjoh states that:

Culture and tradition are…not frozen or stagnant; the individuals and groups partaking of any culture of tradition actively shape and reshape it in their daily endeavors. Culture changes because it is enmeshed in the turbulence of history, and because each act, each signification, each decision risks opening new meanings, vistas and possibilities…Given accelerated flows and interactions of diverse cultural products as a result of globalisation, does it make sense to still talk of individuals and groups as belonging to given cultures like fettered slaves and zombies, or confined like canned sardines (Nyamnjoh 2001 p. 30).

One Indigenous participant in Newman discussed how Martu culture has been changing for some time:

*I’m surprised because I talk to some researchers who are like, you know, quite senior anthropologists and other people just half baked, you know, come up here to help the black people and that kind of thing. You know they’ve got this idea of this persistent line unbroken culture and tradition, this is you know it’s true, it is but it’s not, it has been stuffed around with and it’s not the same you know. So the dynamic is that it’s going to be affected no matter what, even if they sat there in their own country all that time the interactions will change* (Interviewee 13, Indigenous).

The word interaction in this quote does imply some level of exchange between internal and external cultural influences. This view aligns to the third definition of culture, but was not a common understanding of Martu culture within the local discourse.

The Martu people’s capacity to create and re-create their own reality was not well recognised. It is often assumed that Martu people are uncomfortable with
change and modern life and therefore have limited agency. The discourse was however ambivalent about the existence of Martu agency in which to exercise choice. It was observed in the previous chapter that when Martu agency is recognised it is generally viewed as destructive. In the following quote, young Martu people are seen to be able to incorporate aspects of ‘wider society’ by choice, but also have no choice but to assimilate:

*The younger ones are more aggressive. They have a chip on their shoulder. The younger ones want to be in our society. They are being pushed into it, they may not like it. I suppose they are being torn between two worlds aren’t they?...or torn between two cultures...that sort of thing will be generational and after one or two generations it will be sorted out* (Interviewee 16, non-Indigenous).

When Martu agency was recognised within the local discourse it was most often viewed negatively. Martu people are seen to only incorporate the ‘negative’ aspects of western culture. The essentialising influence of stereotypes, particularly those associated with alcohol that were discussed in the previous chapter, is clearly evident in the following quote, which intersects with perceptions of Indigenous identity about welfare and employment:

*I mean it seems that all the negative influences have got into the culture, you know from the western culture. And I guess a lot of people say that they have lost their culture, their traditional culture and the young people now don’t have the skills that the old people...they’re just brought up in this environment, western environment where everyone is entitled to X amount of dollars to live reasonable, to be able to buy food and water and the essentials in life, and they choose to spend it on alcohol* (Interviewee 12, non-Indigenous).

Martu people are thus seen to be not exercising their agency in a way that accords with the standards of society. This is explained by one interviewee:
They say they have got cultural history and all the rest of it, the thing is they can change and use guns...why can’t they change and go to school and become educated and be good, as number one priority, and number two to start doing something for themselves instead of sitting around and creating social problems which are really amongst themselves (Interviewee 3, non-Indigenous).

There was no discussion about how Martu people may incorporate aspects of Western culture to help support Martu culture. However, as discussed in the previous chapter there was a desire expressed in the discourse that Martu culture should be supported. This is evident in the following view:

I guess from my point of view, it is going to be inevitable that they have to adopt some of the white society culture in things like – I guess it is inevitable because if you live in white society you have to adopt some of that sort of issues. I guess that’s like if you moved to another country there’s certain things that we’re gonna have to take on board. But I still think that promotion of retaining that culture is a great thing and encouragement and funding for it to happen and you know, people need to make sure that it is retained and you know, on a daily, weekly, monthly special gathering basis. I don’t know (Interviewee 4, non-Indigenous).

This perception compartmentalises Martu culture as being able to be separated from every day life, as a coat that can be taken on and off for the convenience of mainstream society. This is a common representation of Indigenous people in Australia (Cowlishaw 1999; Williams 2004).

The Newman institutional discourse thus mostly reflects the first and second understandings of culture. Martu culture is seen to be fixed in time (traditional) or to be disintegrating; a firm boundary is created between these two representations. For the Martu people in Newman, culture was seen to be disintegrating. Both representations are a mirror of western identity. Organisational representation mostly did not recognise how Martu agency may be exercised in response to internal and external cultural influences. In the
instances when Martu agency was recognised, it was mostly undermined by stereotypical representation. Differences in culture as perceived by the Newman discourse is the focus of the following section.

### 5.3 Cultural Difference

Cultural difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Australia has been the subject of much research and theory. Cultural difference is described by Rowse (1994 p. 24) as a “colonial conjuncture, which is characterised by an underlying cultural polarity between invader and Indigenous culture”. In the third definition of culture, power and representations are influenced by and in turn influence perceptions of cultural difference.

In Newman the culture of Martu and non-Martu people was interpreted in much of the Newman discourse to be vastly different. One participant states:

> ..the first thing we have to realise is that we are two different cultures

(Interviewee 8, non-Indigenous).

This is an interesting binary distinction in consideration of the many cultures that reside in Newman, including a diversity of Asian cultures. This quote contrasts with the view in the previous section that Martu culture is mostly lost or damaged, particularly in Newman. The difference implies that Martu people have maintained culture despite the influence of mainstream society. The institutional representations of difference however did not generally result in recognition of the value of Martu knowledge and social organisational forms.

Table 5.1 provides a summary of how the differences between Indigenous and Anglo worldviews have been represented in the literature.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Worldviews</th>
<th>Anglo</th>
<th>Aboriginal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individualism/</td>
<td>Impersonal lifestyle</td>
<td>Personal lifestyle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collectivism</td>
<td>People would rather be alone</td>
<td>Hard to understand an ‘impersonal’ person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emphasises individual rewards</td>
<td>Emphasises group security.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Encourages individual responsibility.</td>
<td>Encourages group security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Limited family/parental involvement</td>
<td>Maximum family/parental involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Can be added to</td>
<td>Pre-determined, laid down in The Dreaming; change can be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emphasises extending the</td>
<td>accommodated by re-interpretation of The Dreaming by the Elders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>frontiers of knowledge</td>
<td>Conservative bias; change occurs in a narrow framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Basically verbalisers</td>
<td>Basically listeners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Think out loud, must speak</td>
<td>Do not speak unless it is important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Literate</td>
<td>Illiterate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use books, and very verbal</td>
<td>Use symbolic language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lots of eye contact</td>
<td>Little eye contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is impolite not to do so</td>
<td>Is impolite to do so</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Direct questions</td>
<td>Indirect in questioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very much to the point</td>
<td>Talk around the point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Starts at a specified age</td>
<td>Starts at birth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Occurs at institutions</td>
<td>Non-institutionalised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Named as separate from other activities</td>
<td>An ongoing part of life and taken for granted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher role specific</td>
<td>Teacher role one of many roles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from: (Crawford 1989; Walsh 1997)

The Newman discourse reflected little understanding of the detail provided by the above table. It does however reflect a belief in these essential cultural categories. Martu culture was framed by much of the institutional discourse as having a collective ethic. However, this was also seen to be a constraint to Martu individuals who may be trying to integrate into the mainstream through, for example, employment. Communication was seen to be difficult because of cultural difference and this is discussed in greater detail in Section 5.6.3.
The perception of difference however juxtaposed with conversations about inevitable integration. The following quote demonstrates the integration of one essentialist group into another:

...*maybe realistically would they like to be involved with the rest of us* (Interviewee 4, non-Indigenous).

Another person suggests segregation, which is an example of the ambivalence that exists across the discourse:

...*the Martu people themselves, also like to be amongst themselves as much as we do ourselves* (Interviewee 8, non-Indigenous).

Both of the above quotes are based upon a dichotomised view of cultural change, and both encapsulate a collective and essential Martu identity. A firm boundary is drawn between these extremes. A view by one participant argued that there was not in fact considerable difference between the Martu and non-Martu people:

...*people get too precious about you black fellas, white fellas like there’s not really that much difference* (Interviewee 5, non-Indigenous).

This quotation dissolves the essential boundaries implicit in the preceding two quotes. However, it does not allow for what is at times a necessary recognition of difference in terms of, for example collective cultural rights, as is argued by the Indigenous storyline in Chapter Three.

Reflecting upon my stories reveals experiences of culture shock. This is described by Lundstedt as an emotional reaction which affects one’s capacity to function during the initial contact (Lundstedt 1963). Visiting the Western Desert was probably the greatest shock I experienced. In a story about visiting Parngurr from Stage 3 (Story 3.1) I wrote:
The weekend was endless. I wandered the community with Tahlia not sure of what the appropriate protocol for me to follow would be over the weekend. Tahlia and I were in a settlement which was surrounded by a land that was devoid of humans. One could really imagine for a moment a world without humans. Everyone in this small community knew that I was there. The chilly wind blew constantly through my bones and I felt that if I let go of myself I would dissipate and be blown into a limbo in which neither time nor space has human meaning. At that time I had wished that it would at least blow away the loneliness that was enveloping me. At the points in which the loneliness became too much I would visit my traveling companions who were often playing cards with their kin and friends (NM).

After almost two weeks in the desert, I also experienced shock on my return to Perth. In the same story about Stage 3 (Story 3.1) I wrote:

I returned to my University corridor on Friday and in my diary that night I wrote:

The strange dislocated feeling lasted all day. There was a few instances when I was required to think in numbers and couldn’t. The lights were really bright and I found it hard to have a conversation. It was almost as though I was standing behind myself hiding in shock.

I had returned to a different world (NM).

An experience of mutually uncomfortable cross-cultural shock was described by one Indigenous person:

The people here, don’t worry, they are smart. They are very very clever. Okay, and they are not smart in numeracy and literacy the ways that we think they should be, okay but, we take them out of their realm, they are uncomfortable, the same as they take us out of our world, we wouldn’t survive...they are encouraged to try and they do. They take us out of our
comfort zone, we get away from no lights, no electricity, living out there, us poor bastards would perish out there (Interviewee 1, Indigenous).

This quote relates to Martu people on one hand and to everybody who is not Martu on the other and thus creates essential categories through this boundary. However, this quote does break down what is often perceived by some of the other participants to be a hierarchal difference between the two cultural worlds.

Culture shock appeared in the Newman discourse more generally. It most often takes shape in the form of frustration at the perceived difficulties of working with the Martu people. Many of the participants described the lack of support that is given to work across culture. A major theme within the discourse was the time it will take to attain what is mostly assumed to be integration. O’Donoghue (1999) writes that changes are slow and demoralising which results easily in burn out. Being of Indigenous descent seemed to reduce frustration to some extent, but not entirely. The term ‘aboriginal time’ was used to explain why Martu people do not attend meetings. This helps to ease irritation when Indigenous people do not explain their absence (Cowlishaw 1999). Time and patience were seen to be necessary to counter frustration as indicated by the following quote:

Working with aboriginal people, is one of the hardest people that I have ever worked with...you got to have time and the patience. Turn my back and walk down the corner, they are gone and you get it all the time, you get it all the time, where are they? (Interviewee 20, non-Indigenous)

The discourse about ‘aboriginal time’ reflected mostly the frustrations of bureaucratic culture. One participant states:

....I too have gone to camp meetings with people and sat for three days waiting for people to come and in my time frame, as a white person, what am I doing here for three days? (Interviewee 8, non-Indigenous)
There is a tension that exists between government and industry being available for Martu people and the perceived necessity of efficiency. The view of one person who advocates waiting for the Martu people to approach (Interviewee 5) can be contrasted against another person’s perspective that it is not possible to leave government employees idle for any length of time (Interviewee 7, non-Indigenous). A tension emerges between these views.

Another participant discussed how the Martu people do not look into the future:

_The thing I’ve noticed I guess is they don’t have the same philosophy on life as western people, they don’t seem to look that far ahead... They don’t look into the future_ (Interviewee 12, non-Indigenous).

The assumption here of course is that Martu people do not look into the future and western people do. There is of course also the question of what kind of lens non-Martu people are using to look into the future. Questions of inter-generational visions are of great relevance to sustainable development.

The frustrations that may be experienced by Martu people when recognised were mostly framed as resulting in destruction.

The discussion so far has demonstrated that power and representation operate to imagine boundaries that contrast essential cultural differences between Martu and non-Martu people. This results in stereotypes, such as alcoholism, being extended to an essential cultural group identity inclusive of all Martu people. The following two sections explore how the Newman discourse views differences within Martu culture. They will also analyse how differences within the Martu people were approached within the consultancy participatory projects. Gender is the focus of Section 5.4. The politics of difference between categories such as community, individual, family and leaders is described in Section 5.5.
5.4 Gender

Gender inclusiveness was a principle that I took into the first consultancy participatory project and remained a consideration throughout both consultancy projects. It is thus discussed first here in a separate section. The significance of other categories of difference emerged from praxis and are discussed together in the following section. The intersection of gender and culture is complex. This complexity most often results in gender not being considered within institutional practice and interventions. Participatory approaches have tended to obscure the reality of women and their needs and contributions (Guijt and Kaul Shah 2001). Jolly states:

Development will always impact on cultures and development interventions will always impact on gender. They either change things (for better or worse), or sanction and reinforce the status quo. Ignoring gender in development is just as much a cultural assumption as putting it on the agenda. Cultural impact needs to be conscious and considered, and one directed at challenging oppressive norms of gender, sex, sexuality (Jolly 2002 p. 6).

Internationally, a gender-based critique of development began to consolidate in the 1970s, gained strength through the 1980s and was a central pillar in the international women’s conference in Nairobi by the late 1990s. This period witnessed a number of different methodological approaches which aimed to better involve women in development through participation. The welfare, equity and anti-poverty approach of the 1970s was replaced with an efficiency approach in the 1980s. In the 1990s a broader understanding of how gender intersects with colonialism and neo-colonialism shifted the focus from earlier concerns about incorporating women into development to issues of power, conflict and control. This inclusion changes the community itself by changing the position of certain social groups including women (Welbourne 1991; Connell 1997; Cornwall 2000).
Prior to undertaking an analysis of gender in the context of the case study, it is important to understand the historical context of how gender has been treated across culture in Australia in regards to Indigenous people, as this history sets the scene for institutional performance today.

5.4.1 Historical Representations of Indigenous Gender in Australia

In Australian anthropological literature, Indigenous women have been typically devalued and disempowered, when visible at all. Peters-Little (1999 p. 6) writes that when “an invading culture has a leadership stemming from a predominantly patriarchal framework of power relationships, the result of invasion is devastating, for matriarchal and gerontocratic roles which tend to become obsolete”. Historically most anthropologists and ethnographers were male, spoke mainly to men and were influenced by them as well as their own biases (Bolger 1991). Indigenous people were grouped into a ‘postcolonial other’ whose persona became male (Brock 2001). Indigenous women were exploited in a multitude of ways, most of which are too unfathomable for the majority of Australian society today to imagine. The historic and active agency of Indigenous women resisting colonisation failed to be perceived and recorded (Choo 2001). Women anthropologists and ethnographers, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, are subsequently correcting this view (which they have been required to do over and over) and point to the strong economic, political and social role of Indigenous women (Rose 2001) who are more than just victims of colonisation.

Elements of this counter-literature have documented that in contrast to white British women, Aboriginal women had relatively higher status in their communities. This topic is however heavily debated. For some anthropologists, it has been assumed that gender specific authority in Indigenous society is protected by maintaining a separation between male and female spheres of influence (Weedon 1999; Brock 2001). There are in fact three theories about the relationship between Indigenous men and women: women are subordinate and
men dominant; Indigenous men and women have interdependent roles; and that
Indigenous men and women have separate but complementary roles (Moreton-
Robinson 2000). Tokinson (writing about the Martu people) argues that the
Martu women were neither autonomous nor egalitarian and that Martu women
had secondary status as they were excluded from core spiritual rituals, could not
divorce their husbands, could not be polygamous, and could not choose
marriage. Tokinson postulates that daily life was egalitarian but conflict or
religion favored senior men. Tokinson points to an increasing number of changes
since the self-management era. Martu women are seen to now identify as ‘free
agents’, which is perhaps due to individual welfare payments which for
Tokinson have actually favored women (Tonkinson 1990).

A traditional versus contemporary debate is detailed by Moreton-Robinson
(2000). This relies on an historical construction of culture and power, and
privileges ‘traditional’ women who are authentic whilst the remaining women
are perceived to be culturally contaminated (Moreton-Robinson 2000). Bolger
(1991) argues that now Indigenous women are affected by representations of
race and gender which intersect to negatively influence their position in the
Australian society and within their own culture. Indigenous women’s agency in
response to and also to create change continues to remain invisible. The process
of colonial justification continues to distort the perceptions of the patriarchy
within the broader institutions of government and industry in Australia. This has
created a cultural legacy which continues today. Institutional cultures in
Australia and around the world generally tend to be dominated by male
executive and middle management (Guijt and Kaul Shah 2001).

The landscape of Indigenous affairs in the Western Australian Pilbara region is
gendered. One of the women working for a non-government agency in Newman
comments:

Well there is definitely a bias here. I don’t know about government but I
guess it is. And our organisation. There is definitely a bias for the whole
of the Western Desert (Interviewee 17, non-Indigenous).
Across the Western Desert communities, there is only one female coordinator. I observed the dominance of the male presence in platforms of decision making and financial responsibility, from the local level to the capital city of Perth.

5.4.2 Gender and Martu Participation in the Consultancy Participatory Projects

Mainstream development processes tend to favor the opinions and priorities of those with more power and ability to voice their opinion publicly, which across time and nations have mostly been men. Participation can be a means to counter this and understanding the complexity of gender relations helps to structure participatory processes, analysis and resulting community plans. However, a gender-neutral participatory process is often viewed as being culturally sensitive and non-intrusive. This provides justification to avoid the complexities of listening for less public voices. Such a process has tended to be the norm around the globe and obscures women’s perspectives, knowledge, needs and contributions (Guijt and Kaul Shah 2001).

In the first consultancy participatory project, there was no explicit gender analysis required by the brief nor was gender a consideration in structuring the work scope that was done in negotiation with the funding government department at the outset. In the first stage of this project, the approach to gender difference was to hold separate male and female meetings. This approach was adopted after receiving advice from local agencies in Newman. However, I do not remember seeking the opinion of a Martu person about this prior to the first meetings, which I suspect now was a result of the vast cultural difference between myself and Martu people that I felt at that time. Separate female and male meetings were made possible by the presence of a female and a male researcher in the field. Two people in the field, particularly for any length of time, are often viewed as a superfluous expense. After the first Martu women’s meeting I asked the women if this was appropriate. There appeared to be general agreement and the women called another meeting. I felt at the time that attention to gender earned respect if only because it was an attempt to recognise
difference. Larger community meetings were held at the end of this first stage. Gender was not so much considered in the second stage of the first project (stage 2 of the thesis). The approach that was adopted in the second stage is discussed in Section 5.5.

In the second consultancy participatory project (stage 3 of my research), it was my responsibility to facilitate the Western Desert community meetings. This may have biased the information to an extent, as it was not possible to hold male meetings. In Newman, I asked the wider group if it was best to hold one big meeting or to hold separate meetings. The men did not mind holding a larger meeting but many of the women were adamant that separate male and female meetings should be held. It was fortunate that I had asked the male coordinator of the Parnpajinya community to help me that morning. In the remainder of the communities that I visited I held a larger meeting with both men and women. In Nullagine, the women requested a separate meeting which was held after the larger community meeting. In both Nullagine and Parngurr, the men did speak more at the larger meeting. In the second consultancy project, gender was not a consideration on the day of the Dialogue.

Neither of the consultancy participatory projects adequately addressed the differences that may exist within the gender categories. This assumes that women/men negotiate power better within the same gender. This approach may have masked the interest that some women and men may have in maintaining the status quo in terms of power and privilege (Cornwall 2000).

During the second consultancy participatory project, before I left for the Western Desert communities east of Newman, one of the agency people warned me that Martu men, particularly leaders, do not favor talking to women:

Leaders came. Every single one, which is an honour. Because I am a woman. I am only female. They don’t like dealing with females. The men are not happy dealing with females. But that is okay, that is part of their tribe. But they do not appreciate dealing with females. I have to tell you that prior to going out. If you can get a male to come with you, it
would give you a lot more credence. They don’t like dealing with us females, and that is fair enough. Culturally that is not acceptable, particularly if you are going to ask them about important things (Interviewee 8, non-Indigenous).

This quote is indicative of a general perception within the local discourse that Martu leaders tend to be male. This however contrasts with a widely held view in Newman that Martu women are considered to be the strength. I observed that many of the women in Newman are taking the lead at regional level in trying to address issues relating to alcohol. The role of Indigenous women in this regard is observed by Rowse (Rowse 1994). One participant comments:

now women are leading the forefront in the decision making and just to touch on the women’s group I attended the meeting the women themselves wrote a letter ...they wanted Port banned and more stricter laws put on alcohol which was knocked back...so these women, I think it’s got to the point where they have had enough and so they have called enough is enough (Interviewee 2, Indigenous).

This participant also noted that in Newman a men’s group has been initiated and a major aim is to tackle domestic violence in addition to alcohol abuse. An Indigenous agency person states:

at the moment what is happening amongst all our indigenous people is our women are the leaders where the men have fallen, they’re gone from the leadership to the back seat, just like sheep they will follow the women so what we are trying to do is ‘Hey men let’s be strong let’s stand up and we will work together’ .... But we have a lot of weak men, men that are in position of authority on council or whatever that are there sitting back with their arms folded (Interviewee 2, Indigenous).

This approach recognises the need to address positions of power and powerlessness across and within gender. It must go beyond viewing women as victims and men as the problem (Cornwall 2000).
There was some recognition of the need for more females in government and industry, including the need for a female as well as the current male coordinator. One participant states:

*I’d say with Martu there is men’s business and there is women’s business. So I think you need the two* (Interviewee 19, non-Indigenous).

A recommendation in an earlier consultancy report had suggested that a single coordinator should be female.

Also discussed by some of the agencies was the need for a female CDEP officer as well as a male officer. One Indigenous woman states:

*For me it’s not so much of a problem, you know, like me personally, but for Martu women, yeah it’s not, not as, the problem with the CDEP was that it was screaming for a women’s project to, um, do the women things because of the culturally inappropriate or a character thing with the women you know so, you need that women’s project officer to work with them women and get going for employment as well and then it goes from there. Once they’re out of that system and into the mainstream then culturally appropriateness is not, they can’t use that and say no it’s not appropriate because here boss is a man, she’s in mainstream now, it’s different you know it’s different* (Interviewee 10).

This quote is interesting in that it recognises a need to respect gender difference due to cultural concerns but views this as a transitional step towards making Martu women ‘work ready’. The influence of the Federal storyline is evident here which assumes that Indigenous people should become assimilated into the mainstream workforce.
5.4.3 Reflections upon Representation

Criticisms of new wave feminism have brought the disparities that exist between women into focus. Differences between women and more specifically the different experiences of women which arise from race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, class, age and dis/ability have created tensions in the movement, the origins of which exist in white Anglo-Saxon generally middle-class realities. There is now a strong recognition within the feminist critique that all forms of oppression are equally as important for women in particular settings. Race is the primary form of oppression which is compounded by class and gender. Black feminists see racism and sexism as inter-related. Racism and class inequality in Australia are certainly major forms of oppression for Indigenous people. For example, white Australian women can own and inherit land from which Aboriginal women have been dispossessed. Eve Fesl, an Indigenous Australian, argues that if Indigenous women were to measure oppression, the oppression that is experienced from white women compares negatively to the oppression from Indigenous men (Ramazanoglu 1989).

Within the feminist movement it is now considered to be the responsibility of white women globally to acknowledge the existence of racism (Weedon 1999). The construction of an alternative feminism that accounts for difference requires two projects to be undertaken. The first is the internal critique that must be done on an individual and collective basis within hegemonic Western feminism. The second project relates to the formulation of autonomous, geographically, historically and culturally grounded feminist concerns and strategies (Mohanty 1991). Context is important for both of these projects.

My engagement with the Martu communities in the Western Desert required the acknowledgement of racism as a personal responsibility and conscious exploration of the specificity of one’s position in relation to racial and ethnic divisions (Ramazanoglu 1989). A deconstructive reflexive approach as recommended by Opie (1992) was applied through the maintenance of a field journal. This enabled daily critical and self-reflective adjustment in the field,
particularly regarding attitudes and behavior. Locating the self in an ideological framework was an evolving process. The journal, the subsequent story telling methodology and the writing of the thesis itself enabled a consciousness to be developed and tracked over time and the perspective of the self to be continually positioned and re-positioned. Locating this position is necessary for working within the post-structuralist framework in which all perspectives, understanding and knowledge are situated and relative.

In the first stage of the first consultancy participatory project, I remember clearly a meeting in which I listened to a group of Martu women talk about sewing, cooking and washing. I remember feeling confused and I expressed this at the time in my diary. This reappeared in a story about the second stage in the first consultancy project (Story 2.1):

*The intersection of gender, culture and history left me confused. For example, a dairy entry reads:*

> How much of whom they are today was influenced by the mentality of the Western inter-face of the past? Did I, as a Western feminist, have the right to question whether what these people said they wanted was what they really wanted beneath layers of colonial conditioning and influence? How are participatory practices to be viewed in light of the interplay between tradition and colonialism? (NM)

A tension emerges between encouraging Martu people to engage with visioning processes on their own terms and encouraging women to question their circumstances critically. The first tends to be an aim of a participatory approach whilst the second can be located within a feminist agenda. Complexities arise between these. A Frierian approach is useful here which would encourage people to question their circumstances but on their own terms (Freire 1972).

A tendency to dichotomise is evident within my stories and particularly in regards to gender. In my diary after first arriving in Newman I wrote:
After driving through the vastness of the desert, Newman appears initially as a working ‘man’s’ metropolis. A mammoth dusty red mining truck, beyond human scale, comparatively dwarfed the tourist information depot behind. The backpackers we booked into, which subsequently become a temporary home over the next month, had a neat and efficient atmosphere of a workers’ camp which I was to later learn is exactly what it was. The perceived femininity of the landscape we drove through was left behind (NM).

A tendency to dichotomise is also evident in an article I wrote about facilitating participatory methods and Indigenous gender (McGrath and Marinova 2004). An excerpt from this is as follows:

The recent prevailing discourse in Indigenous affairs, which is largely found within policy circles in Perth, is focusing upon capacity building to support the sustainability of infrastructure. The absence of community, participatory development or alternatively recognition of their importance in their own right may be in part attributed to the perceived femininity of these processes. Such processes require sensitivity and intuitive skills not found within the model of conditioning for the white Australian male, whose model is transplanted over the ‘other’, the Indigenous male. This perception is exacerbated in the outback pastoral or mining setting in which to be male is to be hard and strong, rather than flexible and wielding. These latter elements are necessary for a facilitative approach (NM).

Western thought tends to conceptualise gender as a set of polarised binary oppositions in which one is privileged over the other. Western ideologies are based upon deep dichotomies including mind/body, reason/emotion, subject/object, male/female, black/white, culture/nature (Choo 2001). My dichotomies tend to reflect social norms about male and female characteristics. For example, landscape and community development are seen as female
occupations whilst mining activities and infrastructure are seen to be male occupations.

Dichotomies based upon gender did not feature very much in stories about the second consultancy participatory project. This may have been because I did not have a male with me in this project and was working with a senior female in government. During this second project my academic interest and thus the direction of my literature review and reflections extended beyond gender and focused upon the politics of difference. This theme is explored in the following section.

5.5 Community and the Politics of Difference

Difference is not just a matter of gender. The rise of the New Social Movements in the 1970s led to increased awareness of a politics of difference and emphasised multiple layers of oppression which interact in a diverse and dynamic manner (Mayo 2000). A range of differences that create and sustain inequalities exist. This section will demonstrate that differences within the Martu culture are fixed by the Newman discourse through boundaries that reflect confusion about differences within the Martu population. There was however very minimal conscious recognition which detailed the complexity of Martu diversity. There is scope for considerable reflection within institutional spaces about this. This section will include reflections about how difference beyond gender was approached within the consultancy participatory projects. The discussion is categorised into sections titled community, individual, family and leaders. These themes emerged within the literature, the interviews and my reflections. A reflection about how I have represented difference over the length of the PhD research is also included.
5.5.1 Community

Community is a widely debated concept which has a multiplicity of meanings. Bryson and Mowbray (1981) write that the idea of a ‘culturally and politically homogenous, participatory local social system’ has been acceptable for over a century. ‘Community’ was a catch-phrase of the 1970s generally and was soon critiqued as the ‘aerosol word of the 1970s because of the hopeful way it is sprayed over deteriorating institutions’ (Bryson and Mowbray 1981). Mowbray (2005) writes that it has re-emerged in recent years and is now linked to capacity building and partnerships.

The term community was imposed upon Indigenous people in remote and urban settings in Australia during the self-determination era in the 1970s. This was based upon naïve assumptions about pre-industrial community and the social organisation of traditional Indigenous life expected to fall harmoniously into homogeneity through co-residence (Sullivan 1996; Davies 2003). The emergence of community within Indigenous policy has implied that Indigenous people were seen no longer as a race of individuals (as in the assimilation era) but as a culture of communities (Cowlishaw 1999).

Many of the interviewees spoke about the need for a whole of community approach in Newman particularly. This is expressed by the following quote:

...they need to be working from a whole of community not just their own little groups or their own families (Interviewee 4, non-Indigenous).

Consensus was seen within the Newman discourse to be desirable for decision making about service delivery. This is often assumed to be possible through a representative framework that aligns to the needs of government. I shared this desire through the consultancy participatory projects, particularly in the first consultancy project. Reflecting back now I observe my desire to not fail in the eyes of either Minister responsible for the consultancy projects. Achieving
consensus, particularly in the first consultancy project, was important for me as evident in the following excerpt taken from a story from Stage 1 (Story 1.1):

The Martu would only have a short time with the Minister and it was important that they were clear and spoke as a collective, if that was possible. Consensus building towards this outcome was thus an important technique used throughout this meeting (NM).

It is not unusual for the word ‘community’ to be used by government and industry as it creates the misconception of consensus and justifies political expediency (Lea and Wolfe 1993; Nelson and Wright 1995). There is an evident desire by the Western Australian government at the State and local levels to channel funds and infrastructure though Martu representation that is incorporated into service delivery structures. My own apiration to satisfy the Ministers helped to further entrench the misconception of consensus within both consultancy participatory projects. It is common for participatory public and collective events structured by participatory techniques to result in: the general being the consensus and not the particular; a normative understanding rather than what is; and also towards a unitary view of community which tends to underplay difference (Bourdieu 1977; Mosse 1994; Kothari 2002). This is likely to have been the case in the meetings throughout both projects.

One of the interview participants discussed a need to speak to different people after a large community meeting:

And those meetings are no different to any other community meeting that I go to anywhere else in the electorate because afterwards you find the real story because people come and you get presented with one story which is the official position (Interviewee 21, non-Indigenous).

A tension exists as this approach can discredit representative systems for the Martu people.
Communities are often perceived as sharing a common interest (Mayo 2000) and can create exclusion. Community can also be a nostalgia for a distant, whole and organic past that actually never was (Etzioni 1996). The imposition of this upon Indigenous people possibility reflects a desire for this vision of community. Crawford (1989) writes that Indigenous communities are multi-layered and dynamic and that one person can belong to a number of communities. Within any one community there is what Crawford terms sub-communities of interest. In the local organisational discourse the differences (including sub-communities of interest) between Martu people are obscured by an essential identity which is characterised by a collective ethos.

There is an expectation within much of the local discourse that ‘solutions’ will easily emerge from a cohesive Martu community. One participant states:

...somehow we have got to stop the decision being made in the government agencies and the decisions being made by the people themselves (Interviewee 18, non-Indigenous).

Martu people in a ‘community’ are thus expected to readily find solutions within the community through consensus.

Community is also often confused with geography or place. Bounded geographical space is generally assumed to produce natural and organic communities which may hide social inequality (Brent 2004). I observed many of the Martu people I knew travel regularly between mostly Newman, the outlying Western Desert communities and also Port Hedland. The nomadic lifestyle of the Martu people in Newman was accepted by only very few people. One Indigenous person comments:

Now some of the services are best found in town and sometimes people are going to stop here because there’s an element of nomadicy whatever...people travel a lot, you know (Interviewee 13, Indigenous).
Mostly however there was much confusion within the Newman discourse about how an essential Martu group identity is bounded by space. There is some recognition that Martu people in Newman travel considerably but these people are seen to also reside in Newman when compared to visitors.

The continual influx of ‘visitors’, including Martu people, into Newman appears to create considerable distress for service delivery structures. Such boundaries appear to unsettle the geographical boundary around Newman created by these structures. A participant states:

*Constant interruption of people coming from other communities...And three years down the track there are different people out there and they want different things. This is what happened with the original housing. They did a whole consultation. They took them down to Perth, they looked through all these other places. Came back, started 12 months later, 18 months down the track there’s a big movement in the group, people left, new people came saying we don’t want these houses, we never wanted them in the first place. So you’re like back to scratch. What do you do? Do you just say one hard fast rule because otherwise people can’t change their mind about everything all the time* (Interviewee 4, non-Indigenous).

This quote reveals the frustration of long-term planning for government and industry around the movement of the Martu population in the Western Desert.

Community is often assumed to be intrinsically good, and like participation, this concept is rarely challenged (Kumar 2005). Sullivan (1996 p. 10) writes that the “word ‘community’ in the administration of Aboriginal affairs in remote areas is almost as ubiquitous as ‘Aborigine’. It is perhaps the case that more can be learnt deconstructing this term, and space is necessary to better allow diverse Indigenous understandings to emerge to challenge representations including those found in this thesis.
5.5.2 Individual

Policy relating to Indigenous people in Australia has assumed that equal rights require a focus upon either individual or collective rights but is yet to recognise both simultaneously. In the 1950s and 1960s, the institutional reform agenda in Australia was based upon equal rights for individual Indigenous Australians. In the 1970s through to the 1990s, the second wave of institutional reform instead focused upon groups’ rights and specifically how these relate to culture and land rights. This took place within considerable academic debate (Lea 2000)\(^28\).

The current Federal storyline demonstrates ambivalence about Indigenous individualism and collectivism. In this storyline Indigenous people are expected to become individuals in the economy, whilst also taking responsibility for governance at a collective level determined by local community boundaries. There is considerable confusion between individual and collective responsibilities in Pearson’s reciprocity and also in the Federal government’s concept of mutual obligation. This is reproduced considerably in Newman through discourse. There was also a definite perception by institutional actors in Newman that Martu culture is caught between individual and collective values. At times culture was observed to be shifting towards individual values, especially in urban centers such as Newman.

In Newman there was some recognition of a need to work with individuals rather than communities. This produces ambivalence when contrasted to the whole of

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\(^{28}\) Dworkin and Rawls dominated the literature until 1980s and advocated that within liberal societies minority rights focused upon achieving rights through equal individual rights. This was questioned in the 1980s by a movement called communitarianism or culturalism which stressed the rights of the community. The argument was based upon the needs to go beyond the equal rights of the individual in order to provide special rights for communities or cultural groups to survive the threats to their traditional way of life. Communitarians criticized the libertarians for being removed from reality and the lived experience of human beings. Communitarians argued that the libertarians’ view of the individual was a ‘thin view of the self’ which was not engaged with either community or culture. Individuals make choices within the values of their community and culture. The libertarians’ view was seen to undermine the cultural differences and collectivity. This led to the rise of special group rights in regards to Indigenous communities. The communitarians’ critique was based upon the possibility of the reintroduction of cultural relativism and would justify the restriction of individual liberty (Lea 2000).
community representation that is seen to be required by Newman institutional actors. An Indigenous person states:

*Because that is what it is – it is pretend consultation. But it goes back to what I said originally: I don’t speak on behalf of all women. They still don’t – not speaking on behalf of all aboriginals. We need to get away from that. Maybe we need to start saying well these guys are real individuals it might be a group but are we doing any disservice lumping them together and that the Martu in Newman will solve their problems. And we continuing to just marginalise and make people a minority. You know we’re probably doing a disservice. We all sit around – do you know what I mean? The only way you’re going to get an individual response is one on one. Individual- not having camp meetings but do one on one* (Interviewee 10, Indigenous).

Another participant, who is non-Indigenous, states:

...*and then I say to myself is it an assumption we are making – you how they sort of say well, well the Martu people want this or the Martu people – so we are sort of saying to people well you guys come up with a solution and get called ... just because they are Martu doesn’t mean they have to like each other. Doesn’t mean they have to work together. Don’t they all have individual thing? So what we are trying to do is come up, or everybody come up with one solution for everybody and is that the way it should be? Are we saying because they do it there in Parnpajinya they’re all going to work together and want the same thing in the end? You know how far back do you go or do you say majority rules like whatever happens out here, majority rules and the rest have been put up? You kind of and once I said to somebody once just because they’re Martu or be it like Aboriginal or people like Muslim doesn’t mean they’re are all going to like the same....If you could think of some solutions that would be great. But 12 years in this business and I guess we have got it down to an individual basis. We work with the individuals and try to cater best for them. And protect them if they need protecting, if we can*
within our scope. You know provide them with some, like, liaison advice
guidance if they ask for it. Make sure we get them some medical help if
they need it. But to solve the issues with a whole camp group thing is just
beyond us (Interviewee 4, non-Indigenous).

The above quote questions many of the assumptions made (including by this
person in other parts of the transcript) about an essentialised community that are
described in the previous section. Here the respondent questions whether the
Martu community actually does share a common interest. However, this should
not immediately lead to individualism being imposed upon the Martu people.

This tension has not been easily reconciled within the relevant literature. Rowse
(1994) writes that advocates of Indigenous people have begun to critique liberal
individualism. This is particularly evident in discourse about alcohol29. Lea
(2000) proposes that Will Kymlicka has provided the most successful effort to
reconcile the clash between liberal and communitarian values. Kymlicka argues
that there is no inherent conflict between individual and community rights. A
strong community is required to provide a cultural context in which individual
autonomy is made possible. When the cultural context is undermined or receives
a shock it affects individual autonomy and decision-making through loss of
identity, disorientation and alienation (Lea 2000).

5.5.3 Family

Indigenous kin and lineage connections extend beyond the community residence
across regions and command loyalty (Cowlishaw 1999; Pollock 2005). Rowse
(1994) notes that there are many different types of relationships within the term
‘family’. Language group affiliation and place of origin can build similarities
and also help identify differences. He discusses how Memmot refers to the

29 Memmot (1991 p7-9) writes “The discriminatory aspects of the equal-drinking-rights principle
is that the existing norms of Anglo-Celtic drinking…are neither culturally suitable nor
sufficiently accessible to be put into practice by most Central Australian Aborigines. What was
required in hindsight, was a more cross-culturally sensitive approach to the introduction of
drinking to Aboriginal people in order to obtain a less stressful and a closer fit between drinking
behavior and other Aboriginal social norms and values. What was needed was not equal drinking
rights but equal rights in choosing a culture of alcohol consumption” cited in (Rowse 1994).
number of different types of affinity and affiliation in relation to this term. For example, town campers use the term ‘family’ to describe co-residence (Rowse 1994).

Within the Newman discourse it is difficult to ascertain how boundaries are created through the use of the word ‘family’. In the following quote it appears that family is used as a substitute for the word community or perhaps it implies a number of groups who see themselves as individuals:

*They still have a strong sense of family and they see themselves as an individual group, and they may not participate in local politics* (Interviewee 2, Indigenous).

When compared, the following two quotes produce ambivalence. The first is contradictory in itself in that Martu family groups are seen to be breaking down but are also staying together. The second quote humbly acknowledges the complexity of culture. It is perhaps the case that many participants are not aware of this.

*...and I think the family units are breaking down. They are staying together for the wrong reasons* (Interviewee 3, non-Indigenous).

*...the complexity of the rules of the indigenous family is beyond me* (Interviewee 6, non-Indigenous).

Identifiable family cultural group focus groups were used in the second stage of the first consultancy participatory project based in Newman. It was not until late in the second stage that it became clear that these groups were recognised by most of the Martu people we were working with. In a meeting with the elders (also known as Home And Community Care clients) we mapped broader family groups who were connected primarily through marriage. Five family groups were identified. After this meeting we spoke to a number of Martu people about whether this was an appropriate approach. This was widely accepted as the best approach. I look back now and wonder why I did not ask Martu people about
how to meet before proceeding with the Minister’s and Department’s requirements, again I suspect this was a result of the cultural difference I felt at the time. We held a number of meetings with the family groups in order to create the Community Development Plan. This approach however was still bounded by geographical space (Newman) that was chosen by the Department of Housing and Works. It thus only captured the views of individuals within those families who were in Newman at that point in time.

The gender balance in the first consultancy project enabled flexibility in response to each family group. Depending on the mix, the focus group could be facilitated by either a male or female. We would swap if the Martu people within the family group were not responding to the first facilitator (either male or female). The family cultural group meetings resulted in the more active participants in the process as a whole pressuring the younger members to participate in at least these meetings. There was frustration expressed by older Martu people at the lack of participation within the project by younger people in Newman.

Over time in the first consultancy participatory project I gained an understanding of ‘skin’ groups and the relationships this entails. I wonder why this was not included in the Ministerial brief as pre-requisite knowledge. In the first consultancy project I was invited to start using terms Aunty or Uncle, which are terms used commonly by Indigenous people\(^{30}\) to denote connection. Cowlishaw (1999) discusses the discursive façade on interface and kin or kriol terms and bunji relationships. I would not call this a complete façade, as it enabled some familiarity on my behalf.

I was introduced into the Western Desert communities in the second consultancy project by my given ‘skin’. In the second consultancy project I observed family connections across geographical space at the regional level. I had been given an

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\(^{30}\) Peters-Little’s (1999 p. 6-7) comments are pertinent here: “In order of priority, I was obliged to the elders in my own family first and foremost, then anyone else who was significantly older than I were called ‘Auntie’ or ‘Uncle’. Those ‘recognized’ elders who came from another ‘country’ would have to be treated with respect, but they did not speak on behalf of your ‘countrymen’, and you did not call someone ‘Uncle’ or ‘Auntie’ unless told to do so”.
indication of this connectedness to some degree in the first consultancy project as Martu people came and went from the other communities. It was much more revealing for me however to watch family members meet as my companions arrived in the Western Desert communities. Family groups did not structure the organisation of the second consultancy project. This consultancy project instead was based upon geographical community meetings.

A number of participants discussed the family rivalry that occurs. One Indigenous participant states:

And these people came in numbers and they have set up their own corporations. And they can’t say you can have, in one family, that obviously is a name like Brown. You get a Brown family in one town and so they form the corporation a lot of aboriginal family’s huge, big families, you only 25 people to start a corporation. Right, you only need 25 signatures, okay so then you have a corporation. You know so if you and your family have, say immediate and extended family, you’d have 100 easy. You know. That start their own corporation, all of a sudden one family on the west side of a town has a corporation started up, you only need 25 signatures, they send off their, they make their policy they set up a constitution. And you have that’s done can do that for less than 100 dollars when all that is done you send all that off, okay and you have got a corporation. Okay, so what they do, those 25 people, they exclude the rest of their mob, they exclude the rest of the family. So the other family on the other side of town, they start off their own. Jealous. So straight away what they've done is divided family. By dividing family, you dividing community, by dividing community, you divide culture (Interviewee 1, Indigenous).

Another participant discussed the need to go beyond little groups and approach the ‘wider community’ or perhaps individuals:

So it is having the knowledge of what goes on that there is the mafia, within their own groups. Understanding that and going basically to the
There is considerable literature conveying a nepotism that exists in Indigenous communities and organisations which favors dominant families. Peters-Little (1999) writes that Aboriginal organisations have become the ‘gate-keepers’ of communities and that dominant families in communities are likely to have a greater advantage. This view is supported in much of the local discourse.

Pearson addresses this concern by writing that successful community requires an unnatural suppression of family and this has not led to successful community. It has in fact turned family responsibility into family selfishness … The task was (and is) to recognise the layers of identification within our community … we need to recognise and strengthen families and smaller groupings, and thereby develop community (Pearson 2000).

It is unrealistic and unfair to expect long existing cultural and political divisions to suddenly disappear in addition to the loyalties to kin and tribe of the community council members (Peters-Little 1999).

I find that the family approach was the most appropriate to engage with Martu people. However this approach requires a complementary focus upon other differences including gender and geographical affinity, whilst also allowing for geographical movement. This combines the lessons from both consultancy participatory projects.

5.5.4 Community Leaders

There is a very common perception in the Newman discourse that Indigenous leadership in either cultural domain lacks strength and direction. The perceived lack of governance strength in the Western domain was discussed in the previous chapter. I can also observe this perception now in my own stories, mostly in
stage 1. There is also a belief that is expressed in the Newman discourse that leadership in the Indigenous domain is deteriorating.

An Indigenous person comments:

_They start to lose respect for the elders as well as tribal laws_ (Interviewee 23, Indigenous).

Another non-Indigenous participant states:

_The local Martu peole here in this town, their eldership have suffered. They don’t have strong leadership...I think they have been damaged a great deal and they feel powerless_ (Interviewee 8, non-Indigenous).

Peters-Little (1999) writes that as a result of the impact of colonialism, the definitions of whom and what elders or leaders are can be extremely diverse. This of course does not mean that any definition is less correct than another. Gerritsen defines dominant men as possessing one or more of the following: inherited ceremonial knowledge; recognised control or ownership of sacred land; and power in the whitefella domain (Gerritsen 1982; Rowse 1992). Indigenous people’s concept of leadership can differ from Anglo concepts and conflict will always occur when Indigenous people are expected to conform to the latter (Peters-Little 1999). It is likely that modern techniques of governance will suit the younger generation and devalue elders (Little 2005). This has obvious

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31 Cranney and Edwards find that Indigenous people across Australia are frustrated at the manner in which Indigenous people voluntarily/involuntarily become leaders. These may include:
1. one who is already a ‘cultural leader’ is groomed or nominated by that community as a leader
2. one who is thrust into the role by peer pressure and expectations
3. one is seen to be a expert on a subject or issue
4. one is elected to positions within community organisations or as representatives in their local governments
5. one is perceived as a ‘role model’ and has gained the respect and qualities of honesty and integrity in accordance with community wishes
6. one is publicly in the forefront of media promotion
7. governments appointed a person formally or informally as an adviser
8. individuals assert themselves and express the opinions in the interest of self-promotion (Peters-Little 1999).
implications in regards to favoring western styles of governance and does not providing the necessary support required for crossing culture.

In the first consultancy participatory project, it was recommended by many Martu people as well as government agencies that we also consult with the Nyiyaparli elders to seek approval for the housing development. The Nyiyaparli are the traditional owners of the land that Newman is built upon. This land was handed to the Martu people in a ceremony in the early 1970s. It was necessary to consider at least these two layers of Indigenous governance in the first consultancy project. In the second consultancy project, Indigenous leadership was consulted about the visits through the community coordinator. The meetings were however open and were not deliberately structured around Indigenous leadership. A meeting with a Martu leader of Jigalong in which a discussion about a Martu Western Desert Shire emerged was described in the previous chapter.

It appears that many of the Newman institutional actors only feel comfortable speaking to a few individuals who are not necessarily on the Community Council. One participant states:

*I think most of the agencies in town know the two people and even the stronger women* (Interviewee 7, non-Indigenous).

This quote assumes Martu men provide leadership and women are consulted as a supplement. The Newman institutional actors do not actively seek the Council’s advice on decision making and instead expect representative structures (which are stronger than the current Council) to approach government agencies and industry.

In the first consultancy participatory project I also tended to speak to Martu people that I felt comfortable with and in my writing I would refer to these individuals as ‘key contacts’. I naively assumed that these people were windows into the ‘Martu community’. It is not uncommon for government and industry to

Crawford notes:

It is easy for outsiders to focus communication through those community members who are articulate and friendly. Such people, however, might have no community mandate to act (Crawford 1989 p. 28).

In the literature it is recognised by some commentators that communicating with only a few people can result in gate-keepers who may perpetuate government dependency and distribute goods to kin (Rowse 1992; Peters-Little 1999). Within the local discourse, there was a definite perception that there are few people who manipulate the system to their advantage.

One Indigenous interviewee comments:

_There are a lot of Aboriginals here that are so called you know mouth piece for the Martu, they’re not, so, because they have got a mouth the department seems to go to them all the time and it’s wrong and by the time, you know, the message from the department gets to the grassroot people there’s you know, it’s not even what the original statement was_ (Interviewee 23, Indigenous).

There was only very minimal recognition of the difficulties that Martu leaders may experience. One of the participants discusses this:

_See I’ve seen quite a few chair persons up and down, come and go, because the pressure gets too much for them and from the community itself not externally from internally, you know, just trying to handle that pressure from, you know, cos I guess part of it is still like any one of us if an idea gets suggested that’s great, but .... and if it doesn’t happen, people just lose enthusiasm and the government they find someone to blame for not making it happen and I guess that pressure is on for them as chair people for council members if they’re working together quite strongly as a group. I think you don’t have that old system here anymore of here in town of the elders in the community. We don’t literally have_
the elders of the community here in town (Interviewee 4, non-Indigenous).

Leaders have to negotiate a wide network of kin, including other leaders who do not hold formal positions and need to broker between different domains (Smith 2003). Indigenous leaders face the heavy demands of meeting the requirements and being transparent in two domains (Ivanitz 1999). Folds (2001) writes that it is a difficult task for leaders to deflect to bureaucratic authority in the face of ever-present critics. It is also unlikely that every leader will be able to discuss every issue (Ivanitz 1999). These constraints must be recognised in order for government and industry to provide adequate support to Martu leaders.

5.5.5 Reflections upon Representation

The differences that exist within the Martu population took me some time to interpret. My discomfort with difference is apparent in a story I wrote immediately after the first stage (Story 1.1):

The fragmentation of the Martu in and around East Newman and in Newman itself not only posed a barrier to engaging the participation of the Martu but was a substantial obstacle to the on-going coordination of the socio-political processes in the community (NM).

After re-writing this story for a second time I can observe some learning about the differences that exist between the Martu people. However, the following excerpt (Story 1.2) still exhibits my attempts to categorise the Martu people:

The differences within the community (as with any ‘community’) were significant. Yet the boundaries between these differences appear fluid. There are a number of ‘groups’ within the Martu who can be found in Newman at any one point in time: the permanent residents in Newman, visitors and those permanent residents who had been evicted from Homeswest housing. The latter two were predominantly located at the
Parnpajinya site or would also stay with residents in East Newman (NM).

In a third writing of Stage 2 (Story 2.3) there is some recognition of the fluidity of identity within the Martu population:

*It is perhaps easier to homogenise all of the Martu into one community. The differences were partly revealed to us on our first visit but took some time to understand. The family groups however cut across all of the above categories and individuals within any one category may move into another with a change of circumstance* (NM).

I did not really understand how Martu difference actually relates significantly to the regional level until I went to the outlying communities in the Western Desert east of Newman and saw family interactions across space. In a story about Stage 3 (Story 3.1) I wrote:

*The Martu populations in the Western Desert communities inhabit the region as an inter-connected community which can be contrasted to the non-Indigenous people in Newman who primarily relate to the town. Members of all of the Martu communities regularly relate to the rural centre of Newman in a number of ways: for banking, postal and other government services, for food and bottled water, and to visit kin. The Martu are relatively nomadic between all of the communities and are strongly connected through kin and traditional obligations that have remained strong in the face of encroaching modernisation. However, within this regional community significant differences exist between the communities, arising through different geographies, services available and also the family mix that predominate in the ‘permanent’ population within the communities* (NM).

My changing perspective about differences within the Martu population was enabled by time spent in the field that was broken by periods of reading, writing and reflecting. Approaching participation differently throughout the two
consultancy participatory projects, and remaining flexible to do this, also enabled a changing perspective.

5.6 Discussion

Chapter five has explored only a few of the differences that appear to exist within the Martu population and this section provides a further discussion. The discussion about Martu difference is summarised in Section 5.6.1 and the concept of hybridity is introduced. The undesirability of both Martu and of western politics, the former a likely reflection of the latter is discussed in Section 5.6.2. Communication between cultures is explored in Section 5.6.3.

5.6.1 Difference and Hybridity

The myth of white superiority has created a fiction in which all Indigenous people across Australia share the same culture. The Newman discourse tends towards a fixed understanding of difference which assumes a definite boundary between Martu and non-Martu people. This boundary is utilised to control and subordinate (Brah 1992; Hart and Whatman 1998) the Martu population in the Western Desert. The naturalisation of an essential non-Martu identity leads to the establishment of hierarchical difference in which Martu people (and a defined and bounded Martu culture) are assumed to be lacking in necessary characteristics. An essential Martu identity is thus determined in relation to a naturalised non-Martu identity. This relationship relies upon dichotomies that are characteristic of western thought.

The preceding analysis of the local discourse and my stories reveal that there are in fact a number of different boundaries that are perceived to exist within the Martu population. The multiplicity of these categories of identity (created by imposed boundaries of representation) serves to unsettle the essential and collective identity of the Martu people. The ‘internal’ boundaries that were discussed in this chapter include gender, community, individual, family and
leaders. Reflecting upon these boundaries simultaneously provides an important opportunity to deconstruct perceptions of cultural difference. It is also to consider how they may be used to maintain patterns of subordination and structures of power across and within cultures.

This leads to questions about the construction of boundaries through representation of leadership across culture, particularly the representations of a dominant group. The content of discussions about this ranged considerably within the Newman discourse. One participant comments:

*If any decisions are made that the other families don’t agree with, the families involved, it is going to cause problems and come back on you, so you are better off staying with the chairperson, otherwise those decisions won’t be respected and it can cause conflict* (Interviewee 19, non-Indigenous).

Another participant discusses the difficulties in government structures of working across cultures and knowing when to intervene:

*...we sort of try and struggle with what’s culture and what’s not. Where does that line come into play? I’m sorry that is abuse, we can’t put up with that anymore* (Interviewee 4, non-Indigenous).

The above quote reflects confusion in the Newman discourse more generally about governance in a cross-cultural context. Issues of responsibility are complex and unclear. Consideration of power and representation requires further focus.

I observed that governance structures designed to represent Martu people were not respected. It seems to be the case that often these structures are bypassed, with local agencies seeking the opinion of only a few Martu people, who may or may not be on the Community Council. This denies the agency that is made possible through an essential identity, chosen possibly by Martu leaders as a strategic response to a boundary of prejudice. It also contradicts the perceived
necessity of a representative structure that is required to absorb responsibility for service delivery without necessarily being resourced to do so. Instead, the Newman discourse frames Martu people as failing in their attempts to establish representative structures that are able to provide strong direction in both cultural domains through a unitary voice.

Meta-theoretically there exist three paradigms which explain the interactions that occur when cultures meet. The first is a cultural clash in which the difference is seen to be immutable and results in conflict. The second theory is often called McDonaldisation which refers to cultural standardisation or uniformisation (Nederveen Pieterse 2004). The Newman discourse perceived the meeting of Martu and non-Martu people to result in cultural clash, although most perspectives did not recognise the agency of the Martu people. A perception about cultural clash led to frustration which was often associated explicitly or as an implicit undercurrent with a desire for cultural standardisation that aligned to the naturalised culture. This was met however with an ambivalent desire for culture to be retained but in a manner that is compartmentalised and allows for cultural standardisation.

The third theory about cultural exchange is often referred to as syncretism, creolisation, metissage or mestizaje, which refers to the hybridisation of cultures. Hybridisation can be defined as “the ways in which forms become separated from existing practices and recombine with new forms in new practices” (Rowe and Schelling cited in Nederveen Pieterse 2004 p. 64). The concept of hybridity problematises boundaries that essentialise cultural identity. Hybridisation implies the formation of new identities which may be transethnic and transnational (Anthias 2001). To Bhabha (1994) the in between space or ‘Third Space’ provides a counter-narrative in which to overcome the determinism of cultural boundaries. This space is liminal and is characterised by the ambivalence of two existences and provides for a double perspective (Bhabha 1994; Higgot and Nossal 1997). There was very little recognition of the possibilities for hybridity for Martu people, of the infinite hybrid spaces that are possible for Martu people. The Martu population was divided into those people who were still traditional and those that have lost culture. The dominant view in the discourse was that
standardisation would result in Martu people losing their culture entirely. This obscures Martu agency in determining cultural change and also does not allow for the incorporation of cultures by western culture itself.

A ‘diasporic space’ is observed as a global condition which is characterised by “the intersectionality of contemporary conditions of transmigrancy of people, capital, commodities and culture” (Brah, 1996 p. 242). There has been theorising regarding what this may mean for the relationship between the local and global. This includes but is not limited to glocalisation (Robertson 1992), cultural translation (Gillespie 1995) and translocational positionality (Anthias 2001). These theories argue that situational context is important to understand the particular positionality of hybridity and how this relates to the distribution of power and resources. This is necessary in order to understand how struggles over cultural hegemony intersect with hybrid space (Anthias 2001). Hybridity may actually conceal unevenness (Nederveen Pieterse 2004). It is thus necessary to recognise and perhaps construct boundaries across cultures in order to negotiate issues of power and representation.

The intersection of these identity boundaries (culture, gender, class) is a complex milieu in which it is important to analyse the influence of power and prejudice. In Australia this is complicated by the existence of ancient jurisdictions despite colonial attempts to layer and undermine (Fletcher 1999c). Neither of the consultancy participatory projects sufficiently accounted for this and this is not well recognised either in the local institutional discourse. Mayo (2000) writes that communities of locality need to be viewed in ways that account for competing interests and perspectives and the politics of class, gender, race and ethnicity. The inevitability of dynamic community boundaries and composition is an essential consideration (Guijt and Kaul Shah 2001). This is yet to occur within Australian institutions.
5.6.2 Politics

Vast differences across the Indigenous population in Australia continue to exist despite the intent of assimilation policies. Indigenous people in Australia simultaneously experience localism, individualism and factionalism (Arthur 2001) as well as solidarity (Crawford 1989). Politics was evident in the Western Desert between Martu people.

The Newman discourse reflected a strong dislike for Martu difference, which is seen to result in politics perceived as undesirable ambivalence. One participant comments:

*I just can’t understand why it is like that we should all work together as one…I have seen a lot of clashes between the different people in communities. Why should they have it? Well get rid of that crap and just get on with it…everyone should get together and say this is what we want instead of worrying about their little issues. Nothing is going to happen while they are squabbling amongst themselves* (Interviewee 20, non-Indigenous).

There was a common perception in the Newman discourse that politics and conflict is a complication within and between government, Martu people and industry. The perception in the quote above is that Martu people should all want the same thing. This is expressed by another participant in regards to government:

*Government can be as difficult as you want it to be...for me it’s very simplistic...you see a problem you try to address it and it doesn’t matter who in government everyone should have the same outlook and try and address that issue* (Interviewee 17, non-Indigenous).

Politics at the State and Federal level was criticised strongly by a number of participants. Representations about Martu politics are a likely reflection of
perceptions of the western form of politics. It is perceived that State and Federal levels are primarily concerned with votes and only display interest around election time. One participant states:

*Then comes another election...obviously we start to get the phone calls...you feel quite important...everybody’s important, oh yes, get invited to dinner at the Red Sands and are we really interested and of course you are, not, and then they ignore you for the next however many and that’s politics* (Interviewee 17, non-Indigenous).

Another participant discussed the lack of political will at these levels of government, whereby committees continue to review decisions which gives the pretence that something is actually happening. The focus of government at the State and Federal levels is upon short-term budgets, according to this respondent:

*...if you don’t want a decision to be made, send it off to a committee...so it has all the symptoms of a democracy and power that all it was...was a structure that made the national government say we have dealt with it, look at the amount of money that we are pouring into it... The short term political agenda means that people are focused on where the budgets are going to be in three years and not in fifteen years* (Interviewee 21, non-Indigenous).

This is discussed by O’Donoghue (1999) who points to politicians occasionally visiting outback communities and recommending another review or another pilot study. She likens this to drip feeding and comments that it is counter to effective long-term governance. A number of participants also commented that the short-term nature of political cycles has a significant impact upon funding cycles and programs.

I didn’t really see differences in perception about different issues that exist between the Newman institutional actors until after the interviews had been analysed. When I first arrived in Newman I grouped all of the actors together. This is evident is a story about Stage 1 (Story 1.1):
The local agencies in Newman demonstrated significant resentment towards the project. The group of people together at first appearance presented a united front. This for me symbolised a feeling of remoteness from the centre of power in Perth. A centre that was distant from the daily crisis dealt with by the local service agencies (NM).

However, when I did begin to recognise the differences between the local institutional actors, I perceived these differences and the politics that were created to be undesirable. This perception carried through my stories for some time. In a story about Stage 2 (Story 2.1) I wrote:

Facilitating an indigenous community development process in Newman was a difficult task given all of the local bureaucratic and political dimensions that were involved, particularly in this project (NM).

In a later writing of Stage 2 (Story 2.2) I describe:

Relationships with particular agencies were stronger than others. It was difficult not to get involved in the wave of local politics....we were continually fighting the swell of local politics. Personalities were in conflict and tides would often turn (NM).

My early writings about the first stage grouped stakeholders together across a number of categories. These categories were based upon geographical and cultural locations according to my perceptions. A hierarchical classification is described in Chapter Two, which begins with the Minister. In a story about Stage 2 (Story 2.2) I contrast the Minister who is one person with all of the Martu people who are grouped together:

There existed a range of different perceptions about what was in the Martu’s best interest. This was obviously affected by the position and personalities of the stakeholders. At a stakeholder level there was a number of different interests within the project. AHIU was largely
concerned with building management capacity for the housing development. The Minister who had a long history with the region was concerned for the welfare of the Martu and was in a position to request for further evidence of community development to address the alcohol abuse that was taking place at the Parnpajinya site. The Minister also wanted the Martu to be supported to return to country. The local agencies looked through the lens of their position when working with the Martu. The Martu had very clear ideas which they had expressed for over two decades and had yet received little assistance with developing these (NM).

The above quote fails to recognise the differences that exist within the geographical and other groups. It does however recognise the different interests between the Minister and the relevant bureaucratic department. The different perceptions about the housing development are evident in a newspaper article in Appendix Four.

The difference in power is not necessarily hierarchical, as my writing in the methodology section suggests. One participant discussed the influence bureaucracy has over Ministers:

Their power, they are experts you know in making ministers ineffective and all those episodes we have seen about ‘Yes Minister’ are all true and effective ministers are those ones who have found a way of doing the public servants over but they only last for so long and you see, and how those public servants work is the ones that have been enrolled during a term as soon as there’s even a hint that a government might be on the nose you start seeing confidential damaging documents getting leaked down to public servants (Interviewee 21, non-Indigenous).

Both projects were characterised by ‘projectism’ which suits western bureaucratic structures and Indigenous people are expected to conform to objectives, indicators, timetables, reports and host bureaucrats and consultants. Projectism leans more towards productive activities and timetables suit
bureaucracy, not the community. Short-term projects do not allow for long term process of change (Little 2005). Projectism lends towards imposed boundaries, particularly geographic. The first consultancy participatory project was confined by a managerial project approach; the second aimed more towards a process but was constrained by resources and was framed ultimately by the bureaucracy. In the consultancy participatory projects, ‘projectism’ did not account for politics and instead tried to suppress consent through consensus. A discussion about the relevance of politics for sustainable development is provided in the following chapter.

5.6.3 Cross-cultural Communication

Communication breakdown with the Martu was problematised within the Newman discourse where an expressed desire for improved communication was a major theme. Confusion and cultural shock at the cultural interface is likely to result from an inability to communicate. Communication difficulties arise from different languages, different worldviews and different aspirations and expectations (Cowlishaw 2004). Lowell states that in both remote and urban Aboriginal settings differences between the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of service providers and service users can range from minor to extreme. Even if Aboriginal people speak English or a dialect of English as a first language, serious comprehension difficulties can still occur due to the cultural differences that influence communication (Lowell 1998 p. 6).

There was some discussion about how Martu people say ‘yes’ all the time although there existed different understandings about why this may occur. One person states:

...they don’t say no to anything and they think oh yeah, yeah (Interviewee 5, non-Indigenous).

This was suggested by another participant to be a result of disempowerment:
Well it is disempowering…the aboriginal people when you talk to them, they tell you what you wanna hear. Not what they really think. Anybody that has had anything to do with the aboriginal people, if you put them in a bunch of white folk and ask them what you think they’re gonna tell you basically what they think you want them to (Interviewee 8, non-Indigenous).

There are differing views within the relevant literature as to why this may occur. Crawford (1989) discusses how Indigenous people work within the confines and tell whites what they know to be the right answer to exercise agency and so to avoid unwanted responsibility. Folds (2001) argues that sometimes people just say yes to encourage you to continue talking. He also writes that when people come from Canberra, Indigenous people say yes as this is where money comes from. Overt compliance may in fact be a conscious strategy to protect the cultural domain, which was not recognised within the Newman discourse.

An Indigenous person discusses some of the miscommunication that occurs between Martu people and agencies:

Partly because, you know, agencies you go see, I didn’t like the way they talked to me. Get you hands off stop staring at your hands and do something and maybe you’ll get a bit of attention, a little respect you know this is the thing you know they’re saying, they’re saying this is what we do and Martu are saying to you guys no that’s not what we do. You know that’s what you say you do but it’s not what you do and having spent time out there, been out there, I’ve seen it, they don’t do bugger all you know (Interviewee 13, Indigenous).

Two main points are made in this quote. The first relates to the lack of government understanding about why Martu people are not responding in a manner that is considered appropriate. This quote indicates that standards of communication are set by government which Martu people need to follow before
they are accorded respect. The second relates to the Martu people relaying that the self-perception of government agencies is flawed.

Walsh (1997) provides a useful framework to analyse the causes and consequences of the difficulties that are experienced in cross-cultural communication between Indigenous and Anglo people. He argues that this framework is broad enough to be useful across Australia, although further research is necessary in local and regional settings. This framework is composed of two sets of variables. The first relates to participant relations and the second to the use of the communication channel.

In regards to participant relations, Walsh compares the dyadic style of Anglo communication with the communal style of Indigenous communication. This comparison is presented in Table 5.2.

**Table 5.2: Anglo and Indigenous Communication Styles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dyadic</th>
<th>Communal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An ideology of talking in twos</td>
<td>Talk is broadcast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk is directed to a particular individual</td>
<td>People need not face each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People should face each other</td>
<td>Eye contact is not important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye contact is important</td>
<td>‘Long’ periods of silence need not be avoided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Long’ periods of silence should be avoided</td>
<td>Control by the speaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control by the speaker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Walsh (1997 p. 8)

Walsh (1997) discusses the Anglo way of speaking as one that is not necessarily talking in twos but one that involves a lot of eye contact. Silence is felt to be uncomfortable in the dyadic way of talking, and control in the hands of the speaker and who that speaker is directly talking to. In comparison Indigenous people’s style of communication is based upon broadcasting in which people need not face each other, eye contact is not necessary and silence is acceptable.
(Walsh 1997). The quote above indicates that agencies do not understand certain important aspects about Martu communication styles.

The second set of variables relate to the way in which the communication channel flows. Walsh (1997) believes that the Indigenous communication channel remains open continuously, which is contrasted to Anglo people’s style of interaction which is broken into discontinuous packages. He postulates that these differences may arise as a result of the built environment. Indigenous people tend to live life in the open, unlike Anglo people who live behind segregated walls and doors. It is accepted in anthropological literature that Indigenous people in Australia have a cyclical-relational communication style, as opposed to a linear or tiered style that often characterises Anglo institutional cultures (Wilson 2003).

Most of the Newman institutional actors wanted improved communication expected to occur in a form that is compatible with the needs of a service delivery framework and through some form of representation based upon a linear model. The cyclical approach to communication as described by Walsh is not considered appropriate. One person comments:

*And then you try to discuss it and I guess it can be quite difficult as a service provider where you might suggest something. You might see something as being a good idea and suggest it, you put it out there for people to talk about. People sit round a table, they don’t really say much to you. But you might suggest it and talk about it. You know, identify some of the problems from the good, the bad and you got anything else you wanna. I mean I’ve sat on a few things. But you know, but you know a few meetings. And you sit and you talk they won’t say very much unless they’re very strong in the community and then they’ll go away and think about but then sometimes the end result’s not communicated back to you, so you’re not sure what you’re supposed to be doing and then as a service provider you say to them ‘There is a big problem we need to do something about it. I’m back to you guys to have your input because your important to this decision, you need to make this decision somehow one*
way or the other’ And then like you get there and you go and you walk away and you go ‘Okay, hopefully can you get back to me in like in a couple of weeks or something’. And sometimes nothing ever gets back to me. They might have made a decision but it might not be brought back to you (Interviewee 4, non-Indigenous).

Some people found the different relationships that exist amongst Martu people, and that affect communication, frustrating:

“It is certainly just within their cultural groups. You know, you can’t talk to some people at the same time as you talk to other people. And that is confusing. Because when you go to talk to two people, you want them to come together, they can’t come together for different reasons because of the cultural strength in the area. Either they can’t be in a room with a certain lady or they can’t be there with a certain man and it is very difficult to understand that and then trying to get feedback from the same people at the same time because it could be difficult (Interviewee 7, non-Indigenous).

An Indigenous person discusses in the following quote how the difficulties expressed by some of the agencies are not a sufficient excuse for not trying to communicate with the Martu people:

“No no not, no, no, no. The people who say that it’s difficult to talk to a mob it’s just crazy it’s a weak excuse, one of the weakest and most tiredest excuses I don’t think it really holds up anymore... it’s a weak excuse to me that the people say, probably think its real and you know and that maybe completely oh yes it is really difficult to talk to people. You know it is if you have no idea how to talk to people. If you’re expecting them to hop up and be the same people you are it’s not, I bet you they went to Thailand, Indonesia on holidays they would make a damn sight effort to understand the culture because they’re stuck in it (Interviewee 13, Indigenous).
It is interestingly to note that there were both Newman institutional actors who did and didn’t need a community coordinator to communicate with Martu people. The people that appear to communicate well with the Martu people tended to have closer relationships that involved spending considerable time together.

In the first consultancy participatory projects it is interesting to reflect upon the separate meetings between the Minister with firstly the Martu community and secondly with local agencies that were held on the same day during the first project. The Minister, where the Minister spoke first, had requested for the meetings to be held separately. I found both meetings awkward and difficult.

In a story about Stage 1 (Story 1.3) I wrote:

Much of this third week was spent organising transport for the Martu for the community meeting and also the Ministerial meeting. Local agencies were happy to oblige. The Minister flew from Perth to visit the community which was followed by a meeting with the local agencies on Friday the 3rd August. He was accompanied by his chief of staff (a staff member at ISTP who was on secondment) and the executive director of AHIU. Tension was evident at both meetings, however more so at the latter. The first meeting was held at the Baptist Church outside on the grass. Some of the women had prepared delicious damper which we ate with butter and golden syrup at the meeting’s closure. The media were present at the first meeting. It took a long while before any of the Martu spoke. The few that did speak later in the meeting were predominantly men. The second meeting was held at the meeting room in the All Seasons Hotel. I encouraged two Martu women to attend this second meeting. They remained silent as did I. That meeting was followed by catered sandwiches. I took the Martu ladies home, one with a splitting headache (NM).

The media clipping of the first meeting showing a photo of the Minister and a Martu elder is found as Appendix Four.
The word consultation often means that government officials arrive in vehicles or planes to chair lengthy and uncomfortable meetings during which they do much of the talking. Cowlishaw (1999 pp. 19-20) describes a meeting which “was like an episode in a neo-colonial farce”. Indigenous people are required to attend meetings to get money or services (Cowlishaw 2004). Policies of self-determination and self-management have resulted in meetings, minutes and decisions being mimicked, like a play that is often meaningless (Cowlishaw 2004). Over the last four years I have heard the word ‘seagulls’ regularly being applied to consultants and government, implying a fly in and fly out approach. This resonates with the perception in the Newman discourse about over-consultation and the lack of commitment by higher levels of government who fly in and out.

In both consultancy projects I assumed the existence of Habermass’s ideal speech situation. However, the presence of power in a cross-cultural context is likely to result in what Scott (1990) terms hidden transcripts that are not easily apparent. The greater the power differential, the more hidden these transcripts are likely to be (Scoones and Thompson 1994; Cornwall 2002).

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter has explored how Martu culture is perceived by the Newman discourse. It is found that Martu culture is seen by Newman institutional actors to be fixed in time (traditional) or to be disintegrating, and a firm boundary separates these two representations. The first relates to Martu people who have chosen to remain in the outlying communities in the Western Desert east of Newman, whilst the second reflects perceptions about the Martu people in Newman who are expected to assimilate. Neither of the representations of Martu culture account for the hybridity that is possible for Martu people. In addition, both representations essentialise the Martu people and fail to capture the possible diversity that exists.
Newman institutional perceptions of cultural difference between Martu and non-Martu people also essentialise these two populations. This contradicts the dominant perception about Martu people in Newman, whose culture is seen to be disintegrating. Perceptions about difference are often related to frustration of working across what are seen by Newman actors to be distinct cultures. A major conclusion is that the Newman institutional understanding of Martu culture is limited. This is significant, as culture forms the fundamental basis of the relationship between humans and between humans and nature. The relationship between the Newman institutional actors and Martu people tends to be filled with the former groups’ representations of Martu people, and allows little space for self-presentation of Martu people which is dynamic and different. A first modern perspective again appears evident in the Newman discourse in which difference and change are seen as undesirable ambivalence.

Gender is included as a separate category in this chapter to reflect the importance I placed upon this theme, particularly in the first consultancy participatory project and thus at the outset of this thesis. Reflections upon gender however continued throughout the thesis’ journey as evident in my stories and the articles I wrote about the fieldwork. Gender also arose as a theme within the interviews. The discussion of gender in this chapter begins with a historical background about how Indigenous women have been represented in Australia. This is a much debated topic, but in any case it is likely that western male perspectives in government, industry and academia have historically obscured the voices of Indigenous women. This bias is seen to also continue today. Reflections arising from both of the consultancy participatory projects are that representation across gender is a necessary consideration in crossing culture in the Western Desert. This was also seen as needed by some of the Newman institutional actors who advocated greater representation of genders in the institutional structures that work with the Martu people. The thesis concludes that the mainstreaming of gender into the practice of institutional structures around Martu people is required. Tensions are evident however, at the intersection of gender and culture, particularly in relation to reconciling emancipatory feminist principles with an ethos of participation which seeks self-generated ‘local’ solutions. This tension requires careful and ongoing consideration at the cultural interface.
Caution must also be exercised in imposing western binary thought in relation to gender upon Martu people. The differences within the Martu people were not immediately apparent to me and my reflections demonstrate learning about difference and also the ongoing discomfort that I experienced as a result of perceived difference. Attempts at categorising the Martu population in terms of gender and other categories are present in my stories. Time spent with Martu people in addition to time away to reflect was important. Additionally, a trip to ‘country’, into the heart of the Western Desert, was necessary to unsettle many of the perceptions that I held about Martu difference. In the desert, I was a minority and this forced me, I believe now, to accept both Martu difference from myself in addition to the differences between Martu people.

The discussion about difference in this chapter was categorised into community, individual, family and leaders. In relation to the first category, Martu people are perceived to belong to an essential, primarily geographical community, are expected to provide representative structures and also to consensually negotiate responsibility. There was some recognition of Martu nomadicy but this was viewed negatively and did not seem to disturb perceptions about an essential Martu geographical community. There were also perceptions about the need to treat Martu people as individuals. This was a view that was put forward at times by individuals who had also advocated a whole of community approach. Confusion is evident in this regard about the responsibilities of government and community and how representation is determined between cultures. This also relates to the confusion about Martu family structures. Nepotism was widely critiqued, which failed to account for the representative structures that the family structures provide. This thesis considers that the Martu family structures provided representation in which to undertake a participatory approach. An approach that accounts for these structures in addition to gender appeared to be the preferred approach of Martu people. There appears to be perceptions in the Newman discourse that Martu leaders do not have the respect of Martu people. This is perhaps a reflection of perceptions about the disintegration of culture. A participatory approach must account for these perceptions and allow for diverse cultural leadership. It is the case that Newman institutional actors communicate with the Martu people that they are able to identify with.
The discussion in this chapter focused upon three themes: difference and hybridity; politics; and communication. The discussion about difference and hybridity summarised the Newman institutional actors’ perceptions of difference and related this to theory about hybridity. Conclusions relate to the need to account for the many layers of identity and how they intersect with power, representation and place. The discussion about politics reflects a dislike for Martu politics and also for western politics by Newman institutional actors; the former is perhaps a reflection of the latter. Politics is constrained by a managerial and bureaucratic approach, typically a ‘projectism’, which does not allow for diverse Martu representative perspectives to be heard and to influence decision making about responsibility. The thesis concludes that politics must be integrated into the relationship between Martu people, government and industry. This must allow for the differences that exist within these groups. Cross-cultural communication was a major theme in the interviews. It is seen to be poor, but the reasons for this are not well understood, which may reflect the limited understanding of Martu culture. Communication was seen primarily in terms of a linear service delivery framework and frustrations and improvements were perceived through this frame. This is unlikely to account for styles of communication different from those typically suited to western people.

The following chapter explores how the lessons from the field can contribute to the discourse about sustainable development.
Chapter Six

Ambivalence and Hybridity: Lessons of Hope for Sustainable Development

6.1 Introduction

This chapter reflects upon the lessons that have emerged from the Western Desert case study context and relates these to the broader discourse of sustainable development. It therefore responds to the second research question. The discourse of sustainable development has emerged from the ambivalent bridge between human development and the protection of nature. This discourse has continued to be characterised by contradictory and contested ideologies existing in relations of power and culture. Sustainable development is best understood as a ‘set of contested ideas’ (Scott and Gough 2003) or tensions which is discussed in detail within Appendix One. The debate about sustainable development often fails to account for the spaces between extreme views. Dominant perspectives are largely constrained by binary thought and either/or categories and are often incapable of transcending this. This chapter aims to build a rationale as to why diverse Indigenous voices are necessary within the discourse of sustainable development and to better complement the currently dominant perspectives.

Section 6.2 discusses the lessons about relationships and representation from the case study and explores why diverse Indigenous relational and holistic perspectives are required for sustainable development. Section 6.3 analyses the necessary reframing of power and politics so as to amplify Indigenous representation. A deliberative cosmopolitan democracy is suggested as a mechanism for this. Relationality and politics were themes that emerged from the case study analysis in the previous chapters and require exploration to complement dominant administrative and managerial perspectives within service delivery frameworks. Section 6.4 discusses the need for diverse forms of representative structures in order to negotiate responsibility for sustainable
development across culture. There are lessons from Australia more generally and from the case study context which are outlined in this section in relation to the subject of hybrid governance. The need for institutional change and the international lessons about this are also detailed. Section 6.5 discusses the autonomous space that Indigenous culture may require to self-determine alternative development models and to challenge dominant expressions of destructive development practices. Conclusions are provided in Section 6.6.

6.2 Relationships and Representation

Relationship provides a useful way to conceptualise and understand inter-and-intra cultural interactions within the space between people and places. The concept of relationship provides a way to explore how boundaries of representation are drawn and to determine who is exercising power to determine these. Wilson (2003 p. 161) advocates “the importance of relationships and the realisation that everything needs to be seen in the context of the relationships that it represents”. Section 6.2.1 outlines the lessons about cross-cultural relationships that emerged from the case study. The term relational holism is introduced and discussed in Section 6.2.2. and it is found that there is much to learn from diverse Indigenous perspectives around the world (including the diversity of Martu people in the Western Desert) for sustainable development. This analysis affirms the importance of building relationality into institutional frameworks so as to better allow Indigenous representations of sustainable development to emerge.

6.2.1 Relationships across Culture in the Western Desert

Relationships emerged as a theme in the analysis from a policy review and from the case study analysis that precedes this chapter. It has been found in the thesis analysis so far that the current Federal government (in the Federal storyline) views relationships with Indigenous people across Australia with mostly a neo-
liberal assimilationist framework with little respect for diversity. This can be contrasted to the Indigenous storyline where there is considerable respect for diversity and relationships beyond that which can be measured financially. The Federal storyline (the Standard Story), to some extent, seems replicated by the practice of the State government in a search for simplified, linear and managerial frameworks of service delivery. In Newman, the relational proximity of institutional actors to Martu people produces ambivalence which provides opportunities to explore more closely the cross-cultural ideological terrain.

In the Newman discourse there was some direct discussion about the importance of relationships across culture with Martu people. In terms of building relationships with them, one person states:

Through my experience in a new area, your first thing is getting to know people, just developing relationships, getting down, settling down, talking to the people (Interviewee 14, non-Indigenous).

Many of the Newman institutional actors discussed the need for genuine interest in building a relationship that goes way beyond the demands of a bureaucratic job that is contained within 8am to 4pm Monday to Friday. A participant comments on the:

...extra effort that is required to make a difference ...that requires getting out to the community, you have to pass the test with the people...I think the community has really responded to the fact that we are here to make the effort to learn that language and to acknowledge their language and so that’s made all the difference (Interviewee 24, non-Indigenous).

The necessity of learning across culture for improved relationships is highlighted by this quote.

Another participant discussed the need to take time to have a cup of tea and actually work with people, not just upon achieving outcomes that are framed by the program. The types of people who do this were termed ‘dirt people’ by one
of the interviewees. The first is seen to lead to better outcomes for the second in any case. Time is however considered to be in short supply. It was necessary to spend time building relationships with the Martu people in the consultancy participatory projects. Time spent making damper next to the riverbed or going on drives into the surrounding countryside with Martu people helped to build trust necessary to support cross-cultural interaction.

Car rides were perceived in the local discourse to be an important way of building relationships and giving something to community members.

_A big one is the car thing and giving people lifts, there’s a fine line between becoming a taxi and giving someone a ride but you kind of work that out….if you want people to come to a meeting you got to go and pick them up and then people have gone ‘oh but I’m not allowed to have people in my car and stuff you know for work things’. Well maybe you need to rethink about that with your boss about who you can and can’t have in your car just insurance stuff….you can’t assume that everybody’s in your position because they are not…I had to go to Meekatharra for a meeting, it’s out of my region but I had to go down and I asked a couple of the old girls if they want to go and it’s a really good time, you know, in your car for five hours so you talk to people and you learn things and they teach you words and they share stuff with you and that’s heaps more than you would ever get out of meetings_ (Interviewee 5, non-Indigenous).

This quote reveals how bureaucratic requirements can actually hinder some of the most important work that occurs in relationship across cultures.

For all levels of government, there appears to be an emphasis upon instrumentally managing the service delivery aspects of the relationships with Indigenous people. Within the Newman discourse there is also an emphasis upon the importance of relationships between people across culture which counters to some extent perceptions about the instrumental aspects of relationships. Federal and State governments were heavily criticised for a lack of commitment to the Martu people and to lower levels of government. The term ‘seagulls’ was used a
number of time since my first visit to Newman in 2001. One person cautions governments:

...not to do these fly in and fly out trips out to communities...don’t have a structure just go out there and wait and see what happens and slow down and spend time with people if they want to take you out and show you stuff...I think it’s far more economical and constructive just to go slowly in the beginning and spend some time because then it means everything is much easier to do (Interviewee 5, non-Indigenous).

This is seen to result in a lack of trust by the Martu people towards ‘white’ people:

Comes down to the stereotypical attitudes of people of the white people that are so ingrained in Aboriginals now that they are very wary of, you know, white man bearing gifts (Interviewee 23, Indigenous).

In October of 2005 I was asked by the Health Department for a copy of the reports from the first project: Stage One and Two. I phoned the Housing Department to seek permission to share the report. This was granted and the Housing Department also asked for a copy. The officer there canvassed with me the possibility of replicating the model of the project. The most important ingredient however is not found in the report and is found in the relationship that developed through time. There is a tension with the need to avoid instrumental views about relationships in which a synthetic personalisation brings the private into the public as a strategy of control (Fairclough 1992).

The concept of relationship helps to articulate questions about the nature of cross-cultural interactions and who has the power to define boundaries that determine representation of identities, roles and responsibilities. A number of important themes emerged from the case study that can be articulated in terms of relationships. The case study revealed the tensions facing Martu leaders, for example, who are accountable through relationship both internally (to the cultural domain) and externally and are responsible for defending the Martu
domain. Rowse (1992) comments that for Indigenous leaders, it is likely that internal accountability will be greater than external. The local institutional actors in the Western Desert also have to look in two directions, towards capital cities and back to the community that they are engaged with. The first relationship demands conformity for the achievements of career ambitions, whilst relationships with communities requires risk (Rowley 1986; Rowse 1992). Both Martu leaders and local agencies stand in between two cultures and provide representation across this interface, in addition to being responsible to both worlds. The Newman institutional actors played an important role in the consultancy participatory projects, despite their resentment. They provided bridges between cultures to highlight the important role of cultural translation. This is a considerable and difficult task that is currently being significantly under-resourced. Cultural translation is seen by the Federal storyline as a one way process in which Indigenous people need to learn to be more accountable to mainstream government structures.

In Newman, BHP perceives win-win relationships to promote in respective order: the timely access to resources, an enhanced reputation and healthy communities. These were previously outlined in Chapter Two. A BHP report titled Investment in Aboriginal Relationships Program 2000 (p. 1) states “the emergence of Native Title legislation as a factor in these relationships and the need for access to new iron ore reserves has raised the importance of ensuring that the relationship between the company and Aboriginal communities is sound, well-directed and achieves sustainable benefits for all parties”. For BHP, the relationship between State and Federal governments is also seen to be important (Dames and Moore 2000). The tension between relationships and the profit motive of industry is clearly evident.

The mining company runs cross-cultural awareness programs about Indigenous people in Newman and employees are required to attend. Government agencies are sometimes asked to attend these programs. It was noted by many of the interview participants that the participation of government agencies is seen to require expansion. Downing (2002 p. 108) states that there has been inadequate cross-cultural education in Australia. This is evident at the interface of the two
worlds where people are “under constant pressure and tension, and open to stress, burnout and breakdown” and is a state of being for most Indigenous people. The cross-cultural awareness course in Newman is widely applauded. However, there were a number of suggestions for further improvement. The course is currently run by the traditional owners, the Nyiabili, although some Martu people attend. Many of the interviewees spoke of a desire to spend time on country with the Martu people developing personal relationships. This provides an important means of challenging existing views about cultural change (Martu culture is currently categorised as traditional or lost and damaged) and also about Martu agency and hybridity. The current format is seen to focus too much upon lecturing about historical injustices.

Within much of the Newman discourse, however, cross-cultural education was seen to be a two way process where Martu people also need to learn how to better live in the town. One person states:

*We talked about acceptance of both. And it certainly seems to be pushed a lot on the white population. We have got to make sure that information goes back to the Indigenous so what is expected of them when they come to our town. You know, they have their own by-laws...the behaviour is controlled in two ways* (Interviewee 7, non-Indigenous).

Complexities exist regarding who determines the standards of living in town. This does provide a need to justify dialogue with Martu representative structures.

The nature of relationships has important consequences for the determination of the Martu people’s identity within the Newman discourse. The Newman institutional actors’ representation of a singular Martu identity did appear to exist in relation to an idealised western identity.

Dodson (1994) discusses in general terms how Indigenous people across Australia are defined in relation to the colonising culture. He states:

*Because Aboriginality has been defined as a relation, Indigenous peoples have rarely come into a genuine relationship with non-Indigenous*
peoples, because a relationship requires two, not just one and its mirror. Our subjectivities, our aspirations, our ways of seeing and our languages have largely been excluded from the equation, as the colonising culture ‘plays with itself’. It is as if we have been ushered onto a stage to play in a drama where the parts have already been written. Choose from the part of the ancient noble spirit, the lost soul estranged from her true nature, or the aggressive drunkard, alternately bucking and living off the system. No other parts are available for ‘real’ Aborigines (Dodson 1994 p. 9).

Langton (1993b) states that Indigenous identities arise from the experience of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. This experience involves an intercultural dialogue, which is either in person or through a mediated experience such as a non-Indigenous person watching a television program. Langton states that Indigenous identities are a “field of intersubjectivity in that it is remade over and over again in a process of dialogue, of imagination, of representation and interpretation” (Langton 1993 p. 33). She outlines three broad categories of cultural and textual construction:

1. Aboriginal person interacting with other Aboriginal people in situations that are within Aboriginal culture and are not completely closed with some western influence.
2. Stereotypes, icons and myths of Aboriginal people by non-Aboriginal who have never been in contact with Aboriginal people and are imagined representations.
3. Actual dialogue between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, for example in supermarket checkouts, in which to test models of each other. This requires repeated adjustment and the participation of Aboriginal people (Langton 1993b).

Langton’s discussion emphasises the necessity of dialogue between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and emphasises the potential of the cross-cultural education program run by BHP in Newman. A dialogue allows the subject to speak back, for the dominant culture to be informed by Aboriginal culture and is required to shatter the mirrors of Eurocentrism (Suchet 2002). As concluded in Chapter Five, the local agencies expressed a desire to dialogue with Martu
people. This was mainly framed in terms of service delivery but the evident institutional interest in culture, and the ambivalence that Martu creates in local agency people, offer opportunities to extend the dialogue beyond the goal of improved service delivery.

The discussion so far has focused upon lessons from the case study and has emphasised the necessity for dialogue, time, education and commitment to build relationships across culture in which to share representations. This does not meet well with service delivery frameworks constrained by bureaucratic requirements. In Newman there is much distrust of particularly State government officials who do not take the time to build relationships necessary to achieve outcomes. Time and other resources will require further investment within institutional space. Resources are particularly needed for cultural bridges at all scales, the cultural bridges evident in the case study were Martu leaders and Newman institutional actors. The following section builds an argument for the further incorporation of relationality into institutional frameworks, including the relational perspectives of Indigenous people around the world, and argues why this is necessary for sustainable development.

6.2.2 Relational Holism

Indigenous people around the world, including in Australia, negotiate a dominant worldview that is characterised by first order modernity. This worldview has imposed upon Indigenous people an identity that is but a mirror reflection so as to validate social structures including the nuclear family and the protestant ethic. This has legitimated economic exploitation or disenfranchisement of Indigenous people and a Federal governing system that for two hundred years in Australia has been unable to better adapt to the wide regional diversity of Indigenous governance systems. Indigenous people in Australia have continued to resist the subjugation of traditional and holistic knowledge by western institutional practice and discourse. The Federal storyline about Indigenous sustainable development described in Chapter Three continues to suppress the perceived threat of ambivalence that is posed by Indigenous difference. The Indigenous
essential storyline is instead based upon recognition of difference and the need for a holistic approach. The Newman discourse does reproduce the Federal storylines but contradictions exist and require further exploration.

The first modern governance institutions and professional disciplines of the west approach complexity with reductionism (Clarke 1993; Redclift and Benton 1994; Tryzna 1995; Mebratu 1998). Western fundamental arrogance continues to drive a grand narrative of the homogenising modern project that is contained by the premises of first order modernity. It is argued that first order modernity tries to suppress ambivalence, in a search for order and wholeness. However, in doing so, first order modernity has actually produced ambivalence in society and in nature. This unintended ambivalence has ‘turned back upon’ and transformed the parameters of first order modernity. Beck et al. (2003 p. 3) write that first order modernity “disenchants and then dissolves its own taken-for-granted premises”. Sachs (1999) utilises Susan George’s metaphor of a boomerang to describe the consequences of continuing global integration (including refugees, terrorism, greenhouse warming, declining biodiversity) that are rebounding upon the North. Sachs refers mainly to global trends, but these ‘macro’ trends are compiled of ‘micro’ trends that are happening across a diverse configuration of spaces growing in diverse ways, some of which are perhaps beyond human perspective. Thus, the dominance of the western control in a search for order has implications not only for Indigenous sustainable development but for sustainable development across culture. Recognition of ambivalence allows for alternative voices to the dominant mainstream to be heard.

The discourse of sustainable development is often aligned with a search for a unitary definition (Stables and Scott 2002). A number of authors suggest that there are dangers of ambivalence within sustainable development\(^{32}\). It is argued

\(^{32}\) Scott and Gough (2003) write that sustainable development includes everything and that it can give the impression of substance and coherence when in fact none exists. Lele (1991) provided an earlier warning by arguing that sustainable development is perhaps too abstract and like appropriate technology may become a fashionable phrase that everyone utilizes but is never defined. Frazier (1997 p. 184) argues that “(w)ithout a comprehensive definition, acceptable to a broad span of professions and phrased in measurable terms, any quest for the conceptual essence of ‘sustainability’ or the unequivocal signification of ‘development’ is certain to divert yet more resources, efforts and attention from true and pressing problems”.

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in this thesis that in fact what is most important in sustainable development is a
dialectic approach which challenges attempts by dominant groups to control the
meaning and use of the term. Radical versions of sustainable development
attempt to make apparent the greed, exploitation and oppression of the current
dominant global order (Merchant 1992; Springett 2003). A dialectic process
must remain dynamic such that the term is not naturalised or reified (Foucault
1972), as the concept of sustainable development is in fact created by a
discursive process. Davison (2001 p. 61) writes that “(t)he ambivalence of
essentially contested concepts, the fact that they resist definition, resolution and
closure, is a source of political strength, not of weakness”.

The Indigenous storyline in Australia about Indigenous sustainable development
has important lessons for sustainable development generally, particularly in
regards to a relational and holistic approach. The term ‘holistic’ can be traced to
Smuts in 1926 in Holism and Evolution as meaning ‘the whole is greater than the
sum of the parts’. In more recent times, the term holism has gained prominence,
most notably through the writing of Capri, and is based upon “an emphasis on
totality, the replacement of the observer by the participant, thinking in terms of
processes, an affinity with systems theory, and by ecologism as distinct from
that “scientifically and culturally, Western civilisation is moving away from a
Newtonian clockwork-machine universe toward a vision of a living evolving,
ecological universe”. A ‘whole systems’ approach has been adopted in theories
of sustainable development and includes recognition of complexity, interactions
and emergent properties (Hardi and Zdan 1997). Analogies of ecosystems rather
than linear approaches are being increasingly adopted in sustainable
development planning.

Indigenous traditions are often linked to the discussion about new holistic
cultural paradigms in the West based upon non-binary thought (Scott and Gough
2003). Loomis referring to Indigenous initiatives in conceptualising and
implementing sustainable development, notes a:

tacit hint of a new paradigm, one that deserves to be called a new
paradigm in the Kuhnian sense. That is, the increasing awareness that the
pathway to insuring the future well-being of humankind and the planet lies not in limitless growth, consumption and ‘more market’ but in a creative reintegration of economy, society and ecology (Loomis 2000 p. 903).

In essential terms, Indigenous knowledge, despite diversity and dynamism, is holistic and contextual whilst western knowledge is reductionistic and mechanistic (Morgan 2003; Kinnane 2005). McIntyre (2001 p13) observes that:

Indigenous connective frameworks traditionally conceptualise webs of factors that shape their health and well-being, and this resonates with the latest systemic thinking, which eschews categories and instead considers the ramifications of interrelated or webbed variables that connect across health, environment, education, employment, and crime prevention policies” (McIntyre 2001 p. 13).

This can be contrasted to fragmented service delivery models which are imposed upon Indigenous people and appear unable to approach Indigenous sustainable development holistically.

A holistic and relational approach that is found within Indigenous societies is essential for sustainable development. The tensions within sustainable development are found within a modern order and implementation of sustainable development requires the determination of representation, roles and responsibilities and thus boundaries. The implementation of sustainable development necessitates institutional boundaries that are both artificial and legitimate. Boundary drawing and re-drawing requires binary and non-binary thought. Binary opposition thought has been useful for the development of first modernism, as it has enabled the separation of the self from the other and environment. This has led however to objectification of the other and exploitation (McIntyre 2001). Binary thought has overly fixed the boundaries between the self and others, and has tended to empower the selves that are drawing the boundaries. The other is externalised (including Indigenous people and nature) and is rendered invisible and silent. The relational worldview that is offered by Indigenous traditions can provide the perspective through which to balance the dominance of western binary thought where ambivalence is
externalised and rendered invisible. The dominant model of I-It could be accompanied by Buber’s I-Thou which, according to Briggs and Peats (1985), “are neither separate, nor the same”. The reflexivity required to approach the tensions within sustainable development is made possible by including the either/or (of western binary thought) for sorting, categorising and patterning and also both/and (Indigenous relational holism) for including and synthesising (McIntyre 2001).

The diversity of Indigenous knowledge provides the opportunity to unsettle Eurocentric universalism (Suchet 2002) and the boundaries that this creates with others and also with nature. For Latour (1993), environmental problems are hybrid and require recognition of the relationship between nature and culture that is hidden by a dominant worldview which devalues nature through separation. Humans both are within and exist in relation to the natural system and this requires consideration of different worldviews beyond the western binary worldview which created the ecological and social problems of today (Suzuki and McConnell 1997). Davison reminds us that coevolutionary development has characterised Indigenous traditions for centuries (Davison 2001). The connection between Indigenous people and country is framed by culture (Dodson 1996) and is not easily understood by mainstream Australia. Kinnane (2005 p. 171) states that “Australians, in general, are considered to be one of the most ecologically conscious peoples of the world and yet there remains an ambivalence at the heart of mainstream Australian identity which is unable to grasp Indigenous notions of connection to country”.

Indigenous people in Australia have a responsibility and relationship to country and this presents as a significant difference with non-indigenous people. Bayet states:

33 The economy-ecology interaction has been theorised by Norgaard as a coevolutionary approach to sustainable development. Norgaard argues that this approach is necessary and is particularist rather than universalist in order to account for the uncertainties that arise from the non-linear relationship between humans and nature. This perspective argues that global scale is too complex for sustainable development. Norgaard’s approach creates a link between ecological and economic ways of thought (Scott and Gough 2003). Welford writes that “(e)cologists know that the scale on which we do things is too massive, complex, unwieldy, exploitative and alienating. This is never considered because the golden trend demands greater scale” (Welford 1998).
The Dreaming lays down the laws concerning the accessing of resources from the environment. The environment relates directly to social organisation, kinship and social obligations, sacred law, offences against property and persons, marriage, and an individual’s relationship with the land. Aboriginal land and the meaning behind it passes on information about the environment to each generation, depending on where each person was conceived, when she/he quickened within the womb, and the totemic associations of the father and mother. On this basis certain resources could be gained in different areas by accessing kinship rights. Conversely, restriction and taboos would apply to other persons in other areas. As a result of these checks and balances, sanctuaries occurred throughout the environment where certain species could be reproduced without threat of destruction. Aboriginal people perceive the Australian landscape as their cultural domain. It is their traditional duty to be custodians of the land (Bayet 1994 pp. 498-99).

The distinction between wilderness and country is important. Typically the Eurocentric work ethic was based upon toiling the land and wilderness is a concept within the western environmental movement to counter this separation. Wilderness is perceived by western worldviews as a way of restoring humans to strength and remains based upon a binary distinction between humans and nature. It has increased since colonisation and as a policy has been destructive of Indigenous connections to country (Suchet 2002). In Australia for example, Indigenous people are now not able to practice tradition freely in National Parks. For the Martu people this has denied an important connection to the Ruddell River National Park and negates eligibility to funding for infrastructure in the absence of owning title to the land. It is not surprising that Indigenous people remain ambivalent about western environmentalism (Bayet 1994).

The exploitation of land and the concept of wilderness both rely upon a binary separation. Kinnane (2005) discusses an anthroprogenic ethos typical of Indigenous traditions in which human-created or modified landscapes are believed to require human intervention. This is contrasted to an anthroprocentric
and eco-centric perspectives which both rely upon a separation of humans and nature. Kinnane states:

> From an anthropocentric perspective, Indigenous natural resources are assumed to be available to be utilised by ‘superior’ Western agents. From an eco-centric perspective, Indigenous country is seen as a natural ‘wilderness’ devoid of human interaction. Within this duality the notion of wilderness continues to act as a powerful recurring motif for Western developers and Western conservationists resulting in Indigenous peoples rights, processes, and practices in country being doubly disadvantaged. Existing beyond this eco-centric/anthropocentric divide, Indigenous approaches to country are best described as operating within an anthropogenic, human-created natural world in which Indigenous practices are considered to be essential elements of the natural world (Kinnane 2005 p. 172).

This aligns most closely to ecological consciousness and thus stronger versions of sustainable development (see Appendix One) than to most other western constructs about nature. Anthropocentrism provides a means of enabling the transcendence of many of the tensions of sustainable development by recognising the humans’ inter-connected and co-evolutionary relationship to nature.

It is now more critical to restore the human and nature relationship than ever. There have been more species lost in the last 150 years than since the ice age (LaDuke 1999). There are many reasons for maintaining biodiversity, which range from ethical to self interest, enlightened or otherwise. Indigenous and Western views on biodiversity often conflict over cultural versus economic interests (Little 2005). Indigenous people compose 5% of the world’s population but speak 67-83% of the languages. The cultural diversity of Indigenous people is thus high. This thesis has demonstrated through the case study that Martu diversity is not well recognised and valued by western institutional practice and discourse. Diversity is obscured by a managerial approach by western institutions to relating and the global hegemony of managerialism has significant implications. Indigenous people can be seen as the miner’s canary for the global wealthy elite (Havemann and Whall 2002).
Estimates of Indigenous language loss are as high as 90% over the 21st century. Indigenous people have a culture with the useful skills and knowledge for caring for the local environment. Where Indigenous people remain, biodiversity is greater, however the adaptive mechanisms within Indigenous societies are being rapidly lost. This loss not only affects the culture and social makeup of communities but also decreases Indigenous communities’ capabilities of responding to increased environmental degradation, which has global ramifications. Not only is biological and cultural diversity important but so is the synergy between them (Suzuki and McConnell 1997; Fischer-Kowalski and Haberl 1998; Mebratu 1998; LaDuke 1999; Havemann and Whall 2002; Nederveen Pieterse 2004; Scott 2004). The capacity for creative, adaptive and contextual thought that is generated through the many synergies of diversity is necessary to address complexity in reflexive modernity towards a sustainable future within a framework of relational holism. In order for this to occur time and resources must be invested into the building of relationship within institutional space.

6.3 Power, Politics and Deliberative Democracy

It has been argued in this thesis that the dominant Australian institutional practice and discourse is aligned to a managerial and instrumental approach which focuses upon bureaucratic service delivery. The relationships of power and the necessary recognition of politics are effectively obscured; re-framing both is necessary for Indigenous representation of self and Indigenous visions of sustainable development to emerge. Deliberative democracy provides a mechanism through which to intervene and negotiate representation, roles and responsibilities across culture within a process approach. Section 6.3.1 discusses the necessary re-framing of power and politics and draws upon lessons from the case study. A Cosmopolitan Deliberative Democracy is discussed in Section 6.3.2 as necessary for encouraging the dialogical politics needed for sustainable development.
6.3.1 Power and Politics

Politics is about power, wealth and status. For the ethno-politics of Indigeneity, power translates into self-determination, wealth into land, and status into a distinct, collective identity with associated rights (Fleras 1999; Havemann 1999b). The Federal storyline and much of the Newman discourse does not recognise these claims. The focus of much of Australian institutional practice and discourse is upon ‘practical’ decentralisation rather than devolution of power to Indigenous representative structures. Incorporation of Indigenous people into the ethos of the wider structures has been the historical precedent to increase state surveillance and threaten cultural independence (Hollinsworth 1996). Power here works to further empower those that establish the boundary of representation (Suchet 2002). The consultancy participatory projects demonstrated that Martu people were excluded from decision making forums. Decision making primarily occurs in Perth and is also distant from the local level of government.

There appears little regard for politics within the Newman discourse. This is despite recognition of the differences that exist between the local and other levels of government, and reflects a lack of faith in current political mechanisms. This is likely to be strongly influenced by the Federal government discourse within this storyline about Indigenous sustainable development, which provides an overarching framework of governmentality. Bureaucratic ideology in Australia is dominated by a new public management which relies upon benchmarking and indicators. This is not compatible with Indigenous social and political values derived from a holistic base (Fletcher 1999c). Fergusson (1994 p. xiv-xv) discusses “the expansion and entrenchment of bureaucratic state power, side by side with the projection of a representation of economic and social life which denies ‘politics’” (cited in Smith 2003 p. 101). Bureaucratic and rationalistic policy is unlikely to be the right approach to cross-cultural governance (Mowbray 1994). This works to marginalise and discredit Indigenous knowledge.
Policy making was far from a linear process within either of the consultancy participatory case study projects. This is not surprising as a participatory exercise ‘managed’ by bureaucracy does not sufficiently account for the political process that is required for learning. Political processes are necessary because of different interests, to better incorporate decision making across all of the geographies and cultures of the political process, to enable learning and to better capture the productivity of conflict. I support Albrecht’s (2003) suggestion to better institutionalise politics and power relations to amplify Indigenous voices and representations. There is a need in Australia to move from administrative to political processes that include Indigenous people and better allow for diverse Indigenous representations of identity and responsibility to occur. This has happened in many other places of the world because power was found to be at the root of the issues (Jull 2002). Neither technical nor administrative solutions alone are sufficient for a sustainable development approach, which is of course not a novel approach (see Shiva 1992; Lele and Norgaard 1996). It is instead the case that a technical and administrative approach must be better complemented by a participatory and political approach which allows for amplification of diverse Indigenous visions of sustainable development.

Michael Dodson’s (2002) description of sustainable development acknowledges the political as well as administrative mechanisms. He states that sustainable development is:

> A direction more than a place: it is about innovation and opportunity and involves value judgments about the direction and speed of change. It is also multidimensional, involving social processes concerned with the distributional aspects of benefits and adverse impacts. And it involves political and administrative processes concerned with negotiating the rights and interests of stakeholders involved (Dodson 2002 pp. 3-4).

This however requires dialogue. There is an expression within the Newman discourse of the necessity of a dialogue with Martu people and with other levels of government which contradicts the dominant perceptions of politics. It is possible to presume that politics that enabled meaningful dialogue, the circulation of information and feedback would be more widely accepted. The
desire for dialogue within the Newman discourse aligns more with the Indigenous storyline about Indigenous sustainable development than the Federal Standard Story. There has never been a mechanism for a comprehensive dialogue between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Australia (Fletcher 1999c). This is required as a “continuous state of being” between Indigenous people and the institutional structures that surround them (Bradford 2004b p. 174) and in Newman it is necessary to coordinate the diverse and at times ambivalent ideological representations of Martu people across the institutional actors. It is also necessary for sustainable development across culture. This will take time and political support (Jull 2002). Deliberative democracy is explored in the following section as a mechanism for such a dialogue.

6.3.2 Cosmopolitan Deliberative Democracy

Where democracy is weak, sustainable development is also likely to be weak, as power is in the hands of a few (Beauregard 2003). Increasingly, decisions are being made internationally in boardrooms and laboratories which political systems are legitimising. This indicates the rising influence of corporate interests and the declining role of parliament. Responsibilities are becoming unclear as the role of different institutions is changing. The separation between politics and nonpolitics is becoming blurred and there is a rising subpolitics, including special interests groups, social movements and localisation (Pieterse 1998). Globalisation is resulting in a need to focus upon democracy, to counter the power of markets (Sen 1999).

Reflexive modernisation, Gleeson suggests, has:

emerged dialectically from the encounter between entrenched modernist thinking and the post-modern and post-structuralist critiques leveled at it …reflexive modernisation cannot be regarded as a political-conceptual mid-point on the modernism-post-modernism continuum, a coordinate that would imply a simple reformist politics ..may offer transcendence from the paradox raised by the dual crisis of the status quo and post-modernism by suggesting a transformative politics that is at once
historical and progressive: historical for its reinscription of Enlightenment ideals and values; and progressive because it demands the re-modernisation of modernity, involving, inter alia, the replacement of the modernist state by a reflexive cosmopolitan democracy (Gleeson 2000 p. 118).

Albrechts (2003) observes internationally that political modernisation has been characterised recently by government invitations to listen to a voice/voices about decision making by different actors including citizenry and the private sector. Historically, participatory democracy of the 1960s was joined by discursive democracy models in the 1980s and 1990s. The earlier concern with poverty and institutional discrimination was replaced with issues of identity and rights. Discursive democracy gave publicity to marginal groups. It focuses upon talk and deliberation in which people speak, listen, reflect and search for common ground. This provides for a better process for sustainable development, particularly across culture, when compared to representative and participatory democracy which centres upon the interests of the individual first (Beauregard 2003). This was evident within the deliberative dialogue in the second consultancy participatory project.

It was discussed in Chapter Four that the second consultancy participatory project, Dialogue with the Pilbara: Newman Tomorrow allowed for a reframing of the regional narrative. The stories that emerged from the Dialogue included Martu stories and visions, the importance of social and environmental responsibilities in addition to stories of economic development. These stories are already present but require amplification to be heard above the dominant national story about the importance of mining in the Pilbara and the national financial benefit this produces. Situated engagement is necessary to open up contextual spaces (Suchet 2002) and must allow for multiple cultural interpretations. Dialogic processes are necessary to overcome the tension between universalism and particularism, and thus to challenge the dominance of universalism. Sustainability provides a framework to explore interactions contextually but requires deliberation to drive the process.
Deliberations should take multiple forms and “include the instrumental and
linear presentations of policy analysts and planners, the strategic calculations of
elected officials, the commentary of public intellectuals, and the personal stories
of common citizens, among others” (Beauregard 2003 p. 68). The style of
language and narrative is important and must allow for cross-cultural
understandings and influence. Indigenous people do not just want knowledge
included, this needs to be able to change the way that knowledge is evaluated
(Sandercock 2003 p. 159). Democracy is thick when it is able to generate
multiple, deep and inclusive public understandings (Beauregard 2003). This will
require a transdisciplinary openness and transparency of assumptions and value
judgments and an acknowledgement of the productivity of conflict (Hatzius
1996).

A cosmopolitan democracy is much like the dialogic democracy discussed.
Mouzelis (2001 p. 441) advocates the “establishment of dialogic forms of
communication/decision-making in all social areas where the decline of tradition
and collectivist ideologies has created ‘empty spaces’”. The cosmopolitan
democracy of Archibugi and Held is discussed by Beck (1997 p. 46) to address
the “fading of democracy” that “can aim at the …development of..a republican
modernity with cosmopolitan intent”. The task of radical cosmopolitical
democratic theory and practice is to invite the cultural others of first modern
society into a dialogue and thus to extend rights to a viable life. According to
Beck et al. (2003), European societies invented modernity and therefore have a
special responsibility in reshaping it and to arrange institutions of transnational
and transreligious dialogue which is highly arguable. For Bauman (2000) a
’republican model of unity’ is proposed which is based upon negotiation and
reconciliation rather than “denial, stifling or smothering out of differences”.

The crossing of culture will require that practitioners have the skills to build trust
and create safe places. This is particularly necessary for the involvement of
Indigenous people. Practitioners are also required to be “fluent in a range of
ways of acquiring information and communicating: from storytelling to listening
to interpreting visual and body language” (Sandercock 2003). A cosmopolitan
democracy that relies upon deliberation will require a creative approach
including ‘chants, music, song, dancing’ that goes beyond Habermas’s communicative action model (Sandercock 2003). There is no doubt that institutions within Australia need to incorporate alternative forms of deliberation to encourage politics that is inclusive of diverse Indigenous views and stories for sustainable development.

6.4 Cross-cultural Governance

Governance processes and structures must better allow for change and hybridity in order to better meet the challenges presented to sustainable development. Reflexive modernity is resulting in the questioning of boundaries which determine representation and responsibility. New governance arrangements are necessary for sustainable development. Envisioning, organising and implementing sustainable development across geographical space and across culture is complex. This requires consideration of governance within and between government, industry and civil society at all scales within a globalising world. There is much debate about the relevance of the nation state. In any case, an organisational explosion (including the rise of non-governmental organisations) is occurring at the global, national, regional and local levels (Rosenau 2005). A network society is emerging and is challenging the traditional hierarchical understanding of power and decision making (Marschall 1999). The organisation of change for sustainable development must now consider the structural hybridisation and melange cultural modes which are leading to the pluralisation of both cooperation and competition (Nederveen Pieterse 2004). This is necessary for the negotiation of responsibility and representation across cultures and for the consideration of power.

Lessons from cross-cultural governance models in Indigenous Australia are outlined in Section 6.4.1. This has relevance for sustainable development which requires amplification of Indigenous representations and this will require experimentation in cross-cultural governance. The necessity of institutional
change and the use of participatory methods to do this are described in Section 6.4.2.

6.4.1 Cross-cultural Governance in Australia

Governance is ultimately about control over decision making processes and thus also control over the direction of development. Structures of representation and responsibility have been imposed upon Indigenous people in Australia. Dodson and Smith (2003) state that good governance is the ‘foundation stone’ upon which socio-economic sustainability in Indigenous communities will be built and is thus the most imperative issue for Indigenous affairs. All development initiatives should thus include efforts to build effective governance.

Good governance generally relates to legitimate and capable rule and an environment of collective action which results in social, cultural and economic development as determined by the citizenry. A summary of relevant literature can categorise good governance by four attributes:

- Legitimacy: this depends upon how the structures of governance are created and how leaders are chosen, and also upon citizens’ confidence in them;
- Power: the accepted legal and cultural capacity and authority to determine and enforce laws, resolve disputes and administer public affairs;
- Resources: the economic, cultural, social and natural resources in addition to the information technology required to support governance;
- Accountability: relates to the extent to which governing bodies are required to be transparent, explain and justify actions (Dodson1994; Plumptre and Graham 1999; Sterritt 2001).

The translation of these attributes across culture will likely result in differing meanings.

The concept of governance is concerned with both processes and structures. It relates to the institutions (both formal and informal) through which a group is
best able to make decisions, organise authority and power, envisage a strategic
direction and develop appropriate rules and behavior (Plumptre and Graham
1999; Dodson and Smith 2003). It is not only relevant for government but also
individuals, the private sector and non-government organisations. Whilst ‘self
government’ is primarily concerned with jurisdictional control, ‘governance’
relates more to the institutional capacity to undertake decision-making, and meet
established representation and accountability criteria (Sterritt 2001; Dodson and
Smith 2003). Framing governance as cross-institutional allows for the processes
necessary to cross-culture for sustainable development.

The Harvard Project in the United States has 15 years of research and analysis to
offer the Australian context. This project, which was focused upon American
Indians, has in recent years received substantial attention in the Australian
discourse. It has identified five key characteristics that enable success for
Indigenous governance when this is defined as being good economic
development, increased employment and a better quality of life. These build
upon the characteristics of good governance as outlined above, with a specific
focus on the particular requirements of Indigenous governing systems:

- Sovereignty: as a necessary but not sufficient condition;
- Good governing institutions: a stable bureaucracy that separates politics
  from business management and is efficient and effective;
- Cultural match: institutions that match and have legitimacy with
  contemporary Indigenous cultures is more important than institutions that
  have legitimacy with State and Federal governments;
- Strategic orientation: a move away from welfare band-aid approaches is
  necessary for the creation of long-term vision that is able to shape policy
  and make project decisions;
- Leadership: investment in leadership to take responsibility for decision
  making (Cornell and Kalt 1998).

Four central building blocks for effective Native American Indigenous
development are proposed by Cornell and Kalt (1998). These are sovereignty,
effective institutions, strategic direction and decisions/action. Sovereignty is a
pre-condition that is best supported by effective governing institutions. A degree of autonomy through at least de facto sovereignty is necessary. Autonomy is a relative term and is concerned with degrees of control rather than any fixed level. It opens up the possibility of internal self-governance (Arthur 2001). A development strategy provides the long-term vision through which to make decisions to act. The last three factors lie within tribal control. Sovereignty or de facto sovereignty is a political relationship in which the tribe is able to exercise decision-making and take responsibility for those decisions. A major conclusion of the Harvard Project is that de facto sovereignty at the very least is a key factor in development. There is not one single success story in which the federal agencies have exercised responsibility (Cornell and Kalt 1998). A recognition of sovereignty goes beyond self-management (Kinnane 2005) and allows Indigenous people to not just be involved in service delivery but to influence its design which they have so far been denied (Dodson 1994).

Jull (2002) writes that other governments in the ‘club’ of wealth have accepted that some autonomy is necessary for Indigenous people, as this is a prerequisite to overcome problems as defined by Indigenous people. It is also necessary for the protection of Indigenous knowledge (Jull 2002), which is important to provide a cultural value challenge for sustainable development (discussed later in this chapter). There are four models of the relationship between Indigenous communities and government: assimilation, integration, delegation, and autonomy (Wolfe 1994). The relationship between government and communities has typically been based on the first two. An era of self-determination witnessed the third but without appropriate capacity building of either government or Indigenous organisations.

Almost any institutional redesign that better allows for Indigenous autonomy however has been a challenge to the power of the Austinian ‘Grundnorm’ (Havemann 1999a). There is a reluctance to consent to development of separate structures with a distinct power base and parallel institutions (Fleras 1999). Lea (2000) has discussed Kymlicka’s proposed practical measures which enable a degree of local autonomy and cultural protection for Indigenous minorities within a larger political entity. These include (Lea 2000):
• Special representation at the Federal level through special group representational rights;
• Devolution of authority over issues relevant to local cultures to smaller political units, especially issues of immigration, education, resource development, language and family law;
• Polyethnic rights which protect special religious and cultural practices through the funding of special programs which would otherwise not be protected through the market.

The goal of these measures is self-determining entities within the pluralistic state (Lea 2000) and these would not split the power of the Austinian ‘Grundnorm’ anymore than federalism does (Havemann 1999a). The issue at stake however is power and control, and accountability is often used to justify the negation of these (Fletcher 1999a). These models are being trialed elsewhere in the world. In New Zealand, for example, parliamentary seats are reserved for Indigenous people and in Norway, Sweden and Finland, Indigenous representatives sit alongside mainstream government (Arthur 2001). This contrasts with the Federal approach which is based upon mainstreaming Indigenous services and representation and is replicated to a large degree within the Newman discourse.

An Indigenous order of Australian Government is considered by Sanders (2002) who argues that the rise of the Indigenous organisational sector has provided some order and stability in the representation of Indigenous issues. Limitations have been that Indigenous interests are comparable to other corporate type interests, unlike Canada where the Indigenous population experiences first nation recognition. Sanders (2002) argues that policy recognition of Indigenous organisations as an Indigenous order of Australian government should result practically in simplified and consistent funding arrangements and theoretically in the initiation of a treaty-making process. For him, governance processes are just as important as structure and thus communication and transparency at all organisational levels must ensure diverse representation and accountability. Different organisations offer differing contributions to the process of governance. Sanders (2002 p. 8) states that if “government is thought of more as
a process than as a structure, then there is no need to categorise organisations as either internal or external to government, or indeed as either internal or external to the Indigenous community”. Thus much like the discourse of shared sovereignty, framing governance as a process as well as structure provides an opportunity to examine boundaries of responsibility and representation other than those that define the nation state and the overly simple inclusion or exclusion of Indigenous people within this boundary.

Shared and inter-locking sovereignty is consistent with principles and practice of post-colonialism, and both structure and process are important. There is a need to establish creative structures and innovative processes (Fleras 1999) that are contextual with local and regional conditions. Jull states:

The best way forward in hinterland development is for national governments to recognise indigenous political communities and their rights, and assuring to indigenous peoples their associated imperatives of culture, language and self-government; by accommodating, joining with, or reconciling with those communities through the design of new political, legal and administrative arrangements, governments can best protect land and sea territory and its sustainable resources and livelihoods (Jull 2002 p. 1).

It has typically been the case that governance structures have been imposed upon communities. Lea and Wolfe (1993) write that councils are cumbersome and bureaucratic European structures and are restricted in what they can do. In the case study, there is clear evidence of western protocols and structures being imposed over the Martu people. Figure 6.1 shows a pamphlet that was composed by a local agency person to advertise an upcoming Annual General Meeting for the Martu Community Council in 2001. This flyer shows white people huddled over a computer. Appendix Five has the other form of advertising for this event, a notice in the local newspaper, which is a legal requirement. Neither, in my opinion is suitable to adequately account for cross-cultural representation. Training notes that were compiled by the same local agency for the Martu Community Council are given in Appendix Six. The aim of these notes is to train the Community Council in western protocols. There is
perhaps a need for this; however my point here is to emphasis that there is little space for divergent cross-cultural understandings about representative structures to emerge. Newly created community institutions require to be understood including how they interact with existing or traditional structures (Cornwall 2002). Rowse (1992) argues that the dualities that exist between Indigenous governance and the introduced political structures are a result of the legacy of the colonial encounter. He believes that they will continue for some time. It is unlikely that the indeterminacy that exists will be resolved into a stable and predictable order that is the same across the continent.

Figure 6.1: Flyer Advertising the AGM for the Martu Community Council
Typically, the culture of the dominant western institutions is mirrored with some slight tinkering to make them culturally appropriate. This is likely to erode traditional customs and practices, and cultural differences as well as stifle experimentation (Behrendt 2003). Legislation such as the *Native Title Act* and the *Aboriginal Councils and Association Act* is trying to empower and preserve traditional structures (based upon authority, tradition and custom) by imposing a different form of organisational structure (based upon dynamics of choice). It is generally the more literate Indigenous people who are able to work through choice within this system, which does not necessarily correlate with traditional owners who govern through obligation. However, it is not just a matter of making traditional representative structures fit the ‘cultural context of choice’ to protect themselves against westernisation, which is a difficult task in itself as they exist within a wider government (Lea 2000). The balance of representation and democracy requires negotiation of complex relationships which include issues of bloodline, age, gender and representatives of family groups as well as economic disparities (Peters-Little 1999).

Traditional customs and associated governing systems continue to exist but are neither static or rigid (Ross 2003). Martin (2003 p. 8) refers to a strategic engagement which is defined as “processes through which Indigenous individuals and collectivities are able to interact with, contribute to, draw from – and of course potentially reject – the formal and informal institutions of the Australian society, in a considered and informed manner that provides them with real choices as to where to go, and how to get there”. This is a process rather than an outcome which recognises that Indigenous people do not live within a cultural vacuum and that they should have some control over the terms of the engagement. Deliberative democracy provides a potential mechanism for this.

The issue of scale is much debated and is complex. McIntyre (2001 p. 23) states that for some, “decentralisation of decision making could empower local communities because there are more possibilities for self-determination in decision making in local areas (e.g. town camps) and for others, decentralisation is seen as a move towards disempowering the indigenous nation-building
process”. For Dodson (2004 p. 13) a representative voice at all levels will lead to a “mutually beneficial outcome”. There is a need to work on intra-Indigenous governance (Kinnane 2005) which has received little attention by the Federal Standard Storyline.

In December 2005, the then Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Amanda Vanstone, announced that the closure of smaller settlements was desirable. Lea and Wolfe (1993) state that external agencies need to recognise that communities will vary in their size and also organisational structure and that Indigenous people need to be given space to define the scale of community. Cedric Wyatt at Jigalong argues that larger settlements should be given town status so that they can help (not replace) smaller communities “It provides the social services that a community needs to maintain their health, access good education, employment opportunities, training opportunities – I mean those services just don’t exist” (ABC 2005).

There is much discussion about a new regionalism for Indigenous Australians in relation to representation. The necessity of a regional approach is supported by Macintyre (2001) in regards to her work on Alice Springs. She states that Indigenous development is only possible through working across the region and across the public, private and non-government sector and that the idea of a dry community just transplants the problem to another part of the region. Planning has to be at the level of both regional and local governance so that rights and responsibilities can be negotiated and understood. Noel Pearson’s Cape York is a much-cited example. The realistic ‘limits to localism’ necessitate consideration of both regional and community driven approaches (Smith 2002). Rowse (1992 pp. 89-90) supports this in his warning that Indigenous self-government often just relates to a unified and centralised entity and by stating that “autonomy refers not only to Aborigines’ relationships with non-Aboriginal society, but, just as important, it refers to their relationships with one another”. McIntyre (2001 p. 23) argues that there “appears to be a need for both local control for health and development and also social movements for building a sense of national Indigenous identity by working across organisations” and that the “balance of power between local councils and overarching councils could be addressed”.
Difficulties arise through politics in the formation of regional bodies. There are a number of ways to define a region including demographically, geographically, and geo-politically, and some regions are easier to define than others (Arthur 2001).

A model of Indigenous governance termed regionally dispersed, layered community governance was considered by Rowse 10 years ago and remains relevant today (Rowse 1992; Sanders 2000; Smith 2002). This allows for both devolution (and thus autonomy) as well as centralisation, and has important lessons for the diverse representative structures required to cross culture within sustainable development in order to better negotiate responsibility. In a regional dispersed layered model the role of major hub communities is the focus of decentralisation and devolution. Governance arrangements are then dispersed to smaller satellite communities which would retain autonomy of decision making and management. These communities could then disperse governance responsibilities and accountabilities upwards to regional organisations responsible for particular services e.g. housing. Regional function-specific service agencies are able to provide advice and supervision and share information. Regional districts may develop from this upwards regional aggregation which would best occur through negotiated agreements. Roles and responsibilities within this overlapping network of organisations must be clear.

There are a number of advantages to this model. They include:

- A culturally appropriate balance between local autonomy and collective relatedness;
- Provides opportunities for diverse and equitable representation, imperative for the multiple and overlapping layers of traditional obligations;
- It enables flexibility and consensus through shared cultural, social, economic and political objectives which result in aggregations and regional districts;
- It is adaptable to change;
- Enables a whole of community approach;
• Distributes accountability vertically and horizontally, thus spreading and therefore making the workload more manageable;
• Encourages economies of scale;
• It is already being practiced through Indigenous initiatives, such as: the homelands and outstations movement; the Coordinated Care Health projects; and the activities of regional function-specific Indigenous resource agencies (Sanders 2000; Sanders 2002; Smith 2002; Ross 2003).

Smith (2002) proposes a financial framework for resourcing this model that consists of two components currently lacking within the Australian context: the decentralisation of agreed areas of financial authority to communities; and the devolution of negotiated areas of jurisdictional authority to major communities. Decentralisation primarily relates to the delegation of responsibility to subordinate units within a hierarchy. Devolution involves creating autonomous geographical authority, responsibility and entitlement and also downward accountability to the community/ies. Jurisdictional devolution is a necessary complement to decentralisation, as it better transfers power and capacity and thus autonomy to the local level and is the most appropriate term through which to discuss Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination. This will require a number of mechanisms which are immediately applicable to the Western Desert, Newman and also to the Pilbara generally, including:

• Jurisdictional recognition of representative governing bodies in communities;
• Negotiation of an adequate funding base for community governance (tied to considerations of location, population, entitlements, disability factors);
• Consolidated pooling of multi-jurisdictional funding (triennial block funding with a flexible negotiated package of tied/untied funds);
• Funding for communities to develop financial transition and governance planning strategies;
• Development of mechanisms for communities to negotiate legally-binding governance agreements;
• Establishment of an Indigenous Financial Management and Training package (operating a system of training, mentoring and accreditation for community financial management);
• Consideration of models for developing regionally-dispersed community governance (Smith, 2002).

The plausible opportunities post-ATSIC focus upon the formulation of regional plans and agreements which could drive the regional dispersed layered model. Patrick Sullivan (1996) argues that these plans should allow Indigenous organisations to slowly adapt in a culturally appropriate manner to governance and service delivery. He believes that firstly, Indigenous culture will become institutionalised and applied in new forums and secondly, this will result in recognition, legitimacy and endorsement by the dominant system. This could result in an experimental approach to self-government which is driven by Indigenous communities. Regional agreements that grant powers similar to local councils are a possibility. Institutional arrangements would involve delegation of power from Federal and State governments. Possibilities exist through the creation of powers to make community by-laws; State legislation which would enable Indigenous administered education, health and justice; through the Federal race power which concerns family law matters; and also delegation to establish institutions and infrastructure is possible through both levels of government. The resulting regional agreements would ideally occur concurrently with the negotiation of an agreed process and standard at the national level, which could potentially result in a treaty regarding principles and jurisdiction that guides regional and local agreements (Behrendt, 2003).

Holcombe (2004) provides a historical review of Indigenous engagement with the mining sector within the Pilbara and discusses the contemporary Indigenous organisational context. She states that the “modern multi-articulated Indigenous lifestyle equates to both dispersed residence and dispersed governance” (Holcombe 2004 p. 7). Negotiations relating to native title and resource extraction with the mining industry have led Indigenous interests to be dispersed over a number of administrative processes and agreements. This does allow for a
dispersed and layered model across different families and language groups, but it is also unnecessarily competitive.

Tensions between the collectivity, at the community or regional level, and the desire for individual autonomy within the Pilbara are likely to complicate Indigenous governance structures and processes. Indigenous leaders face a difficult task of reconciling the diversity of interests with a majority interest, necessary for democratic leadership. Positive and tangible change is required to maintain respect of constituents. This is difficult within Indigenous societies who face overarching constraints that are sometimes externally imposed (Holcombe 2004). Government and industry policy and programs must support Indigenous leaders within the tensions between individual, community and regional interests.

Without improved governance capacity, communities are unlikely to make informed decisions about the form of development; nor are Indigenous people able to adequately able to provide comprehensive representations of these decisions necessary for negotiation across culture. There was little to no evidence of this approach within the case study. It is unfair to ask Indigenous people to be responsible for decision making without the knowledge, skills and capacity (as defined in negotiation with the communities themselves) to make decisions (Ah Kit 2002); government policy must make this an immediate priority and provide resources accordingly. The experience with the policy of self-determination demonstrates that capacity building for governance should be an iterative learning process that takes place within a framework allowing for experimentation in cross-cultural governance. It will require long term commitment by government and industry and a willingness to change. Experimenting in cross-cultural governance is a priority for sustainable development in order to negotiate responsibilities across space and time. This necessitates ongoing dialogue and the surfacing of politics. It will also require institutional change which is the focus of the following chapter.
6.4.2 Institutional Change

The institutions that surround Indigenous people are founded upon colonial assumptions and tend towards a managerial approach to ‘the Indigenous problem’. It has been argued throughout this thesis that a relational approach within the institutions of government and industry is required that better allows for participatory engagement and cross-cultural experimentation and learning with Indigenous people. This is essential for sustainable development as institutions are an important meeting place of cultures and geographical spaces. Most importantly, institutions need to be reframed to be founded upon a relational culture of care (Tilbury and Wortman 2004).

One of the participants discussed the disconnection of senior bureaucrats and the need to take these people to the ground where the decisions should be made:

Well I mean one of the problems that I get at my level of dealing with the bureaucracy is that I have a problem, people come to me with a problem and they are blocked because of some level of bureaucracy, so I go from the top end and come down and, I have agency heads who have been in that position for 10 years who can’t believe that that’s a problem...so they are so disconnected themselves... the most effective tool that I’ve had in getting anything done and changes made is to actually get the people who can make decisions out on the ground by one way or the other, even threaten these preselections even to get out there, that’s the crux of the matter. The decision makers actually have be taken out of their cocoons and have to actually be put out into where the decisions need to be made and that’s the biggest criticism you get generally from people in the bush you know. People that I have brought out, bureaucrats who have come in different trips with me out in the scrub, ..you talk to them two years later they are so, they are still impassioned by...it’s like there’s a small sub culture (Interviewee 21, non-Indigenous).
This participant suggests sending departmental heads to communities as part of professional development to “break down all the red tape”.

Another participant at the local level also suggests this approach for local agencies:

....a month living in a community would be a really good thing for a lot of these people...spent assisting in one of the places, either in the medical centre or in the school or helping in the office in the council chambers ...with the Martu...just be part of the team, part of it...if these people don’t want to, they don’t have to speak English and I have to make an effort to understand you...A lot of people just sort of I think in their own situation well I just done my bit, I did my best and that’s all I can do (Interviewee 13, Indigenous).

The importance of commitment and care to the Martu people was highlighted within the interviews. However, this was seen to lie with only a few individuals and was not the norm within bureaucratic structures. A participant states:

So occasionally you get hard working individuals that sort of like come in and make a brief bent and to the mob’s credit they’re able to distinguish when that person comes along you know (Interviewee 13, Indigenous).

There was much discussion about the ‘wrong people’ in positions that interact with the Martu people. It was seen that people get these positions because their partner is working for the mine. Greater attention needs to be given to employment practices within government agencies. High staff turnover is also attributed to the lack of support provided. This was explained by one participant:

... people who have got the skills either won’t commit long term or the funding is not long term or they burn out (Interviewee 6, non-Indigenous).
Employment recruitment and incentive procedures need to recognise the importance and thus reward commitment and care.

There is also a need to provide greater institutional support and care for cultural translation and awareness at the local level for agencies and also for Indigenous representative structures. The lack of this support is a cause of burn out and the high turnover of institutional staff. Bottlenecks occur between cultures and this tends towards an over-reliance upon Anglo staff and upon a few Indigenous people that are able to communicate with institutional structures. There are minimal Indigenous people working at the interface with the Martu people. One of them states:

*Listening to the people talk out there, they’re very, very happy that they got one of their own…I can explain it to them in basic terms that they can understand. They don’t feel intimidated by, you know, a white person or anything like that trying to, it’s not they don’t understand like that, I think it’s just they are very wary* (Interviewee 23, Indigenous).

Indigenous people can play an essential role in cultural translation. This was recognised by some of the interviewees as important to build relationships and to translate across languages. Indigenous people and in particular local Martu people require support to undertake this role (Mowbray 1994; Peters-Little 1999). One Indigenous person states:

*The outsiders come in and telling the Martu what to do it doesn’t work in my experience. Whereas they seem to get along a lot better with Indigenous people from the local area...they start taking up a lot of the slack that anthropologists had because the people who they know, their country is they share commonality in law. They know their people the same as us, they’re not going to be cheeky and try and tell us what to do. We’re not going to have the antagonistic outlook to start of with when we enter the relations when they want them to be here* (Interviewee 13, Indigenous).
There is a tension within the discourse between the extent to which Indigenous people are made to conform to the organisation or the extent to which the organisation takes on the suggestions that are provided by Indigenous people. One person suggests:

*But they also need to then respect the work culture of the organisation*

(Interviewee 4, non-Indigenous).

Again, this re-iterates the importance of dialogue.

The importance of Indigenous organisations in cultural translation is also underestimated. They act as cultural mediators between government, community and industry (Sullivan 1988). These institutions are not comfortable places, as the meanings of both western and Indigenous values are contested (Folds 2001). Indigenous organisations currently face funding arrangements that are overly complex, uncertain, inflexible and uncoordinated, subject to constant change without consultation or communication, are overly administrative resulting in the dominance of upward accountability, lack transparency, and are insufficient to meet needs (Ah Kit 2002; Smith 2002).

The development of local protocols was suggested by one participant as a way to build relationships and improving cultural translation processes:

*...people have to be able to change the way, they have to start putting a lot of work just to improve relations and getting a working relationship going and some sort of guidelines going... protocols* (Interviewee 13, Indigenous).

This is a necessary strategy to counter the continual changeover of staff and counter the current seagull mentality of higher levels of government. It also provides power to Indigenous representative structures, enabling them to hold government, industry and academia to account. There was no negotiation about protocols in either of the participatory projects. This would be a starting point for
me in any future work with Indigenous people, particularly that which involves the extraction of information.

Institutions must better allow for phronesis, and study the values and ideology that underpin practice and discourse. The lessons from lower levels of government (policy implementation) require amplification in policy formulation. It is also necessary to learn the lessons from the past and from success (O'Donoghue 1999) and to maintain necessary records about information that is produced. There was little evidence of this in the case study and this appears to exacerbate apparent over-consultation of the local level by higher levels of mainstream government.

There is certainly a need to decolonise the institutions that surround Indigenous people and that are not amenable to Indigenous worldviews or knowledge (Howitt 2001). There is a need to remove the deeply entrenched belief about terra nullius within Australian institutions (Dodson 1994; Behrendt 2003). This is associated with a requirement to develop a historical memory (Crawford 1989) and honesty to understand the layers of oppression that face Indigenous people (Alford and Muir 2004). Neoliberal economic policy is a threat to Indigenous self-determination as it is unsympathetic to culture and the legacy of history (Behrendt 2002).

The decolonisation of western institutions will require a critical consciousness to be developed within the people that are found in these institutions. This consciousness must address the ideology of its discourse and practice. The ethnocentric dominant worldview has obscured other ways of knowing (Clarkson et al. 1992). Cowlishaw (1999) comments upon the unselfconsciousness of the Anglo subject of their own cultural domain. The corporation including bureaucratic organisation and practice needs to become visible as a cultural practice and as part of individual subjectivities. Critical awareness would enable a questioning of the cultural assumptions of western institutions (Taurima and Cash 2000), must allow people to interpret the ideological undercurrents of their discourse and how this represents Indigenous people. Nelson and Wright (1995 p. 11) ask “if bureaucrats and researchers are
embedded in the apparatus, and do not look reflexively at how it is working, how can they ‘empower’ others?"

It is the occupational hazards of bureaucracies to define their success by their ability to process a problem quickly or to achieve material results within a specified period of time (Goulet 1989). The normal bureaucratic tendency is to standardise, centralise and impose top-down targets and thus to impede or prevent open-endedness, flexibility, creativity and diversity (Chambers 1994). The project or program approach typical of bureaucracies exacerbates these tendencies (Leurs 1998). Pearson, a recognised indigenous leader and activist, argues that the Australian Government needs to transform from a position of disabling to enabling, so that Indigenous communities are in a position of senior partner who is empowered, engaged and in control rather than in a position of passive dependency (Pearson 2001). Both government and industry do have responsibility and this must be translated into community action and state support. The key elements that require attention are influence, authority, decision-making, access, control and ownership over funding and knowledge (Leurs 1998). Ongoing processes that allow for a dialogue across cultures is necessary. The practice and theory of participation has much to offer here.

Thompson (1998) argues that it is possible to alter the operational procedures and institutional cultures of centralised, bureaucratic institutions, but this is not easy nor is it quickly achieved. Some of the key elements required for government and industry to become strategic, enabling institutions are:

1. a policy framework supportive of a clear role for local communities;
2. strong leadership committed to developing learning-organisational systems, capacities and working rules;
3. long-term financial commitments and flexible funding arrangements;
4. better systems of monitoring and evaluating performance, and new mechanisms for ensuring accountability, both to policy and to communities;
5. attention and patience in working out the details of systems and procedures, with lessons learnt from pilot projects, and the negotiation and accommodation of different interests and perceptions;
6. creative management, so that improved policies, procedures and field practices, once developed, can be scaled-up and implemented effectively;
7. an open, supportive yet challenging organisational climate in which it is safe to experiment and fail;
8. small, interdisciplinary teams or working groups of innovative and committed agency professionals working in collaboration with external resource persons capable of acting as catalysts for change (unbundling hierarchy);
9. regular documentation and analysis of lessons for improving practice and building and institutional memory;
10. a flexible, integrated, phased training program over a sustained period of time, involving key actors at different levels (Shephard 1998; Thompson 1998).

Participatory methodologies are now being employed successfully around the globe to enable an institutional framework that facilitates a process of dialogue, partnership, networking, learning and managing change including the effects of globalisation (Chambers 1994; Blackburn and Holland 1998). The employment of these methodologies for training is an integral component within the process of organisational learning. Training in this regard includes the creation of interactive learning environments and continuous learning, preparing staff to use innovative field methods and improve communication, analytical and facilitation skills. However, it is also necessary to change the institution’s rules-in-use, financial management practices, reporting systems and supervisory methods if the institution is to be changed from an implementer (dictating the terms of development) to an enabler (supporting local people’s research or development) (Thompson 1998). This institutional change will require a broader participatory approach.

Korten (1988) identifies five inter-related stages for institutionalising a participatory process. The first phase involves identifying changes required
within existing training procedures. During the second phase, after the participatory approach has been adequately conceptualised, senior staff are exposed to the new approach, generally through facilitation of external agencies. In the third phase the participatory approach is tested under diverse field conditions in which the methodology’s strengths and weaknesses are assessed. Lessons are also learnt in regards to training working teams. The fourth stage involves enacting the methodology at a broad scale, where trained facilitators usually from a third sector train large numbers of agency staff. The training of a team of in-house facilitators occurs in the fifth phase (Korten 1988).

6.5 Reframing Development through Culture Value Challenge

First modern society perceived Indigenous culture as an obstacle to modernisation. Indigenous traditions were devalued in contrast to the progressive mission of capitalist imperialism. The evolution of capitalism has involved ‘The Great Transformation’ (detailed by Polanyi in 1994) in which a societal shift to capitalism resulted in economic disengagement from social and environment spheres and the dominance of the market in social relations (Loomis 2000). An embedded economy is described by Polanyi as an interdisciplinary approach to development which not only draws from economics but also from political science, sociology, adult education, anthropology, comparative religion, ethics, law and philosophy and an intercultural approach which recognises that each economic unit is composed of Zaoual – un site symbolique – symbolic site/space (Carmen 1996). Indigenous societies have much to offer in regards to a holistic and relational approach for sustainable development, as detailed in the first section of this chapter.

Section 6.5.1 below provides a discussion of hybrid modernities. It is necessary to recognise these to decentre Eurocentrism and the concept of cultural value challenge to develop the discussion. Section 6.5.2 outlines why cultural value
challenge that requires consideration of Indigenous autonomy is necessary, and describes a capabilities approach to this.

6.5.1 Development and Hybrid Modernities

The concept of development can be interpreted in a multitude of ways. However, it is most often discursively associated with economic development and is measured by growth. Culture is often not a consideration. As discussed in Chapter One, this dominant ideology has been heavily contested within the discourse of sustainable development. Within development theory, post-structuralists or post-developmentists (including Ferguson, Sachs, Escobar and Rahnema) argue that the meta-narrative of development is linked to modernisation as westernisation that does not account for the diverse understandings of development, many of which do not even recognise western terminology. Development practice is seen to aim for further incorporation to expand control of global elites including development practitioners (Escobar 2000; Nustad 2001; Mohan and Hickey 2004; Rapley 2004).

However, the subaltern of the world have not been passive and are inevitably opposed to change (Rahnema 1997; Little 2005). Indigenous people do not necessarily reject development and this results in diverse responses to the selective incorporation of some aspects of modernity (Robins 2003). Perceiving globalisation and development as resulting only in homogenisation does not allow for the plural modernities that are unfolding (Nederveen Pieterse 2004). Beck (1997) discusses the development of ‘alternative modernities’ which are the overlapping realities and possible futures emerging from the dialectic of modernisation and counter-modernisation (Beck 1997; Gleeson 2000). Recognising diverse hybrid responses to the homogenising tendencies of the western perceptions of modernity is necessary to destabilise the western desire for order and uniformity (Briggs and Sharp 2004; Espinosa-Dulanto 2004).

In Australia, John Ah Kit (1998 p. 37) defines western interpretations of development as “a theory of wealth creation for a few, at the expense of many. It
doesn’t work anywhere in the world, and it certainly doesn’t work for Aboriginal Australia”. He encourages Indigenous Australians to develop “a new model, or even a series of models, and it is the task of Aboriginal people to develop these models if we are to survive into the next century”. This contrasts to the Federal storyline in which assimilation is assumed to be the only possible pathway for Indigenous people. This was reproduced to a significant extent within the Newman discourse. It is the case in Australia that the pathway of modernity and development for Indigenous people is seen to lead to a pre-determined and single space. Sustainable development requires a cultural value challenge that diverse Indigenous models of development can provide.

In the interviews in the Western Desert, there was very little discussion or recognition about the hybridity of the Martu people’s lived reality and the multifaceted interface at which traditional life meets western values through time and space. Martu cultural representations are instead compartmentalised and fixed in time. This is because the Martu identity is seen in comparison to a western idealised identity. Many of the activities of the Martu people are not valued. Hunting and gathering for example were not seen as productive activities. It was often perceived in any case that the Martu people are no longer performing traditional activities. Only one Indigenous person talked directly about the productive possibilities of culture and land and the connection to the Ruddell River Native Title Claim. It is a common ‘non-Indigenous’ attitude to perceive Indigenous hunting and ceremonies as leisure, when in fact they are part of the community wellbeing (Crawford 1989). An explanation for this is the separation of the western worldview of economic activities from other aspects of human existence.

Altman’s Hybrid economy is perhaps the most comprehensive approach to Indigenous development. He argues (2001) that economic development in remote discreet communities is not only about enhanced market engagement, high formal employment and growing income. It is also about spiritual and physical wellbeing that living on country enables and is diverse and dynamic (Altman and Whitehead 2003; Kinnane 2005). This provides for a holistic framework in which to conceptualise Indigenous sustainable development.
Altman (2001) argues that the neo-liberal policy framework has failed to understand and conceptualise the distinctive hybrid structure of the Indigenous economy, which not only includes the market and state but also in many cases a robust customary economy. Government policy has failed to recognise the social benefits generated by the hybrid economy and to perceive its capacity to generate more social benefit if given the appropriate support. Remote areas for Altman are characterised by too much welfare state and insufficient state support for productive activities. Government has failed to support the activities where Indigenous communities have a comparative advantage but are faced with high transactions costs or missing markets. For Altman (2001) Indigenous sustainable development requires growth in both the market and customary sectors to support cultural business which is often where Indigenous comparative advantage lies, for example in art and crafts and tourism. He perceives a role for both industry and government to achieve this.

An Indigenous person comments about the complexities of integrating Martu culture, art and the market economy:

Don’t exploit it you know, there’s quite a lot of artwork has been over exploited and it’s going elsewhere instead of staying here and you know people want to come and see traditional dance, keep it in my own country you know and don’t look at everything for dollars and cents, look at it as ‘OK I’m going to get paid for it but I’m also teaching my kids and my kids are going to teach their kids and it’s information that is going to be passed on from generation to generation it’s not going to die and not lie, how can I put this, a lot of aboriginals do things because what will I get out of it not what my community or my community will get out of it you know (Interviewee 2, Indigenous).

Integrating traditional activities with the market economy is certainly complex (Williams 2004). It involves crossing epistemological frameworks, and for Indigenous people making choices in this space, endeavouring to integrate certain aspects of western culture whilst also protecting the autonomy of
Indigenous culture. These difficulties are not sufficiently recognised or addressed by any level of government. This is despite the fact that the lessons from these choices are not only important for Indigenous sustainable development but for all cultures and provide for a necessary cultural value challenge. Policy needs to better conceptualise Indigenous sustainable development within a framework of diversity that is driven by politics and deliberation.

Within the Western Desert there was much discussion about the use of creative techniques to cross culture for communication in addition to providing for economic opportunities and how this needs to be expanded within government and industry. One local agency person comments:

I get the feeling that, like, lots of other agencies just think that it’s a bit soft and wishy washy but people are always talking about, oh, they got to want to do it themselves and empowering themselves and you know this and think, well look at all those arts things out there. Like you got people who are having their own exhibitions and it is economic development. The women, it’s not major scale, but the women making their baskets and that’s another thing I do, I document their baskets and send them all up to Hedland and that, you know that’s, a huge thing and no one’s forced anybody to do that you just offer a bit of support and a framework for it to happen (Interviewee 5).

Among other things this quote indicates that creative techniques are not well supported.

Figure 6.1 shows one of the baskets that I bought during my visit to Newman during the second participatory project. A newspaper article (in Appendix Seven) applaudes the creative efforts of a program that enabled basket making by Martu women in the Western Desert.
A creative approach enables the recovery of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people’s creative capacity and potential, which first modern society has obscured. This also allows for better scope for them to participate in the redefinition of the inter-cultural space which is required for the learning to approach sustainable development and to enable for cultural value challenge.

Cultural value challenge is also likely to require recognition of Indigenous autonomy and a capability approach. This is the focus of the following section.

6.5.2 Autonomy, Choice and Capabilities

Australia can be defined by a ‘psychological terra nullius’ (Behrendt 2003) which is ingrained into society with the nation state as the sole sovereign power with exclusive authority (Fleras 1999). Indigenous aspirations (described in
Chapter Three by the Indigenous storyline) include shared sovereignty that is legalised with constitutional recognition and negotiated through a treaty process. In Australia, a ‘treaty’ is yet to be negotiated and continues to feature in the discourse of Indigenous aspirations in Australia (Fletcher 1999c). The discourse of rights from an Indigenous perspective includes: a challenge to the legitimacy of the sovereign state; a collective and inherent right to self-determination; the transformational politics of land, identity and political voice; decolonisation of Indigenous-State relations; cultural and political space for sovereign coexistence; nations within and a new social contract. Indigeneity as principle and practice is concerned with realising these (Fleras 1999).

Indigenous people in Australia are not a multi-cultural minority; they are a people that never ceded jurisdiction and are seeking universalism but differentiated citizenship rights (Fleras 1999). Behrendt (2003) outlines the debate between two forms of liberalism: a difference-blind liberalism and multicultural liberalism. These are seen to be competing: monocultural difference-blind liberalism will not allow policy to account for difference as this would be inequitable, whilst within multicultural liberalism recognition of difference is required in order to achieve formal equality. Behrendt puts forward another option, an outcome-focused liberalism which is a hybrid of the two. It combines the principle of equality in difference-blind liberalism in substantive equality and gives an institutional basis through effective participation within multicultural liberalism. This provides an important conceptual approach to cross-cultural governance and the negotiation of representation and responsibilities. It has been conceptually recognised by the Federal government.

Eliminating Indigenous rights to difference is no longer overtly part of Australian government policy but is still evident within discourse, as was evident within the Federal storyline and in the Newman discourse. Autonomy is necessary for the creative resistance to the normalising tendencies of managerialism, which was evident in the Newman discourse in the case study. In Australia, the Federal storyline has little regard for the benefits of Indigenous autonomy and this was also demonstrated by the Newman discourse. Indigenous
people are expected to simultaneously assimilate into the market economy. Arabena writes that

This is the core of the matter for me: in the new arrangements Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are beholden to government, who determine whether we can control our affairs. This determination is dependent on society’s views of our competence: and this competence is measured only in terms that describe our contributions to the market economy (Arabena 2005 p. 28).

The analysis in this thesis has shown that the layers of government in Australia do not widely recognise the possible contributions Indigenous people can make to the wider terrain of sustainable development by providing a cultural value challenge, nor is there sufficient recognition of the complexity of remote economic development. Jull supports this view, arguing that:

Governments talk a great deal about the need for Indigenous self-reliance but usually seem unable to imagine or assist any future except on the margins of an industrial economy” (Jull 2002 p. 22).

Autonomy is difficult to define in today’s world (Little 2005). Arthur (2001) writes that autonomy, dependency and self-determination all convey an absolute sentiment. For example, when people are economically dependent this often blocks from view the many other forms of independence that people may experience (Jackson 1990). Negative autonomy represents autonomy from interference (autonomy from), whilst positive autonomy represents ability to direct one’s affairs (autonomy to) (Jackson 1990; Arthur 2001). The issue of Indigenous autonomy (at both the individual or collective levels) is both political and economic. Political autonomy requires institutional arrangements which restrict the political will of the central government in certain areas of decision making but can also acknowledge the relational aspects of shared sovereignty. It can also be argued that political self-sufficiency also requires a degree of economic self-sufficiency. There is an ideological tension as to whether Indigenous well being is improved through political or economic autonomy, which are perhaps mutually exclusive (Lea 2000). Economic autonomy requires resources and access to markets (Jackson 1990; Arthur 2001) and in remote Australia this requires consideration within policy frameworks, as discussed in
the previous section. The integration of political and economic autonomy is complex, thus needing consideration that is inclusive of contextual Indigenous voices.

The value of a diverse cultural value challenge for sustainable development must consider the extent to which Indigenous cultures can be subsidised to retain what is perhaps a necessary autonomy to resist some aspects of modernisation and thus provide alternatives to western hegemonic interpretations of modernisation. Sen argues that:

The threat to native cultures in the globalising world of today is, to a considerable extent, inescapable...This is a problem, but not just a problem, since global trade and commerce can bring with it – as Adam Smith foresaw – greater economic prosperity for each nation. But there can be losers as well as gainers, even if in the net the aggregate figures move up rather than down. In the context of economic disparities, the appropriate response has to include concerted efforts to make the form of globalisation less destructive of employment and traditional livelihood...it is up to the society to determine what, if anything, it wants to do to preserve old forms of living, perhaps even at significant economic costs (cited in Scott and Gough 2003 p. 136).

Sustainable development is often about integration. The discourse of sustainable development must also allow for relational differences within a holistic approach and the autonomy that may be required to protect these differences necessary for cultural value challenge.

Sen (1999) proposes a definition of development that is distant from dominant interpretations. He describes development as the creation of opportunity and the expansion of freedoms. This allows for the space necessary for Indigenous autonomy, in which to freely self-determine. Sen’s definition best captures the original translation of the word ‘develop’ which derives in part from the Greek word des (meaning a reversal) and also in part from ‘envelop’ (meaning to enclose). The translation of develop is therefore an unfolding in which a constraint or envelop is removed. This can include the unfolding of spiritual,
intellectual and moral characteristics resulting from the removal of oppression (Frazier 1997). Sen’s (1999) capability approach is of value for policy about Indigenous people and moves discourse beyond needs to a recognition of rights, and this includes the right to be different. His focus upon the capability to freely choose amongst opportunities is an alternative means of perceiving human development that goes beyond the limitations of the neo-liberal approach to poverty. Much of the Newman discourse reproduces the Federal prescriptive approach which predetermines the type of opportunities that should be available for Martu people. There were some participants however, that advocated a more participatory approach. One of them observed, for example, that:

.....they are trying to make people do things that they are really not interested in, but if they sat down and listed and watched and things, they’d realise well why don’t we look at getting people, helping people find employment and economic sustainability and whatever in the things that they are good at what they want to do (Interviewee 5).

There are a number of issues and themes of importance to Indigenous capabilities and capacity (Boughton 1998).

- The continuing importance of ‘subsistence-style’ economic activity, especially in non-urban areas;
- The importance of community-based employment and of part- and full-time ‘voluntary’ work;
- The existence of alternative indigenous development pathways and models, expressed through Indigenous organisations;
- The centrality of land and land management issues to Indigenous development aspirations;
- The existence of distinct regional economics and labour markets;
- The value of local and regional development planning.

Some of these themes were recognised within the local discourse. They require full consideration within participatory policy frameworks that allows for contextual diversity and cross-cultural understandings.
Exercising rights is different from having them (Ah Kit 1998) and the lack of knowledge about opportunities is a problem for Indigenous Australians. Too much money is lavished upon outside experts rather than being utilised to better build the capacity of Indigenous people to freely choose hybrid spaces and resist assimilation (Jull 2002). It is necessary to empower Indigenous people to share knowledge for sustainable development across cultures (Havemann and Whall 2002). Research can play a better role and needs to be re-orientated to provide training, mentoring and other variations of institutional support (Tsey 2001). Resourcing capacity building for the expansion of Indigenous capabilities, including governance beyond managerialism, requires a focus upon scale and time which are important considerations for Indigenous sustainable development. Multi-scale strategies need to build Indigenous governance from the local to the national and international levels. This contrasts significantly with the current Federal approach.

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter is linked to the second stream of the thesis relating to sustainable development. Its aim was to draw lessons from the case study for sustainable development.

Relationships and representation was the focus of Section 6.2, which began with a discussion about relationships in the case study context. Many of the local agency people recognised the importance of relationships, and also recognised how the typical bureaucratic approach of government hinders the building of cross-cultural relationships. BHP’s profit motive appears to drive a desire for cross-cultural relationships. However, BHP funds a cross-cultural course which was applauded by local agency people. Dialogue with Martu people is desired by Newman institutional actors and this is necessary to interface institutional representations of Martu people with Martu representations of Martu identity and responsibilities.
The imperative of Indigenous voices for sustainable development is the focus of Section 6.4. This is because of the relational holistic view that is typically found in Indigenous traditions and is evident within the Indigenous storyline outlined in Chapter Three. Indigenous relational holism allows for dynamism and diversity and thus unsettles Eurocentric universalism. Indigenous perspectives in particular have much to offer in terms of transforming the current western approach of separating humans from nature.

The reframing of power and politics is necessary for sustainable development, to better allow diverse voices to influence decision making, as discussed in Section 6.3. In the case study, Martu people are excluded from decision making forums. Additionally, cross-cultural politics is hindered by Newman institutional actors’ perspectives which frame both Martu and western politics as undesirable. This chapter concludes that greater recognition of politics is necessary which will require a cross-cultural dialogical approach. Cosmopolitan deliberative democracy as a method has much to offer for dialogue, politics and importantly representation across culture to negotiate responsibility. Creative techniques will be necessary for crossing culture. The concept of dialogue must therefore be extended to also include non-verbal forms of communication.

The necessity of cross-cultural governance in order to negotiate representation and responsibility is discussed in Section 6.4. This is necessary to allow for diverse cultural expression for sustainable development. There is substantial Australian literature on this topic which is reviewed in this chapter. However, this need for cross-cultural governance is not recognised by the Federal government. A regional dispersed layered model is particularly useful for sustainable development as it allows for multi-scaled strategies and negotiates the tension between decentralisation and centralisation. Indigenous governance requires considerable resourcing within this model and others in order to address both intra- and inter-governance tensions and also to allow for diverse experimentation.

Institutional change is also discussed in Section 6.4. This is necessary to better reframe the institutions of government and industry to allow for an ethic of care.
Cultural translation also requires further support and Indigenous people in government and industry and Indigenous organisations have an important role which requires greater recognition and resources. Local protocols are necessary to better negotiate cross-cultural interactions with respect. The practice and theory of participatory methods have much to offer Australian institutions, particularly in regards to the incorporation of phronesis which allows for diverse cultures and context.

Alternative forms of development and the cultural value challenge they provide is the focus of Section 6.5. Hybrid modernities which offer diverse pathways, other than the current first modern path are discussed in Section 6.5.1. They offer first modern societies alternative pathways to explore the tensions of sustainable development. Section 6.5.2 outlined why consideration of Indigenous autonomy and capabilities is necessary and the importance this has for cultural value challenge of sustainable development.

The following chapter provides a summary and the conclusions of the thesis in addition to highlighting areas of further research.
Chapter Seven
Summary, Conclusions and Further Research

7.1 Revisiting the Research Questions

The research within this thesis was based upon two research questions, outlined in Chapter One. It is useful to revisit these briefly before providing a summary of the thesis in Section 7.2 and also major conclusions in Section 7.3. The two questions are as follows:

**Research Question One:**

*How does western organisational practice and discourse frame Indigenous representation and responsibility?*

**Research Question Two:**

*What lessons emerge from a case study approach to Research Question One that are relevant for sustainable development?*

Chapters Three, Four and Five related mostly to the first research question. The second research question is relevant mostly for Chapter Six. The chapters as a whole however are inter-related.

7.2 Thesis Summary

This section provides a summary of the thesis and is structured around the research questions.
7.2.1 Research Question One

The conclusions relevant to this research question have been categorised in accordance with the themes in Chapters Three, Four and Five respectively.

**Discourse and Storylines**

Indigenous people in Australia have been the subject of colonial representations since colonisation. First modern perspectives have since rendered both Indigenous people and nature as an externalised other. This has impacted negatively upon both, and also upon the relationship between Indigenous people and country and the responsibilities this entails. Since the 1967 Referendum, Indigenous people have been viewed as citizens of Australia. The interpretation of this has however been significantly different depending upon which political party is in term. The last 10 years have witnessed the Coalition (Liberal/National) government dismantle many policy initiatives initiated by Labor governments of the past including those based upon self-determination. This has been replaced with a ‘practical reconciliation’ which aims to ‘share’ responsibility (but not decision making power) between government, Indigenous people and to some extent industry. This historical background was provided in the thesis and frames the storylines about Indigenous sustainable development that exist today.

Two essentialised storylines about Indigenous sustainable development were outlined first. They are deliberately depicted as essential in order to uncover the extreme ideologies that exist in the policy discourse about Indigenous people in Australia. The first of these is the Federal government’s storyline which is also supported by the State government in WA and the second storyline is composed of diverse Indigenous aspirations (located within commentary by national Indigenous leaders). The first can be described as the Standard Story; a number of self-sufficient arguments based upon neo-liberal egalitarian discourse are often used to support this. There is evidence in both storylines of a desire for improved Indigenous representation and responsibility. The storyline of the
Federal government is based upon a first modern perspective which aims towards uniformity and the externalisation of difference. Indigenous people across Australia are expected to assimilate and conform to an idealised identity. This can be contrasted to the recognition of Indigenous diversity in Australia within the Indigenous storyline.

These storylines are discursively compared through four categories which are: participation, identity, governance and economy. The analysis demonstrates that the Federal government attempts to assert power by drawing boundaries of representation around Indigenous communities which are assumed as homogeneous. Responsibility is assigned to only those representative structures which are recognised by institutions and there is little recognition of the difficulties of negotiating Indigenous diversity within and across communities. Indigenous representative structures are significantly under-resourced and as a result national Indigenous leaders advocate for further support and resources. This ‘whole of community’ approach to governance by the Federal government runs counter to the individualised approach to economic development that is advocated by the Federal storyline.

The analysis in this chapter demonstrates that the two storylines in fact discursively overlap: at times there are only subtle differences, sometimes the differences are distinct and at times the discourse of one storyline is not used by the other storyline. An important difference is the historical lack of recognition by government for a dialogue. Such a dialogue is a significant theme of the Indigenous storyline. A major conclusion of this thesis, discussed in the following section, is the necessity of this dialogue for the negotiation of Indigenous representation and responsibility in which diverse perspectives can be heard and space is provided to delineate discursive confusion.

The case study of Martu representation is analysed against these storylines using two participatory projects and follow up interviews in Newman and the Western Desert in Western Australia. The local discourse reveals some similarities as well as differences in relation to power and representation.
Power and Representation

Three models of power are outlined to set up the theoretical background for the analysis. The first model perceives power to be held by centralised institutions that exert ‘power over’ while the second model is termed ‘power to’ and relates to empowerment strategies. The third model follows from Foucault and power is seen to circulate across organisations. These models are utilised by the analysis to reveal different aspects of institutional discourse and practice.

The comparison of the Newman discourse (derived from the interview process) to the Federal and Indigenous storylines about Indigenous sustainable development is based upon the same four categories of participation, identity, governance and economy developed in the previous analysis. The Newman discourse was found to both reproduce and resist the Federal storyline. As with the Federal storyline, the Newman discourse indicates a need for Martu representative structures that are required for service delivery and are capable of representing an essential Martu identity. There is also a desire for Martu individuals to mainstream into the economy. The contradiction of collective governance structures and an individual approach to economic assimilation is found at the Federal level and is reproduced in Newman. Local perspectives about culture provide a window of ambivalence which opens up the ideological reproduction of the Federal storyline. Resistance to the Federal Standard Storyline was found to exist in the discourse in Newman evident by the strong desire for dialogue by Newman institutional actors with Martu people and also with other levels of government.

The discussion about regional narratives is focused upon the Pilbara but provides lessons for Australia more generally. At the national level the story of the Pilbara is dominated by a neo-liberal perspective which tends towards first modernism. The environment, the Martu peoples stories and other stories such as sense of place are rendered invisible by this dominant perspective which centres on economic progress and the perpetuation of a first modern moment. The drawing of boundaries of representation and responsibility is complex in regional Australia. Changing global institutional structures are resulting in diverse glocal
configurations. Sustainable development however provides a framework with which to conceptualise the negotiation of representation and responsibility. This was witnessed in the second consultancy participatory project in the thesis, Dialogue with the Pilbara: Newman Tomorrow which allowed for diverse perspectives, including perspectives from the Martu people, to be amplified. An important finding is that the negotiation of responsibility and representation in regional Australia could be better enabled by deliberative democracy that is structured by sustainable development.

The concept of space was used for the analysis of power and knowledge in the consultancy participatory case study projects. Space can be seen as closed, invited or claimed/created. Efforts at creating invited space in both consultancy projects were met by an attempt to create closed space by varying levels of government. Both consultancy projects resulted in the subjugation of Martu knowledge. They revealed the limitations of bureaucracy when framed by a rational, instrumental and managerial approach. There is significant frustration evident in the Western Desert about the lack of accountability in government. Accountability, like knowledge, is channelled from the Western Desert to higher levels of government. There is substantial suspicion about the intent of government in consultative processes. This thesis reveals that there is a significant attempt by government at all levels to exert power over Martu people. In Newman this is further enabled by the discursive reproduction of the Federal storyline which frames Martu representation.

In both consultancy participatory projects, the Martu people were represented by people who were not Martu. Neither of them sufficiently accounted for the complexities of representation in a cross-cultural environment. The tools and techniques were western, Martu facilitators were not employed, and a Martu person did not undertake the analysis. I was often placed in a position in which I was asked to speak about Martu people by government and the responsibility for Martu voices became mine. Such insufficient representation in governmentality does not allow for change in the dominant frame of government. Opening space to provide opportunities for Martu (or Indigenous) inclusion is the only way this could happen.
The analysis of boundaries that determine who is inside and outside reveals the confusion I experienced in addressing the ambivalence of being inside and outside state government and the Newman context. This ambivalence provides opportunities to either accept or deny responsibilities. The boundary drawn by Federal, State and also local government delineates responsibility to those Martu representative structures that are recognised by government but denies Martu inclusion in decision making. Governments at all levels fail to understand the agency that is exercised by the Martu people in determining boundaries of inclusion and exclusion in order to protect the Indigenous domain in the Western Desert. Interestingly, the Newman discourse appears to frame other levels of government as outside of the local context. Hence, there is a plurality of boundaries that determine insider and outsider positioning.

Although the focus of this study was on the Martu people, it is not improbably to assume that the government approach is uniform for all Indigenous people in Australia.

**Culture and the Politics of Difference**

The discourse analysis of culture and the politics of difference reveals important aspects about Newman institutional actors’ perspectives regarding Martu cultural change. Martu culture is seen to be fixed in time (traditional) or to be disintegrating and a firm boundary is drawn between these two extremes. There is little recognition by Newman institutional actors of the possibilities of Martu agency and the changing nature of Martu culture. Cultural difference is largely viewed within the Newman discourse as a boundary between an essential Martu group of people who are significantly different from everybody who is not Martu (the latter includes the many different cultures who are not Martu in Newman). This strong boundary contradicts the dominant perspective about the disintegration of Martu culture. Martu culture is seen here to be different and Martu people are seen to be not assimilating. There is substantial frustration within the Newman discourse about working with Martu people, particularly about the tension between the need to be flexible to work across culture whilst simultaneously being efficient and producing outcomes to meet the
accountability criteria of higher levels of government. This thesis finds that there is limited understanding about Martu culture within the Newman discourse and this is likely to further confuse boundaries of representation and responsibility.

Gender is discussed as a separate category, reflecting the bias that I took into the first consultancy participatory project. A history of colonial representations of Indigenous women is argued to continue to negatively affect Indigenous women today. In addition, a bias is found in the Western Desert institutional structures which privileges male perspectives between cultures and within government. Recognition of the need for representation across gender was an appropriate approach in both consultancy participatory projects. I was limited in the second consultancy project due to the fact that I was not accompanied by a male colleague. Within the Newman discourse there is a strong recognition for the need to support both male and female Martu people throughout different programs and also through the representation of both genders in government, particularly in terms of decision making power. In terms of employment training this support was seen in the Newman discourse to be transitional only. My reflections upon feminism demonstrate confusion across culture in this regard. Gendered binary dichotomies are clearly evident in my stories and are typical of western thought. Hence, mainstreaming of gender is required within institutions in order to better support the representation of both Martu men and women and of Indigenous people across Australia in the diversity of contexts that exist.

Differences beyond gender became apparent to me over time. They are categorised as community, individual, family and leaders. Martu people are seen by Newman institutional actors to belong to an essential community which is expected to provide representative structures and to consensually determine responsibility (without adequate support or resources). The nomadic nature of Martu people who travel between communities creates some distress for service delivery. This however does not unsettle perceptions about the essential geographical communities to any great extent. There is some recognition by Newman institutional actors of a need to approach Martu people as individuals, which contradict perceptions about the necessity of a whole of community
approach. Confusion about the responsibilities of government and of Martu representative structures is evident in regards to the care of Martu individuals. There is substantial confusion about Martu families which perhaps results from a minimal understanding of culture. Family nepotism is viewed negatively within the Newman discourse. Martu families as a representative structure that is determined and recognised by Martu people is not well recognised by Newman institutional actors. A family approach to participation complemented by recognition of other differences including gender is likely to be the best approach to cross-cultural communication and decision making.

Martu leaders in Newman do not appear to be well respected by institutional actors. A participatory approach across culture in the Western Desert requires recognition of diverse leadership. Institutional practice tends to favor Martu people that are able to communicate well within the structures of government and industry. There was little recognition of the difficulties that are faced by Martu leaders.

My reflections upon difference show my own discomfort with difference and an ongoing desire to categorise Martu people. A trip to country, where I was part of a minority, helped me to better understand the complexity of Martu interconnections across space and the many layers of Martu representative structures. The significant differences that exist within the Martu population are not well understood within institutional practice and discourse.

Martu difference, hybridity and politics are also discussed and viewed negatively within much of the Newman discourse. Negative perceptions about Martu politics are likely to reflect cynicism about western political structures. Politics is constrained in the consultancy participatory projects by the administrative ideology of bureaucracy and by ‘projectism’. It is important for politics to be better integrated into the practice of governance in order to allow for Martu perspectives. Cross-cultural communication is a significant problem for the Newman institutional actors but is not well understood. A focus upon improving cross-cultural communication is required to better allow for Martu voices. This will require the mainstreaming of cross-cultural education.
7.2.2 Research Question Two

A major focus of the thesis is upon relating lessons from the case study to the discourse of sustainable development.

Relationships

Relationships emerged as a significant theme in the analysis. Relationships are seen as important for cross-cultural work within the Newman discourse. However, Newman institutional actors felt constrained to effectively build relationships with Martu people by bureaucratic requirements. This is supported by reflections from the consultancy participatory projects. Further support is required for cultural translators, including Indigenous representative structures and local agencies, to build relationships across culture. Cross-cultural education is also required for this purpose. This must include a critical questioning of the ideologies informing institutions discourse and practice and allow for the Indigenous other to speak back.

In terms of institutionalising relationships there is much to be learnt from Indigenous relational perspectives. A relational holistic view is required for sustainable development and in Australia is provided by the Indigenous storyline about Indigenous sustainable development. This is necessary in order to centre first modern perspectives and to better recognise diversity and difference. A relational approach to difference, able to recognise difference and the interdependencies that exist, is required. First modern perspectives have externalised both nature and the other of Indigenous people. There are many lessons about the relationships between Indigenous people and country that are necessary for sustainable development generally. They primarily relate to transcending binary distinctions between first modern people and their others. A relational holistic perspective provided by Indigenous people needs to be better represented in sustainable development debates.
Power, Politics and Deliberative Democracy

The analysis within the case study has demonstrated that the existence of power and politics tends to be obscured by a bureaucratic and managerial approach. The institutional perspectives about politics require reframing in order to address how power operates to subjugate Martu knowledge. One possible way to do this is through the expansion of a cosmopolitan deliberative democracy. The use of creative tools and techniques is likely to be necessary.

Cross-cultural governance

Globalisation is resulting in the reconfiguration of institutions. Sustainable development requires a focus upon new governance arrangements which are better able to cross culture. It also calls for cross-cultural governance experimentation and institutional change to better allow for the learning required within a process approach to cross-cultural governance. Participatory methods can provide a means of re-structuring government and industry.

Reframing Development through Cultural Value Challenge

Culture has been typically separated in western perspectives from other spheres including the political and economic. Development tends to be viewed in terms of economic growth and associated indicators. There are many hybrid trajectories of human development around the world and in Indigenous Australia. They tend to be obscured by a first modern perspective. Culture is typically compartmentalised by institutional practice and discourse, which was evident in the case study. This does not account for the holistic integration of culture with economy. A hybrid economy will better conceptualise the integration of Indigenous traditions with government and industry, and will allow for the diverse and changing nature of Indigenous culture. This framework requires recognition by government and industry, which has yet to occur. Indigenous autonomy and a capabilities approach is able to move the discourse beyond basic needs and is likely better able to determine appropriate opportunities across culture. Indigenous political autonomy should not be dependent upon economic autonomy. The important lessons that can be learnt from Indigenous perspectives and the cultural value challenge these perspectives provide for sustainable
development justify political autonomy to protect Indigenous knowledge and choice.

7.3 Thesis Conclusions

A number of major conclusions can be drawn from the research and include the following.

Indigenous Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is argued by many Indigenous people today to have been an integral aspect of traditional Indigenous life. In contrast, the dominant approaches to sustainable development remain focused upon a first modern society perspective of control and certainty. This perspective is being increasingly questioned as a result of the conditions of reflexive modernity. The dominant global paradigm is unlikely to solve the problems that face a global world alone. Indigenous perspectives provide a relational holism and thus a cultural value challenge necessary for sustainable development and this must be recognised by dominant institutions. The concept of Indigenous sustainable development must allow for the autonomy that is necessary to protect valuable Indigenous knowledge and culture for sustainable development generally. There is substantial debate in Australia now about the development (and sustainable development) of Indigenous people. It is imperative to continue to explore how Indigenous sustainable development is being defined, by whom and also how it is being implemented. This is necessary to enable the negotiation of responsibility and representation within and between cultures necessary for sustainable development.

Cultural and Contextual Diversity

The diversity and dynamism of Indigenous people today, and the many hybrid pathways of the Indigenous lived reality can be contrasted to the dominant Eurocentric perspective which overshadow Indigenous lives in Australia. The Standard Story of the Coalition government (which has held office since 1996) obscures Indigenous diversity and thus disenables diverse representation.
Governments in Australia fail to provide an overarching enabling framework that recognises the many tensions faced by Indigenous people and also by institutional actors, as evident in the case study context. It is instead the case in Australia that diversity is approached with uniformity. This results in Indigenous communities being framed as cohesive and homogenous and understood by an essential identity. This allows responsibility to be devolved to communities by government without adequate resourcing for Indigenous representative structures.

Proponents of the Federal Standard Story (which is supported by the Western Australian State Government) and Newman institutional actors appear to be generally uncomfortable with the ambivalence that Indigenous difference provokes. However, attempts to control and eradicate this difference produce further ambivalence. Western ambivalence about Indigenous culture was clearly evident in the case study, in that Martu culture was respected but assimilation was also seen as necessary. This provides a major window in which to explore the tensions that exist between cultures.

Eurocentric universalism must be decentred by diverse Indigenous perspectives about sustainable development. An approach based upon control and separation will not solve the problems faced by humanity today. Indigenous hybrid perspectives must better inform decision making frameworks. The non-binary thought typically found in Indigenous perspectives is required to build relationships between humans themselves and between humans and nature. The importance of context cannot be understated. The solutions required for sustainable development in diverse glocal configurations will not be provided by a uniform western modern blueprint. Context also provides for a sense of place and the relationships across cultures that exist but are not always immediately apparent. In the case study, the Federal Standard Storyline does not completely obscure the respect for both nature and Martu people by Newman institutional actors. Evidence of both can be found and requires amplification that is inclusive of Martu perspectives. Enhancing the negotiation of responsibility and representation in context will better allow for these relationships. This appears necessary to counter the widely held view that the local context is over-
consultated by other levels of government. A dialogue will allow the other to speak back to institutional representations.

**Dialogue**

Dialogue was a major theme across the thesis and is necessary to negotiate power in cross-cultural spaces. It is also necessary for politics within and across cultures, which was evident in the case study but continues to be hindered by a managerial and administrative approach to governance that emphasises the efficient delivery of services. The Federal and Newman discourse frames Indigenous representation and responsibility in accordance with this dominant approach to service delivery. Dialogue was a significant aspect of the Indigenous storyline. Power over continues to be exerted upon Indigenous people by the Federal Standard Storyline, in denial of dialogue. Most Newman institutional actors perceived dialogue with both Martu people and other levels of government as necessary. The differences that exist within and between Martu people, government and industry require dialogue in which to negotiate responsibility and representation and this will best be done in a context that allows for the development of relationships. Cultural translators will be necessary for this dialogue (and the negotiation of representation and responsibility) and require considerable support by institutional structures. The institutional bridges that provide cultural translation (Indigenous leaders and particular Newman institutional actors) are not currently valued. Such a dialogue must be ongoing and must allow the Indigenous other to speak back to dominant representations. Deliberative democracy as a method has much to offer in the negotiation of representation and responsibility through contextual dialogue. It allows for the amplification of diverse voices at the local level, and this provides opportunities to counter the imposition of the Federal Standard Storyline.

**Creativity**

Creativity is necessary to cross culture in dialogue. The incorporation of creative techniques in communication between cultures must occur in order to allow for the autonomy of Indigenous knowledge. Song, dance and stories including visual expressions better allow for Indigenous expression and celebrate diversity and the connections between each other and with nature. Creative thought will be
necessary to approach the tensions of sustainable development. This questioning must be ongoing to allow for dynamism, change and complexity.

**Reflexivity**

The case study indicates that institutional perspectives have a significant influence upon Indigenous identity and lifestyle. These are imposed upon Indigenous people in order to determine the nature of representative structures and the extent of responsibility. There is thus a substantial need for the further expansion of reflexivity to deconstruct institutional perspectives at all levels of government. Participatory methods have much to offer in allowing dialogue and in building relationships towards a culture of care that allows for difference.

**Methodology**

Methodology was a significant aspect of the thesis. Reflexivity was essential in order to negotiate my own subjectivity and to reflect upon western organisational practice and discourse. The autoethnographic story technique was developed in the early stages of the thesis research and provided the means of tracking my changing perspective and identifying how changes occurred. This was useful throughout the research for reflecting upon reflection, which provided a means of understanding how my perspective changed over time. It was particularly evident in how I perceived the differences within the Martu population.

This thesis concludes that a participatory approach to Indigenous engagement is necessary but complex. My approach to Indigenous participation would be different in future research. I consider now that the development of protocols that provide opportunities for Indigenous people to be involved in problem definition, collection and analysis of data and the writing of results is necessary to account for power across culture and to improve relationships. This would be a prerequisite for all future research with Indigenous populations.
7.4 Areas of Further Research

The thesis conclusions point to the need for further research within a number of key areas. This section provides a brief outline of these.

Reframing institutional perspectives
Further work is required regarding the opportunities provided by institutional ambivalence about Indigenous representation and responsibility. They provide for the opening of deeply held ideological positions.

Cross-cultural governance
Further research is needed to address the challenge of negotiating representation and responsibility across culture in regards to governance structures and processes.

Cross-cultural economies
Research is required to explore hybrid forms of development that integrate culture with economic activities. This has important lessons for Indigenous sustainable development and sustainable development more generally.

Deliberative Cosmopolitan Democracy
Crossing culture in deliberative democracy events is necessary for sustainable development. Research is required investigating how this may better occur. Experimentation with creative tools and techniques is required.

Institutional change
The dominant institutions of government and industry require change in order to better learn in a process approach across culture. Further research is required to explore the diverse configurations that are possible.

This thesis concludes with hope that space will be expanded for Indigenous representations which will mean a better world for current and future generations.
Appendix One Tensions of Sustainable Development

There is a general consensus within the literature tracing the recent history of sustainable development to the 1970s (Pezzoli 1997; Mebratu 1998; Byrne and Glover 2002; Castro 2004). The 1972 publication by the Club of Rome of the \textit{Limits to Growth} report provided a convincing argument that to avoid ecological catastrophe, global limits to growth (population and economic) in both developed and developing countries must be respected (Meadows et al. 1972). Malthus and Ricardo had theorised these limits from an economic perspective in the previous century (Mebratu 1998). In the 1970s, a discourse of crisis emerged around these limits and included terms such as the ‘tragedy of the commons’, ‘carrying capacity’, ‘the lifeboat ethic’ and ‘the population bomb’. This discourse is described as the first wave of environmentalism and did not engage mainstream economists or industrialists perspectives. Schumacher provided an alternative model of economics in his publication of \textit{Small is Beautiful} in 1973. This supported the limits to growth perspective and introduced the discourse of appropriate and intermediate technology (Schumacher 1989) to the environmental movement.

The \textit{Limits to Growth} received high profile attention by global media and institutions amidst great controversy (Pezzoli 1997; AtKisson 1999). The challenge of reconciling human development, primarily to overcome global poverty, and environment protection, generated growing debate. Giddings et al. (2002 p188) write that the “combination of socio-economic concerns and environmental concerns was guaranteed to be a contested field as the long standing debates within both socio-economics and environmentalism flowed into sustainable development with the added debate over the relation between socio-economic and environmental issues”. From the 1980s on we have witnessed the second wave of environmentalism, which unlike the first has included the participation of economists and industrialists. Sustainable development discourse was mainstreamed and replaced the less politically acceptable eco-
development approach of the 1970s (Lele 1991). Middleton et al. (1993) writes that sustainable development was like political fudge in which to gain widespread acceptance.

Sustainable development continues to be characterised by many tensions today. This Appendix will more closely examine some of the key tensions within sustainable development. The outline below of each of the tensions remains cursory and brief as many of these tensions are inter-related.

Weak and strong sustainable development

Sustainable development is placed along a continuum, at one extreme is the technocratic versions of soft, shallow, weak or very weak sustainable development and the other extreme is described as the political and moral versions of hard, deep, strong or very strong sustainable development (Davison 2001). Very weak sustainable development is based on the Solow-Hartwick model (neo-classical economics) and natural and human-made capital is considered to be directly substitutable (Turner 1992). Neumayer (2003 p1) writes that according to this view it “does not matter whether the current generation uses up non-renewable resources or dumps CO2 in the atmosphere as long as enough machineries, roads and ports are built in compensation” (Neumayer 2003). In contrast, weak sustainable development recognises critical natural capital which is non-substitutable (Barbier and Markandya 1989; Pearce and Turner 1990). Both the very weak and weak versions of sustainable development are fundamentally instrumental and are based upon the assumption that the natural environment is measurable and predictable.

Versions of strong sustainability are more diverse (Neumayer 2003), particularly in the extent to which nature and humans are seen as separable. Proponents of the strong sustainable development school, across a variety of disciplines, argue that the ecosystem has a primary value which cannot be captured through measurement. Very strong sustainable development is based upon a steady-state economy which recognises the thermodynamic limits of the finite biosphere.
Very strong sustainability has drawn upon the work of radical ecology including bioregionalism and deep ecology and advocates local self-reliance and participatory democracy (Turner 1992). Zero population and economic growth are required to maintain a steady state which does not preclude other forms of development (Hirsch 1976; Daly and Cobb 1989).

**Sustaining Growth or Development or the Environment**

The dominant global development ethos continues to be characterised by growth, expansionary competitive tendencies and assumptions of trickle down wealth. Growth, change, westernisation, industrialisation and modernisation are discursively associated with development, which has replaced terms such as progress and evolution. Many authors point to the need to de-link the discursive association particularly between growth, progress and development (Pretes 1997). Critics argue that the ‘liaison’ between growth and development is ‘dangerous’ and ecological and social justice continue to be traded for growth (Sachs 1999). For Daly, appeals to resolving North-South inequitable development through the trickling down of growth focus upon misplaced faith in GNP (as a measure of development) which created unequal development in the first place (Daly 1990). A number of authors believe that sustainable development originated and has evolved as a mainstream reaction to contain and control the ‘limits to growth’ debate and to maintain the status quo.

There are competing perspectives about whether resource scarcity will threaten human survival or whether resource constraints have and will continue to lead to productive adaptation (Scott and Gough 2003). The 1997 publication of *Factor Four* by von Weizsacker, Lovins and Lovins argued from the latter perspective, claiming that wealth could be doubled whilst halving resource use. This publication displaced the limits to growth debate from three perspectives (von Weizacker et al. 1997) revealing that:

- A no growth paradigm will impact most heavily upon the world’s poorest;
• It was doubtful that the limits to resources and the earth’s biospheres carrying capacity were as close to being maximised as the ‘limits to growth’ literature suggested;

• Technological progress rather than a change in consumption will provide solutions to environmental problems.

Dryzek calls this opposition to the limits to growth the Promethean response (a Greek mythology in which Prometheus stole fire from Zeus and increased human capacity to control the world). The concept of development has been transformed by Modernism and Western civilisation (which tends towards Promethean confidence) from a finite process with an end to an infinite and endless process. Infinity has become a prime symbol of Western societies and growth enabled by technological advance is an endless possibility from such a worldview (Pretes 1997). The eco-efficiency revolution (industrial ecology and corporate social responsibility), despite a recognition of the need to reduce resource use (justified as a reduction in costs not as a necessity of ecological and social justice), is thought by some ideologies to actually help to maintain the myth of endless growth (Robinson 2004).

Even pro-growth perspectives would concede that a certain proportion of the environment needs to be maintained. The motivation for this varies considerably. Robinson (2004) contrasts the preservationist position, framed in romantic and spiritual terms, with the conservationist position, which tends towards enlightened self-interest with the protection of natural areas for inter-generational use (Robinson 2004). The preservationist position is ecocentric in that it is based upon the belief that nature has a value in itself (Pepper 1998). Alternatively, the conservationist position is relatively anthropocentric. Many authors, including Dobson, argue that all forms of sustainable development are anthropocentric and are limited by language (Dobson 1996; Scott and Gough 2003). The important difference here is whether sustainable development is homocentric, a humanistic approach including stewardship of nature, or egocentric, development according to modernisation under capitalism (Merchant 1992; Dobson 1996; Pepper 1998).
O’Riordan (1989 p. 85) describes an ecocentrism-technocentrism spectrum which provides some operational substance to sustainable development. Ecocentrism is characterised as a “demand for redistribution of power towards a decentralised, federated economy with more emphasis on informal economic and social transactions and the pursuit of participatory justice”. Ecocentrism is based on either Gaianism or communalism. Gaianism advocates the rights of nature, the need for the co-evolution of humans and nature and of natural ethics. Communalism instead has faith in the cooperative capabilities of societies to achieve self-reliance through renewable resource use and appropriate technology. In contrast, technocentrism is the “belief in the retention of the status quo in the existing structures of political power, but a demand for more responsiveness and accountability in political, regulatory, planning and educational institutions”. Technocentrism can also be classified by two perspectives, accommodation and intervention. Accomodation is based upon faith in the adaptability of society to assess, evaluate and accommodate whilst Intervention is based upon the application of science, managerialism and market principles (O’Riordan 1989).

The last few decades have been witness to an increasingly trend towards an ‘ecological consciousness’ rather than an environment consciousness. Ecological consciousness claims that modern thought (including traditional environmentalism) is founded upon flawed ontological and epistemological presuppositions which fail to adequately comprehend environmental issues. Ecological thinkers critique environmental consciousness as being too instrumental and argue that a new and holistic relationship between nature, society and self is required. Once a marginal perspective, ecological consciousness is perhaps now the majority perspective within the environmental movement (Christopher 1999).
Intra and Inter-generational Equity

Sustainable development relates not only to a spatial human dimension, but is also temporal in relation to the rights of future generations. Anand and Sen (2000 p. 2030) refer to ethical universalism which is “basically an elementary demand for impartiality – applied within generations and between them …the recognition of a shared claim of all to the basic capability to lead worthwhile lives”. Anand and Sen write that it would be ‘scandalous’ to deny future generations this capability but that it is equally ‘outrageous’ if the modern world fails to enable capabilities for the majority of people in present generations (Anand and Sen 2000).

The gap between the rich and poor has grown over the past fifty years (Frazier 1997). For Shiva, within a finite system, the growth of affluence is in relationship with the growth of poverty, the growth of knowledge is intimately connected to the growth of ignorance. A major re-allocation of resources is required (Shiva 1992). For many, sustainable development discourse avoids issues relating to power, exploitation and redistribution (Robinson 2004). The differing perspective about the redistribution of resources and the depth of change required for sustainable development was witnessed at the negotiations leading to the Rio de Janeiro conference. These differing perspectives cannot be clearly delineated by a North-South divide, as perspectives differ considerably within national populations. Elite desire to maintain standards of wealth and environmental health is seen as hypocritical and neo-colonial when this translates into dictating development globally. This claim is made in light of the continuing neo-liberal global policy of resource extraction and exploitation of cheap labour.

Determining the needs of future generations is an impossible task. Anand and Sen write that because of this, it is only possible to conserve a capacity to produce well-being as a generalisation. Reconciling over-and-under specification of what is to be sustained is problematic (Anand and Sen 2000).
The degree and scale of change

It is suggested by Springett (2003) that from the outset, sustainable development has been too tightly controlled by minority interests. Many authors argue sustainable development arises from the same cultural base as the issues that it is aimed at addressing (Jacobs 1999; Springett 2003; Castro 2004) and is meaningless for the type and scale of change required to achieve environmental and social justice. For Escobar (1995), the concept of sustainable development is founded and remains within the management tradition, which advocates technical solutions to manage externalities through eco-efficiency (Escobar 1995; Springett 2003; Castro 2004). Eco-modernisation is an example of this and is a dominant response to sustainable development concerns. Eco-modernisation was developed in the early 1980s and fused market economics and liberal democratic politics within a reconfiguration of the capitalist political economy. Eco-modernisation assumes a partnership between governments, business, environmentalists and scientists that is based upon an anthropocentric view of nature.

Dryseck (2005 p 172) writes “ecological modernisation is a discourse of reassurance, at least for residents of relatively prosperous developed countries. No tough choices need to be made between economic growth and environmental protection or between the present and the long-term future”. Hajer argues that the Brundtland report is a key ecological modernisation document. Ecological modernisation is relatively silent about social justice and the development path of poorer countries. Dryseck argues that if all countries followed eco-modernisation intolerable stress would be placed upon the planet’s ecology. For Dryseck, the dominant discourse of ecological politics is around sustainable development rather than eco-modernisation (Hajer 1995; Dryzek 2005). Christoff (1996) writes of a strong ecological modernisation which is characterised by significant change in institutional systems, including democratic decision making based upon participation and informed communication. Langhelle (2000) argues however that Christoff’s description of strong
ecological modernisation is so removed from the conventional understanding of the term that it is unrecognisable (Langhelle 2000).

The question remains as to whether industrial society must fundamentally change its trajectory (Robinson 2004). The concept of change is accepted within the discourse of sustainable development. It is the degree of change that is disputed. For Sterling, there is a choice between doing something deeply different or whether to change society within the bounds of the current institutional framework (Sterling 2001; Scott and Gough 2003). Dryzek classifies four types of environmental discourse based upon whether they are reformist or radical and prosaic or imaginative. These include problem-solving (reformist and prosaic), survivalism (radical and prosaic), sustainable development (reformist and imaginative) and green radicalism (radical and imaginative). Thus for Dryzek, sustainable development is imaginative in its attempts to bridge the conflict between environmental and economic values by redefining growth and progress to also include social and environmental values. This enables the debate to move beyond the limits to growth of survivalism. However, for Dryseck sustainable development is reformist rather than radical in the degree of change that is necessary to incorporate both these values (Dryzek 2005). It is not clear from what perspective Dryseck forms his categorisation of sustainable development. I would argue that sustainable development can be dominated by a prosaic and reformist practice. However theoretical streams of sustainable development are imaginative and radical. The practice and worldviews of other societies can also be considered imaginative and radical, although the terminology of sustainable development may not be used.

For Frazier (1997), there is an implicit understanding that sustainable development maintains the status quo for those that have reached a certain level of material and political wealth. To reduce this standard of wealth is unlikely to mean sustained development for those people (Frazier 1997). In this regard, the question of scale is complex. What is locally appropriate is unlikely to be appropriate at a regional, national or global scale. Davison (2001 p53) writes “(o)ne of the crucial deceptions facilitated by the rhetoric of sustainable development at the Earth Summit was the broad consensus that there is no
conflict between global and local concerns about sustainability” (Davison 2001). Thus, what meets the sustainable development needs of individuals in a given locality may run counter to the sustainable development of wider geographical or social scales and visa versa (Hatzius 1996; Scott and Gough 2003). Thinking Global and acting Local can actually further entrench the global dominant platform. For Indigenous people around the world it is important not to let the global utopianism dominate (Kinnane 2005).

A New and Old Paradigm

Sustainable development is often described by a paradigm change\(^\text{34}\). A ‘new emerging paradigm” tends towards a contrast and critique with some of the Enlightenment ideals but not others. In actuality there is considerable literature debating whether human society is undergoing a paradigm shift or alternatively whether it needs to undertake a shift. This is often linked to the need for particular academic disciplines to undergo or to strengthen a paradigm adjustment (Scott and Gough 2003).

A ‘new’ paradigm in participatory development is often associated or merged into this ‘new’ paradigm of sustainable development. Chambers (1997) delineates two paradigms of relevance to this discussion. These include firstly, a paradigm of ‘things’ (modernisation through infrastructure and capital), and secondly, a paradigm of ‘people’ (participatory and empowering development) (Chambers 1997). The participatory development literature centres on the importance of the bottom-up approaches that include the marginal and celebrate

\(^{34}\) The concept of paradigm originates from the work of Thomas Kuhn. Kuhn was writing about the history of the natural sciences in which the emergence of new paradigms was not a matter of choice. Scott and Gough (2003) write that the social sciences are characterized by what Kuhn saw as pre-paradigmatic speculation rather than an emerging paradigm shift. Pieterse (1998) on the other hand questions whether paradigms are applicable to the social sciences. Kuhn did not contribute to a discussion about the paradigms which operate at a society level (Scott and Gough 2003). Goerner (1995 p4) writes that “Kuhn’s notion of a paradigm is a conceptual framework shared by a community of scientists that provide them with model problems and solutions. It is too narrow and non specific to guide our understanding of a conceptual framework shared by a community of human beings engaged in all forms of endeavor”. A broader definition of paradigms is provided by Chambers (1997) as a coherent and mutually supporting pattern of concepts, values, methods and behavior amenable to wide application.
local and indigenous knowledge. The role of the State in this regard is often seen to be minimal, which over-simplifies issues of social responsibility and ignores the politics that exist outside of the State.

Table A.1 lists on the left side the undesirable characteristics of the Western enlightenment and on the right, and in contrast, some the characteristics described in sustainable development discourse. The transition from the left to the right is well described by sustainable development literature. Scott and Gough question whether the characteristic on the left are meaningfully coherent in opposition to the right column (Scott and Gough 2003). Whether the characteristics on the left or right form a coherent paradigm, either spatially or temporally, is certainly questionable. The discussion about a new paradigm in sustainable development exhibits a Kuhnian pre-paradigmatic speculation and is at times contradictory.

**Table A1: A New and Old paradigm: The Sustainable Development Transition**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reductionism</th>
<th>Holism</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anthroprocentric</td>
<td>Ecocentric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modernist</td>
<td>Postmodernist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deterministic</td>
<td>Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centralist</td>
<td>Decentralist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
<td>Libertarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependency</td>
<td>Empowering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriarchal</td>
<td>Feminist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive</td>
<td>Co-operative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managerial</td>
<td>Participatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchical</td>
<td>Egalitarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploitative</td>
<td>Protective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipulative</td>
<td>Nurturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standardisation</td>
<td>Diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privatise/nationalise common property</td>
<td>Affirm common property and expand field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State role provider, producer and regulator</td>
<td>State role as enabler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic growth</td>
<td>Growth as social and environment justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic valuation of development</td>
<td>Multi-faceted development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress as linear</td>
<td>Non-linear complexity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment as given</td>
<td>Environment as a social construct</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from (Chambers 1997; Hamdi and Goethert 1997; Shephard 1998; Scott and Gough 2003)
Each characteristic in the left hand column of Table A.1 exists in relation to a characteristic in the right hand and it is likely that both sets characteristics will exist together at one time through human history (Scott and Gough 2003). The left and right columns thus exist within an ambivalent relationship.
Whitefella evil locks wanted

A desert community looks at a way it can protect its youth, reports CHARLIE WILSON-CLARK

Parnngurr would like to put a big fence around the town of Newman and lock it up then throw away the key.

The idea is not about keeping Newman residents in but keeping their community youth out, to live on the traditional Martu lands with which they have held a sacred connection for thousands of years.

Grog, petrol and lawlessness have their origins in the whitefella town, and the old people believe a lot of their problems would go away if the town was off limits.

They say their communities are on "dry country" and they know the statement refers not only to the heat and dust of the western desert but their strong stipulation that alcohol be barred.

Department of Indigenous Affairs workers and police have been visiting communities in the upper Gascoyne and eastern Pilbara discussing bylaws — a whitefella concept under the Aboriginal Communities Act — which can help communities maintain law and order.

There are 22 communities around the State already equipped with bylaws, while others are trying to maintain order under their own systems, riding a delicate balance between infrequent police patrols and customary law.

DIA principal legal officer Amanda Caterneole said most communities needed to use a combination of formal and informal mechanisms to keep the peace, and bylaws could help them.

Wardens underpinned the scheme as community members responsible for logging breaches of bylaws. The offenders were then passed over to police, who enforced the breaches on their next patrol.

Wardens had no power to arrest or search and seize, but acted as monitors for the community controlled patrols.

Sgt Russell Edmunds said communities selected their own wardens but police could vet them.

In the western desert communities of Parngurr, also known as Cotton Creek, and Purnmu, it was the older generation who supported the concept of bylaws.

Purnmu community chairman Mitchell Hillaby said the warden scheme and bylaws were an opportunity to support community rules already in place.

"I think it is safer to look after the community and young people — get them away from silly things," he said.

The women at Purnmu said they needed help to deal with unruly youths who slept all day and caused havoc at night.

Residents Nerri Nerri Morgan and Peter Rowlands said youths who broke the rules were usually taken out bush and given a bashing.

As a result many ran scared to Newman, where their lifestyles become even more destructive.

"We got to get the law in Newman, if those boys can come back to this community, we can talk," Mr Rowlands said.

They wanted the bylaws to stop them bringing in alcohol, petrol and disrupting the peace by driving cars wildly around the community.

"Drink, ganja, makes it so there is nothing here, now there is no people here," Mr Morgan said. "They are sorry people, my people."

Source: (Wilson-Clark June 7 2003)
Appendix Three Newman Aboriginal Education Partnership Article

Dreams take shape after school

Teacher Sherrin Farmer has no problems getting students to attend an after-school homework centre — in fact, they keep coming back for more.

But the Newman Aboriginal Education Partnership is more than just an after-school centre.

"We want to inspire them to build on their talents, to follow their dreams," said Ms Farmer, the centre's co-ordinator. "I love the word 'dream'. It's not just about aspirations but your cultural dreaming and if you lose your dreaming then you are lost."

The centre is modelled on the successful Port Hedland program and is aimed at identifying and encouraging talented Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. The project is managed by the Graham (Polly) Farmer Foundation with additional funding provided by BHP Billiton Iron Ore, the Federal Government and the Pilbara District Education Office.

The centre, which opened about three months ago, has 24 children, selected from Newman's two primary schools and one high school, who were identified as having talent. The children come from a wide range of backgrounds.

The children are required to attend once or twice a week depending on their age and are given tuition and access to computers to do their homework. BHP Billiton has kitted out the centre with the latest technology, including video cameras, to assist in their education.

Increasing school retention and participation, academic achievement and tertiary admittance rates are the primary aims of the centre.

A bus has been provided to transport all Aboriginal children who live some distance from the school.

"We try to find what children are good at, what they can do," Ms Farmer said. "It's about giving children a goal in life and a way to achieve that goal. It's also about helping their parents see there is a way to achieve those goals for their children.

"Most Aboriginal children are very attached to their families so leaving the region is very hard for them. We need to show them there are places where they can find that support."

Source: (McNamara August 18 2004)
Appendix Four Newspaper Paper Article about the Housing Development at Parnpajinya

Building a future for the fringe dwellers

Behind Hickman

FOR almost 20 years a fluid group of up to 40 Martu people have camped on the fringe of Newman, in the heart of Western Australia's remote north, in shocking conditions likened to the worst of the Soviet township to South Africa.

Without access to permanent housing, they have lived in car bodies and under bonnets, without toilets, sanitation or proper drainage while successive state governments and agencies struggled with how to help them.

While problems with indigenous fringe camps are not new, the Parnpajinya community at Newman is probably the most notorious and one of the most difficult to resolve.

Children as young as three months are living in appalling conditions, which have probably contributed to at least eight deaths in the past decade.

Pilbara MP Larry Graham says state governments have committed $4 million in funding. But no viable improvements have been made.

In the past two years, the former Court government helped the community to have its few buildings demolished and later promised to rebuild if it could devise a management plan.

A final push has now begun among elders and their supporters for a permanent 30 million community to be built on the site.

Last week Housing Minister Tom Stephens visited Newman for a meeting that many saw as their last chance to convince the new Government of the merits of the plan, which has the support of local agencies and service providers. Western Desert Per-

Housing conditions: The Parnpajinya community

tukumwarra Aboriginal Corporation co-ordinator Kim Aude also says it includes building 15 houses and an administration block, and an extensive management strategy.

"The people would look after it," he says. "There would be in-laws in place to control alcohol and overcrowding. If people didn't adhere to this, the elders would have the authority to kick them out."

But NTSC regional manager Chris Cullum says that while people cannot be forced to move, the organisation does not support building significant infrastructure at the site because it could disadvantage the dry, traditional communities surrounding Parnpajinya.

Housing Minister Tom Stephens faced with deciding the issue, remains to be convinced of the best way forward.

He wants proof the community can be sustained, that it has the support of and that Parnpajinya families can afford financially and physically.

"Just because people articulate that this is what they want, it doesn't mean that somehow or other we have just got to roll it out for them," he says.

Source: (Hickman August 6 2001)
Appendix Five Advertising for the Martu Council’s AGM

Source: (Advertising for AGM October 24 2001)
Appendix Six Training Notes for the Martu Council about Protocols for Meetings

AGENDA

MINUTE FORMAT.

MEETING TO BE HELD ON THURSDAY 20TH SEPTEMBER

1. OPENING MEETING} THIS IS WHERE THE CHAIRPERSON OPENS THE MEETING AND WELCOMES EVERYONE.
2. APOLOGIES} THIS IS WHERE YOU GET NAMES OF PEOPLE THAT DIDN’T ATTEND.
3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING} THIS SHOULD BE READ OUT AND DISCUSSED
4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF MEETING} THIS IS ABOUT ANYTHING THAT NEEDS TO BE TALKED ABOUT CONCERNING THE PREVIOUS MEETING AND SEE IF ANY CHANGES NEED TO BE MADE.
5. CORRESPONDENCE IN}
6. CORRESPONDENCE OUT} THIS IS ALL ABOUT LETTER GOING OUT AND COMING IN.
7. ANY BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF CORRESPONDENCE}
8. GENERAL BUSINESS} ALL ABOUT THE MEETING AND ANYTHING ELSE YOU SHOULD LIST IT.
9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS} THIS IS WHEN SOMEONE WANTS TO RAISE SOMETHING.
10. NEXT MEETING DATE} DATE OF NEXT MEETING INCLUDING TIME.

NOTES: SECRETARY HAS TO RECORD ALL THAT GOES ON IN THIS ORDER SO IT CAN BE READ OUT AND PASSED AT THE NEXT MEETING.
Women of the desert weave a sell

LETH PAGANONE

Women of the Western Desert are famous for their baskets, which are made from grasses, leaves and vines. The baskets are often painted with intricate designs and symbols that represent the natural environment and the cultural heritage of the women who create them.

The baskets are used for a variety of purposes, including storing food, carrying goods and protecting fragile items. They are also used as tokens of respect and appreciation, often given as gifts to special guests or as token gifts to show gratitude.

The baskets are typically made from the roots of the various plants found in the desert, which are then dried and pounded into a strong and durable material. The women who make the baskets often spend many hours working on each one, carefully selecting the materials and designing the patterns.

The baskets are not only functional, but also beautiful and unique. They are a testament to the creativity and resilience of the women who create them, and a reminder of the rich cultural heritage of the Western Desert.

Source: (Paganoni August 18 2004)
References


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