A Sociological Analysis of Gay Racism and Its Affect on Asian Men in HIV Social Research

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This thesis is presented as part of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts with Honours.

Murdoch University
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DECLARATION

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.

Carl Gopalkrishnan
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Abstract
This thesis examines HIV social research investigating Asian men who have sex with men (MSM) and their HIV health needs in Australia. In recent years, there has been growing awareness in HIV discourse, based on a ‘diversity’ promotion in the gay and lesbian community, of the exclusion/rejection of Asian MSM from the gay-community and from gay-community-led HIV services and social research. I argue that this is part of a racism and misogynist culture crucial to the formative structures of gay, male identity. This aspect of gay male culture is avoided when focusing on Asian or NESB HIV issues in research because of the higher representation of gay, white, male interests in HIV social research. There are further barriers to viewing Asian MSM’s rejection/reactions ‘anglocentricism’ in the gay male community – as symptomatic of an epistemological racism in Australian research. Since the climate of discourse in Australia does not support analysis of racism in research or policy-making, ‘gay racism’s’ invisibility in HIV research allows for the construction of an ‘Asian problem’. This is further made possible by new discourses of – 1/ cognitive reductionism in psychology and healthcare studies of risk – 2/ the effects of postmodern identity discourse on Asian MSM and NESB categories in HIV discourse – 3/ and a New Liberalism using ‘culture’, ‘the individual’ and ‘meaning’ as a substitute for open debate about the growing dominance of ‘rational racism’ in public discourse. The degree to which gay racism works with New Liberalism to silence Asian men in HIV social research is the topic of this paper.
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Introduction - The odd angry letter - 1994

May 1994. The Independent Monthly

In concentrating so narrowly on the external machinations of the gay movement, John Birmingham’s story “The Empty Closet” (March IM) missed an opportunity to examine it from within. Richard Cobden made a sensitive and important comment in highlighting the fact that the gay movement is stacked in favour of white men in well-paid jobs which allow them a degree of choice in accepting the “open blast of discrimination”. These men have successfully utilised a cultural advantage not wholly enjoyed by all gays, assuming the mantle of spokesperson for us all.

As an Australian-Asian gay person, I find it very difficult indeed to accept the myth of a united gay culture which is supportive and representative of all its members. I find it harder still to support those leaders of the gay political lobby who have fought so hard for overdue concessions for themselves and, on the brink of realising them, make no real efforts to bring gays outside their narrow stereotypes into the game. If anything, they support the stereotype, aided by an equally racist and single-minded gay media. If the lobby is going to scream about human rights, it had better take a good look at the stark racism and class prejudice within its own backyard. Working-class men are not just “rough trade”; Asian men are not just “rice queens”1; gay men and lesbians have far from equal power in gay society and the power games in sexual politics, eulogising cultural and economic exploitation are entrenched in gay erotica. To stop being a victim, one must stop victimising others, and until the gay community does this, its mandate to rule will always be dependent on mainstream hierarchies. I disagree that the gay lobby has won the fight, as Birmingham implies, but I believe that it must continue its commitment to human rights, freedom of speech and progressive and caring social policies for all its members, lest it should collapse under the weight of its own hypocrisy.

Carl Gopal
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1 “Letters to the Editor” in Independent Monthly magazine (May 1994). It is useful to review the HIV discourse in the light of this letter as a measure of both my own involvement with the issue and the degree to which the HIV research industry has altered its agenda to include the issues addressed both by my letter and by the views of practitioners within the HIV fraternity. The term ‘rice queen’ is usually attributed to Caucasian men who seek out Asian men, but I used the term generically, as is sometimes used among Asian men themselves as a counter-insult to the hierarchy which has created the language in the gay community.
This thesis originates from a concern that the issues highlighted by this letter have not altered in the six years since its publication. It is especially obvious in the manner with which ‘Asian’ men are constructed within HIV social research. This research shows that Asian men having sex with men (MSM), whether they identify as gay or not, are not being reached in HIV preventative education initiatives. This is demonstrated by low response rates in surveys and low involvement with HIV outreach programmes indicating a resistance to assumptions about their culture, communication, sexual practices and self-identity. With national, policy-based research projects, my research provides an opportunity for examining the neglected relationship between the ‘culture’ of the gay community and HIV social research. While the gay community remains a central conduit of HIV preventative information and support for Asian men, it is vital to ask why this relationship is not analysed in relation to NESB data results. Repeated comments within HIV discourse concerning the role that racism plays in the alienation of Asian men from the gay community will be discussed to question why NESB issues have circulated in HIV publications for years without moving beyond a limited debate on ‘culture’ and ‘diversity’.

To accomplish this task, I query a confusion of methodologies in addressing Asian men. Specifically, this essay will document a range of approaches to the construction of the category ‘Gay Asian MSM’ through analysis of articles for National AIDS Bulletin (NAB), cross-cultural HIV conference papers and 3 main reports from the National Centre for HIV Social Research in Sydney (NCHSR). The boundaries of this review

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2 Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli, “Cultural diversity and men who have sex with men.” A review of the issues, strategies and resources (NCHSR June 1998) p11. This is the accepted term used in HIV research to describe three categories: 1) men who identify as homosexual or gay; 2) men whose main sexual practice is with other men but who do not see themselves as homosexual or gay; 3) bisexual and heterosexual identifying men whose main sexual practice is with women, but who may occasionally have sex with men.” For a more detailed explanation of the history of this term see, Gary Dowsett, “Governing Queens: Gay Communities and the State in Contemporary Australia” in Mitchel Dean & Barry Hindess, eds, Governing Australia: Studies in Contemporary Rationalities of Government (Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1998) p. 147-148.
are between 1993 and 1999. By looking closely at the debate, I will highlight how statements of the ‘Asian problem’ are actually racism in action within the gay community and in some cases, within social research itself. I will also review the underlying theoretical perspectives in HIV/AIDS research.

The model for the term ‘racism’ in this essay is the combination of both ‘power’ and ‘prejudice’ in practice. The manner in which racism has been discouraged from being used in public discourse is illustrated by references to the changing political climate since the election of the Liberal Government in Australia in 1996. Asian men navigate a complex grid of power imbalances that make identification with the language, terms and institutions of HIV as problematic as facing overt racism in the gay community to which they are encouraged to ‘assimilate’. American academic J. J. Sheurich has written about what he calls ‘epistemological racism’ and its role in the reconstruction of racism in research. His ‘policy archeology’ model will be used as a tool to reveal a complex ‘grid of regularities’ that forms the mechanisms of both control and alienation that Asian men face in preventative HIV education. The failure in reaching Asian men who do not identify with the gay community and the veracity of the theorising on this subject by HIV researchers is the basis for my argument to cite a denial of racism as an act of racism in ‘policy-based’ HIV social research.

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3 Power ‘plus’ prejudice, linked together to affect discrimination against a person or groups is a model used in equal opportunity and anti-racism analysis.
What colour is ‘objectivity’ itself?

There are many intersecting interests in this essay. I will begin by examining the term ‘racism’ before introducing the theoretical model that will highlight the mechanisms used to maintain it in the research process. This is followed by an analysis of what I will term “gay racism”.

Racism is always a contentious issue. Racism in research is even less openly discussed in the academe. For the purposes of this essay, ‘racism’ is defined as the joining of both ‘power’ and ‘prejudice’ in identifiable mechanisms within the gay community and their link to HIV organisational structures and social research. ‘Prejudice’ shows in the construction of Asian male sexuality by gay-community culture in Australia. This in turn is a filtering of broader historical and contemporary Australian recreations of “Asians”. The ‘power’ in this argument refers to the power to affect awareness of HIV issues and change in sexual practices by Asian MSM, but also to focus attention away from gay racism. The reproduction of the link between ‘power’ and ‘prejudice’ is occurring in the slow adaption by HIV policy makers of ‘access and equity’ principles into Asian MSM research. It is a combination of both conscious and unconscious racism. In Australia, the connections between ‘whiteness’ and ‘Asian-ness’ are not always discussed outside cultural theory. Though I want to offer a theoretical tool to examine ‘access & equity’ initiatives, it is important that it operates within an appreciation of unarticulated Australian constructions of ‘whiteness’. Suvendrini Perera\(^4\) notes the Australian vernacular uses of terms like ‘the battler’ and ‘the mainstream’ as uncontested code words for ‘white’, “...which in turn conceals the specificity of Anglo-Australian ethnicity being invoked.”\(^5\) These familiar terms

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\(^5\) Ibid.
demonstrate a process that could be applied to the language and criteria defining 'expert knowledge' in HIV social research into Asian MSM. Racist commentary is now more acceptable in public discourse than at any time since the demise of the White Australia Policy.6

In an analysis of epistemological racism, where one is asking, “what colour is objectivity itself?”, this paper is concerned not only with internal differences but also with visual representation, as in the arguments centred on cultural representation. The assumptions in universalism will be questioned, so that a distinction will be made throughout this paper between ‘whiteness’ on the one hand and ‘Aborigines’, ‘Asians’ and unspecified ‘migrants’ on the other. It is this unspoken divide that needs to be asserted before introducing the complex, distancing and at times ‘assimilating’ and essentialising process of theorising on race and inequality. In regard to the use of Non-English Speaking Background (NESB) categories, I note that Greek and Italian men’s 'ethnicity' is perceived as aspects of 'white' as opposed to 'Asian', 'Indian' or 'Aborigine', which are perceived as non-white. Although categories cross over in identity discourse, arguing the issue of 'whiteness' makes race more visible and racial groups quite distinct.7

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6 Fran Baum, The New Public Health: An Australian Perspective (Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1998) p 428 The new racism of Liberal Government policies is now considered established enough to be included in a major textbook on public health policy by Professor Fran Baum from Flinders University who states that, “Racist comments have become far more prevalent in popular debate in the late 1990s and have been seen as evidence of a growing intolerance in Australian society.”

7 For more about the argument on relative distance to the norm of the white, male, English speaking, midde-class, heterosexual, [and able-bodied] as markers of acceptability see Tracy L. Robinson’s “The intersections of dominant discourses across race, gender, and other identities” (Special Issue: Racism: Healing Its Effects), Journal of Counselling and Development, Vol 77, i1, 1998, p73(7). A cultural theory approach to ‘whiteness’ is available from Daniel Bernardi’s, ed, The Birth of Whiteness: Race And The Emergence of U.S. Cinema (Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 1996); for an 'orientalist' discourse see Mathew Bernstein & Gaylene Studlar’s, eds, Visions of the East: Orientalism in Film, I.B. (Tauris, London, 1997); for an examination of a co-operative definition of an orientalism with occidentalism in western intellectual development see J.J. Clarke’s Oriental Enlightenment: The Encounter Between Asian and Western Thought (Routledge, London, 1997).
The ‘too hard’ basket of epistemological racism

The crux of the issue is the interpretative moment as it occurs throughout the research process. And, into this moment, the researcher brings considerable conscious and unconscious baggage - other related research, training within a particular discipline (such as anthropology), epistemological inclinations, institutional and funding imperatives, conceptual schemes about storytelling or power, social positionality (the intersection of race, class, gender, sexual-orientation, among other key social locations), macro-cultural or civilisational frames (including the research frame itself); and individual idiosyncrasies, the interactions of which are themselves complex and ambiguous. This, ... interacts with the interviewee, who, of course, brings her/his own baggage into the interaction. That the written result , ... is overloaded with the researcher’s interpretive baggage is therefore, inevitable.8

Despite the clear conflicts of interest that occur with policy-based research, it is useful to separate this issue from the acknowledgment of the ‘whiteness’ of ‘objectivity’ in the very foundations of the research process. An acknowledgement of ‘whiteness’ accepts both that problem and solution are tied to a single perspective and that this is not automatically a universal truth. Without this knowledge, it is very difficult to implement Access & Equity principles. While Access & Equity policies are now in place to ensure that ‘disadvantaged’ groups are not penalised for being from a non-English speaking background,9 epistemological barriers make the act of listening to NESB issues in HIV discourse an exercise in ‘double jeopardy’. I would posit that racism is both conscious and unconscious in sustaining a complex network that


9 Michael Camit, “Working With Diversity” in National AIDS Bulletin Vol 11, #2, 1997, p. 12 provides a list of access and equity policies in Australia. They include: the Access and Equity policy (1985); The National Agenda for Multicultural Australia (1989); the NSW Charter of principles for a Culturally Diverse Society (1993); The Health Services for a Culturally Diverse Society: NSW Health Implementation plan (1995); the policy document, “Removing Cultural and language Barriers to Health (1993); the NSW Ethnic Affairs Policy Statement 1991/92-1994/95; The Draft National Strategic Plan for the Sexual Health of People from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds (1996) which specifically identifies ‘competencies’ for working with cultural diversity as a key strategy to address the issues of training and service delivery”.

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encompasses privilege, prejudice and also white domination of policy frameworks in HIV research. It is more unconscious in the epistemological frame within which research, as defined by policy-based research, operates. It is more conscious in the close association the HIV ‘industry’ has to a gay community with questionable power grids in the racial/sexual arena.10

With policy-based research, there is an awareness of conflicting interests that originate from government funded research. These conflicts are also an awareness of racism to researchers conscious of gay racism operating within the HIV industry. These grids form a network that J.J. Scheurich’s ‘Policy Archeology’ is well suited to expand upon. This is a new method of policy analysis devised to explain his theory of ‘epistemological racism’ in the social research process.11

In Scheurich’s book, Research Method in the Postmodern: Qualitative Studies Series, he outlines the 4 established categories of racism most addressed by social research and social science theory. These categories are 1) overt; 2) covert 3) institutional; and 4) societal. The fifth is Scheurich’s proposition for what he terms ‘epistemological racism’. He describes overt racism as, “… a public, conscious, and intended act by a person or persons from one race with the intent of doing damage to a person or persons of another race chiefly because of the race of the second person or persons.” 12

In a community distinguished by a dominating emphasis on sexual identities, practices and politics, this is not only about identity politics. The lack of open discussion on the role of race in this hierarchy is not well documented.

J.J. Scheurich 1997 p. 132. His dissection of the research model also interrogates the interview process. This is important in HIV research, since Asian data is still mainly dependent on narratives used in qualitative analysis due to the low participation of Asian ‘gay’ or ‘non-gay identifying’ MSM in surveys.

Ibid. p. 133. Australian and American legal definitions of racism differ but for the context of Asian MSM issues and of epistemological racism, Scheurich’s definitions are useful.
which society will find more palatable.” 13 A tendency to assume all racist critique of
epistemologies as a personal attack denies a separate sphere of examination to uncover
assumptions that allow overt racism in research to be denied. Scheurich explains that,
“...the fact that it restricts our understanding of racism to an individualised ethical
arena is a barrier to a broader, more comprehensive understanding of racism - for
society and for researchers”.14

This paper looks at both overt and covert racism as defining the institutional and
societal forces of racism at work in HIV research into Asian men’s sexuality. As a tool
to uncover this, policy archeology attempts to bypass the binary argument of racist or
non-racist identities of individual social researchers. Within this particular argument,
however, specific items of covert racism within the dominant white, gay male
community are introduced as items which unconscious, epistemological racism cannot
identify. This is the institutional racism which Scheurich describes as occurring,
“...when institutions or organisations, including educational ones, have standard
operating procedures (intended or unintended) that hurt members of one or more
races in relation to members of the dominant race.”15

Scheurich further explains:

The labeling of the target group as a social problem is critical to
the maintenance of the social order. The labeling of the targeted
groups via social agents, particularly by socially legitimized social
agents like professionals and policy analysts, positively disciplines
productive citizens by defining what a proper productive citizen
is and by reaffirming the productive citizens’ goodness or
correctness. More simplistically, the social order and its
attendant regularities reproduces by repeatedly producing ‘bad’
groups who are publicly identified as such (labeled, studied

13    Ibid. p. 134.
14  Ibid.
15     Ibid. p. 135.
treated) so that the productive behaviour of ‘good’ citizens is repeatedly reinforced.\textsuperscript{16}

Policy archeology\textsuperscript{17} presents four ‘arenas’ which outline invisible links which analysts can posit as the ‘interpretative moment’. These are as follows:

\textbf{Arena 1:} The education/social problem arena: the study of the social construction of specific education and social problems.

\textbf{Arena 2:} The social regularities arena: the identification of the network of social regularities across education and social problems.

\textbf{Arena 3:} The policy solution arena: the study of the social construction of the range of acceptable policy solutions.

\textbf{Arena 4:} The policy studies arena: the study of the social functions of policy studies itself.

Scheurich’s Arena 1 elicits questions about the creation of an ‘Asian problem’ that creates Arena 2, a ‘map’ of the problem (fig 1 & 2) which in turn outlines Arena 3, being the literature of HIV discourse, which itself defines a boundary to possible solutions to this ‘problem’ group. Arena 4 moves too far outside the immediate areas of investigation to be examined in depth.

Looking at fig 1 & 2, it is possible to see many ways to maintain racism as both integral to the construction of an ‘Asian problem’ and membership of the gay community.

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid. p. 107.
\textsuperscript{17} The frame of Policy Archeology is informed by a poststructural sensibility, in the same way that Foucault’s Archeology of Knowledge seeks to uncover constructions of knowledge that incorporate the historical context of meanings and intent. Scheurich has acknowledged this heritage from the French tradition, but also expanded on it to become more specific in addressing epistemological racism.
\end{flushleft}
OVERVIEW #1 fig 1
The Grid Of Social Regularities
Examining methods that result in the defining of Asian MSM (men who have sex with men) as a problem and high-risk group.

ACADEMIA: domains of valid knowledge
- western epistemologies – west/Asia constructions
- Models/Methods/Theoreticals
- queer theory; sociology; cultural theory; history; race theory; anthropology; ethnography; post-colonial theory; poststructuralism; racial epistemologies (Scheurich)

GOVERNMENT
- race relations - history & govt policy context
- Asian Region relations
- Domestic politics: Hansonism
- EEO principles
- UN Charters signatory

HIV SOCIAL RESEARCH
- Race of researchers, their epistemological traditions.
- Influence of academia: science
- Gay community agendas & influence in HIV principles
- Influence of minority eg: theories/poststructuralist

gay community:
- a socially constructed identity with a dominant group and minority sub-groups
- acknowledged racism appearing in texts at both academic and popular levels/visibility still low.
- HIV activists, researchers and education
- community groups
- social systems: deviant & normal within construction of gay & lesbian
  - tribal codes; language; dress;
  - physical/media constructions of desirability;
- minimal queer theory influence
- dominant liberationist model supporting middle-class, male Caucasian accepted norm

The Visual Identification of Asian Men categorises all Asian msm.
Construction of Asian MSM as a problem / at-risk group.
Perpetuating the problem through definition and control of responses by target group (Asian MSM)

**OVERVIEW #2** (grid detail) fig 2

**POWER RELATIONSHIPS**

- Western epistemologies - valid truth
- Pro & cons of queer discourse

**VALID TRUTH #1**

- Dominance of Western epistemology & white researchers
- Arguing valid truth
- Prominence of gay culture as a filter to see HIV/AIDS issues by government and researchers
- Prominence of a liberationist model in gay identity
- Internalised racism and the hegemony of the education system in Australia, whereby non-white academics must speak in valid methods with in-built racist structures; histories and epistemologies/ontologies/axiologies
- Commodification of sexual desire by criteria of race
- The control of the discourse by dominant race
- Silence on questions of racism in research

**GAY COMMUNITY**

- Asian MSM split
  - Gay Asian identifying & community networked msm
  - Non-gay Asian identifying msm

**VALID TRUTH #2**

- Cultural diversity and men who have sex with men: A review of the issues, strategies and resources. NCHSR June 1998.
- Too busy studying and no time for sex? : Male International Students and Sexual Health. NCHSR Monograph 4/1999. UNSW

**PROBLEM:**

- Low rate of data on non-gay identified Asian MSM reported
- Unreported or low priority cause of resulting data imbalance

**FORMS OF RESISTANCE**

- Not assimilating into socially constructed and approved GLBT community (values, behaviour, alliance outside of ethnic homebase)
- Failure to achieve target goals of HIV social research (ie: acceptance of education structure/content)
- AT RISK - failure to negotiate safe sex practice. This is perceived as an Asian problem, not a racist problem or failure of the gay community's social order

**OTHER NON ASIAN RESISTANCE**

- Bisexual men/women; lesbian; feminist; transgndered; low income; mature-aged; non-physical types

**ACADEMIA**

- Go to link here

**GOVERNMENT**

- The funding process

**HIV SOCIAL RESEARCH**
In reviewing the HIV literature, the theory demonstrates how the word ‘racism’ could break current interpretation of the research. Other elements, including the historical, cultural, societal, institutional and theoretical expressions of western constructions of Asian sexuality need to be dealt with separately and are not in the scope of this paper.  

In this essay I will mainly examine the HIV industry discourse.

Exclusively poststructural perspectives that ignore self-criticism of assumptions within its own method have the potential to be misused. Broader arguments on the misuse of the liberal discourse resonate within the matrix of racism in the gay community as I will show in Chapter 4. Scheurich, however, uses poststructural approaches to examine the methodologies produced by western liberalism. In the present understanding of what is ‘liberal’ and ‘progressive’, there are power imbalances that rarely get articulated, with many of them involving race. This, of course, is an observation from within the current paradigm of ‘valid truth’. I myself exist within a grid which creates the environment that in turn creates the ‘Asian problem’. I am operating from what Scheurich calls, “… the intersection of two formations” within a multi-formation of archaeologies, as a member of a non-dominant (non-white) formation (epistemology) within the dominant western academic tradition (or ‘reality’) determined by the language of the research process itself. This dual-citizenship must be considered in stating my own subjectivity towards the topic.

18 There is a large body of work that looks at the notion of ‘orientalism’; ‘postcolonialism’; and ‘ethnic studies’.

19 Therefore, it is worth noting ethnic studies’ debates occurring on the role of racism within a new form of liberalism. In the context of this essay, I want to make it clear that I do not see queer theory as a panacea to the exclusion of racism within ‘mainstream’ academic discourse.

20 Scheurich 1997 p. 85. In this chapter Scheurich questions the language which creates ‘validity’ in research. He writes that the, “...Same/Other power binary appears to be endemic to virtually all constructions of validity” resulting in a type of “monotone of dualisms which characterise the western epistemological framework.”

21 Scheurich, 1997, p. 68.
To illustrate both the ‘grid of regularities’ as an influencing factor in the construction of a social problem and also position my own bias, I can introduce myself as occurring, ‘...within and in the terms of archaeologies.” of the following ‘categories’.22

Being of Indian and Chinese heritage I am constituted by a dominant Malaysian, post-colonial Indian and Chinese culture; as a visual artist, I am constituted by a dominant European construction of ‘Bohemia’; As a British born Australian citizen, I am constituted by the dominant cultures of 2 countries in racial23 transition; as a male I am constituted by the dominant formation of the male; as a man who has sex with men I am constituted by the dominant construction of the gay community; as an Asian ‘gay’ man within that community, I am constituted by that dominant construction’s view of Asian men; as a 33 year old I am constituted by the advertising industry’s dominant construction of my demographic as Generation X; and as a researcher of colour I am constituted by the university’s dominant construction of ‘valid truth’. Thus, in an archaeological manner, these categories do not construct me as much as describe categories of thought and thinking and set of conditions24 that make it possible for me to present this argument.25 The difference in using this grid to outline diversity to question validity or dominant categories as opposed to avoiding questions altogether is important.

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22 Ibid. p. 169.

23 Although I will explain a simpler model for racism in this essay that relates to the model investigating policy based research methods in HIV, the subject is vast, even before the introduction of race and ethnic studies instigated by the social movements in the West during the 1960s. Michael Banton in Racial Theories: Second Edition (Cambridge University Press, 1998) provides historical overviews, case studies and the inclusion of ‘communication’ age factors which encourage a ‘bottom up’ approach to future studies of race, as opposed to the ‘top down’ structures in Sociology.

24 Ibid. p. 100

25 Scheurich1997. Scheurich uses a similar but less detailed system to illustrate his own subjectivities to archaeologies.
Diversifying the categories of ‘disadvantaged’ groups was devised as a tool to understand and improve methods of preventative HIV education. It was not devised as a semantic tool to justify the failure of researchers to confront their own prejudice in order to maintain the power to define and support their own ‘culture’. Constructing the client as a ‘problem’ ignores the challenge to question research procedures. HIV discourse on NESB issues uses ethnocentricity based on mainly covert racism, with political arguments built on the notion of ‘individual choice’. Within the ethnocentric paradigm is the issue of ethnviolence which is clearly absent from researchers’ minds when they interpret Asian MSM narratives. All Asian MSM articles, chapters and essays focus heavily on either Asian men’s culture or the effects of marginalisation and racism on their ability to access HIV education. It does not examine the perpetrators. Research into ethnviolence shows that:

Debilitating effects may last for years or recur sporadically. ... an observer cannot predict the effects of an incident solely from knowledge of the incident itself. What is of consequence to one person may elicit only passing notice from another. Also, a given act can change its meaning depending on the social setting in which it takes place.26

The change in meaning is what underpins this thesis. To HIV researchers, the gay community and the observer of policy, Asian MSM appear to receive attention. Their encounters with racism are acknowledged. Yet the complete lack of examination of the perpetrators of racism (gay community) shows a predisposition to consider racism acceptable by ignoring its causes. Introducing epistemological racism and Sheurich’s Policy Archeology is intended to provide some understanding of the processes at work encouraging the invisibility of this racism.

In Chapter 1 I will explore gay racism by relocating the terms of references commonly used to describe gay male culture as generic. This culture’s roots in gay male pornography highlights issues of racism, misogyny and unequal power dynamics which are extensively commercialised. I will locate these traits as central to the formation of gay male identity and explore the implications for the over-representations of white, gay men in HIV/AIDS research. In Chapter 2 I will outline the evolution of gay-community involvement with HIV/AIDS government policy, uncovering some dissenting views from gay activists not featured prominently in the discourse. I will also examine the structures of the major Australian HIV/AIDS research institutions. In Chapter 3 I will analyse articles about Asian and NESB MSM in National AIDS Bulletin (NAB), multicultural/HIV/AIDS conferences, 3 major reports into ASIAN MSM and a gay-community-identified book called Multicultural Queer. My intent is to demonstrate that the nature and scope of the denial of further investigation of gay male culture within a HIV/AIDS context, especially in HIV social research investigations into Asian MSM, is racism in action.

Though poststructurally influenced, policy archeology has a goal to uncover a specific issue, rather than just textually exploring the parameters of the problem. While Chapters 1-3 will look specifically at gay racism in HIV discourse and research reports, Chapter 4 will detail my argument for the limitations of postmodern discourse and cognitive dominant theories of psychology in explaining the risks associated with Asian MSM in Australia. In this chapter I will explain how the conceptualisation of sociopolitical and environmental factors as variables within rational, cognitive interpretations of human behaviour masks gay racism’s role in the construction of the ‘Asian problem’ within HIV social research.

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1. The Unspoken Taboo of Gay Racism - Pornography, racism and misogyny in gay male identities

*Rice queens, Gooks, Chogees, Slopes and other terms of endearment from gay male ‘liberation’*

I began this thesis with a letter to the Independent Monthly in 1994. Sadly, 6 years after that letter was published, I have been disappointed, that not only has the gay community not altered its course of racist constructions of a ‘good gay citizen’, it has extended its exclusion of legitimate gay citizenry to lesbian-feminists, bisexuals*, transgendered, the overweight, lower income earners, gays who have children, a mortgage or live in the suburbs (ie: the new insult of ‘family’ values applied also to Asian ‘oppression’); those opposed to pornography and serial polygamy (or even sex addiction); non-drug-users and anybody who doesn’t support a strong masculinist image reminiscent of Berlin in the 1930s and so powerfully embodied by Finnish artist/pornographer *Tom of Finland* (Fig 3-4 below).

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*Disputes in an ESB setting are not resolved either. Research into ESB college males show some of the antipathy between bisexual identifying and gay and queer identifying Caucasian men as in the comments with interviewees in Robert A. Roads, "A subcultural study of gay and bisexual college males: resisting inclinations" in *Journal of Higher Education*, July-August 1997 Vol. 68, No.4. p. 460 (23).*

*Tom of Finland is the work of a Finish artist specialising in erotic sexualised imaged of hyper-masculine men in homo-erotic scenarios. These are often associated with fascist themes, rape scenes and have a strong influence on constructions of gay male identities in Western societies.*
Only in 1999 is there any concentrated (if circular) attempt to debate NESB HIV issues in the shape of forums, conferences and a book *Multicultural Queer*,\(^{30}\) which represents the gay community’s attempt to articulate racism against Asian men under the watchful eye of Assimilation. In the same year activist and journalist Paul van Reyk also presented a talk for a forum entitled “Gay Men, Cultural Identity and HIV/AIDS” which centred on ‘Racism and the gay community’.\(^ {31}\) This talk also began with a letter which he discusses, itemising incidents of overt anti-Asian racism with both the gay media and HIV researchers at international conferences. Van Reyk also introduced gay male sex tourism in Asian countries as another taboo topic. The letter, from the 1992 January issue of *Campaign*, the longest established gay magazine, read:

\(^{30}\) Jackson & Sullivan 1999.

I have to compliment you on that beautiful guy on the November cover, Linden Davidson. But when I looked inside I was disappointed to see that Asian queen, Chee Kun Woo. He would probably look good in the Hong Kong weekly. How come there are thousands of gay men coming out from Asian countries? Who lets them in when there are thousands of American, German, Irish, Hungarian and Italian queens who could emigrate getting knocked back? I didn’t come out with my suitcases of gold and money and open a gay restaurant or Asian supermarket. I had to work ten years at two jobs. Now I have two shops on Oxford Street.

I am not an Australian born person but a very proud naturalised Australian. I love Lena Horne, Shirley Bassey, Sara Vaughan, Harry Belafonte and Soul II Soul but in their own country. I don’t want to have dinner with them or go to places with them. It is okay to go to bed (for one night) with a coloured person but to have an everlasting love affair is out of the question. So you are really kidding yourself when you feature an Asian on the cover and try to be multicultural. It is only the stupid Australian (gay poofsters) who want the so-called ‘multicultural’ pot. We hate each other. There are only a few white men interested in the small Asian dick. You can show me a small dick and show me a big black one and it is more important to go off with the big black one than the small Asian one.

So whatever you try to do there is never going to harmony between the colours and the whites and others. We just laugh at you and other journalists who are in a dream world.32

Unsurprisingly, it took nearly 8 years for this letter to be critiqued in a discussion of gay racism within earshot of the HIV research fraternity. Gay racism is neither new nor remarkable. It is simply that a ‘boys club’ of dominant white gay males has monopolised the tools of government bureaucracy, information technology and advertising to market their sexual culture as the essence of their ‘ethnicity’.

Living in Harmony?

The gay community is currently trying to promote its diversity policy, pointedly using gay Asian men to support the myth of a united gay culture. Listed among NCHSR report’s limited reference list of HIV cultural discourse, is a book called *Multicultural Queer*. Editors Peter Jackson and Gerard Sullivan position their Asian narratives against what they term ‘logical’ discourse to lend a validity to the book’s narratives. The chapter on Asian HIV/AIDS and racism by Rasyid Sanitioso, which is positioned as a "social-psychological perspective" is the strongest acknowledgement of the role that racism plays in HIV/AIDS and Asian men. Otherwise, the other chapters by gay Asian men are more insights into the *effects* of a dominant gay culture’s racist attitudes rather than a close scrutiny of the problems in gay culture which cause them. Presented in the style of 'Asian narratives' they are given credence of ‘truth’ as Asian and NESB voices, but not a concentrated power and rage against the gay values that perpetuate them. Additionally, Sanitioso’s comment on growing rates of Asian MSM HIV infection in the US should be coming from the HIV industry which has had access to US statistics since 1988.

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33 There is a very logical terrain of racist constructions within a range of theoretical disciplines, ‘gay’ identity politics and the broader epistemological questions from which these writing take their direction. Intersections of knowledge apply a ‘natural’ racism which maintains a social hierarchy within the gay community and this is never questioned by either the writers or the editors themselves.


35 Anger is conspicuously missing in all Asian quotations of racist incidents by HIV and gay discourse.

Their ‘preamble’, a combination of the introduction and first chapter, seeks ‘unity’ of gay diversity while the texts actually confronts the disunity of gay culture. Without articulating what ‘gay’ means within a cultural/identity argument, the book can only reinforce a dominant gay culture as an unquestioned (and universal) term of departure, even as it seeks to express that culture’s version of inclusion and compassion towards Asian/NESB gay’s within its hierarchy. A hierarchy, one can add, that is only acknowledged in the language of gay identity politics which unquestioningly ascribes to a sense of belonging to a dominant core of white hyper-masculinity. I would like to argue that a temptation to applaud this book should be resisted, given the amount of HIV discourse and years which have elapsed to allow the editors to go much further in a critical analysis of racism within gay culture.

Until only very recently, negative criticism of the gay community from gay men themselves has been smothered. It is still taboo. Only a few academics and activists today can speak of it while risking scathing attacks from gay activists and HIV researchers supportive of dominant gay values. Christopher Kendall has taken a critical stand on gay pornography to articulate the central role that misogyny and racism play in constructing gay male identity. This is the ‘culture’ of gay men that never appears next to references of either ‘gay liberation’ or ‘human rights’. Kendall observes:

> Some view gay male pornography as integral to the formation of gay male identity, as something that challenges heterosexuality as a compulsory social construct. But gay male pornography is neither. It is hate speech. It is integral, indeed central, to the formation of a misogynist and heterosexually defined gay male identity. Gay male pornography does not challenge compulsory heterosexuality and male dominance. It supports it. When I see gay male pornography, I see the underbelly of current identity politics—a gay identity that rejects compassion, affection and caring between two men, and that instead promotes internalised

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37 Jackson & Sullivan 1999 p 22. The editors state their hope that the book will, “foster a greater appreciation of differences within our community and more acceptance of and support for this diversity” but think that this can be done without dismantling racism.
homophobia, hate, and the harming of others. Gay male pornography presents hyper masculinity, what it means to be a socially defined ‘male’. These images ensure that white male dominance is maintained and that those who have historically been denied equality will continue to be the victims of hatred and violence.38

The strongest criticisms about the way gay Caucasian men view Asian MSM centres on Asian men being feminised. This comes from both gay activists trying to address Asian mens’ marginality and from HIV researchers trying to address racism without addressing the extent that racism is integral to maintaining gay male culture. Gay sponsored publications that try to address gay racism without acknowledging the ‘gay’ in that racism substantially dilute their attempts to prevent what they tacitly acknowledge as an unsavoury aspect of gay male culture.

The problem with Multicultural Queer is that it addresses racism without addressing ‘gay racism’ and at a time when it has become fashionable to be seen to talk about racism. Being a form of white stewardship (and monitoring) of Asian MSM voices by two Caucasian editors whose editorial justification involves claiming roles as men with non-Anglo-Celtic partners recalls a 1994 comment by Michael Camit that, “This raises issues of empowerment,”39 but on an epistemological and ontological level. The book’s inclusion in a research process of Asian MSM is questionable only in the under-representation of genuine differences of view that might contravene dominant interpretations of gay culture. The authors and the gay-identifying writers reinforce


the ‘universal’ nature of ‘homosexuality’ by the use of Anglo-American ‘gay’ definitions of identity politics. Scheurich’s 3rd arena of study, ‘the study of the social construction of the range of acceptable solutions,’ can thus be applied to suggest that a ‘universal homosexuality’ defines the problem (resistance to HIV research by Asian MSM) and the solution (assimilation into a essentialising gay male identity). The Sanitioso chapter also analyses Asian psychological damage resulting in unsafe sex practice with an exclusive focus on Asian men (thus apportioning more blame on ‘Asians’) and no criticism of white gay racism. Sanitioso’s analysis is also trapped within a less influential part of psychology, social psychology, which is itself struggling with the cognitive obsession with the individual. This disciplinary restriction is designed to see collectivist cultures as problematic barriers to, “...self-esteem, self-efficacy, control, knowledge and communication skills.” Chapter 4 will elucidate on the role of individualism within cognitive theories, and the Health Belief Model in particular. In the context of gay racism, Sanitioso’s only reference to a criticism is his admission that, “...the adoption of gay identity may, in some cases, expose the individuals to potentially more risky situations. (i.e., more frequent and varied sexual partners, more varied sexual activities). This observation of gay male culture is also an unconscious reference to a gap in HIV social research issues demonstrating the censoring quality of gay, male culture on interpretations of scientific research findings that oppose their sexual culture.

40 The term ‘homosexual’ is littered with discourse, from its medical use to the emancipatory politics of Anglo-American culture. For a more critical overview of the evolution of this term in the West, and the manner in which it crosses into cultures outside the West, see Rudi C. Bleys’ The Geography of Perversion: Male to Male Sexual Behaviour Outside the West and the Ethnographic Imagination, 1750-1918, (New York University Press, Washington Square 1995).

41 Jackson & Sullivan 1999 p . 81.

42 Ibid. p. 80.
Multicultural Queer retreats from making its collection of essays a critical examination of entrenched racism in lieu of a call to arms for unity and assimilation into a gay culture apparently beyond self-criticism. They also appear to have recruited their NESB/Asian participants, like the NCHSR reports, through the established network of gay male culture.

Like their 1950s progenitors of male patriarchy, the stony faced denial of any trouble in the gay 'family' has become the dominant 'party line' in gay discourse. This denial is seen in the growing body of theories on Asian men and their culture as containing an inability to say 'no' to either non-consensual or 'safe' sexual activities with Caucasian men (who are limited by their culturally defined inability to follow their English language HIV prevention knowledge at the moment of sexual penetration).

This mind set of rigid denial is becoming increasingly cartoon-like, as evidenced by the external projection of gay culture onto Asian bodies in the latest posters by the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO) targeting gay HIV positive Asian men in Australia. The reinforcement of a strong sexual imagery and emphasis on hyper masculinised youth is not an exact reproduction of Tom of Finland, but there is an undeniable visual culture at work in the minds of the campaign planners which is hard to refute. (fig 5-6).

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43 Although the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO) have commented that there is racism in the gay community, yet again, the poster’s campaign targets Asian men as a problem group within problem communities that need education into [white] gay values. The images are not unlike Asian versions of Tom of Finland men in body pose, being shirtless and in sexually evocative body positions. At URL: http://www.afao.org.au/posters.html
Figure 5 Poster Campaign 2000 aimed at HIV+ Gay Asian Men Australian Federation of AIDS Organisation [http://www.afao.org.au]
The AFAO would no doubt deny that there was anything amiss in this representation, as shown by Gary Dowsett’s remarks in a chapter of Governing Australia when he says:

Some might read this alliance between the state and gay communities as a non-too-subtle incorporation of the gay communities in the machinery of the power. Certainly there is convergence of purpose: to stop HIV. But the gay communities have fought every step of the way for sex-positive, non-repressive configuration of health promotion, achieving some loosening of sexual regulation of health promotion and retaining an impressive autonomy in the representation of their sexual culture.44

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44 G. Dowsett in Dean & Hindess 1998 p. 150.
Dowsett’s version of “their sexual culture” however, is not explained as much as assumed. The extent to which questions of racism in HIV social research have not been asked is evident in his ability to make this statement without qualification. His confidence in excluding a qualification for gay sexual culture is what this paper is questioning.

In *The Lesbian Heresy*, Sheila Jeffreys describes the allure of gay male culture in the 1990s as ‘male money and power’ enticingly promoting ‘glamour and influence’ while deriving most of its finance and cultural values from the sex industry. Her book outlines the attack on the lesbian feminist movement by gay men and the distorting influence of poststructuralism and postmodernism, whose strongest advocates were ‘...gay or sadomasochistic or paid lip service to the politics of minorities.”

The manner in which gay male values have become a measure of worth in some areas of the lesbian community illustrates the mechanisms of hegemony at work in creating a real dominant class within the perception of what is ‘gay’. This puts a new slant on Dowsett’s celebration of ‘their sexual culture’ to infer unified support for what has become an essentially white, male version of sexuality, commercialised to the point of caricature. Again, Dowsett’s confidence in excluding a qualification for the gay sexual culture he believes should be commercialised must be examined. Its role in his ‘...machinery of the power...” deserves nothing less. In fact, this gay community is not the perfect world of back-patting, celebratory discourse that dominates an understanding of ‘gay pride.”

Gay media personal columns and internet chat

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46 "Gay Pride” is the term used to describe both a movement, campaign and self-ascription which encapsulates the Anglo-American emancipatory model of gay identity.

47 Gay media that reflect gay cultural values referred to in this essay include titles such as *Outrage*, *Sydney Star Observer*, *Capital Q* and *DNA*. And personal columns on the internet such as Pinkboard.com. For an analysis of the role the media plays in representing minorities see Charles Ungerleider, "Media, Minorities, and Misconceptions: The Portrayal by and Representation of Minorities in Canadian News
rooms abound with the statement: "no fats, fems or Asians". The gay media also represents almost exclusively, a white hyper masculine male image on its covers, pamphlets and posters. Sex/social events glorifying economic and sexual exploitation are the community rule rather than the exception with pornography titles such as “... Fuck Me Like a Bitch, I Was a Substitute Vagina, Beat Me Till I Come, Muscle Beach, Slaves to the SS and Stud Daddy” indicative of this. Kendall has described the way that gay male pornography constructs gay male identity. He writes:

Gay male pornography offers those who use it two choices. It tells them they can either be straight/dominant “men” society has told them they have never been or they can be the feminized/subordinate “others” used by those “men.” In so doing, it invites them to participate in a sexual dynamic premised on hierarchy, the polar opposite of all that is equality ... gay male pornography sends a very clear message about what the gay male is or should be today: young, muscular, “good looking,” preferably white, definitly able-bodied.

An indication of the endemic proportions that anti-Asian sentiment is rife in this community is the very construction of the 'Asian problem' by HIV industry researchers who sympathise and uncritically represent the values of the dominant formation of 'gay liberation'. To then see the commercialisation of this culture as an acceptable issue in governmentality is the epitome of a tinted lens, as shown by Dowsett again who says, "The publicisation of gay, and increasingly, lesbian sexuality is also leading to its commercialisation - not necessarily a bad thing." Unsurprisingly, postmodern


48 C.Kendall in Lederer & Delgado 1995, p. 162. These titles, all found in gay male pornography that accurately indicate the tone of gay male culture regarding issues of misogyny and racism, they provide a sobering counter argument to Gary Dowsett's idea of commercialising gay and lesbian culture. See also C. Kendall, “Real Dominant, Real Fun? Gay Male Pornography and the Pursuit of Masculinity” in Saskatchewan Law Review, 1993, Vol 57 (1). P.21.

49 Ibid.

50 Dean & Hindess 1998, p.152. This whole chapter is a good example of gay dominant 'white' epistemology diffusing the essence of the liberal value system, by allocating new categories to describe a good small 'l' liberal. This is as much in the text as in the inclusion of the work in a book representing the
discourse has followed through with this assumption, offering no explanation for its own transfer from supporting critical analysis to supporting consumer capitalism.

Racism in the gay community is articulated in a tepid manner by Caucasian researchers, and most carefully by researchers of colour.\textsuperscript{51} The hesitancy even of researchers of colour to bluntly or angrily name ‘racism’ per se as a reason for the slow rise of NESB issues on the HIV agenda, can be linked to both the power that gay ‘culture’ has in influencing HIV research categories of ‘high-risk’ groups and the processes by which Asian persons are assimilated into ‘whiteness’. Firstly, in Australia, 80% of HIV infections are spread through male to male sexual contact\textsuperscript{52} and this is also why the culture of HIV has remained firmly in the hands of the gay lobby. While a good argument for the continuation of gay-community involvement in HIV research and education, it is also a crucial reason to see this community as a culture in itself, in need of the same critical research and evaluation into its attitudes as NESB or Asian men. While this has certainly been achieved to the satisfaction of the Caucasian, gay, male community, the translation of this model into broader HIV application does not contain any self-critical analysis from this community. It is also inconsiderate to the reactions of other cultures (including other Caucasian sub-cultures of society) which are rejected or accepted against a dominant Caucasian ideal.

The gay community’s power to define HIV research agendas makes research categories of “Asian MSM” integral to the maintenance of the gay social order. As the current academic views of governmentality in a Foucaultian sense, which Sheila Jeffreys has criticised for its tacit support for the ‘harmless’ economic, sexist and racist exploitation in pornography.

\textsuperscript{51} I am using the term ‘researchers of colour’ in a way that has become accepted in some racial and ethnic discourse. It is a term not suited for everyone and does not indicate that the person referred to has self-identified by this term.

\textsuperscript{52} Dr Lisa Maher in Cultures of Contagion?: Injecting Drug Use and Indo-Chinese Immigrants in Culture, Ethnicity and Sexual Health: A series of forums exploring cross cultural issues. (NSW Health Study Grants Seminar Series, 1999).
Gay community is perceived as a relative sub group of society, its social hierarchies are protected by the idea that being gay is a form of ‘ethnicity’. This is a problem in that it protects white gay men from government scrutiny by the same EO principles that are there to protect Asian MSM. It does not prevent HIV researchers from criticising ethnic communities on their homophobia but it does protect the gay community from exposing their own racism. Within the gay community, criticism against inequality within the community is actively discouraged.

Secondly, assimilation, while not the easiest or most pleasant word, is a concept that operates at several levels within the Asian collective itself. Unacknowledged by researchers is the ‘model minority’ syndrome, whereby Asian-Australians are denied the more aggressive tendencies permitted by other minority groups. In discussing this perception in the Asian-American context, Benjamin R. Tong writes,

> Whether forever foreigner or fake white, Asian-Americans are expected to be hardworking, inexpressive, compliant, and generally invisible, all the while euphemizing constricted personality as the legacy of an exotic, effeminate, little-understood ancestral “Oriental” culture. The end result is a well-behaved, self-monitoring “model-minority.”

Tong further distinguishes between 3 types of assimilation more familiar to Asian communities than to the mainstream studies of ‘the other’. These types include: literal assimilation (visual and lifestyle and association); colonial assimilation (succumbing to

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53 John Ballard refers to this phenomenon when talking about the formation of a 1970s US tradition of "ethnic group mobilisation" to "develop gay communities in the English speaking world and beyond in "The Constitution of AIDS in Australia: Taking 'Government at a Distance' Seriously" in Dean & Hindess 1998 p. 131.


the passive stereotype and subject to tokenism); and finally *egalitarian assimilation* (epitomised by the managerial-professional stratum, who desires the same power and influence as white males with all its accoutrements).\(^{56}\) It is useful to list these to demonstrate the deeper interpretations to the term ‘Asian’, ‘assimilation’ and ‘non-Western’ that litter a superficial analysis of cultural differences in identity discourse. It also provides alternative avenues to traditional elite perspectives which would further entrench arguments within a Western intellectual tradition. Throughout Tong’s analysis of the interplay between ethnicity and psychology, he reiterates that both historical legacies of racism and contemporary racial inequities are central to the psychological problems faced by Asian-Americans in a clinical context. No such approach is present in understanding risks of HIV by Asian MSM in HIV social research.

This chapter has demonstrated the way gay racism is supported by gay male pornography containing essentially racist and misogynist hierarchies. Gay activists support this dominant hierarchy and resist investigation into their culture through the use of the same EO principles motivating the dissection of Asian culture by HIV social research. The research institutes, in co-operation with the gay male community, contain an over-representation of the interests of white, gay men. They do not, however, contradict or examine gay racism in cultural detail, thus apportioning more blame onto Asian MSM through theoretical assumptions biased towards individual agency. Critics like Kendall and Jeffreys are minority voices amongst dominant interpretations for ‘gay liberation’ and ‘human rights’ which are also the embodiment of white, gay male culture further hidden within a commercialised sexual culture protected by a veil of “ethnicity”. Without scrutinising this culture, HIV research has become a tool for denying racism. By specifically locating examples of racism and

\(^{56}\) Ibid.
misogyny in gay male pornography, the gay media and in the gay community’s recon-struction of ‘multicultural’ gay consciousness, I hope to loosen the grip that these power elites have in their definition and control of Asian MSM research findings.

Chapter 2 will review the assumptions and conflicts embedded in HIV/AIDS education policy by following policy developments since the early 1980s. In exploring the structures, dominant expertise and research boundaries of the 3 leading research centres, I will emphasise the institutional mechanisms which bound gay male culture to HIV social research. I will look at specific instances where gay male cultural values have directed research agendas to show a precedence of influence on the health policy process. Racially, I will identify where Kendall’s model of anti-Asian racism in gay culture is situated in the HIV/AIDS context. An understanding of the HIV/AIDS research context is therefore important in showing how gay racism operates in HIV social research in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4, I will analyse the research theories which are the mechanisms of epistemological racism which create an academic invisibility to deny the existence of gay racism towards Asian MSM in HIV social research.
2. A Mirror With Two-Faces - The HIV context in Australia today

*Australian HIV Research Centres*

Australia was the first country to develop a National Strategy on HIV/AIDS. This occurred in 1989. Since then there have been a total of four such policy statements: 1989; 1992-93; 1996-96 with the latest to cover periods between 1999-2000 and 2001-2003. The Victorian AIDS Council, with the gay community information provided by Gay Men’s Health Crisis in New York, spearheaded early initiatives with government towards HIV prevention in Australia. Later this was followed by Sydney, which quickly assumed the position of a dominant centre of activity in the HIV/AIDS policy formulation, aided by a large and politically active gay community. As John Ballard has outlined in *Governing Australia: studies in Contemporary Rationalities of Government*, between 1985 and 1987 - the epidemic’s saturation point within the gay community, government concerns with blood supply prompted early fusion between the gay community and the Commonwealth policies on HIV/AIDS. Between arguments for ‘containment’ or ‘education’, a division occurred between the medical rationality of the AIDS Taskforce and the strong community representation within the National Advisory Council on AIDS (NACAIDS). A conflict arising from AIDS Taskforce’s Dr David Pennington’s position over closure of gay bath houses and compulsory testing of core groups split the political groups into distinct camps. Thus, AIDS Councils, NACAIDS and the Commonwealth department were bound together. This only weakened after the departure of the community’s strongest

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58 J. Ballard describes the formation of alliances between gay community groups and government health policy makers in Dean & Hindess 1998 pp. 125-138.
advocate, Former Labor Health Minister Neal Blewitt, with subsequent administrations shifting the focus onto new economic accountability measures. This process of politicisation of the gay community and the establishment of a strong bargaining position with government has been built on fear of a possible Australian heterosexual epidemic (which never eventuated), public sympathy with the community (which is now arguably weakening) and its early intervention and development of ‘safe sex’ codes based on condom use while downplaying the role of multi-partnerism in HIV transmission.

In the gay community itself, early calls for restraint in sexual multi-partnerism was replaced by ‘sex-positivity’ when Larry Kramer, founder of Gay Men’s Health Crisis in New York was voted down in that city’s influential vote to not support such a education policy on the grounds of it being ‘homophobic’, shame-based and serving the interests of the right.\textsuperscript{59} This internal division has resulted in heavy community involvement with research being biased towards two philosophies that are accepted as the norm in HIV research. These are 1) ‘sex-positivity’, or the notion that high partner rates is an unavoidable part of being a gay man and that restraint is homophobic; and 2) ‘harm reduction’, which also considers change in behaviour as unrealistic and bases itself on proven, rational evidence-based arguments that must avoid judgment.\textsuperscript{60} Together, these two ideologies underpin HIV/AIDS research in Australia, supported by the leading US HIV/AIDS agencies and gay community groups. Since the 1989 International Conference on AIDS, there has also been a dramatic shift away from the scientific and medical discourse to questions of the cultural construction of health and

\textsuperscript{59} G. Rotello 1998 p. 97.

\textsuperscript{60} URL: http://www.chr.asn.au/harm.html. The Centre For Harm Reduction states that harm reduction is, “...a pragmatic philosophy, which recognises that the risks to social and public health associated with some stigmatised, anti-social or illegal behaviours are so great that they must be reduced by whatever means possible
HIV/AIDS in particular.\textsuperscript{61} This has spawned contests about meaning and interpretation, with meaning linked to individual processing of knowledge. At the same time there has been a corresponding drop in emphasis in psychology on the social and environmental contexts in which human behaviour operates. This dominant trend of focusing on cognitive processes will be further examined in Chapter 4.

Three main research centres collaborate on the national policies set for HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment and research in Australia. Established in 1990, The National Centre in HIV Social Research (NCHSR) leads investigation into behavioural/cultural factors determining infection rate factors in core groups in Australia and it has the closest relationship with the gay community, both in professional dialogue and work-culture practice. The NCHSR, like all western research agencies, is directed by the political, medical and epidemiological policies set at international HIV/AIDS conferences which are heavily influenced by US researchers and US cultural mores into both core group cultures and definitions of ‘human rights’. The NCHSR (located in Arts and Social Sciences at UNSW) has collaborative arrangements with The National Centre in HIV Epidemiology and Clinical Research (established in 1986 at UNSW) and The Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society (established in 1992 at La Trobe University).

The Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO) is also a major umbrella group under which all agencies operate as a disseminating centre for education and, primarily, gay-community policies that will have a large impact on state AIDS Council approaches to the community in their state. Internationally, The Centre for AIDS Prevention Studies in San Francisco has a leading role in setting research agendas.\textsuperscript{62}

\textsuperscript{61} Paula A. Treichler in How To Have Theory In An Epidemic: Cultural Chronicles of AIDS (Duke University Press, Durham, 1999) p. 8.

\textsuperscript{62} For an overview of the National Strategy on HIV/AIDS see the website URL: http://www.health.gov.au/pubhlth/strateg/hiv_hepc/hiv/
The National Centre in HIV Social Research (NCHSR)

Based in Sydney, the NCHSR conducts research “which describes and analyses the social understandings, meanings and practices of peoples, institutions and communities in relation to HIV, STDs and other communicable diseases ... [and is]...utilised to inform government and non-government organisations, other research contributors, health educators, other health care professionals and community members.” 63 It has divided its research into four broad areas which use a variety of theoretical perspectives. These areas are:

1/ Mapping of Risk Practice
2/ Negotiating the medical field
3/ Exploring the cultural dynamics of health
4/ Understanding health knowledge and practice.64

The NCHSR’s other involvement includes ‘teasing out’ the “meanings and value of unique subcultures within broad population groupings” and the “social and historical processes that produce them.”65 The methods used to do this include:

1/ close focus methods of inquiry including textual analysis of material derived from multiple data sources, ethnography and life histories.
2/ quantitative techniques of inquiry such as cross-sectional and longitudinal surveys.
3/ sociological and historical analysis of the changing nature of epidemics and their social and economic impact.66

63 URL: http://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/nchsr/
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid.
NHSCR works very closely with affected communities and also “the expectations of those affected [by HIV/AIDS].”\textsuperscript{67} It has a substantial role for advisory committees such as the Science Advisory Committee which, of its 6 sitting professors, include prominent gay activist Dennis Altman and the Director of the centre Susan Kippax, a founding editor of the journal \textit{Culture, Health and Sexuality}. Among regular workshops are those run by Associate Professor Gary Dowsett, a board member of The Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society at La Trobe University, and one of the writers critiqued in this thesis for their uncritical position on gay ‘sex-positive’ ideology in tax-payer funded, preventative education campaigns. This will be discussed in the following chapter.

\textbf{The National Centre in HIV Epidemiology and Clinical Research (NCHECR)}

Established in 1986 at UNSW, the NCHECR is billed as “one of Australia’s leading medical research centres and ...recognised internationally as a leader in the field of research into HIV/AIDS.”\textsuperscript{68} The centre has a substantial role under the National HIV/AIDS Strategy and a Scientific Advisory Committee which reports to the Australian National Council of AIDS and Related Diseases (ANCARD) via its Research Advisory Council (RAC). It is primarily funded from the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care through NACARD.

The research directed into HIV/AIDS focuses on epidemiology, clinical research and clinical trials with priorities in “surveillance and monitoring of HIV infection and AIDS, epidemiological studies of transmission and disease progression, identification

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{66} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{67} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{68} URL: http://www.med.unsw.edu.au.au/nchecr/about.htm
\end{itemize}
of social and behavioural factors affecting HIV disease and the establishment of Australia as a primary site for clinical trials of HIV therapy.” NCHECR also conducts research into Hepatitis C and other blood born viruses and has a stronger leaning to Science qualified staff. All of its postgraduate supervision is with Science graduates.

The Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society (ARCSHS)
The Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society was established as the Centre for the Study of Sexually Transmissible Diseases in October 1992 within the Faculty of Health Sciences at La Trobe University. The Centre is funded by the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, is a collaborating centre to the National Centre in HIV Social Research and is affiliated with The University of Melbourne. Its aims are:

1/ To undertake multidisciplinary research into social and behavioural aspects of sexually transmissible diseases, their prevention and their consequences.

2/ To focus resources and to provide leadership on both state and national level in the study of sexually transmissible diseases.

3/ To provide a firm foundation of knowledge, skills and resources upon which other organisations can draw to assist them in health promotion, STD prevention education and the formulation of public health policies.

The Centre has close relationships with core groups and also with the Australian National Council of AIDS and Related Diseases (NACAIDS) while involved with extensive publishing in professional journals. It has a core staff of 9 researchers from a

69 Ibid.

70 See URL: http://www.latrobe.edu.au/www/centstd/
'variety of disciplines'\textsuperscript{71} and offers supervision to students at PhD and Masters levels in areas including: Epidemiology, Gender Studies, Health Policy, Health Education, HIV/AIDS/STDs, Psychology, Sociology, Sexual Health and Youth Studies. Its focus on collaborative research extends within the Asia-Pacific region as well as with other Australian centres in HIV/AIDS research. Its Acting Director until July 2000 was Associate Professor Gary Dowsett, with Professor Marian Pitts appointed Director from this period. Its main research projects include: Understanding Sexual Health; Optimising Sexual Health outcomes; and Informing Policy and Health Systems.

\textbf{The Holy Trinity}

These three centres of research have a close alliance due to the interdependence of disciplines in the full context of HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment which require, apart from a multidisciplinary approach, close ties with core group communities and government funding and administration.

The HIV ‘industry’\textsuperscript{72} is extensive. The Australian Federation of AIDS Organisation’s (AFAO) publication \textit{National AIDS Bulletin} is a good indicator of how community, research and government collaborate in the complex policy-making process that eventually becomes a National HIV/AIDS Strategy Policy affecting (or in-affecting) Asian MSM. The AFAO is also a leading player in the campaigns devised to reach Asian MSM. In the latest campaign referred to in the following chapter, a committee

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{72} I refer to the HIV/AIDS social and medical research, education, publications, treatments, policy-making processes and groups as an industry because of the enormous diversity and opportunity for investment and funding, as well as its associations with both government and the pharmaceutical industry. I do not intend to devalue the personal sufferings of HIV/AIDS sufferers, however I do believe that this ‘industry’ perspective has overtaken the humanitarian ethos of the management of HIV/AIDS.
was formed to specifically address ‘gay’ Asian MSM needs in the campaign. This committee, like most HIV industry committees on Asian MSM was made up of a mix of gay identifying Asian MSM from HIV/AIDS practitioner professions and gay male community practitioners, researchers and academics. It appears as though none seriously question the dominant gay male hierarchy and this will be demonstrated in Chapter 3.

There are a plethora of publications from general HIV education to specific journals dealing with HIV treatment, general practitioner information, epidemiological, infection control, legal issues and patient education quite apart from the highly specific scientific and health education journals. Many disciplines of the university have also developed sub strands of HIV/AIDS research within their core disciplinary arenas. An example of this would be a Sociology of Health or Health Policy focusing on HIV/AIDS. Each state has community organisations such as People Living With HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) or specifically for women or drug users and AIDS Councils exist in each state providing assistance with preventative education, client support and community and government liaison. Each state’s health department is also involved in the matrix of HIV/AIDS.

On the issue of Asian MSM’s representation in HIV social research, the three main HIV/AIDS research centres discussed above form the major source of policy influence. As the 3 main reports into Asian MSM have been conducted and released through the NCHSR in Sydney, I have selected them as my main reference to ‘HIV social research’ in Australia, while assuming a close collaboration with ARCSHS and NCHECR’s goals and assumptions about Asian MSM in the terms of reference of current reports and HIV discourse.

73 The AFAO is the peak body for community-based responses to HIV/AIDS in Australia. For a full explanation of the AFAO rationale behind this poster campaign see their website URL: http://www.afao.org.au
In order to ‘see’ racism, we must conceive the possibility that current gay male values have not only failed their own test of ‘liberation’ from enforced heterosexuality and oppression, but that this failure relies on the successful establishment of a rampant consumer capitalist sexual currency. The marketplace that this currency trades on relies on racism, sexism, misogyny, inequality and abuse. This requires that we acknowledge the institutionalised distribution system for such an ideology and its reliance on the HIV/AIDS research centres for validation.

The cutting-room floor

There is a palpable separation between information known to those within the gay male community and those standing outside, with the ‘general public’, watching Mardi Gras on television. Gabriel Rotello writes:

It was an historic accident that HIV disease first manifested itself in the gay populations of the east and west coast of the United States,” wrote British sociologist Jeffrey Weeks in AIDS and Contemporary History in 1993. His opinion has been almost universal among gay and AIDS activists even to this day. Yet there is little “accidental” about the sexual ecology described above. Multiple concurrent partners, versatile anal sex, core group behaviour centred in commercial sex establishments, widespread recreational drug abuse, repeated waves of STDs and constant intake of antibiotics, sexual tourism and travel—these factors were not “accidents”. Multi-partner anal sex was encouraged, celebrated, considered a central component of liberation. Core group behaviour in baths and sex clubs was deemed by many the quintessence of freedom. Versatility was declared a political imperative. Analingus was pronounced the champagne of gay sex, a palpable gesture of revolution. STDs were to be worn like badges of honour, antibiotics to be taken with pride.74

74 G.Rotello 1998 p. 89.
Research into HIV/AIDS has always been subject to political controversy, as the first cases of epidemic proportions affected a marginalised group with very hostile opposition from right-wing groups. Such prejudice, or ‘homophobia’, has had a very detrimental affect on the ability of gay activists, HIV researchers or epidemiologists to look at the role of gay sexual practices in the self-identifying process of becoming a ‘gay’ man. Fear of a backlash against gay communities now influences the semantics of every label and every discourse that emerges in research. Consequently, the current export of gay ‘human rights’ into Asian culture does not contain sufficient critical studies of core group (or community) values underpinning the interpretation of epidemiological, medical and social research into HIV/AIDS in the West.

In this case, it is the cultural values of the western-defined gay and lesbian community that is considered ‘off-limits’ to critical evaluation where Asian MSM issues are concerned. Instead, multi-partnerism, commercial sex-venues, drug-related compulsive behaviour, higher rates of STDs and a besieged community identity are never discussed as ‘cultural factors’ in the same way that Asian MSM’s have their own communities dissected by HIV social researchers. Thus, these factors cannot even be raised when arguing the gay-community motto that it is not core groups that cause disease, it is the virus that causes the disease. Although the political ramifications of this distinction has been thoroughly explained by Gabriel Rotello in Sexual Ecology: AIDS and the destiny of gay men, it is rarely used in critical self-assessment by the HIV industry in relation to studies of Asian MSM attitudes to sexuality. In Australia, this is taking a long time to filter into the final recommendations of all HIV research. A powerful factor for researchers remaining uncritical of the gay community is their need to maintain the co-operation needed to recruit research participants within a core infection group.
The homophobia ‘variable’ in HIV research

A current list of research projects at the NCHSR has a large number of Rotello’s ‘ecological’ factors as their research topic, but they are not used in reference to “gay community values” or the completely ignored issue of “whiteness” when looking at reasons cited for the rejection by Asian MSM of gay-community sponsored HIV education. Researchers also rarely recommend intervention policies that would contradict ‘sex-positive’ gay values and thus alienate the core community.

An example of how a HIV issue other than Asian MSM could benefit from such critical self-evaluation is the research on gay men’s HIV transmission and drug use. The NCHSR research into drug use and unsafe sexual behaviour in the gay community finds that, “The vast majority of the men interviewed rejected the link between using drugs and having unsafe sex, however, with only a small minority of men attributing their unsafe sexual practices to drug use.”

The absence of a critical position toward gay-community culture, where drug-use is evident in cultural representation, make it impossible to suggest ways that these statements could fail to say otherwise. Similarly, its research findings on international (mostly Asian) MSM students in Australia places racism last on the list after “too outrageous” and “culturally inappropriate” as reasons cited for reluctance to use gay community and AIDS Council services. The manner in which researchers do this will be explored in the next chapter.

Suggestions that multi-partnerism in the gay community and commercial sex venues perform vital functions in increasing statistical probabilities of maintaining HIV/AIDS

75 URL: http://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/nchsr

at epidemic proportions in core groups invites accusations of “homophobia”. To question the ‘condom code’ as the sole solution to HIV prevention, in the absence of scrutinizing the sexual values of core groups, threatens the culture of multi-partnerism (or “sex-positive” values) crucial to upholding the matrix of signifiers that constitute a ‘gay man’.77

Justified gay-community fear of homophobia has steered HIV/AIDS research work-culture on an international (western?) level for almost two decades. It is understandably characterised by defensiveness and fear of victimization. This means that a thesis factoring in racism must contend with assumptions ingrained in HIV research, public policy and popular western culture supporting a political position whereby racial inequity becomes secondary to reducing homophobia. For instance, AIDS devastated Sub-Saharan Africa and its staggering dominance of HIV/AIDS in global statistics can only now begin to factor in racism within International Aid strategies. What the African HIV/AIDS crisis has not done, however, is increase the focus on the changing racial demographics of core groups within developed countries in the West. If taken with an acknowledgement of the under-representation and misrepresentation of non-white cultures in western research, such emphasis could support research similar to this thesis on Asian MSM in other developed countries.

**In Australia**

Two issues must be considered when examining HIV research with a gay male cultural dominance. First, in reporting core group representation in media coverage, it is usually only the ‘undivided’ culture defined in Australia by Oxford Street, the ‘gay ghetto’, which makes the competitive leap into representing the character, values and

77 Ibid. p. 91.
sexual practices of all Men Who Have Sex With Men (MSM). Secondly, the initial policy of prevention has gradually become secondary to promoting the health and well-being of HIV positive persons group’s HIV education campaigns, creating a false sense that the HIV/AIDS problem is over. As Rotello describes it:

People are said to be “living with AIDS”, not dying from it. Gay magazines and newspapers are filled with articles that celebrate the ability of healthy-looking HIV-infected men to lead rewarding lives, and stories abound of men who experience meaningful personal growth only after they found out they were infected, at which point shame and sexual compulsion and substance abuse were swept away, replaced by a new spirit of hope and purpose and determination to get the most out of life. Many of the publications that engage in this kind of well-intentioned boosterism often carefully avoid images of wasting or illness or gruesome deathbed scenes, considering such journalism “intrusive.” A stranger to gay culture, unaware of the reality of AIDS, might believe from much of the gay press that HIV infection was a sort of elixir that produced high self-esteem, solved long-standing psychological and substance abuse problems, and enhanced physical appearance. This, of course, is hardly the reality for most HIV-infected people, who scoff at any supposed “benefits,” wish that they had never become infected, and pray desperately for a cure. But such messages, which are primarily aimed at the already infected, inevitable reach the uninfected as well, often inadvertently creating the subconscious impression that infection—the “penalty” of unsafe sex—is really not so bad after all.78

The ‘condom code’s’ ability to reduce factors such as unprotected oral sex and multipartnerism in HIV transmission, combines with gay media portrayals to create false security and false consent. There are therefore several unresolved issues that never make the policy mission statements of HIV organisations. These are also arguments within a ‘white’ framework that do not even begin to factor in other cultures. The main aim of educating HIV positive people to have safe sex is not an altruistic desire to not infect others with a disease that will kill them, but to prevent further infection with STDs or mutated strands of new HIV that will lessen quality of

78 Ibid. p. 241.
life. There is also the heightened sense of security amongst young gay men having unsafe sex as they emerge into a gay culture where developments in drug treatments are perceived as having ‘solved’ the AIDS problem. The rise of ‘bare-backing’ (sex without condoms) as an acceptable form of resistance is an indication of this change in perception, as are continuing HIV infection rates in this group.79 These still largely taboo issues are never highlighted in cross-cultural HIV education policies. This further raises questions about the quality of access and equity in information when political priorities favour western, ‘universal’ ‘gay’ community models at the expense of allowing other NESB MSM to make informed decisions biased by their own community values, whether or not this contravenes the more powerful lobby group in HIV funding or not.

Clear racial divisions of infection are not highlighted as central issues, or even connected to prejudice between whites and non-whites, and the research focus is still very much on monitoring the changing behaviours of individuals within the unquestioned culture of the gay community. In Africa people are considered to be “dying of AIDS”, as Africans have a tendency to die of something. In stark contrast, the developed world only has people “living with AIDS”. In the US, the rates of black male infection rates dominate national figures and there are indications that Asian-Americans80 are assuming the fastest growing racial sector of HIV infection rates. The Australian-Asian infection rates are still not accurately measured, but there is a growing realisation of the racism that infects gay communities, as well as criticism of the current Australian government’s views on Aboriginal, Asian and other NESB issues.

79 Ibid.

Asian MSM Research: The Story So Far

Prior to 1992 Asian men’s sexual health was not prioritised by HIV social research. In all there are 6 main studies that precede the most recent report, *Asian Gay Men In Sydney: December 1999 - January 2000* (Monogram 2/2000) by the NCHSR. Its authors include Garret Prestage of NCHECR, Paul Van de Ven of NCHSR, Ken Wong and Mohamad Mahat of South-West Sydney Area Health Service and Tadge McMahon of Multicultural HIV/AIDS Service. Prestage and McMahon will be referred to further in the review of NAB articles in Chapter 3, Paul Van de Ven has responsibility for Asian MSM research at the NCHSR in Sydney. Two of the 6 studies referred to by the 2000 report include NCHSR projects that led to publications used specifically in this paper in reference to gay racism within social research. These projects were “Cultural Diversity and Men Who Have Sex With Men Project 1998” by Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli and “Homosexually Active Male International Students Project 1997” by Pallotta-Chiarolli and other researchers. These led to the publication of the reports *Cultural Diversity and Men Who Have Sex With Men* and *Too Busy Studying and No Time For Sex* which I will review in Chapter 3. Prior to these 2 reports, 4 other studies focused on Asian/NESB MSM which are reviewed by the *The Asian Gay Men In Sydney* authors. To link current awareness of racism in research with previous Asian MSM studies, I will review their observations of these 4 studies. My aim is to question the authors’ awareness of gay

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82 Ibid.

racism in studies of Asian MSM in the manner by which previous studies are summarised in their report.

1992-1996

The Bisexual Activity and Non Gay Community Attachment Research (BANGAR) Project investigated,

... methods of targeting homosexually active men who were neither gay identified nor closely associated with the gay community...[and] were either approached in settings where they sought to make sexual contact with other men, or they responded to advertisements placed in publications that facilitated sexual contact between men. They were then invited to complete an anonymous survey, usually by telephone. Men were excluded from the study if they indicated that they were either gay identified or regularly associated with gay men.84

This project interviewed 698 men of which 58 were of Chinese background (with 19 unspecified Asian backgrounds). Chinese men were selected by language and interviewed in either Mandarin or Cantonese. Language thus became the primary focus of analysis. This report heightened awareness of Asian cultural diversity, but was by its own admittance a “small survey that collected very limited information.”85 Racism was noted as less important than Asian cultural factors. This is evident in the only reference to racism while commenting on communication barriers. In reference to this research, the 2000 report noted that, “There are also issues of discrimination both from within the gay community-either overt or presumptions based on Anglo-Celtic values that may make non-Anglo-Celtic individuals uncomfortable...”86 Described as “somewhat contradictory” but not racist is the finding that,

85 Ibid. p. 10.
The Chinese respondents were more highly educated than the Anglo-Celtic respondents. On the other hand, two-thirds of those who were working were in blue-collar positions, whereas fewer than half of the Anglo-Celtic respondents were in blue-collar occupations...[reflecting] the fact that many Asian immigrants to Australia have overseas qualifications that are not recognised here and therefore have to settle for jobs requiring fewer qualifications. Others in the sample were foreign students who had taken blue-collar jobs to support themselves during their university studies.87

This lack of awareness of how racism affecting employment would affect self-esteem and power relations between opposing masculine identities shows a deep ignorance of equity issues and how they overlap into the power dynamics of sexual health. It also makes the comment that “Chinese men who have sex with men were no more or less at risk from HIV infection than others in BANGAR.” a sweeping statement from the vantage point of current EO knowledge.

1993-1995

The Southern Sydney Area Health Service Beats Outreach Project collected data on core groups between 1993 and 1994. Primarily a data gathering exercise, MSM were targeted irrespective of attachment to the gay community, with 20 Asian background men identified out of a total of 149.88 By their own admittance, the review of this project admits to lack of cultural distinctions in the term ‘Asian’ and to small numbers of Asian MSM, a pattern which repeats itself throughout Asian MSM research.

The Men and Sexual Health Studies in Sydney (SMASH) and Melbourne (MMASH) and Brisbane (BRASH) between 1993 and 1996 used “compatible survey instruments”89 to combine 3 sample groups to distil a single sample of NESB MSM

87 Ibid. p. 10.
88 Ibid. p.16
89 Ibid. p. 17
for analysis of ethno-cultural differences. The participants were primarily gay-community attached, with 102 Asian men used in the study which found that each ethno-cultural group (proscribed) necessitated a basic division between Chinese men (27), East Asian men (78) and South Asian men (24). East Asian men were found to be less likely to take the insertive role during anal intercourse or to engage in sadomasochistic practices. The results of questions around condom use, as I have already discussed, should not be used either as a factual representation of condom use or respondents truthfulness in answering questions. This is especially relevant when ‘communication barriers’ acknowledge, but don’t examine, gay racism’s role in the low participation rates of Asian men in research.

Tadge McMahon’s and Multicultural HIV/AIDS Service’s NESB Isolated Gay Men Project in 1995 investigated HIV/AIDS needs among Indonesian, Vietnamese, Polish and Italian background MSM. Men were contacted by telephone after recruitment via advertisements and completed an anonymous survey. Irrespective of gay-community attachment, the targeted NESB and MSM group highlighted that greater isolation was experienced by Vietnamese men. The small sample sizes and language and cultural barriers resulted, researchers said, in making the “...the administration of the survey problematic; as a consequence, considerable data were missing.”90 In fact, missing data is a recurring event in the investigation of Asian MSM, pointing to their invisibility in research without suggestions that invisibility and racism may be related issues.

An understanding of how HIV research has developed in government policy can help in explaining the particular nature of HIV research culture. These historical and political legacies affect the way that Asian men negotiate research culture. All studies

90  Ibid. p. 16.
previous to and current research into Asian MSM focus on ethnoc-cultural differences without a clear definition of the cultural terms that effectively define the research boundaries. Expert knowledge on HIV transmission has evolved concurrently with gay, male politicisation, linking perceptions of the disease to gay male political ideology in ways that are inseparable. To deny objectivity while clinging to selective universalisms or simply challenging scientific models in order to avoid a study of gay male culture has characterised much of what appears as critical evaluation of cultural factors. This provides an inadequate foundation for adopting EO principles in research and reduces racism to little more than the unspecified ‘variables’ used to measure cognitive outcomes. While Chapter 4 will pursue precisely how cognitive reductionism assists in maintaining gay racism’s absence in Asian MSM research, the next chapter will look at how discourse within NAB articles further demonstrate a culture of avoidance of gay racism in the HIV industry. The way in which this discourse influences publications (and subsequent policy) is examined through 2 NCHSR publications and a brief review of the first stage of data analysis from the most recent survey, *Asian Gay Men In Sydney: December 1999-January 2000*. 
3. A ‘Culture’ Of Denial: The ‘Asian Problem’ in HIV Social Research

*Whose Culture?*

In National AIDS Bulletin (NAB) one can glean some of the tensions discussed in Chapters 1 and 2. The articles focus almost exclusively on Asian cultural differences in ways that excuse acts of racism, which are belittled or ignored and this pattern recurs in NCHSR reports and conference papers examining cross-cultural HIV issues. Certainly a commitment to uncover the extent of racism is not substantially represented. I argue that discussions of ‘culture’ need to address the culture of HIV research bodies and the dominant values of that culture. Also, a lack of allegiance to any notion of agreed methodology leaves the entire bureaucracy of HIV research and policy closed to effective academic, political and economic auditing. The agenda of HIV policy processes, operating without question and in tandem with dominant gay interests, places NESB/Asian MSM data processes into question.

Culture, ethnographic assumptions and identity politics are decorative rituals that keep researchers from directly confronting racism. Between 1993 and 1999 there has been a documented pattern of avoidance in NAB. To make this clear, I will highlight the concepts used to stretch Asian MSM issues through continual *redefinitions* of the problem that do not question why Asian MSM have such low response rates in HIV research. This is despite evidence suggesting their inability to negotiate safe sex practices with each other and especially with Caucasian men.\(^91\)

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\(^{91}\) This is the rationale for intensive scrutiny of Asian MSM in nearly every single article, report and conference paper, though it is seen as an Asian problem because of cultural aspects of being an Asian.
To explain the past, current and present level of discourse on this subject, I review several articles in NAB that attempt to deal with NESB and Asian MSM. Many issues are raised, and there is no apparent structure to their development over time, but in many ways they ‘frame’ the limitations of the discussions around Asian MSM into distinctive areas. These areas are interchangeable but briefly they encompass: 1) issues of ethnocentricity; 2) definitions of culture; 3) definitions of ‘diversity; 4) gay-community values; and 5) the culture of HIV organisations. This review looks at the ‘frame’ as belonging to one viewpoint - that of the denial of racism as a key issue in HIV research into Asian MSM. Keeping these issues in mind while reviewing the NAB literature and seeing them as reflections of one side of the argument establishes a pattern of awareness that is clearly not there among HIV researchers. I believe there is enough opinion, though not research, to indicate that these issues should have had enough time to germinate among professionals paid to analyse information. Certainly enough given the extensive funding (in NSW alone $81m to HIV and sexual health in 1998/99).92

THE REPORT DATA 1998/99

My concern with examining policy based research, as opposed to all forms of research, is due to an imbalance in critical studies of Asian MSM in HIV social research which problematizes them, rather than generating the equitable outcomes promised under current EO legislation. Asian MSM research began from a perceived lack of detailed information into the diversity of NESB MSM populations. It was made possible (and funded) through the implementation of the 1985 Access and Equity Strategy adopted by the Commonwealth Government to ensure equitable access to healthcare and

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92 "Integrating HIV and HCV" at the conference - Broadening the focus: Sexual health, HIV/AIDS and related diseases. Key Speakers Mr Bernie Coates, HIV/AIDS Coordinator, NSAHS Dr Yogas Paramsothy, Liverpool Sexual Health Service; and Ms. Janice-Pritchard-Jones, Hepatitis C Coordinator, CSAHS in Culture, Ethnicity and Sexual Health: A series of forums exploring cross-cultural issues in HIV/AIDS and related diseases in Australia (NSW Health Study Grants Seminar Series, 1999).
services for all Australians. In response to this, a national audit was conducted in the later half of 1997 by the National Centre in HIV Social Research (NCHSR) at Macquarie University in Sydney. This was funded by the Department of Health and Family Services as phase one of a two part project, the second part forming the publication. “Too busy studying and no time for sex?”: Male International Students and Sexual Health.

Briefly, the national audit was then used to divide the investigation of NESB MSM issues into two main areas: Issues and Strategies. Issues included: ethnic identity and community; socio-cultural constructions of masculinity; gay identity and community; location and position in the wider Australian society; and health services and organisations. Strategies included: access and equity strategies; and dissemination of information within NESB communities. These form chapter headings in the first publication, a monograph entitled, “Cultural diversity and men who have sex with men”: A review of the issues, strategies and resources 1998” by Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli which establishes key points that later define the boundary of the 1999 report.

None of these publications, however, include critical examination of ‘white’ racism, the research process itself or the gay community, though 11 points echo the discourse from NAB about ‘cultural problems’. These are:

93 M. Pallotta-Chiarolli 1998. Pallotta-Chiarolli has outlined the justification for her 1998 report as part of a process begun in 1997. She describes the 1985 strategy’s role in policy-based research into Asian MSM. The 1985 Access and Equity Strategy acknowledges cultural, religious and linguistic diversity while placing more responsibility on agencies and services to treat existing and potential clients in a more equitable manner. This was followed by the National Non-English Speaking Background Sexual Health Action Plan (Draft) in 1996 to identify “… competencies for working with cultural diversity in training and service delivery” p. 2.

94 Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli; Paul Van de Ven; Garret Prestage; Susan Kippax, “Too busy studying and no time for sex?”, Male International Students and Sexual Health, NCHSR Monograph 4, UNSW, 1999).

95 A substantial amount of information exists on ‘white’ racism or ‘white supremacist’ ideology existing alongside liberal discourse, and at times within this discourse. It appears strange outside of it’s residency within ethnic and race studies, and this reflects the divisions within the academic disciplines and the way race is seen as an adjunct to the ‘mainstream’ intellectual process, much in the way ‘women’s studies'
1/ divergence/convergence between sexual behaviours and sexual identification
2/ languages spoken
3/ religious regulation of sexuality
4/ levels of education
5/ rural/urban locations in both Australia and pre-migrational abodes
6/ migrant, refugee, transient or second-generation status
7/ family, marital and community relationships
8/ constructions of masculinity and femininity
9/ links with participation in/alienation from gay community both in Australia and pre-migrational abodes
10/ attitudes/responses to sex and sexual health education
11/ socio-economic factors.\textsuperscript{96}

There is a good summary of the dangers of creating the problem they are trying to solve in the conclusion: “Beyond ‘problematising cultures’ and ‘cultural problem’\textsuperscript{97} and in identifying constructions of masculinity as key issues. These promises, however, have not been met in subsequent Asian MSM research. The obscuring of racism – especially gay racism - in both reports angles both ‘culture’ and ‘masculinity’ towards an examinations of ethnic group interpretation, rather than non-dominant to dominant interaction. The absence of any concept of ‘whiteness’ further brings together ethnic groups that under ‘whiteness’ may not as easily coexist. Pallotta-Chiarolli’s comment that, “Work with NESB MSM should not become an exercise in blaming the

\textsuperscript{96} M. Pallotta-Chiarolli 1998 p. 3.

\textsuperscript{97} Ibid. p. 22.
culture.

"is vital but does not factor in ‘white’ epistemological frameworks or acknowledge/examine the gay community’s use of racial difference in sexual commodification systems. That she says that many of the issues raised also apply to ESB working class men is also credible and raises two ‘flagpoles’ to challenge gay cultural values in depth. While Pallotta-Chiarolli has presented some valuable issues on the research process into NESB MSM, she does not expand or question the source of assumptions within the terms of this report. In the context of a policy-based report, this can be attributed to factors that include: the demographics of the research team and both their professional and personal identification with the gay community; the government department and policy initiative funding the research; and the current policies, social attitudes and constructions of the target group. In other words, the culture of HIV research at the time of the data collection.

Cultural values built into definitions of ‘universal homosexuality’, ‘gay and lesbian’ or even ‘community’ remain unquestioned for fear of being categorised as either homophobic, divisive or the advocate of a new queer ‘moral majority’. These values can exert great influence and power on categories of ‘Asian’ in the data collection and analysis of the 2 NCHSR reports.

98 Ibid.
99 English-Speaking-Background (ESB)
100 Pallotta-Chiarolli 1998 p. 22.
These 2 reports show a low participation rate in research for non-gay identifying Asian MSM and a higher rate for gay identifying Asian MSM who are mostly recruited via the gay-community networks closely allied with HIV social research bodies and individuals. In “Too busy studying and no time for sex?” there is a lack of commitment to look beyond gay-community mechanisms in recruiting Asian men for research. The findings, “were based on a small number of gay-identifying and gay-community attached survey and focus group participants.” and found substantial, “...gaps in terms of being unable to access Asian homosexually active international students who were not gay-identifying or gay-community attached...”. Only 42 Asian men participated, 37 of whom identified as ‘gay or homosexual’, with one ‘bisexual’, another heterosexual and one ‘unsure’ (two are disqualified). The usual Asian narratives are offered in place of what could be called neither a successful survey based on the knowledge available since 1994 or a rigorous analysis of potential conflicts of interest. In the words of an Anglo American song of the 1940s, the researchers try and ‘Accentuate The Positive’ by stating that, “…this research has provided useful preliminary information to [1] inform the planning and implementation of future programs ... [and] raise questions about research methodologies and recruitment strategies that may not be appropriate or successful

102 Pallota-Chiarolli; Van de Ven; Prestage; Kippax.1999
103 Ibid. p. 32.
104 Ibid. p. 34.
105 Ibid., p 13. Note also that Tadge McMahon in National Aids Bulletin 1997 p 16 comments that ‘bisexual’ may not be a suitable category to understand other cultures.
106 Pallota-Chiarolli; Van de Ven; Prestage; Kippax.1999 p. 13.
107 For a more detailed analysis of the Asian narratives position within a developing Asian written discourse in the West, see Wong, Sau-ling, C. and Santa Ana, Jeffrey. J. “Gender and Sexuality in Asian American Literature” Signs, Autumn 1999 v25 i1 p. 171.
108 A popular American song of the 1940s.
with specific cultural and sexual groups in Australia,...”109 It seems an obvious and poor justification for not using the available, though hardly more rigorous, information available. It appears that all the NAB discussions on ethnocentric definitions of culture, acknowledged gaps in ‘access and equity’ implementation and the acceptance of a dominant identity within the gay community are not being challenged within the NCHSR reports.

Racism, which permeates the report’s Asian narratives, is only dealt with in the statement: ‘Most students identified racism within the gay community.”110 Since most of the Asian MSM are gay-identifying, one can only guess at the double barrier to non-gay identifying Asian men who feel excluded by racism in the gay community and racism in the mainstream community (highlighted in institutional and policy terms relating to immigration). The fact that the previous 1998 report included references to an act of racist violence is significant when comparing this knowledge of gay racism to the 1999 comments from NCHSR. In the 1998 report appears the Asian narrative: “This man cornered me in the toilet and demanded I suck his dick, when I said no he punched me in the face and told me to fuck off and go back to my commie homeland where all you nips belonged”(Waterford, 1997).111 The report acknowledged that,

Within the gay community, stereotypical thinking can be quite problematic. For example, there is the common belief that Asian men are passive and feminine. Cultural ignorance and Anglocentrism are problematic. Australian gay men may show little understanding or appreciation of the diversity of political systems, geography, cultural systems, religion and family systems.112

109 Pallota-Chiarolli; Van de Ven; Prestage; Kippax.1999 p. 34.
110 Ibid. p. 28.
111 Ibid. p. 13.
112 Ibid.
This is the most understated of comments and shows ‘little understanding or appreciation’ of the overt systems of racism at work in the aforementioned narrative, which had nothing to do with subtlety of understanding. It was about visual perception and a racial/sexual expectation of supply and demand. The report continues by saying that, “On occasion, the racism may become overt with some men, particularly Asians, being the subject of minor physical assaults and threats of physical intimidation...”113 Describing the racist violence above as a ‘minor physical assault” does seem to belittle the crime and show a complete denial as to what racism is, what it does, and what to do about it. It also gives a tacit approval to maintain silence on racism masquerading as sexual taste.

This sexual taste, however, also relies on misogyny and racism within gay male pornography, as Kendall has observed. While commenting on Richard Fung’s article “Looking For My Penis: The Eroticised Asian in Gay Video Porn” in How Do I Look,114 Kendall highlights Fung’s findings that, “… of those tapes in which Asian Men are ‘featured’ (90 percent of which are purchased by white men), white supremacy and non-white inferiority are the norm.” To this, Kendall further adds:

...within the context of gay male pornography that features Asian Men objectification of the Asian stereotype is very much central to the power dynamics presented ... the ‘central focus is, nonetheless, on the role of the white dominator (who, not surprisingly is usually also the more aggressive, more idealised of the two) and ...the focus in all gay male pornography is not just the white over the non-white male, but also the more male over the feminised, less male who becomes, as a result, ‘female’. Because gay male pornography focuses on the party who ultimately penetrates, and because ...the characteristics of the more aggressive, more masculine, more male penetrator are what

113  Ibid.

are always glorified, this focus makes the objectification of the non-focus more harmful.  

Kendall notes that through pornography, not only are Asian men made ‘female’ in a systematically racist, pornographic culture, but the misogyny responsible for the alienation of lesbian feminists who supported gay liberation in the first place is firmly entrenched. Thus, we overlook how the ‘feminisation of Asian men’ is actually the continuation of the abuse of women embedded within a long Western tradition of imposing its own gender essentialism onto other cultures. This tendency to ignore abuse extends into new sub-groups of male supremacist ideology which worship the hypermasculine and demean the ‘female’ in all its forms. To this, one should add that one cannot isolate the ‘problem’ of Asian men’s non-assimilation into the gay male hierarchy as simply ‘the feminisation of Asian men’ without questioning the culture that has set these boundaries in place. In the absence of a critical assessment of either the gay male community or constructions of white masculinity, well-intentioned research into Asian MSM can only find ‘cause and effect’ from Asian Men themselves, as if they existed in a vacuum. John Standfield II writes in Handbook of Qualitative Research that,

Cultural concepts such as masculinity and femininity are often articulated as universals and applied without critical revision to Afro-American male and female gender role development. This misappropriated generalisation pattern has been stretched to Western impositions of notions of femininity and masculinity on non-Western, ex-colonial societies and regions. Thus what is missed or not understood properly are the socialisation processes in Afro-American and other populations of colour, which do not so neatly package and dichotomise qualities attributed to females and males. 


116 John H. Standfield II, “Ethnic Modelling in Qualitative Research” in Norman K. Denzin, Yvonna S. Lincoln , eds, Handbook of Qualitative Research (Sage, Thousand Oak, 1994) pp. 180-181. Examples of the Western constructions of Asian sexuality is embodied in The Madam Butterfly myth applied to Asian women in western culture. It is relevant to Asian men in the gay community, as they are feminised by western men, and therefore bring forth the full brunt of white male heterosexual
In Australia, there is more than enough EO legislation for researchers not only to recommend reprimand of the gay community on racism, but also to look beyond a gay male ‘mask’ of masculisation as the panacea to complex and painful problems. To avoid a self-assessment of white cultural values within research methods becomes a form of silence. This silence, however, is not only the result of linguistic and ontological chasms between Asians and Caucasians. Benjamin Tong writes that in America,

Experiences of racism pressure Asian-Americans to stay invisible (Kitano & Kikumua, 1976) to avoid further racial attack and discrimination...[they] are reluctant to report our own people to law officers, or to seek help from the social services...117

**Systematic Silences of the Asian MSM Collective**

Silencing is something the gay community does very well. Gay racism remains as taboo a topic as gay domestic violence and gay male rape, pointing to a failure of the gay community to be honest about its own shortcomings.118 Considering such issues lends a new dimension to the little more than one page headed: ‘Cultural ignorance, racism and Anglocentricism’ in the 1999 report *Too busy studying and no time for sex?*: *Male International Students and Sexual Health*. A power imbalance with sexual practice and negotiating safe sex is not a minor issue in HIV education and should be given constructions of Eastern exoticism and pleasure, this time in a male to male sexual context. See D. Bernardi 1997; and also M. Bernstein & G. Studler 1997.


greater scope for development. While it is not totally ignored, its inclusion does not indicate its significance to Asian men. The Gay Education Strategies Project\textsuperscript{119} states as one of its points that: “A power dynamic exists between Caucasian and non-Caucasian men in the Australian gay community, which is detrimental to the social and sexual situations many Asian gay men are in.”\textsuperscript{120} Given that this ignores non-gay identifying Asian men, the low number of ‘gay’ Asian men these reports use, and deeply insufficient figures on the extent of gay racism towards Asian MSM - how can this and other research into Asian men marginalise racism to construct Asian men as problem groups, instead of considering the defining role that the gay community plays in HIV research. Where are the questions on ‘conflict of interest’?

The research ‘frame’ is still reflecting one viewpoint - that of the denial of racism as a key issue in HIV research into Asian MSM. Self-evaluation is superficial, undisciplined and open to the most perfunctory audits, most of which look at the preambles to the research rather than the findings themselves. While impossible to omit racism because of its recurring appearance in Asian MSM research, NCHSR offer no critique of dominant gay-community values and how racism is supported. Intervention is permitted through agencies such as AIDS Councils, which are gay-community directed, because they are seen as promoting ‘positive’ values. The report findings of ‘International Students and Sexual Health’ present 4 recommendations that criticize university services and redirects Asian MSM to gay-community agencies. These are as follows:

1) That university international student orientation packages contain information about support services on campus as well as contact numbers for sexual health clinics, AIDS Councils and gay community services off campus.


\textsuperscript{120} Ibid. p. 14.
2) That university sexuality officers be invited to introduce themselves and speak to all international students about on-campus gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender support services.

3) That university health services and counsellors promote their role in relation to sexual health, and also consider how to proactively promote their service as being ‘gay-friendly’.

4) That university health and international services should work with health providers within the students ethnic communities and within gay community groups and AIDS Councils to ensure the students get the support and services they need.\(^{121}\)

It should also be noted that while the report acknowledged that non-gay identifying Asian MSM had not been reached and further research into why this occurs must be conducted, follow-on surveys focus on gay Asian men in Sydney, specifically “Asian men attached to the gay community” with recruitment through sex on premises venues and gay Asian groups. Since non-gay identifying Asian MSM were not reached by the first national research project, and the four main recommendations of this report focus the entire responsibility for this failure onto university services, the follow through survey planned only for Sydney gay-identifying Asian MSM could be seen as yet another failure to demonstrate a commitment to support Asian MSM outside of the gay male hierarchy.

Universalist interpretations of gay culture separate Anglo-Celtic and Asian cultures according to the dominant belief of what a ‘progressive’ society means. In this case it is a ‘good’ gay-accepting western, Caucasian frame versus the ‘bad’ Yellow Peril\(^{122}\) of homophobia, whereby heroic gay values can ‘save’ the noble savage of Asian/NESB men from their ignorance - not to mention their own community. Further, HIV

\(^{121}\) This summary was provided at the NCHSR website to promote its 1999 report. Unusually, such a specific articulation of blame on university services and promotion of gay services was not so bluntly included in the publication itself. See: URL: http://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/nchsr/

\(^{122}\) A term used to refer to the onslaught of Asian immigration and foreign (bad) cultures from the North (in Australia) but used in the US historical treatment of Asian races as well.
research discussions that try and separate NESB/Asian MSM values fall into new essentialist traps that create a divide between ‘good’ gay (safe sex educated) MSM and ‘bad’ non-gay identifying (non safe-sex educated) MSM. Racism is hidden within an identity discourse which is confusing to those without direct experiences of overt racism in particular. Analysis focuses on the ‘liberal’ impoverishment of ‘Asian values’ instead of a naturally anxious response to negative stereotyping, foreign epistemologies and gay racism.

A pattern of awareness is not a substitute for policy action. This failure to act is reflected in low survey participation by non-gay identifying Asian men and insufficient data of infection rates or HIV knowledge among Asian men of any self-definition. It would be interesting to note the change in research quality if Asian MSM were seen as part of the Australian community, and not a separate identity from the dominant group (gay white men). Given the current Asian MSM statistics, only those who do use HIV/AIDS services, are gay-community attached or become ill are counted. As the recent NCHSR reports prove, Asian men are yet to be seriously counted! Those on student visas whose mortality and health care fall ultimately to foreign governments are perhaps never counted at all. Further, without serious interdisciplinary cooperation between HIV research and EO knowledge, the industry is under no pressure to push the boundaries of its current success to include the diversity it promulgates.123 It can continue to act as political support for dominant interests within the gay lobby with no accountability to the wider community who fund these private hierarchies of exclusion.

At no time have identity politics and their effect on Asian MSM research been

123 The HCV contribution shows much more comparative data from SE Asian countries without too biased assumptions about ‘Asian values’ being different (detrimental?) to the Australian HIV context. It is relevant in communicating to international students in Australia to ascertain the extent and type of HIV knowledge they do possess and the particular biases that might be allocated to individual countries instead of a generic ‘Asian’ region. While still susceptible to the habit of problematising cultures it is trying to investigate, a good attempt to review epistemology issues is made by Judith Glover’s, “Epistemological and Methodological Considerations in Secondary Analysis” in Linda Hantrais and Steen Mangen’s, eds, Cross-National Research Methods in the Social Science (Pinter, London, 1996) p. 28. Questioning epistemology in cross-national research, such as HIV/HCV might lead to new angles on the ‘Asian problem’.
questioned as part of the research process itself. Neither has the cultural identification of researchers of colour that sit on committees providing claims to immunity from Anglocentricism, if not racism by it proper title. In this instance, Tong’s 3 types of assimilation from Chapter 1 could provide deeper analysis of how well non-white issues are understood in HIV research.

Apart from the internalised racism of researchers of colour, two other factors exert considerable influence on cross-cultural HIV research. These are the under-representation of non-gay identifying Asian and NESB MSM in the decision-making process and a Howard Government that has made the word ‘racism’ persona non grata in public discourse while simultaneously attempting to rewrite the holocaust of Aboriginal genocide in a poor imitation of historian David Irving. These issues naturally lend a dangerous air to using the word ‘racism’ among minorities living in the New Order of ‘free speech’ for nationalistic Australians such as Pauline Hanson. In other words, representation has a consequence. The political demography of the HIV industry supports allegiances that do not question this change in political climate; the appropriateness of the values promoted in gay culture (ie: the ‘Teflon’ affect in public policy), leaving intact an epistemological framework that constitutes reactions to racism as yet more essentialist sub-groupings of Asian cultural mores that only really harm themselves. ‘Good heavens, we must help the poor things.’ Of course, it would


125 Pauline Hanson’s One Nation Party campaigned against Aboriginal rights and in favour of decreasing levels of Asian immigration to Australia. For more analysis of the One Nation Party’s role in Australia’s changing political climate see Perera and Pugliese 1997 and also M. Rose 1997.

126 A special non-stick coating used in cooking utensils
be so much easier if Asians (as plural) assimilated into the Caucasian model of sexuality and gay identity in order to qualify for efficient HIV preventative education programmes which many of them already pay taxes for anyway. Easier indeed!

*The Lost Art of Listening: Literature Review 1993-99*

The academic research system places great emphasis on the quantity of publications and citation for the establishment of academic credibility. There are therefore growing resources for Asian MSM research which serve two purposes. They superficially satisfy the auditing requirements for government funded research organisations, at the same time constructing the parameters for how the problem will be repeatedly defined. This is similar to Sheurich’s Arena 3 on policy study - the study of the social construction of the range of acceptable policy solutions used in his policy archeology model in the Introduction. It is also the tool by which dominant representations of white gay male interests maintain their privilege in the social order of HIV research priorities.

Real self-evaluation, as opposed to a burgeoning growth in discursive acronyms, appears to be missing in HIV research. With increasing interest in Asian MSM, the HIV industry is confronting obstacles that are both apparent and invisible to researchers. The plethora of approaches and standards compete, rather than support, the process of communicating with Asian MSM and this is not helped by postmodern discourse that documents, rather than directs, this effort. The terms that define the boundary of discussion include reviews of: ‘ethnocentric’, ‘diversity’; the ‘scientific model’;127 ‘objective truth’, ‘essentialism’, ‘stereotypes’ and models of ‘disadvantage’. These terms are frequently used when accessing ‘at-risk’ categories in the community.

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127 J.Ballard in Dean and Hindess 1998, p 131. The anti medical sentiment in HIV discourse can be linked to the evolution of HIV management in 1985-87 and the furore over suggestions by David Pennington’s ”...assertion of a medical rationality [which] served to bind the AIDS Councils, NACAIDS and the Commonwealth departments together, ...” p.131.
At the same time, postmodern discourse as well as theories of rationality underlying HIV research emphasise individual agency. These contradictions describe the tensions between cognitive interpretations and social cause that splits many disciplines today. They would, however, be more effectively debated were racism as internal motivator joined to the social constructions and representations of different races. In Chapter 4 I will discuss how excluding or belittling a recurrent variable such as racism severely limits cross-cultural communication strategies.

Racism, or the use of power by those with prejudice, influences the hierarchy of prominence for each item of cultural dissection across nearly a decade of articles within NAB - the forum of the HIV Industry. A systematic review of NESB/Asian MSM issues in NAB is therefore useful to highlight specific NESB issues; the time taken to integrate these issues into effective research and education strategies; and whether or not these categories, policies and approaches to research effectively confront racism in projects such as those implemented by the NCHSR.

Articles and conference papers abound in HIV discourse concerning the difficulties that arise from being Asian. Rarely is the lens turned inward towards the viewer. There is acknowledgment of racism but no study or understanding of ‘whiteness’ to balance the scrutiny of the Asian problem. In this way, the only problem that appears in the texts of HIV discourse is the ‘Asian problem’. This epistemological racism is apparent through the absence of ‘whiteness’ when studying ‘the other’ in the same way that Dowsett can omit a qualification for gay male culture in validating gay-community direction of public health policy. Racism plays a significant role in the alienation of Asian men from the gay community but beyond a limited debate on ‘culture’ and ‘diversity’, this is not given prominence in HIV research.
Michael Camit has outlined the clearest arguments for greater review of research and data collection and developed the primary NESB education kit for practitioners in the field.\textsuperscript{128} He does not outline a case for racism as much as expand the ‘Asian problem’ without specifying its origin, thus deleting justifiable reactions against systematic prejudice. In fact he never says anything about racism though it is implied in the issues he brings forth, though in a 1994 NAB article he outlines obstacles Asian men face and in 1997 returns to NAB to make suggestions for ways HIV organisations can implement closer adherence to ‘Access & Equity’ issues (a new euphemism for racism?).

A review of Camit’s and other practitioners between 1994 and 1999 in NAB make a convincing case that there has been awareness in the HIV industry of a power imbalance between white and Asian MSM. In ‘Positive Asians: a hidden minority’\textsuperscript{129} Camit focuses on Asian men who are HIV positive and lists the issues: diversity of language; confidentiality issues; distrust of authority; family loyalties; an inability to seek help until it is too late; and the power imbalance caused by internal racism in interracial relationships.\textsuperscript{130} This last point is crucial as it introduces a tentative discussion of racial exploitation. He says, “Power and internalised racism are very common issues when discussing safe sex and relationships. Often, the only access to social support and information is through their [Asian MSM] Australian partners. This raises issues of empowerment.” \textsuperscript{131} Such issues are raised continually over the next 6 years in the form of articles about ethnocentric assumptions of Asian and NESB men. In a 1996 interview with Victorian ex-Senator and cross-cultural community

\begin{itemize}
  \item M. Camit 1994.
  \item Ibid. In many ways this summarises the ‘Asian problem’ strategy.
  \item Ibid. p. 27.
\end{itemize}
development worker Rob Wood, Damien Ridge questions, “...the ethnocentric limitations of conventional understandings of issues including coming out and gayness ... [which have] significant implications for HIV education strategies.” \(^{132}\) Wood states that,

The gay community, which has a very Anglo-American notion of gay liberation and individual self-actualisation, frequently has little comprehension about what the experience is like for many minority cultures. There is a subtle and unarticulated assumption whereby men from the dominant culture frequently assume that their own cultural ways are the preferred model.\(^{133}\)

Wood questions this model in reference to Greek and Italian men, but reiterates Camit’s view that traditional family roles are a link between Greek, Italian and ‘many Asian cultures’ compared to ‘white, middle-class men’.\(^{134}\) Thus we have the beginning of the questioning of the nature of gay culture in Australia, its Anglo-American roots, the ‘subtle’ cultural hegemony at work in the community with the dominant culture being a ‘liberationist’\(^{135}\) model. We also have one of the few specific references to the source of these ‘unarticulated assumptions’ - ‘white, middle-class men’. Over the next few years this group is rarely referred to racially as ‘white’, though ‘Asian’ takes on a greater clarity and focus through a relentless dissection of what exactly it means to be ‘Asian’. This silence on White voice versus Asian or NESB voice in the language of research begs the question, ‘what colour is objectivity itself?’. This process is what I term ‘the construction of the Asian problem’ and is a symptom of epistemological racism. It might be said to inform a decision by non-gay identifying Asian MSM in the most recent 1998 and 1999 research surveys not to participate and thus resist


\(^{133}\) Ibid.

\(^{134}\) Ibid. p. 21.

\(^{135}\) Ibid. p. 18.
further scrutiny under the western microscope. Compared to the less troublesome ‘gay’ Asian men (recruited mainly from gay-community centres and networks and ideologically assimilated), non-gay identifying Asian MSM numbers were not sufficiently represented in the NCHSR 1998/99 national surveys to satisfy even the most liberal qualitative research analyst. Therefore the prejudice within the gay and wider community cannot be said to have had an effect either way on those results because the question is not even asked as part of the recommendations in those reports. Ignoring this prejudice while having the power to exert an influence to define and reproach that community through HIV policy and recommendations is what constitutes racism in HIV social research.

**Methods Acting on the HIV Stage**

Ethnocentricity, however noble its introduction into review, is treated selectively from the beginning of NAB’s ‘birds eye’ view into the factional representations within HIV research. It is mainly a rejection of rational, scientific models that are seen as culturally inappropriate to NESB communities. The rejection of normative values has a price in that it justifies the downgrading of many systematic procedures and qualifiers that other government agencies must adhere to and which the entire funding process is built upon. Rejecting ‘logic’ thus becomes the equivalent HIV Research gesture of adopting what researchers think is ethnic/Asian epistemology. In NAB, the ethnocentric question continues to define the ‘Asian problem’ in ever more complex detail. A big contributor to the ‘Asian issue’, Tadge McMahon, quotes S. Kahn in NAB in 1997 and states that, “Terms like heterosexual, homosexual and bisexual arise from a historical context derived largely from medicine in the Western world.”

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interviews with three men of Vietnamese background form the basis of an article which states that:

Like the wider community, gay men are not culturally a homogeneous group. Taking account of such cultural diversity presents challenges to HIV interventions and services in Australia. ...the policy framework for meeting these challenges already exists, and ... there is a wealth of HIV/AIDS experience to draw upon. All that is needed is a commitment to working with a diversity of men who have sex with men.  

The men McMahon interviews derive little of their own values from those of the gay community which focus on personal choice and the ‘primacy’ of the individual rather than the Vietnamese notion of family and collectivism. He restates the ideas of both Camit and Wood in terms that reflect a ‘Sydney-centric’ power imbalance in the way gay identity is constructed in Australia. He says, “Successful HIV/AIDS interventions for gay men in Sydney have drawn on Anglo-American gay culture. So, too, will interventions for gay men from other cultures be successful if they draw on and are relevant to a diversity of cultural backgrounds.” McMahon also specifies the policy framework that he says at the beginning of the article already exists - Access & Equity - and reminds fellow HIV practitioners and policy makers that there is already, by 1997, “...more than a decade of experience to draw upon for guidance and advice.” and that the only thing missing is commitment.

While a worthy contribution to the Asian/HIV examination, it is still a minority view being resisted by the denial of gay racism.

137 Ibid. p. 16.
138 Ibid. p. 18.
139 Ibid.
In the same year, Michael Camit’s second article, “Cultural difference and gay identity”\textsuperscript{140} outlines a more detailed strategy for making this commitment happen. It tries to address the data collection issue. It tries hard. It fails. Once again, Camit makes specific, and much more numerous, suggestions that underscore the structural mechanisms of racism in the HIV research process, but without mentioning the word - racism - or the combined effects of ‘power’ and ‘prejudice’ in the system he works in. This is not a reprimand but a disappointment in the structures at play that make it so difficult to put client welfare before political etiquette when one word might change the paradigm of HIV education for Asian MSM and alter the dynamics in a way that would more honestly help Asian men by acknowledging the racial prejudice in a community with the power to influence the HIV agenda from its inception.

In many ways, Camit’s recommendations on how to make organisations EO compliant is a veiled description of the mechanisms of both epistemological and gay racism\textsuperscript{141} which create an unconscious racism that researchers with the most liberal intentions will reproduce. Several other articles in NAB also expand on these topics less efficiently, but frequently enough to demonstrate a recurring attempt to try and understand and also assert the NESB agenda in HIV policy. A further, but brief summary of some other articles in the NAB demonstrate this repetition of the debate and a foundation for the views of Camit, Wood, and McMahon.

\textsuperscript{140} M. Camit 1997 p. 11.

\textsuperscript{141} M. Camit 1997. His points for working with diversity include: 1) gathering information on diversity within HIV organisations/services; 2) collecting information on the demographics of the target group/s and comparing them with the representation of that group within the HIV organisation; 3) initiating contact and fostering cooperation with NESB communities; 4) assessing HIV service/organisation’s culture and values; 5) having policies in place for access and equity and a ’strategic plan’; 6) implementing policies on interpreters and translations of information; 7) encouraging the participation of NESB groups/communities; 8) planning for continual diversity and cross cultural training for staff; 9) identifying and training bilingual/bi-cultural staff and; 10) involving ethnic media.
For instance, in 1997 there appears a review of 6 HIV/AIDS workers which questions their views on access and equity. ‘What Access? Whose Equity?’ discusses this rather obvious question in the light of the length of time that this issue has been on the agenda. It is almost as if Access & Equity needs a special interpretation by HIV/AIDS workers before they are obligated to implement it. This is peculiar given the nature of care and community advocating that they do as part of their daily work. The comments are predictably appropriate, mainly with the exception of Camit, who appears to be the Bulletin’s only source of culturally and racially relevant comment. Kieth Gilbert, a project officer with the AFAO acknowledges that Access & Equity is seen as ‘too hard’ and that questions of barriers to access is ‘two way’. There is an acknowledgement also of the rural/urban competition for funding and between gay men and ‘other’ groups. This point is made by Di Furness, a manager of AIDS Council of NSW (Northern Rivers Branch) who pointedly ascribes a different hierarchy to the HIV client groups when she says: “[W]e aim to be accessible to anyone affected by HIV/AIDS - this includes injecting drug-users, sex workers, women, Indigenous people and non-gay identifying men, as well as gay men.”

‘Ethnocentricity’, ‘Culture’ and the Politics of Avoidance

Camit observes that there are more than 130 languages in use in Australia and HIV/AIDS workers need to review their understanding of ‘culture’ to integrate EO principles into their organisation’s work culture. While not referring to the theoretical issue of epistemological racism, he does state that, “there is a lot of ‘assumed general knowledge’ and that this is transmitted both orally and

143 M. Camit 1997 p. 11.
144 Ibid.
symbolically. He lists as examples Vietnamese interpretations of ‘safe sex’ as, ‘...having sex at home without being seen by anybody...’ and translation problems with the words ‘condom’ and ‘gay’ in Vietnamese and ‘penis’ and vagina’ in Filipino/Tagalog. He also clarifies the ‘disadvantage model’ from the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) and the token involvement of NESB individuals in forums, conferences and workshops that, “...raise sensitivity and awareness to the issues of disadvantaged groups but at worst, they promote stereotypes.” This is his strongest comment, which in turn leads him to highlight that, “There has been little or no evaluation of whether these workshops actually increase the numbers of NESBians using HIV/AIDS services.” In the same ‘multicultural’ themed issue is an article, “Calling All Cultures: where policy and practice converge” by Alex Voukelatos and Deborah Boswell which is mainly a manual for HIV managers to focus on staff training. Such a manual and Camit’s article on language barriers, however, are wasted without considering the current policy environment towards immigrants. Emphasising language and communication barriers without critical studies of racially inequitable government policies is a self-imposed limitation on research - not one imposed by funding cuts. Fran Baum notes the obvious criticism that is missing whenever language barriers are listed in ethno-cultural studies of minority groups. She states that:

Australia’s population contains a high proportion of migrants whose first language is not English, and who should be provided with free opportunities to learn English. In the late 1990s, funding to English language classes had been curtailed and user charges introduced.. These measures are likely to exclude some

145 Ibid.
146 Ibid.
147 Ibid.
groups and contribute to their general exclusion from Australian society—not a healthy option.  

There is silence on the substantial effects of funding cuts on health care equity and a lack of qualification for problems faced by NESB MSM in NAB articles. This makes it difficult to make detailed, specific cross-checks on statements that lead from article, to conference (or vice versa) to workshop, to funding application, to real funding and then to established policy with the power to influence an inappropriately unspecified number of either gay or non-gay identifying Asian MSM.

In 1998 there are signs of greater momentum in focusing on the ‘Asian problem’ as in Dennis Altman’s extract from the book *The Emergence of Gay Identities in Southeast Asia*.  

“Globalising Sexuality” discusses emerging gay identities in Southeast Asia by making the rather incomprehensibly uncritical comment that, “Both affluence and political liberalism seem to be required for a commercial gay world to appear.”  

His focus on a criterion of the, “...best example of Western-style political activism...” to show progress in establishing an Asian version of western gay culture is reflective of the views of his dominant culture.  

Asian region HIV issues are covered from a gay-community attached Asian male perspective in a 1996 NAB article featuring Aung Myo Minn, an openly gay student activist from Burma which has the third highest official global HIV infection rate. If culture is an influencing factor then it can be noted that Minn is New York educated and that this is again being used to support an


151  Ibid.

152  In an earlier chapter of *Asian & Pacific Inscriptions* edited by Suvendrini Perera, Meridian, 1995, Altman has created the quintessential white anthropological intellectual lens in his review of gay developments in ‘Asia’. Apart from making unquestioned reference to painter Donald Friend’s obsession with young Balinese boys, and while trying to also condemn sex tourism, he touts sexual exploitation as “larger economic inequities” which are “complex relationships at work”. He then goes on to say: “In many cases young men are able to use their sexual contacts with (usually older) foreigners to win entry into the Western world,...”.
Asian profile that restates that, “gay rights are human rights ...”. Read next to the poster campaign by the AFAO aimed at HIV positive gay Asian men this information reinforces gay male identities discussed in Chapter 1. Instead of bare-chested, hyper-masculinised Asian men, we have instead the linguistic equivalent of the lycra t-shirt. Again, Benjamin Tong’s 3 types of assimilation can be used here to analyse the effectiveness of “Asian representation” in HIV discourse.

Another voice of colour is found in Julian Jayaseelan’s 1999 NAB article which begins to tackle the hard question of positive Asian values and how to integrate them into a new ‘gay’ Asian identity. Jayaseelan thinks that the “'Western gay community model’” is no longer our goal ...to be able to do this we need to keep our existing inherited power of Asian values - family first, communal rights, respect for authority, inclusion and harmony and being frugal.” To first generation Asian-Australians, this is a little simplistic and almost a reverse form of essentialism. It also, yet again, promotes the globalising ‘human rights’ of gay culture to the exclusion of any in-depth examination of prejudice within western ‘gay’ culture itself, not to mention an A-list of Tong’s ‘colonial assimilation’. In this way, the NESB/Asian man is made to choose between a culture where prejudice is not articulated or confronted and the comfort and oppression that he at least understands. This last point is especially poignant for students on a temporary visa who are not protected by any official government body, even though they pay exorbitant fees to study here at their own cost.

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154 Lycra is a fashion fabric frequently associated with ‘club’ culture and, in Australia, with the Oxford Street ‘gay ghetto’ sub-culture established by white gay men as part of a process of becoming “ethnic”.


156 Dai Le & Chris Bullock [producers] “A Foreign Student’s Story: A Cautionary Tale” (transcript) 7/03/99, ABC Radio National’s Background Briefing at. For a transcript see URL: http://www.abc.net.au/rn/talks/bbing/stories/s19850.htm Radio National ABC produced a story on young Asian students recruited by private Australian language schools with no official protective agency to prevent
It is unfortunate that Indigenous Australian and Asian issues are not allowed to meet in discourse, where the lines are drawn hard and fast to protect everyone’s dwindling pot of funding and public opinion credit. The ‘deficit theory’\textsuperscript{157} of competing interest groups illustrates that for the sake of competition to reach their goal minority groups must play into the hands of the dominant group which benefits from this division. Not surprisingly, only an Indigenous gay male has outlined the clearest statement of racism on the HIV agenda. As Rodney Junga-Williams tells in a 1998 NAB article that where equal rights in Australia are concerned, “The bottom line is: unless you are a white or educated or wealthy person, it really doesn’t work...”\textsuperscript{158}

\textit{“Mass-debating” with the HIV Fraternity}

Complimentary to the growth in Asian MSM awareness in NAB is a rise in the inclusion of the topic in health forums dealing with HIV and multiculturalism. I will briefly outline the 4 forums exploring cross cultural issues in HIV/AIDS and related diseases in Australia” which were funded by the NSW Health Study Grants Seminar Series. These forums further expand on the HIV politics emerging in 2000. The papers presented come from a greater variety of HIV ‘industry’ sources than NAB and show tensions within competing health groups and disciplines which, while still cautious, are certainly less oblique.

\textsuperscript{157} M. Pallotta-Chiarolli 1998 included a vital section on problematizing cultures which seems to have been equally ignored in subsequent studies of Asian MSM. Among her comments she includes the deficit model as a factor in clouding information gathering in cross-cultural research.

Forum 1 in August 1998 is entitled “HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C in South East Asian Countries: A bridge to Australia?” and what emerges is a real difference and antagonism between the HIV group and those of Hepatitis C (HCV) and Intravenous Drug Users (IDUs). Questions of a merger in funding priorities have unearthed a clear power imbalance where speakers in HCV have carefully avoided castigating gay-community control of HIV funding while arguing the need to loosen up funds for a disease with greater infection rates than HIV, especially among women, IDUs and NESB communities. Their involvement and presentation of HIV risk and behaviour data in Asia was the first detailed comparison with another country’s methodology encountered by this author, especially in regard to Asian-Australian MSM. Greater use of cross-national research methods could provide some depth to the variety of ‘Asian’ MSM nationalities used in justifying researchers’ cultural awareness of Asian ‘diversity’.

Forum 2 in November 1999 entitled, “The cultural dimension: Gender, power, HIV/AIDS and sexual health” introduced gender and women’s issues in HIV outreach programmes with a detailed examination of assumed terminology misused against women that Asian men would benefit from if applied to their own category.

Forum 3 in February 1999 entitled, “Gay men, cultural identity and HIV/AIDS is the most relevant to Asian MSM. It presents us with 2 radically different approaches with which to confront racism. The most straightforward and specific statements come from journalist Paul van Reyk in “Anglocentricism, Racism and All That”. He puts forward case studies from gay media, the HIV community and his own Asian

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159 Culture, Ethnicity & Sexual Health: A series of forums exploring cross cultural issues in HIV/AIDS and related diseases in Australia Funded by the NSW Health Study Grants Seminar Series 1999.

160 Ibid.
friends in a clear articulation of racism. At the end of his brief paper, he states that apart from creating culturally appropriate contexts, we must, “...work with non-Anglo gay men and lesbians to create an environment within the gay communities in which racism, however unconscious, is not tolerated.”161 In view of this statement, Amos Hee’s long explanation/ justification to arrive at the same point is a great disappointment.162 It is also a case study of what is going wrong in what I term the “Mass-debate” around issues of NESB/Asian MSM, to which researchers of colour are not immune, despite being so close to issues of immunology.

After outlining the difficulties of having to adjust to access and equity as an idea in HIV to the audience in reference to a painfully endless discussion about ‘diversity’, ‘multiple cultural identities’ and a continuous ‘process’ of avoiding any definition, Hee says, “hey, it’s okay! This is part of the process, part of striving for a more sophisticated understanding of what drives humanity to seek pleasure, avoid pain, and live and die well.”163 After reviewing the suggestions in NAB since 1994, and not even touching on earlier geographic-specific Asian surveys and analysis in Australia,164 Hee’s account seems a poor representation of NESB/Asian MSM at a national level. At one point Hee, yet another voice of colour, cannot say the ‘R’ word, and opts for the acceptable description fashionable in academia and policy formulation which is now very familiar:


162 Ibid. Mr Amos Hee, a Researcher in Melbourne, presented the opening address for, “Gay men, cultural identity and HIV/AIDS” Forum 3, February 1999 Culture, Ethnicity & Sexual Health: A series of forums exploring cross cultural issues in HIV/AIDS and related diseases in Australia (Funded by the NSW Health Study Grants Seminar Series 1999).

163 Ibid.

164 Ibid.
... understandings of HIV/AIDS [have] been filtered through particular paradigms and bodies of professional knowledge and skills. These understandings have largely been derived from Western, rational and scientific paradigms emerging from the fields of medicine psychology and social research.165

This statement is over-simplified, easy to shoot down and fearful of ostracism, and says everything but the truth, which is that misplaced notions of ‘respect for authority’ and political etiquette in HIV issues equal a death sentence for every Asian MSM not educated in ‘safe sex’, no matter what his cultural identity. The fact that after nearly 10 years of debate this has become an abstract discourse about the ‘Asian problem’ is inexcusable. At the end, with poignant and frustrating narrative ‘story telling’ about a real case study, Hee describes in full detail the act of racism in the gay community inflicted on a Asian man, Ming. After this, he, and other researchers of colour have the gall to ask at the conclusion of his address: “Considering what we’ve discussed, how do we create alternative pathways? How do we stretch the boundaries? And how can Ming’s story show us where to begin?”166 My only response, which I shall try and answer in Chapter 4, is another question. How can professional researchers and practitioners in a multi million-dollar industry build careers on silence while people die?

Forum 4 in June 1999 entitled, “Broadening the focus: Sexual health, HIV/AIDS and related diseases”167 provides a real insight into the factional infighting between HIV and HCV, and the glaring ‘cultural’ divide between diseases in Australia. From the perspective of a Asian MSM, the almost desperately logical arguments of HCV

165 Ibid.
166 Ibid.
advocates for a piece of the ‘HIV pie’ is a glaring affidavit for the fear, ignorance, prejudice and addiction to political power motivating the gay community to lose sight of the true meaning of ‘human rights’.

Human rights, in the gay male community, can be bought and traded on the open market if you have the economic and political influence to enjoy the benefits. Nowhere is this clearer than in the manner in which Sydney Asian Gay Men have become the focus of study. While the previous report into International Asian MSM Students showed a complete lack of ability or commitment to help Asian men outside gay male community culture, their plight remains unexamined and a sign of their ‘cultural problem’. The fact that these men do not participate in gay male culture through becoming profitable patrons of gay services, media, pornography, drug circuits, fashion accessories or gay male political lobbies which fund hierarchies of exclusion - make invisible Asian men expendable. If image is everything in the world of consumer capitalism, gay capitalism has reached new heights of exclusion.

Wealth is not an unrelated topic, as shown by Rodney Junga-Williams 1998 statement that being white, wealthy and educated is essential to equal opportunity. In Chapter 2 I explained the role that consumer capitalism, pornography and sexual hierarchy play in establishing a gay male culture that is essentially racist. The degrees to which Asian men are assimilated is dependent on their willingness to support the white, gay male social order and thus accept an objectified, but still desirable, acceptable ‘other’ which has some second rate social benefits. This ‘otherness’ does not challenge white gay male dominance any more than gay male pornography challenges compulsory heterosexuality and patriarchy. What it does is provide ideological methods to maintain hierarchies where punishment and reward is integrally tied in with HIV social research. Nowhere is this clearer than in the most recent research publication on Sydney Asian Gay Men.
Interestingly, the 2000 report on Sydney Asian Men focuses on gay-community attached Asian men. If we are willing to look at gay racism as more than a cognitive variable, then research findings could be used to substantiate an argument to support a link between racial and economic factors directing assimilationist tendencies towards white, gay male identities. For instance, 68.7% of Asian men in the survey received HIV information from gay media, the same pro-pornography (and ‘sex-positive’) media criticised in this paper for racism and misogyny. This indicates that commercialised gay racism engages with gay-identified Asian men by both promoting the boundaries of acceptable group behaviour and enforcing it through a HIV discourse that defines acceptable risk and prevention (or harm minimization)

Assuming a dominant cultural definition of ‘gay’ also means looking at representations. Large percentages of Asian gay men obtained further HIV information from television - 60.8% (dominant values mirrored by mainstream media), Friends - 59.2% (dominant values from the gay community) and Posters and leaflets - 56.1% (dominant values in organisations such as the AFAO). Long term residents (or gay culture assimilated) posed less problems in displaying the ‘correct’ HIV information, being community attached (approved) and therefore easier to contact, interview and analyse by being culturally closer to the terms of reference in survey design than the BANGAR or NCHSR reports of 98/99 participants. The 2000 report is indicative of how a question outlines the range of acceptable replies permitted. It is a sexually explicit report, using gay-community ‘translations’ to otherwise standard questions such as with the terms Oral Sex (I sucked his penis/cock) and Anal Sex (I fucked him with a condom). Ironically, in Camit’s and the NCHSR’s discussions of language, there is no reference to the cultural specificity of their own survey terms or its implications.

The Asian men who assimilate into gay male hierarchies are both willing and economically able to do so. In comparison with the BANGAR Project which focused on non gay-community attached men, the 2000 report on Asian Gay Men indicates the substantial role economics perform in gay male identification. While the BANGAR data noted higher education rates of non-gay-community attached Asian men, they were more highly represented in blue-collar, lower socio-economic employment. The commercialised, consumer oriented gay male culture of Sydney, where Asian men were self-identified as ‘gay’ show a much higher employment prospect. Nearly 33% are shown in Professional/Managerial occupations; 9.9% in Paraprofessional; a majority of 53.6% in white collar jobs such as clerical or sales. Blue-collar occupations are least represented amongst gay-identifying Asian men with only 2.3% in Trades and 1.4% in Plant operator and Labourer jobs. Education rates for both gay and non-gay-community attached Asian men are similar but overwhelmingly only economically privileged Asian men who identify as gay, and thus support the terms of reference for white, gay male dominance are permitted to participate (but never to dominate or achieve superior market value to a white gay man). Such percentages are not analysed in relation to gay male culture and how a culture of sexual consumer capitalism affects social/sexual power dynamics to further influence Asian men’s ability to negotiate HIV issues. Considering Gary Dowsett’s celebration of the commercialisation of gay culture, one cannot discount the role that economic privilege plays in gay male identities, and Asian men’s ability to either assimilate or mimic (depending on your point of view). The majority experience of Asian men in white democracies, however, tend to the opposite. Psychologist Benjamin Tong writes that Asians face, “...[such] disparities as that between high educational achievements (as measured by acquisition of degrees and credentials), on the one hand, and low-income level and workplace
status (when compared with whites), on the other...”\textsuperscript{169} This, of course, cannot be included as part of an individualised self-rating such cognitive processing requires, and is therefore not admissible in a claim of active racism in research measurement.

Further, in terms of analysing cultural factors, current analysis of longer term Asian residents being less likely to engage in monogamous relationships is oppositional to non-gay-community attached Asian men’s views, as referred to in McMahon’s NAB article. Reviewing immigration status and the economic differences between Chinese, Korean and Japanese ‘gay’ men in comparison to Thai and Filipino ‘gay’ men is also important in explaining their ability in acquiring the accoutrements of gay male identity on their own terms, or at least with some degree of protection from more overt prejudice. In this respect, cross-national research data, such as that provided in the 1998 forum: \textit{HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C in South East Asian Countries: A bridge to Australia?} could provide deeper insights than simply designating “Asian’ nationalities, in the same way that national costumes are used at Multicultural festivals. Protection from racism, therefore, is mainly a transference from overt to covert acts of hate. Economic affluence and education do not protect as much as alter the silences and solicit more subtle forms of silencing.

These power dynamics are not the source, so much as symptoms of a host of factors which constitute racism in the gay community. Like a contaminated river, this racism becomes part of commercial gay male culture, it flows into HIV social research, flowing further into Asian MSM reports, into the stereotypes, isolation and silences of

\textsuperscript{169} K. P. Monteiro 1996 pp. 120-121. Tong also discusses the American historical precedence of anti-Asian hate. He notes, for example that the “...Chinese Exclusion Act was enacted in 1882 to prohibit early Chinese immigrants from voting, sending for their wives in China, owning property, and testifying in court on their own behalf and when the Japanese Americans were forced to sell their property, and were imprisoned in concentration camps as if they were war criminals...” p144. This mirrors Australia’s own White Australia Policy and “Fear from the North” propaganda embedded in Australian popular culture for generations, but which never gets mentioned as a possible variable because it is classed as a social factor - and not an individual one within cognitive processing.

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Asian MSM and finally into the moment of physical and cultural penetration of an Asian man. The 2000 report of Sydney Asian men explains that the limitations in all previous attempts to survey homosexually active Asian men were caused “... by a lack of adequate funding and other resources.” This is arguable given the breadth of rhetoric, time and other funded projects allowing researchers to include the process of research culture itself.

Fran Baum summarises the responsibilities facing researchers in HIV/AIDS and indeed all public health policymakers when she writes:

There may be some frustration amongst health bureaucrats and service providers that they can do little to reduce inequities, given that the crucial factors are outside the health sector. This is reinforced by the tendency for social factors to be regarded as epidemiologically fixed and unchangeable. Health policymakers need to be reminded that these factors are not inflexible, but as they are socially created they are amenable to change through social and political actions. The task of health departments is to look for opportunities to complement services with actions that may do something to change the factors underlying inequities.

In order to remind health bureaucrats in HIV/AIDS research about their ability to make changes to inequitable social research on Asian MSM, it is worth examining the underlying theories that control the options made available to them today. Baum’s comment on the epidemiological fixity of social factors is what the following chapter will explore. Harm reduction, cognitive theory and postmodernism co-operate to make this inaction possible. It is the joining of these three otherwise useful and proactive methods of enquiry which creates a false acceptance of diversity designed to uphold, not to break down, gay racism in HIV social research. Theoretical models become focused on covert racism by assimilated Asian and NESB researchers who

fight in new arenas of theory and linguistics to try and attain the ‘equal’ rights of
superiority (or Tong’s ‘egalitarian assimilation’). In the process of doing so, they trade
silence for a few more inches of equal opportunity while those Asian MSM with neither
economic or intellectual power to change the status quo are given no opportunity to
compete for project funding with their ‘gay’ assimilated Asian counterparts. Or as
Baum puts it: “Effective community participation strategies need to be based on an
understanding of the different power positions within communities.”\textsuperscript{172}

Within the matrix of signifiers surrounding talk of diversity is the reality of the
continual denial of investigation of gay male culture as crucial to the rejection,
objectification and reduction of Asian MSM into nothing more than a funding
opportunity.

\textsuperscript{172} Ibid. 1998 p. 332.
4. Masks of Cultural Penetration: Rationality, Cognition and Postmodern Identity Discourse

...the cognitive turn has led to a new individualism in social psychology (Graumann, 1988), in which the focus on the mental processing of information has created an even greater distance from social reality. Questions of the ‘sociality of human existence’ have been ignored in psychology or ‘passed to the social sciences.’

-Uwe Flick in *The Psychology of the Social*

This chapter will look at the issue of epistemological racism in greater detail. I will view Western academic paradigms as cultural objects in themselves and ‘postmodernism’ as less of a break with the intellectual past than a crisis along an uninterrupted lineage of Western intellectual tradition. Although the way in which the non-white individual or collective is theorised in competing Western theories has not changed, the language has. HIV discourse and reports on Asian MSM, cultural and postmodern identity discourse and cognitive psychologies of health risks in HIV prevention contribute to an unconscious racism. This occurs through a denial of social and political spheres where racism flourishes. I will use several critiques of cognitive theory as the dominant discourse in explanations of human behaviour to analyse how AIDS behavioural models continue this denial, supported by rational choice theory and the theory of reasoned action. To question postmodern identity discourse, I will review Baden Offord and Leon Cantrell’s essay, “Unfixed in a Fixated World: Identity, Sexuality, Race and Culture” in *Multicultural Queer*. In conclusion, I will provide a metaphor to encapsulate the many fragmented efforts of researchers to resist investigating racism in the gay community and to deny its affect on Asian men in HIV social research.

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The link between cognitive rationalities and postmodernism is the dominant ideology of \textit{individualism}. This individualism is universalised by the study of individual behaviour (by theorists) at the expense of cultural, political or emotional explanations of human behaviour which all exist as \textit{variables} within cognitive-behavioural research. The deficiencies of using variable factors in models to predict behaviour is central to critics of cognitive reductionism in psychological research. Apart from rational choice and reasoned action theory, which will be a focus in this chapter, I will allude to the health belief model and self-efficacy theory to illustrate the failure of qualitative multifactor approaches in dealing with racism. Cognitive-based theories such as protection motivation, planned behaviour and different aspects of attribution theory do not fall within the immediate frame of this paper, but could be assessed using the critiques of cognitive reductionism which I will introduce. Christina Lee in \textit{Alternatives to Cognition: A New Look At Explaining Human Behaviour} writes that all of these theories share the same basic assumptions,

\begin{quote}
... that conscious thought is a direct cause of human behaviour. It is the most important cause of human behaviour and the only one that psychologists ought to study. Economic, social, and environmental influences on choice and freedom are largely ignored by contemporary social and cognitive theories.\footnote{Christina Lee , \textit{Alternatives to Cognition: A New Look at Explaining Human Social Behaviour}, (Lawrence Erlbaum Associated, Publishers, New Jersey) 1998 p. 6.}
\end{quote}

In these models, says Lee, “... the real world is relevant only peripherally, as the raw material from which the individual constructs a subjective world (Bruner,1986).”\footnote{Ibid.}

While an obvious postmodern cliche arises immediately to this statement: \textit{What exactly is the real world?}, I suggest that overt, covert, institutional and societal racism is materially experienced (and constructed) within the social interactions of what Lee
refers to as “the real world”. Though this world seems to exert less and less of an influence on research, this has not always been the case.

Historically, the dominance of cognitive psychology emerged out of a justifiable dissatisfaction with the scope of activities that extreme behaviouralism allowed. In this period of separation, the late 1970s, 1980s and most of the 1990s, the research focus has shifted from observing behaviours to exploring the cognitive processes of individuals. Coincidentally, this cognitive victory coincided with the rise of: postmodernism, economic rationalism and the global HIV/AIDS epidemic. In the perceived death throes of former grand narratives, the general acceptance of rationality has given great weight to the postmodern identity discourse promoting the cultural justification for Asian cognitions in HIV research.

The ideology of Individualism has quite a history. The concept of conscious thought as central to human behaviour has a respectful and long tradition in western thought. Lee notes its modern development from Descartes treatment of free will and the concept of ‘thinking’ (conscious thought) to the separation of humans from other animals. The separation of mind and body and self and society are foundations in Western ontology. Daphna Oyserman and Hazel Rose Markus in The Psychology of the Social note the Cartesian model’s role in the splitting of the self in both North American and European intellectual tradition, with a ‘self-objectification” resulting in further division between experiencer and what is experienced. Meaning, therefore,
subsumes the social. This “...gives rise to the western notion of the self as an entity containing significant dispositional attributes which is detached from the social context. This view has been called the Western, separate, individualist, or independent view of the self.”181 In a contemporary global context, this leaves no other place for reality to evolve but in the mind of the individual, much as in the virtual worlds created in cyber space.

**Cognitive Modeling in HIV Risk Reduction**

HIV social research, policy and interventions are built on cognitive-based models of risk. In her book on theories of risk, *Risk and the Other*, Heléne Joff writes that, “Risk-related perceptions have been studied extensively in cognitive psychology without references to the social environment and its cultural differences.”182 Risk of HIV transmission is thus based heavily on the lone individual. ‘Other’ cultures challenge science and rationality by their values and belief - especially their emotionality. Joff writes that this is perceived as a threat, which in turn evokes Pallotta-Chiarolli’s warning of problematizing other cultures in her NCHSR report. Joff writes that, “Comparisons in which non-Western cultures emerge as inferior in terms of the core values of the West may be a reaction to this threat. They are part of the ‘identity work’ (Crawford, 1994) carried out by Westerners.”183

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181 Ibid.
183 Ibid. 1999 pp. 19-20. See also C. Lee 1998, p. 101 who writes: “Although there are strong challenges to the assumption that other cultures’ ideas are most appropriately interpreted from a Western perspective, this view is not one that fits easily with the approach of mainstream psychology to it subject matter.”
The Information-Motivation-Behavioural Skills (IBM) model (fig 7) is one such model. Although there is some social psychological analysis of Asian MSM risk behaviour involving racism, notably the Sanitiosi chapter in *Multicultural Queer*, it is still heavily tied to cognitive functions, self-efficacy and the subject’s individual, rational reactions to racism in terms of high risk behaviour. Misovich, Fisher & Fisher in their chapter “Social Comparison Processes and AIDS Risk and AIDS Preventive Behaviour” in *Health, Coping and Well-Being: Perspectives From Social Comparison Theory* describe how information, motivation, and behavioural skills are “fundamental determinant of AIDS preventive behaviour”. To re-examine their assumptions, several points need to be addressed.

Among these is the imprecision of articulating racism by locating it as a variable within the individual’s cognitive processing. This is also a rational, non-emotive model of human behaviour. Emotional trauma, and its attendant behaviour, is allowable through Sanitiosi’s social psychological approach in *Multicultural Queer*, but again, this redirects research away from gay racism and constructs Asian men as a problem group. Despite the adaption of social factors into theories of social-cognition, social-representation and social-comparison, the cognitive dominance in most of these areas has prompted the critiques of Lee, Joff, Flick and Oyserman and Markus. In their view, a dominance of cognitive theory in psychology is still restricting equitable...
research into human behaviour. Cognitive reductionism’s role with inequitable healthcare policies - and in this case Asian MSM research – requires scrutiny as part of any examination of HIV research culture.

To illustrate these points, I will first introduce exactly what HIV/AIDS models assume in the IBM model. Misovich, Fisher & Fisher write that (my italics),

According to the [IBM] model, information that is directly relevant to AIDS transmission and prevention is an initial prerequisite of AIDS preventive behaviour. Motivation to engage in AIDS preventive behaviour, including personal motivation (attitudes toward AIDS preventive acts), social motivation (perceived social support for performing these acts), and perceptions of personal vulnerability to AIDS, is a second critical prerequisite of AIDS preventive behaviour. Finally, behavioural skills for performing specific AIDS preventive acts effectively, including objective skills at performing these behaviours and a sense of self-efficacy in doing so, are a third critical prerequisite of AIDS preventive behaviour ....

The IMB model specifies that AIDS prevention information and AIDS prevention motivation work largely through AIDS prevention behavioural skills to affect the initiation and maintenance of AIDS preventive behaviour (see Fig. 4.1). An individual's information and motivation are expected to be expressed primarily through the application of his or her behavioural skills, and therefore information and motivation work through, and are limited by, behavioural skills.184

This approach does not factor in the evidence of the denial of racism I provide in the first three chapters. Firstly, the “information that is directly relevant to AIDS transmission”, does not include any critical reflection of racism, misogyny or consumer capitalist fervour in the gay, male community nor the dominance of individualism in HIV/AIDS prevention models. As shown in Chapter 2, these factors influence how HIV/AIDS policy issues evolve. Secondly, 'perceived social support for performing

these [sexual] acts” and ‘perceptions of personal vulnerability to AIDS’, is rated from a perspective of a lone agent’s conscious and rational information processes. The lack of attention given to social, environmental or political causes, such as gay racism and its dominant representation in the media, bathes the cognitive explanation in the aura of ‘truth’ or ‘common sense’. Thirdly, the objective ‘application of his or her behavioural skills’ is confined to the rational world-view that accepts a self-assessment based on self-reflection that assumes a conscious mind seeking rational aims and goals; Fourthly, ‘self-efficacy’, which is a feature of social cognitive theory, has deep limitations. Lee acknowledges that such a theory hypothesises that, “…the cognitions relevant to choosing a particular course of action are influenced by personal experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal and other symbolic information and perceptions of physiological states.” Lee comments that within such self-efficacy, however, there are:

... no predictions of the direction or extent of influence. Thus, it is impossible to predict the effect that any combination of experiences might have on self-efficacy or to hypothesis, at any level of precision, beyond that suggested by common sense, that any particular event will affect the cognitive variables in any particular way.

She later links this to cultural differences and the way that they interact with cognitive variables in rational models of behaviour:

There is very little research exploring demographic factors and their possible relation with theoretically relevant variables ... The possibility that the hypothesised relations between imaginary variables are specific to people with particular cultural or education experiences and inappropriate for others has not been explored, but it is clearly important if these theories are to reflect our understanding of human diversity.

185 C. Lee 1998, p.57  questions the use of questionnaires as less than ideal models of measurement in

186 Ibid. p. 9.
187 Ibid. p. 9.
188 Ibid. pp. 42-43.
According to Lee, the health belief model belief that barriers to HIV prevention determine whether or not individuals engage with particular actions is illusory because of the complex interactions between imprecise, attitudinal variables. These variables, she says, are ambiguous definitions and unsatisfactory for measurement\textsuperscript{189}, the criteria of policy-based research. Helène Joff concurs with this view on the dominance of individualism in HIV/AIDS prevention when she writes:

Health promotion based on cognitive premises has a vision of a rational, lone individual making cognitive errors, in a value-free environment. These assumptions are particularly problematic in the face of risks which involve a high level of physical arousal (such as unsafe sex) and chemical changes (such as alcohol and drug-related risks). In fact, one might argue that since risks are often linked with excitement and desire, the more rational faculties of the mind are not to the fore in the decision-making that surround them. Furthermore, risks often take place in the presence of others, and in sexually related risks in particular, negotiation rather than lone decisions will determine whether safer practices occur. By locating risk-related thinking in the minds of the individuals, cognitively led research and intervention programmes fail to tap the dynamic interaction between the social context and individual minds. They also fail to take non-conscious motivations into consideration. These include tacit cultural and unconscious psycho-dynamic forces. This is not surprising since mainstream psychology, which is characterised by these cognitive models, is currently predominantly a science of the conscious mind.\textsuperscript{190}

Two models with inadequate explanations for the effect of experiences and events on cognitions are rational choice theory and theory of reasoned action. Green & Shapiro observe in \textit{Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory: A Critique of Applications in Political Science} that rational choice theorists are characterised by an instrumentalist and universalising bias in dealing with difference. They see individualism as denying

\textsuperscript{189} Ibid. p. 8.

\textsuperscript{190} H. Joff 1999 pp. 70-71.
societal causes in that, “... rational choice explanations cannot be predicated upon entities other than individuals.” 191 They write in regard to its use in politics that:

In our view, the weaknesses of rational choice scholarship are rooted in the characteristic aspiration of rational choice theorists to come up with universal theories of politics. This aspiration leads many rational choice theorists to pursue ever more subtle forms of theory elaboration, with little attention to how these theories might be operationalized and tested—even in principle. When systematic empirical work is attempted by rational choice theorists, it is typically marred by a series of lapses that are traceable to the universalist ambitions that rational choice theorists mistakenly regard as the hallmark of good scientific practice. 192

This universalising tendency in HIV/AIDS is symptomatic of what Joff considers the hegemonic position of Western culture worldwide. She mirrors Kendall and Jeffreys’ insights on the silencing of oppositional views to gay, male culture and writes,

Western representations of AIDS, to take but one example, have far wider currency throughout the world than non-Western representations do, due to the universally dominant position held by the Western mass media and by Western science itself. Dominant groups exert their control by controlling the process of representation; some representations gain greater currency than others on the world stage. There is a silencing of certain voices, while others are more pronounced. 193

With reasoned action, notes Lee, relations among its variables are weak supports for hypothesising relationships between individual and societal cause because 1/ the target behaviour must be under their volitional control, 2/ they must have all the relevant information at hand, 3/ this information must not change in the time between the measurement of the intention and observation of the behaviour and 4) “…the target behaviour should not involve a choice between options of similar valence such as


192 Ibid. p. 16.

193 H. Joff 1999 p. 29.
selecting one activity over another, equally favoured choice.”.194 Such a binary cannot explain the manifold pressures exerted on Asian men to assimilate into white, gay male identity. The mainstream obsession with fixed internal cognitions constructs these social contexts as inconsequential. Lee writes:

... when the Theory of Reasoned Action and its offshoots are used, the respondent’s ‘normative beliefs/attitudes’ are tapped. Yet this is measured by asking about the beliefs of family and friends pertaining to the issue under investigation. Even when the conceptualisation is widened to the influence of social institutions, no attempt is made to discern how the normative influences come to bear...There is some work which primes respondents to think in terms of in-groups and out-groups in both the optimistic bias and attribution literatures. Yet they are concerned with the lone thinker’s subjective processing.195

These critiques question the appropriateness of cognitive models to construct racism as an individual variable without recourse to a deeper explanation of social interactions between individuals and groups from different cultures. These individualist assumptions have become ingrained into ‘common sense’ assumptions and New Liberalism. Indeed, changes in the English language should be analysed as carefully as the languages of NESB cultures. This requires that the lens of researchers be turned inward towards assumptions in what Suvendrini Perera refers to as ‘whiteness’

“Cultural Repertoires” and The Evolution of the English Language

The lens of poststructural ‘grids’ is not a policy in itself, nor is attacking the ‘culture’ of logic without acknowledging one’s dependence on rationality in discourse and research methods. The English Language forms a central role in the ethnocentric paradigm and is well contested in identity discourse. Yet it is also a part of a culture that Scheurich tries to uncover in his ‘policy archaeology’ when explaining


195 Ibid. p.138 Lee also notes, in a broader context than Asian MSM, that, “In addition, optimistic bias model, comparison to ‘others’ generally involves comparison to peers of the same age and gender.
epistemological racism in qualitative research. This is a factor which postmodernists, arguing differences and diversities in their own terms, seem oblivious to.

In chapters 1-3 I documented denials of racism by emphasising culture. Jonathan Potter and Margaret Wetherell in *Health, Coping and Well-Being: Perspectives From Social Comparison Theory* describe this new language as ‘cultural repertoires’ in their 1997 study of racism in New Zealand. They write that at this time in history in New Zealand, talking about culture is a way of showing sensitivity, tolerance and respect for difference and that, “...the use of these repertoires does not present the speaker with the sorts of profound identity problems that traditional racist discourse of innate inferiority now tends to invoke (van Dijk, 1992).” I argue, however, that the resistance to any definition of material reality leaves no place to discuss racism or oppression, and without the existence of discourse analysis, they would remain completely invisible. The fact that it exists means that information about racism exists to ‘flesh out’ composite variables that make up outcomes in cognitive behavioural models.

Policy based research functions within white epistemologies and paradigms functioning within this epistemology are often critiqued without moving outside of assumptions accepted as ‘common sense’. This common sense is also a production of a culture, as John Standfield II explains in his article “Ethnic Modelling in Qualitative Research” in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. He writes that, “…As cultural foundations, paradigms are the guides to more explicit intellectual activities, most fundamentally, theory construction, methodological strategising, data interpretation, and knowledge dissemination.” In HIV health education policy, the language of


cognitive theorists supports the assimilation forces of white, gay male culture through the uncritical acceptance of the gay community’s definition of sexual health in defining a successful behavioural outcome. This infers that to refuse this model of sexual health, bearing in mind Rotello’s summary on the politics of the ‘condom code’, is not a psychologically or physically healthy option. To refuse, in this sense, is a free choice denial of good health.

Recently a report in Campus Review stated the intention of a NCHSR supervised postgraduate study to "...investigate cultural differences and motivation of Sydney Asian gay men. It intends to build an integrated model to improve the understanding of safe sex behaviours of Asian gay men..."198. It intends to use social cognitive theory to further strengthen the perception that Asian MSM rejection of the gay-community led HIV investigations is their problem - or in rape terminology, that somehow "they asked for it" by being 'Asian'. Once a hierarchy of 'Asian expertise' has been validated through rigorous adherence to the gay dominant group’s identity and values, then this process can begin in earnest. The denial of gay racism suggests that this new Asian expertise will continue to reduce racism into a sub-variable within an individual’s social experience.

Individualism is assumed as a universal trait, and gay universalism is embedded in the individualist assumptions researchers use when living out their understanding of an urban, Anglo-American, gay “ethnicity”. The reproduction of this assumption is contained within cognitive theorist’s understanding of social forces as undefined variables. A ‘universal homosexual’ ‘human right’ does not factor in the sub-textual meaning of, “...the almost universal right to fuck - to assert ... [gay] male dominance

over all that is not himself by using it for his phallic gratification or self assertion at either a physical or symbolic level.”199

“You WILL be HELPED - resistance is futile”

In order to develop the theoretical model of Scheurich I mentioned in the introduction, I want to review Baden Offord and Leon Cantrell’s essay, “Unfixed in a Fixated World: Identity, Sexuality, Race and Culture” in Multicultural Queer edited by Drs Peter Jackson and Gerard Sullivan. This article represents the intellectual and theoretical perspective underpinning the selection and order of gay/queer Asian and NESB voices. While both lesbian and gay male texts are included, most of the male voices are ‘Asian’. While this identity discourse has a right to be heared, its location within Multicultural Queer says more about the theoretical and cultural assumptions of the editors than of the Asian/NESB writers.

The Offord and Cantrell essay is focused on the conscious construction of identity by individuals who have the ability to choose their identities. They begin by situating the essay at a ‘crisis’ of identity experienced in a broad context, “…At the dusk of the twentieth century…”, for those who are “…from a multicultural, multisexual background,…” who are “fragmented”200 The central point they return to is the issue of being, “…unfixed but connected to ‘others,’ aware of the substance beyond identity and labels. This is being ‘unfixed’ in a ‘fixated’ world, challenging gravity, resisting definition and compromise.”201 These are all important issues, but issues which most certainly belong to a collective whose language and terms of reference validate such a


201 Ibid.
crisis. Since this involves identity discourse in reference to a crisis in, “...politics, sociology, law and particularly culture.”\textsuperscript{202} it is primarily a debate about power, in a new arena where identity categories more than ever decide access to power in the academic and political spheres. In relation to racism, the use of ‘prejudice’ and ‘power’ to exclude and disfranchise minorities who wish to participate in dominant forms of decision-making procedures is certainly damaging to notions of equity. At a more fundamental level, however, it ignores overt racism.

\textit{Soft focus gay patriarchy}

The foregrounding & backgrounding of multiple subjectivities within the context of the argument is crucial. Returning to figs 1&2 from Chapter 1 demonstrates the context in which Jackson & Sullivan’s book should be read. Alone, it is not a measurement of any progress simply because it admits and qualifies the ‘problem’ in its own terms, and thus defines the problem group. Offord and Cantrell’s statement that, “...a person who is one-eighth Aboriginal may choose to foreground that one-eighth in order to help the cause of promoting indigenous people’s rights”.\textsuperscript{203} is naive. Racism is invested with issues of colour, and to invest ‘one-eighth’ of a race with freedom of choice without acknowledging Perera’s comment about the relationship of the degrees of ‘whiteness’ to the degrees of racism is a testament to how far discourse can sanitise the ugly face of racism in Lee’s “real world”.

\textit{Multicultural Queer} is an example of how individually honest accounts of ethnic gay identity are used within the context of this ‘grid of regularities’ to foreground and background specific items of diversity and racism as I have spoken about in this thesis.

\textsuperscript{202} Ibid. p. 208.

\textsuperscript{203} Ibid. p . 208.
Explained in this sense, discourse maintains the dominant constructions of ‘diversity’ (foreground), while supporting white, gay male social values (foreground). Racism (background) competes against ‘gay unity’ (foreground) within the context of limited references to poor Asian HIV research results (background) and quite negligible participation of non-gay identifying Asian MSM (background). At the same time, they fulfil all the requirements of the ‘act of listening’ to Asian MSMs (foreground), most of whom are long-term gay-identifying (foreground) who do not seriously threaten dominant Anglo-American ‘gay liberation’ models. Jayant Lele’s summary in Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asian describes the hypocrisy of trying to subvert a gay-identifying cultural position through contrived uses of legitimate life narratives. This explanation locates the “textual attitude” where successful, ‘correct’ knowledge is actually the reinforcement of the historical struggle of the white, gay, male aristocracy within the broader white community, Lele writes [my italics]:

The experience of these past struggles is incorporated and kept alive in the symbols, rituals, and texts. It remains accessible as a source of inspiration for collective social action under appropriate conditions and through contextualised reinterpretations. These past points of departure, while they remain mystified and mythologised, serve as sources of legitimation. They are used to support the claim that the existing social order, as the product of previous struggles, is a socially cherished end in itself ... [and they] have to be and are systematically constructed...


205 Breckenridge & Van de Veer, 1993 p. 59. J. Lele comments on Edward Said’s use of the term “textual attitude” in describing the fear of the “self-critical public attitude” and the need for “successful (i.e. correct) knowledge” in the process of exploiting “the other”.

206 Ibid. p.69.
The drawback with the male narratives of Multicultural Queer is that they use the oppressor’s values and language as terms of reference to resist racism. Given the immense focus on racism’s affects, this book becomes an exercise in diversity discourse and postmodern-influenced queer identity politics between Asian/NESB gay men. In other words, an otherwise creditable diversity discourse necessary to expand solutions to old problems becomes a smoke screen to hide gay racism supporting gay, male identity. Selected truth are used to maintain production of discreet pieces of information.”\textsuperscript{207} that can be rearranged to support new hierarchies. Lele says:

\begin{quote}
The rejection of meta-narratives on the grounds of their value-ladenness and ethnocentricism ... by social researchers and area specialists, does not prohibit policy makers and other manipulators of people’s memories and dreams from using them to reduce the complexity of amassed information and to flexibly empty them to ensure control and exploitation.\textsuperscript{208}
\end{quote}

This is what occurs in the act of promoting ‘universal gay rights’ without \textit{critical} analysis of gay culture in HIV policy. Covert mechanisms of racism become more important mechanism of control, and in such cases, identity discourse is important in locating its presence. The drawback is that overt forms of racism become less ‘real’ to those participating in identity discourse. Covert racism, in a protected environment, appears more obvious and is infused with the aura of an overt act of racism, such as violence and psychological or verbal abuse. For Offord and Cantrell, being ‘connected to others’ in covert racist situations equals an egalitarian \textit{access} to power; while the same term applied to recipients of overt racism means \textit{relief} from abuse. These differences are overlooked. Not only is elite rationality hard of hearing, its eyesight is suffering from internal racist stereotypes from the hegemonic act of

\begin{tabular}{l}
\textsuperscript{207} Ibid. p. 60. \\
\textsuperscript{208} Ibid. p. 60.
\end{tabular}
compromise defined by the dominant group. This is what Tong has called ‘egalitarian’ and ‘colonial’ assimilation by Asian and NESB researchers.

Tong’s model denies free choice because it locates racism as central to Asian identity crises, and thus involving both social interaction and historical locality. Tong says of the ‘model minority’ colonial assimilationist that s/he is “... proud to be the white racist version of well-behaved, lay low yellow. The object of racist love. s/he is famous for functioning as the compliant, obedient, non-complaining, non-questioning, non-leading (always the follower), industrious (in specifically non-threatening ways), long-suffering servant.”209 His egalitarian assimilationist is interested in, “... equal access to political and economic rights and resources theoretically guaranteed by law to whites and everyone else. ... who desires what the most powerful, influential white males have: big money, high office, membership in exclusive clubs, access to the “best” neighbourhood, and so forth.”210 For a white stewardship of Asian MSM issues that need to use Asian voices to espouse gay, white male virtues, recruitment can only come from tried and tested (or educated) ‘egalitarian assimilated’ Asian men on the pay roll.

Offord and Cantrell’s specific context of “political equality” demonstrates covert forms of racism in categorisation preventing minorities from accessing ‘freedoms’ associated with gay and lesbian identities. This is admirable, but makes theirs a fight within ‘the family’ of gay, white privilege, rather than support of Asian MSM outside of gay-affiliations (and also lesbian, feminist, bisexual and low-income members). They do not seek to address those outside the family because they do not engage with the terms of gay cultural reference and in addition are made invisible by NESB researchers and writers who speak from within this culture, albeit as partially accepted,

210 Ibid.
lower echelon members demanding ‘gay rights’ at the expense of representing their compatriot victims of overt racism.

Invisibility of non-gay identifying Asian MSM and other minority groups is never seen as resistance to the very discourse which tries to articulate ‘invisibility’. Perhaps this is why such discourse insists on unfixed paradigm - since it cannot see the goal in a way that those violated by overt racism do. In an odd way, the Postmodern identity ‘crisis’ that Offord and Cantrell infer, is not unlike Marxism describing the disfranchised dissatisfaction of the Bourgeoisie - neither totally oppressed by overt racism, nor confident in their noble birthright to rule. Between the stench from the offal above and the vapours below, multisexual/multicultural identity discourse must redefine the very act of breathing in order to stay alive on the political stage.

One of the reasons that gay racism remains hidden in cognitive models is the liberal tradition of individualism at the heart of cognitive, rational choice theory. When racism is transformed into sexual liberalism (and sex-positivity) it erases the distinctive attributes of gay male culture that Kendall, Jeffreys and Rotello have discussed. These include an ‘ethnic’ model/civil rights structure; queer theory definitions of diversity; language, representations and codes of identification; and a highly organised and commodified culture based on sexual identity/performance. Gay male values therefore seem to embody a universal desire for what Amos Hee in Forum 3 of 1999 described as humanity’s desire “...to seek pleasure, avoid pain, and live and die well.”. This foregrounded assumption is policy-acceptable, although it has relinquished even the gay rights struggle for remaining gay white male inequities in the lower socio-economic groups which my 1994 Independent Monthly letter referred to as ‘rough trade’. 
Identity discourse (within its own queer theory versus gay activist binary) inhabits a protected niche (or a ‘lifestyle enclave’) in which new liberalism needs to look progressive, but which denies overt gay racism by elevating covert (and mostly unspecified) prejudice to dominance. Covert prejudice is a discourse-friendly subject, while economic inequity in identity-making is now seen as too normative/positivist (even Marxist) to be used in comparative analysis between identity discourse and projects such as the NCHSR 2000 report on Asian men. The only link between the two is the universalising influence of rational choice theory and individualism silently embedded within dominant epistemologies.

This universalism becomes a problem when it assumes gay male culture in HIV research categories as part of the liberal, individualist tradition behind the paradigms that produce the methodology that created ‘Asian MSM’. Offord and Cantrell acknowledge that in, “…a discussion about the interface between culture and sexuality, identity is fraught with the danger of becoming trapped by the limitations of categorisation.” But they see this as a part of a challenge to political and legal recognition of fixed categories that deny ‘political equality’ for ‘gay and lesbians’ and they do not expand the conditions under which this includes or excludes identity outside of gay, male culture in their essay because their argument is part of this community. To align with this culture means accepting that gay rights will always supersede racial minority rights embedded in the fundamental construction of current gay, male identities.

Categories denied are as objectifying as categories stated. Categorisation in the public domain is only a danger to those included in the political process, including token persons of colour who live constantly with the reminder of their non-white stature

when facing daily acts of non-representation when studying ‘the other’ in research or on committees of “Asian MSM” education campaigns. Purely cognitive relationships (to maximize utility) do not factor in forms of resistance to the dominant gay male culture. It would be more useful to question the cognitive influence on psychology and its relationship to policy based research (that is economically rational) than simply attacking categories. In many ways, to attack categorisation, without a balanced appreciation that this same technique is used to highlight and also construct problems within identity discourse, risks new forms of essentialism. Working with categories is the start of identifying oppressions and therefore unavoidable, as is the compromise with the dominant group which allows difference to be isolated, articulated, and selectively assimilated into ‘acceptable difference’. It is into this fray that multiple identities spawn identity discourse. It is at once born of resistance, and in the act of acceptance into the norms of the dominant discourse as a new phase, or a new development, it surrenders its own unique epistemology, leaving only the view of ‘the other’ which was once ‘us’. It is Tong’s egalitarian assimilation in reflection. In Offord and Cantrell, the denial of overt racism (based on colour) in the only essay of methodology in *Multicultural Queer* gets subsumed by their emphasis on cognitive-oriented tensions between fixed and unfixed identities.

Individualism is still resident in exclusively poststructural discourse focused on the self-ascription of identity and the *rational* choosing of identities. Offord and Cantrell admit that, “Some might say that subscribing to an unfixed subjectivity implies a loss of specificity and therefore the entrenched problem of marginalisation will worsen.” 212 but they respond to this only by affirming their goal of making connections amongst a shifting “cultural gravity” and by asking: “Where would the gravity of identity be strongest, and where would be weakest? Where, in other words, would “I” belong?”

In fact, the “I” is what most identity discourse is about. The “We” that gave birth to civil rights, to a challenge to the dominant discourse responsible for gender and racial inequity is quite obliterated in a haze of ‘cultural repertoires’. Feminism has suffered a similar fate in that legislation promoting gender equality has made gender inequity a woman’s individual problem, given the legal, discursive resources now available. How could they fail? Gay, ethnic minorities’ failure to access power becomes their cultural problem, or a postmodern problem of multisexual/multicultural (and Millennial) schizophrenia.

Queer theory has spawned the first challenges to the culturally (racially) homogeneous gay and lesbian culture epitomised by Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras. However it does not have within it the means to confront and deal with the bureaucratisation of gay racism that is so strongly embedded in New Liberalism. Annamarie Jagose in *Queer Theory* states that, “there is no generally acceptable definition of queer; indeed, many of the common understandings of the term contradict each other...By refusing to crystallise in any specific form, queer maintains a relation to resistance to whatever constitutes the normal.” What it is resisting is also embedded in the very tools of postmodern discourse that gave birth to identity discourse, as Sheila Jeffreys observes:

Postmodernist lesbian and gay theory performs the useful function of permitting those who simply wish to employ the tool and trappings of sexism and racism to feel not only justified but even revolutionary. Lesbian role playing, sadomasochism, male gay masculinity, drag...can be milked for all the pleasure and profit that they offer in a male supremacist culture in which inequality of power is seen as all that sex is or could be.

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213 Ibid.


215 S. Jeffreys 1993 p. 97
A demonstration of this ‘blind spot’ to inequity is Offord and Cantrell’s comparison between the 1996 Sydney Mardi Gras parade and the 1996 conservative election win. Their pointed description of the 1996 conservative political landslide victory occurring on the same night as the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras parade as an “issue of social contradictions”\(^{216}\) is, again, only so through an uncritical acceptance of the equity in gay male culture. Their statement that “It was one Australia, and yet it was two.”\(^{217}\) mirrors their goal to join ethnic, transgendered, gay and lesbian identities together by their connections, which in turn, “...are connected by their pursuit of survival.”\(^{218}\). I would say that a conservative win and the gay and lesbian mardi gras are not contradictions, but a social indicator of how far the gay and lesbian community has moved to the right, and how conservatives have learned to use the symbols of the left to achieve power in the new fluid states of identity discourse politics and of consumer capitalism. The pursuit of survival has become the pursuit of validity, in the eyes of those who pursue ‘whiteness’ because they have one of the three qualities that enable Offord and Cantrell’s ‘choice’ to assume degrees of visual, intellectual, and discursive ‘whiteness’. The three qualities, “Beauty, Brains and Bucks”, are not particular to gay culture, but gay male culture has elevated them into something of an ideological deity in itself.

Postmodern discourse, built on reactions to ‘normative’ meta-narratives, is structurally incapable of offering solutions to racism. That the dominant power structures will also become fluid in response to multiple cultural identities to redefine ‘freedom’ into new niche markets of pleasure escapes identity discourse exponents stuck in a binary of fixed versus unfixed. Conservative politics’ adoption of left-wing rhetoric leaves

\(^{216}\) Jackson & Sullivan 1999 p. 216.

\(^{217}\) Ibid. p. 217.

\(^{218}\) Ibid. p. 212.
identity discourse weak in resisting the consumer-capitalist hijack of postmodernism, since it sees itself (quite falsely) beyond this dualism. In throwing out formerly influential meta-narratives of class, economics, race and, in psychology, subconscious cognitions, Lele writes that,

Precisely these insights that throw light on the processes by which suppression of critical sensitivity occurs are now being suspected or ignored. One can enter the postmodernist discourse either from the left or the right. The two paths are distinguished only by the personal preferences of the entrants.

In this way, the system is maintained, but without any serious challenge from postmodern exponents who benefit from a freedom of accountability to anybody’s definition of ‘outcome’. Lele further elaborates on the mechanisms by which researchers at the gay ‘cutting edge’ of multicultural ‘queering’ don the protective armour of ‘cultural repertoires’ which “… disavow normative commitments and seek to judge the outcomes of problem-solving processes only in terms of survival and stability of the designated systems,” - or ‘survival of the fittest’ in the best Darwinian tradition.

“Where Do You Want To Go Today?”
- The catch-phrase that launched Microsoft’s Windows operating system in the mid1990s

Postmodernist multiple identities go hand in hand with the explosion in niche marketing of lifestyle options, such as the stratification and commodification of sexual practices (and then identities, in that order). Offord and Cantrell’s ‘crisis’ is the crisis of the consumer with economic (intellectual) indigestion. To “choose”, as Offord and Cantrell seem to believe is universally accessible, between fixed and unfixed identities

219 Breckenridge & Van der Veer 1993 p. 65.
220 Ibid. p. 50.
is a statement of privilege. The only thing ‘unfixed’ about identity discourse is its isolation from overt racism or any understanding of the reality of commercialising gay male culture. This is the same commercialisation that Dowsett thinks is, “...not necessarily a bad thing.” Of course, this depends on who you choose to be. A social interpretation would not consider choice a factor. Rape is not frequently an individual choice, though that has always been a stable part of defence arguments that represent the accused. In a culture where BDSM is marketed as a lifestyle option and defines gay club sex culture, rape is a viable sexual expression.

Belittling the NCHSR’s “punch in the face” statement in Chapter 3 is just such a defence of white, male supremacist gay culture in what I term a ‘cultural rape’. By assuming that such assaults are ‘minor’ as the report states, it infers that they are infrequent because they are perhaps never reported, and part of being ‘Asian’. BDSM’s role in ‘sex-positivity’ also de-sensitizes us to real abuse, as opposed to ‘consumerist abuse’. It therefore contains the sub-textual suggestion that it was, “your own fault” (to the Asian assault victim). There is no incentive by gay or queer emancipatory movements to show its concern toward other movements contesting oppression.”

Quite the contrary. Their discourse has become a new meta-narrative, defined by the ‘interface’ rather than the ‘confrontation’ between cognitively fixed and unfixed identities and by meaning, rather than content. Where a ‘fixed identity’ of a prejudiced white gay man with power confronts a ‘unfixed’ identity of an Asian MSM,

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221 Bondage, Discipline, Sadism and Masochism (BDSM) is a substantial part of the consumer choice of sexual practices available in the ‘sex-positive’ marketplace of pornography, and this sub-culture is now becoming available to the mainstream through internet pornography and its uses in fashion. What gets less notice is the crucial role that ‘consent’ plays in the BDSM culture. Positioning issues of ‘consent’ next to lifestyle choices strengthens the ‘they asked for it’ clause in rape defense arguments since, indeed, what is marketed as pleasure is now the act of asking for abuse. I believe that the marketing of ‘consent’ creates great complexities in sexual abuse cases and should be further investigated.

222 Jackson and Sullivan 1999 p. 211. Offord and Cantrell comment on a statement by Anna Yeatman on the need for emancipatory movements to support each other. This, of course, is never related to the deficit theory of minority group competition in the multicultural funding-circus that ensures groups remain disunited.
Offord and Cantrell’s ‘connection’ would be better defined by acknowledging racism and not by a belief that all excluded groups operate at the same distance from the dominant forces of society. Thus Offord and Cantrell support *Multicultural Queer*’s editorial goal of promoting universal (gay) values by finding ‘connections’ to affect a “broad humanitarian unity” with the blessing of gay Asian men. This further becomes part of what Lele calls “contextualised reinterpretations” to deny gay racism in queer identity discourse as well as racism within the discourse of ‘new liberalism’. The consciousness of cognitive reductionists precludes the consciousness to ask questions about Asian men’s safety as an immediate concern affecting realities outside of the privilege enabling gay and queer identity discourse. This privilege is given, by ‘babyboomer’ degrees, to minority voices so they can give tacit support to the fundamental values supporting a culture of prejudice. In doing so, criticism and ‘diversity’ is allowed within limits. These limits are defined by the dominant group. In *Multicultural Queer* this is defined by the white, gay editorial power of Jackson and Sullivan as self-defined “partners of non-Anglo-Celtic men” and in the universal gay human rights that have never been seriously questioned outside of homophobic, right-wing agendas, the fear of which silences critical debate. Asian MSM assimilation into gay or queer discourse encourages a ‘connection’ which flattens out differences at the expense of confronting overt racism. Such ‘cultural repertoires’ still manage to echo historic liberal ideals which appear to promote diversity but which create new

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223 Ibid. p. 21.

224 M Pallotta-Chiarolli 1998. Despite a good summary of the dangers of creating the problem they are trying to solve in the conclusion: “Beyond ‘problematising cultures’ and ‘cultural problem’ as key issues, the reduction of gay racism in both reports angles both ‘culture’ and ‘masculinity’ back towards Asian responsibility. Pallotta-Chiarolli acknowledges that: “Work with NESB MSM should not become an exercise in blaming the culture,” but does not factor in ‘white’ epistemological frameworks or acknowledge/examine the gay community’s role of race in connecting with host group. While Pallotta-Chiarolli has presented some valuable issues on the research process into NESB MSM, these do not expand or question the source of assumptions within the terms of this report.

stereotypes which, like computerised artificial intelligence, has yet to become ‘self-aware’.

A cockroach in the banquet of identity discourse

New Liberal stereotypes within the ‘soft focus forum’ should be treated with caution with the comment from Michael Herzfeld that hegemonic symbols, like everyday stereotypes are like, “... a barium enema, they brightly outline the cultural indigestion of which the national patient so bitterly complains.”

226 Confrontations with gay racism are subsumed by a ‘soft-focus forum’ of incrementalism which releases intellectual guilt about overt racism because ‘the system’ can’t be changed overnight anyway. This makes it easier to digest lunch between courses of theoretical elaboration to avoid racism, and thus cultural indigestion, while the ‘leftovers’ (Asian men somewhere ‘out there’) stay hungry.

Superficial deconstructions create new distinctions that further weaken the challenge to the dominant group. By defining itself beyond collective or social influence and focusing on the individual cognitive perceptions of race, ethnicity and difference, discourse cannot debate racism in any depth. For researchers and writers of colour invited into the social order via discourse analysis or cultural studies, this can be hard to digest when its the only food on the table. Asian specialists should therefore declare their cultural identification if they are involved in policy based research on Asian or other NESB MSM research.

To engage with ‘liberal-friendly’ gay racism in research, several areas need to be challenged. These include: 1) the nature and extent of assumptions in gay culture not

challenged in HIV discourse; 2) new ‘cultural repertoires’ supporting dominant white, male, middle-class gay privilege and; 3) the way research methodology reinforce constructions of a ‘Gay Utopia’ without the psychological or moral infrastructure to deliver for Asian MSM.
CONCLUSION

An "Act of Cultural Rape"

Without an effective representation of the ‘Asian problem’ as a form of resistance to gay racism, 227 all HIV discourse, research and data analysis is merely a sophisticated act of ‘persuasion’ to consent to what I define as a ‘cultural rape’ of the Asian collective consciousness (not withstanding its literal progenitor). The degree to which one can judge how seriously Asian MSM expertise challenges the privileges of gay white culture must be assessed within a full understanding of the context which defines Asian MSM. In previous chapters I highlighted the way that the HIV industry, through NAB, have systematically avoided castigating the gay community for their racism because of integral ties with this community in HIV/AIDS research.

The reports on Asian MSM by NCHSR have downplayed racism and belittled acts of violence, opting to criticise tertiary services for problems that are inherently gay male community based. In Multicultural Queer, gay-community attached Asian men have been used to reinforce the importance of gay cultural values, the same values critiqued by Kendall and Jeffreys for their racism and misogyny. I have also looked at the culture of individualism in cognitive theories that are used to assess health risk, in particular, the theory of rational choice. Finally, I have tried to expand on how individualism and rationality in postmodernism affect identity discourse at intersections of race and sexuality. To conclude, I want to clarify Scheurich’s policy archeology and to attempt to tie together the inequities faced by Asian MSM’s in HIV research through an analogy. I do this to both clarify the thesis’ aims and to try and

227 Brekenridge and Van der Veer 1993 p. 60. J. Lele states that historicism frequently ignores that colonialism of the oriental imagination and intellect does not happen without resistance and rarely completely.
impart a sense of urgency into what I suspect is compassion-fatigue in many social researchers. From my own experience, I believe that Asian MSM oppression is not simply an academic deconstruction of ‘assimilation’, but an "act of cultural rape". The National AIDS Bulletin, cross-cultural HIV conference papers, the NCHSR reports and *Multicultural Queer* are my compilation, collectively, of the profile of a rapist.

This rape takes the form of a ‘date rape’ scenario or a domestic violence rape within a relationship (or gay family), because, like its heterosexual counterpart, these rapes are under-reported; harder to prove and the scope for manipulation and escape from prosecution much greater than the anonymous and sudden rape that pervades public fears. Queer identity discourse promises protection, inclusion and acceptance by highlighting the ‘racist love’ qualities of the ‘model minority’ but denies racism (or cultural rape) until the moment of penetration. ‘Power’ and ‘prejudice’ in a sexual identity discourse is more than just a dialogue of identity and cultural politics. It causes uncounted Asian men physical, mental and emotional damage. Without examining the particulars of white supremacism, sexism and violence in the broader community or that of gay-community cultures of pornography, sexual commodification, alcohol and drug dependence and control of HIV policy, then identity discourse can only comment on the niche-lifestyle activities of elite professionals. The invisibility of critical gay cultural analysis in reports, articles and books on Asian MSM reduces the scope of responsibility for Asian mens’ invisibility onto themselves alone. In other words, gay-contextualised cultural arguments about generic ‘Asian values’ make a strong case for the ‘he/she asked for it” argument by the rapist. Adopting hyper-masculinity, says the rapist, will protect Asian men - since only the feminine expects to be raped.

Like many date rape scenarios between rapist and rape victim, the easiest victim is already insecure, under siege by internal and external racist (sexist) hierarchies of desire
where white men (any white men) validate their gay citizenship and self-worth. Into this dialogue comes the insinuation that if you don’t say ‘NO’, you are saying ‘YES’. This assumption litters cognitive ‘theory-confirming’, rather than ‘theory-testing’, research and postmodern identity discourse which is becoming uncomfortably determinist. In a rape trial, this is where much of the contention over ‘guilt’ spends its time and money. Taken with my previous examination of the HIV industry, I propose that the HIV industry is like a Court of Law, with all its encompassing language, money, power and prestige to allot guilty (bad HIV knowledge and no gay identity) or innocent (good HIV knowledge and gay identified) verdicts with questionable equity. The case? The collective rape (physical, mental, emotional, cultural, sexual) of Asian men by gay, white men of privilege who define a culture of commodified sexuality that requires inevitable hierarchies to create value, currency and trade - the orgasm of consumer-capitalism. The defense opening statement?

Asian men are dressed in a ‘mini’ of sexually fetishised ‘branding’ in a gay ‘meat-market’, wear t-shirts from their female counterpart with the US marine slogan: “Little Brown Fucking Machines” with a feminised, passive culture incapable of saying ‘NO’ to hyper-masculinised gay, white aggression. Based on this cultural character - they asked for it!

Asian men in research and discourse identify and want to belong to the gay community. They want the validation, if not of a white gay man, then a white gay identity, value system and privilege. A human privilege. Tong’s ‘colonial assimilation’ is better than no assimilation. This makes their contributions all the more complex because no overall framework or study of gay white racism exists in identity discourse to allow them a choice to ‘name’ (and thus position and transform) their anger, conspicuously absent from some extremely disturbing and emotional narratives, case studies and essays. This ‘model-minority’ behaviour is epitomised by the recruitment [editorial] process which uses voices of colour to create false hope. This prevents Asian MSM anger by prolonging hope of acceptance and respect. It lures Asian men into an
artificial sense of change in the gay community. To an Asian sensibility, ‘Asian MSM’ research is a collective statement, and like the gay white male community, a rapist with charm, intellect and social position. I suggest that the grid of social regularities realigns research into 3 new health warnings such as those found on cigarette packaging, with each title representing the dialogue of a rapist and his victim to negotiate/manipulate a false sense of "consent". These warnings should be included at the base of each poster targeting Asian MSM in the next media blitz. They would be headed:

**Warning 1:**
"Experts agree that a moderate amount of rape does not cause serious damage to your health"

**Warning 2:**
"Experts agree that if you acknowledge rape and create a theory about its function and then read it, the next time you get raped - "it’s your own fault" (cognitively speaking).

**Warning 3:**
"Experts agree that social-psychological factors make Asian men a lot easier to rape, because they are incapable of saying 'NO' for "cultural reasons". Try one, you’ll enjoy the taste!

Given this information, which is never disclosed in the IBM model, Asian MSM can assimilate into hyper gay masculinity at their own peril. Forewarning Asian men about such attacks on consent would at least excuse hidden rational choice assumptions and provide a ‘level playing field’ for the Australian myth of a ‘fair go’.

It is not all versions of “western truth” that this thesis seeks to challenge, just the white dominance relegating non-white, and especially Asian MSM realities to the margins of invisibility.\textsuperscript{228} To fight systematic abuse of the Asian MSM collective in all their

\textsuperscript{228} Ibid. Lele remarks,"..., those who merely suspect the entire western tradition, including its earlier critical-evolutionary moments, as a conspiracy, seem to join those whom they oppose as oppressors.” and I would agree, but this argument is also frequently used in excess, and when discussing covert, perhaps less violently aggressive forms of control.
differences of identification, the language of identity discourse must move beyond binaries of ‘fixed and unfixed’ opposition and admit when fixed realities, such as the “We” of racism (and social cause), warrant a commitment to someone other than the “I” of poststructural and cognitive discourse.

Dowsett says that, "HIV/AIDS has not destroyed the gay communities in Australia (or around the world, for that matter), they are stronger than they were in many ways".229 To the group of white men and their proteges dominating privilege in a culture of their own constitution - this is a blessing. To Asian men - it is a curse. If racism was ever critically debated within the enclave of HIV research, then I believe the ‘Asian problem’ would suddenly become “our problem”.

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229 Dean and Hindess 1998, p. 150.
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