HAS THE REPRESENTATION OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLE IN THE WEST AUSTRALIAN
CHANGED OVER A 50 YEAR PERIOD?

By

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I declare this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not been previously submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

Signed: .........................

Chace Hill
Abstract

Studies have shown that media outlets such as TV, social media and newspapers portray African Americans with respect to crime and social issues when in comparison their White counterparts are generally portrayed with respect to politics. Further with respect to the United Kingdom Muslim people were portrayed more negatively post 9/11. The aim of this paper is to provide an analysis of the representations of Aboriginal people in The West Australian newspaper from 1966 - 2015. The analysis will address three areas: First if The West Australian has represented Aboriginal people negatively. Second if these representations occurred as a result old-fashioned racism and third has the representations of Aboriginal people shifted, over time, to new racism. A qualitative thematic analysis was used to gather codes from within The West Australian. The results from the qualitative thematic analysis identified six major themes; separation within society, negative representation of Aboriginal people, representation of past and culture of Aboriginal people, negative representation of Aboriginal youths, Aboriginal peoples issues are their problem and government mistreatment and failure of Aboriginal people. The themes support previous research on both old-fashioned and new racism. What was different from previous research was that shift towards new racism in The West Australian was from 1980-1990 when, in comparison, the same shift in America happened in the 1960s. When related to Criminology three theories were used to explain Aboriginal over-representation within the Criminal Justice System. These three theories; Strain theory, Labelling theory and Differential Association theory, explain that social strains in conjunction with labelling and negative peer groups create and fuel anti-social and criminal behaviour.
REPRESENTATIONS OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLE IN THE WEST AUSTRALIAN

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Acknowledgement of country

I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of this country, the Whadjuk Noongar people, and pay my respects to their elders past and present. I’d like to acknowledge the ongoing contribution that the Noongar people have and continue to make to our communities. Further I would like to recognise that this paper has no intention on criticising or harming any of the language groups that make up Aboriginal Australia. The bulk of this work has been on Whadjuk Noongar land and precautions have been taken to ensure the minimisation of risk in this paper.
Acknowledgements

First and foremost I would like to thank my mother Leigh Hill for giving me the strength to keep moving forward within my studies and always driving me to strive for a better life.

I would like to give a big thankyou to my supervisor Dr. Joseph Clare for pushing me to keep my research and work up even when I was at breaking point. Being new to a University is not easy and it is made harder when you have to take on the role of supervising Honours studies.

To Guy Hall, Tracey Woolrych and Courtney Field, three of the best lecturers a student could ever ask for. Thanks for not giving up on me when, at times I had given up on myself. Thanks for the push and the opportunities you have given me to further my future.

Finally thanks to all the staff and students at Kulbardi Aboriginal Centre at Murdoch University. Having spent many hours at the centre I would like to thank the staff and students for being a family.
Introduction

This thesis is going to focus on how Aboriginal people have been presented in The West Australian newspaper print media over the last 50 years. Initially, a brief summary of Colonial thinking and Australian history will be provided. After this, some relevant theoretical constructs will be discussed to help explain the way in which racist attitudes have changed over time. Next, some findings from an analysis of representations of minorities in the media from the America (USA) and from the United Kingdom (UK) will be examined, with reference to these theoretical frameworks. The aim of this research is to examine whether Aboriginal people have been depicted in a racist manner by The West Australian print media over the last half-century, and if so, whether the type and extent of this racism has changed over time in a manner consistent with changes observed elsewhere.

Historical Background

Due to Social Darwinism and its representations of Aboriginal people as a dying breed the early colonisers were reluctant to help Aboriginal people when issues caused by Colonisation arose. Haebich (1988) maintains that Social Darwinism is a pseudo-scientific theory adopted from Darwinism’s survival of the fittest. The theory was applied to Aboriginal people with the belief that they were inferior and would die out. There were notable differences between Aboriginal people and colonisers, stemming from different beliefs, languages, law/LORE\(^1\), culture and economics (known as the ‘clash of economy’). An example is the use of rations as payment which built an early reliance on food being given to Aboriginal people by colonisers (Haebich, 1988). The rations were given to the elderly as they were physically

\(^1\) LORE is Aboriginal peoples concept of law
incapable of hunting. Also, traditional plants were now scarce within settled areas (Haebich, 1988).

Another example is the difference between the idea of justice between both Aboriginal people and colonisers. Payback, which was the idea of justice for Aboriginal people when applying customary LORE, was used to keep members of bordering clans in their own country (areas where Indigenous people lived) and included spearing and banishment (Eastwell, 1981; Clark, 2002). The idea of violence in Australian history was written in two ways; when Aboriginal people used violence as justice, through payback, it was seen as an act of savagery by colonisers as it did not fit their idea of justice, but when violence was used by colonisers it was seen as a suitable instrument of justice (South West Aboriginal Land & Sea Council, 2009). Customary LORE was an important aspect of Aboriginal culture as it allowed culture values and discipline. It also allowed for conflict resolution within language groups and between neighbouring groups (Clark, 2002). An example of violence against Aboriginal people is the Pinjarra massacre (1834), previously termed ‘the battle of Pinjarra’, which happened as a result of earlier attacks by Aboriginal people on the settlers (Ferrell, 2003). As a result Governor Stirling, Thomas Peel and officers ambushed a group of around 70 Aboriginal people. The Aboriginal people, mostly elders, women and children, were fired upon as they tried to flee the area. Official reports say that the number of Aboriginal people killed was 15 – 20. Eye-witnesses accounts and oral history put the number of deaths at twice that of official reports.
Once colonisers realised that Aboriginal people were not going to die out, the passing of *The Aborigines Act 1905* was seen to allow for better protection and care of Aboriginal people in Western Australia (Haebich, 1988). One of the key components of this act was the creation of a position called the Chief Protector of Aborigines who became the legal guardian of all Aboriginal children under the age of 16. It was seen that Aboriginal populations were decreasing as a result of the impact of Colonisation and following this it was believed that ‘half-caste’ Aboriginal children could be saved if they assimilated into the colonisers’ culture and society (Hollinsworth, 2005a). The result was the assimilation of ‘half-caste’ Aboriginal children into society through *The Aborigines Act 1905* as the Chief Protector had the power to remove Aboriginal children from their families and put them into adoption or work (Hollinsworth, 2005a). Once removed these children were taught to forget their heritage, had their names changed, were not allowed to speak their language and were lied to about their families (Commonwealth of Australia, 1997).

In more recent times, 1966 – 2015, Australia experienced social and political movements that would see Aboriginal people at the forefront of newspapers and conversation. The 1967 National Referendum saw a large ‘Yes’ vote for Aboriginal people to be recognised in the Census and to enable the federal government of Australia the ability to make laws for Aboriginal people. The referendum was passed on the 27th May, 1967, with a record 90.77% of Australians saying ‘Yes’ to this proposition (Attwood & Markus, 1997). After the referendum the next major political issue following an Australia day speech in 1972, was the construction of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy which was opposite parliament house in

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2 Half-caste is a term used by colonisers to describe an Aboriginal person with mixed bloodlines. Although this term is still used today it is not an acceptable term.
Canberra (Robinson, 1994). The embassy was set up as Aboriginal people felt as if they were aliens within their own country (Robinson, 1994).

The Bicentenary in 1988, marked 200 years since Australia had been colonised. This was another pivotal moment in Aboriginal history during which Aboriginal people protested in an attempt to have Aboriginal culture recognised (Hollinsworth, 2005a). This occurred because the Bicentenary failed to acknowledge that Aboriginal people had occupied Australia for over 50,000 years (Pettman, 1988). Following the protests there was a Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCADC) in 1991 due to the high numbers of Aboriginal people dying in the care of the government (RCADC, 1991). This resulted in investigations into the large number of deaths of Aboriginal people that were in the custody of police and prisons and the over representation of Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system (Cunneen, 2005). One of the most significant moments in Aboriginal history, that paved the way for Native Title, was the recognition of *Terra Nullius* when the *Mabo v Queensland* no.2 (1992) decision came down. This resulted in the overturning of *Terra Nullius*, in which the High Court recognised that there were people living on this land before Colonisation. This resulted in land rights being given to Eddy Mabo, land rights for the Northern Territory and the creation and passing *The Native Title Act 1993* (Cth).

Following the *Mabo* (1992) decision was a speech by The Honourable Paul Keating in which he acknowledged the history of Aboriginal people, and an acknowledgement of the impact of Colonisation and past government failures (Hollinsworth, 2005b). *The Native Title Act 1993*
(Cth) gave Indigenous people Native Title rights over land and water where it can be shown they have a connection to land. After a few years, and with the new Western Australian State Government in 1996, mandatory sentencing was implemented which saw a large increase in the amount of incarcerated Aboriginal youths (Feather & Souter, 2002). The introduction of Mandatory sentencing by the Liberal party in Western Australia was used as a prevention technique. The laws focused on offenders who had multiple burglary offences (Roth, 2014). It was also applicable to youths who could be sentenced to detention. The “three strikes rule” (as it has been called) was seen as a racist piece of legislation as it, inadvertently, targeted crimes that were committed mostly by Aboriginal youths (Feather & Souter, 2002). Another important part of Aboriginal history was the tabling and release of the Bringing Them Home report (Commonwealth of Australia, 1997) in which, released in 1997, which had information about how many Indigenous people were taken, why they were taken and the effects that the stolen generations had, and continue to have, on Indigenous people in society today. In the same year the 10 point plan was a strategy bought in by the then Prime Minister John Howard as he believed that the “pendulum had swung too far” and that Indigenous people had too many rights and as a result, John Howard amended the Native Title Act 1993 (Cth) making Indigenous people considerably worse off (Hollinsworth, 2005b).

In the lead up to the Sydney 2000 Olympics, Cathy Freeman was warned that she would risk losing her medals if she chose to fly the Aboriginal flag (Bruce & Hallinan, 2001). This came as a result of her prior actions in which she held up an Aboriginal flag after winning a medal at the Commonwealth games. A few years from this, in 2007, following the Little Children are Sacred report, the then Prime Minister John Howard implemented the Northern Territory intervention (Behrendt, 2009). The report found that there were acts of child abuse and

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3 Indigenous used as it incorporates both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
neglect within the Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory. As a result, Prime Minister Howard abolished the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP), suspended the *Racial Discrimination Act*, and forced health check-ups for Aboriginal children (Altman, 2007). Finally a change in government saw an apology made by the then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd. It was an acknowledgement of the wrong doing of the past governments and an official ‘sorry’ by the current government for the actions of the past (Hollinsworth, 2005b). With a brief overview of the history of Aboriginal people in Australia in mind, the next section will examine theoretical frameworks that have been developed to explain how racist attitudes have been displayed and changed over time.

**Racism: Old-fashioned and new**

The idea of biological superiority held by the colonisers is not a unique concept. Similar to Social Darwinism, old-fashioned racism holds the same idea of biological superiority. This has been seen to be active in the USA (Virtanen & Huddy, 1998). Old-fashioned racism, otherwise known as ‘blatant’ or ‘overt’ racism, has the idea of biological superiority as its theoretical underpinning (Pedersen & Walker, 1997). For example, in the USA old-fashioned racism has been demonstrated through behaviour such as segregation of Blacks in employment, schooling and housing (Virtanen & Huddy, 1998; Dunn & Forrest, 2007). When applied to Australian colonial history, ideas such as Social Darwinism and assimilation, along with events such as the Pinjarra massacre, has resulted in the creation of separate legislation for Aboriginal people and the removal of Aboriginal children from their families. These actions were motivated by the ideals that underpin both old-fashioned racism and Social Darwinism. After the decline of old-fashioned racism in the USA during the 1950s as a result of social and political changes, the idea of ‘new/modern’ racism emerged (Sniderman, Piazza, Tetlock & Kendrick, 1991; Dunn, Forrest, Burnley & McDonald, 2004). What can be drawn from the
literature (Kinder & Scears, 1981; Virtanen & Huddy, 1998 & Yue & Wyatt, 2014) is that new racism is the emphasis of cultural/symbolic differences between ‘minorities and ‘majorities’. Further new racism explains that ‘minorities’ are unwilling to help themselves, are lazy, are welfare reliant and are solely to blame for their disadvantage (Kinder & Scears, 1981).

**Media and racism**

Looking at the evidence to support new racism a study by Entman (1992) titled “Blacks in the News: Television, Modern Racism and Cultural Change” looked at the way in which American news impacts Whites attitudes towards Blacks. The argument made was that racism was indirectly encouraged by two types of depictions of African Americans in the media. First the idea that African Americans are more physically threatening and commit criminal acts. Second, African Americans within politics demand more rights in comparison to White politicians. The methodology used was a close analysis of the visual portrayals in the television news of the accused and various quotes taken from actors in their own voices. A content analysis was applied to 55 days’ worth of local television news in Chicago. The results for African Americans and crime showed that, with respect to violent crimes, African Americans were less likely able to voice their opinions. With respect to visual depictions, African Americans were seen to be dressed poorly and were more likely to be physically restrained. Finally with respect to African American politics, the analysis showed that African American activists were seen to only represent the interests of the African American community, compared to White leaders, who were seen to represent the entire community.
Hall and Smiths (2012) paper, “This is not reality...it’s only TV’: African American Girls Respond to Media (Mis)representations”, looked at the misrepresentation of African American women in music videos in the USA. The methodology adopted was the use of semi-structured interviews, data analysis and interpretation of subject meanings. The study had a specific focus on an American high school where three female students were selected based on their availability and interest in the study. Hall and Smith found that music videos generally represented African American women as more sexual than their White counterparts. The women they interviewed agreed that African American women were represented in music videos as unsuccessful and uneducated. The interviewees also felt that the music videos sent a negative message to the wider community. Specifically, one interviewee felt that her teacher stereotyped African American women due to their representation in music videos.

With respect to the UK, Bleich, Stonebraker, Nisar & Abdelhamid (2015) examined the media portrayals of Muslim people through newspaper headlines between 2001 and 2012. This research focused on the tone with which the media portrayed Muslims, looking at positive and negative media coverage. Another focus area was the comparison of the portrayals of Muslims to that of Jewish and Christian people, with the idea being that Muslims are systematically associated with terrorism, antisocial behaviour, crime, economic threats and socio-cultural incompatibility. The author used a coding technique on newspaper headlines. The justification of the authors’ coding of newspaper headlines was on the grounds that they serve as short cuts and draw the reader’s attention. The headlines were taken from four British newspapers: the Guardian and the Daily Mirror, two left-leaning newspapers and the Daily Mail and the Daily Telegraph, two right-leaning newspapers. Using LexisNexis headlines with search terms such as ‘Muslim!’, ‘Islam!’, ‘Jew!’, ‘Jewish!’ and ‘Christian!’
were used to collect data. All together the results of this process identified 688 headlines about Muslims, 198 headlines about Jewish people, and 225 headlines about Christians between 1st January 2001 and 31st of December 2012. Each headline was coded by two coders to reduce miscoding and coder fatigue. When coding, the researchers looked at five categories: victim, beneficial, problem, other or ambiguous. The results showed, in general, that Muslim people were not portrayed negatively, although, when broken down into right-leaning and left-leaning newspapers, right-leaning newspapers portrayed Muslim people negatively. With respect to other analogous groups the number of articles that represent Muslims negatively was 215 (of the 688 stories identified, or 31%) in comparison to 30 for Christians (13%) and 3 for Jewish (just under 2%).

It has been shown in above that African Americans and Muslim people have been represented negatively within different media outlets. With respect to Aboriginal people although African Americans and Muslim people have different cultures their common connection is a history of oppression, racism and social issues.

**Aims/hypothesis**

This paper will be using a qualitative thematic analysis to assess the representation of Aboriginal people within *The West Australian* from 1966 – 2015. It will assess the representations of Aboriginal people from within each decade looking at two key areas: first, were Aboriginal people represented in a racist manner? Second has that racism shifted over time from old-fashioned racism to new racism?
Based on the evidence above it can be postulated that Aboriginal people will be negatively represented in similar aspects as African Americans in the USA and Muslims in the UK. It can be argued that the representations of Aboriginal people fall firstly into old-fashioned racism with a shift in the representation of Aboriginal people to new racism reflecting the shift in the USA. This shift from old-fashioned racism to new racism in the USA came about in the 1960 following the civil rights movements of different minority groups including African Americans. It is postulated that a shift of racist ideologies, from old-fashioned to new, will be seen in *The West Australian* newspaper against Aboriginal people after the 1967 referendum. This is because the referendum allowed for the counting of Aboriginal people in the census and paved the way for more social movements involving Aboriginal people’s rights.
Methodology

Methodological overview
There are many ways in which representations of minority groups can be measured. This paper has used a thematic analysis which is a qualitative methodology whereby data is read, important information is coded, and themes are then created from these codes. It is a process that goes beyond words or phrases and focuses on identifying, describing, analysing and reporting the reoccurring themes captured from the data (Caulfield & Hill, 2014). When applying a thematic analysis approach, the amount of data collected depends on ‘saturation’. Saturation occurs when there are no longer any new themes to find within your research. Once saturation occurs the next set of data can be moved onto (Morse, 1995).

Evidence for a qualitative thematic analysis
Although the examples below do not look at racism specifically, they demonstrate how such a qualitative thematic analysis can be used to look at representations through the use of themes. Further these articles will show that a qualitative thematic analysis can be used to look at specific changes in representation of time.

Rooke & Amos (2013) preformed a thematic analysis on newspapers in the UK and Scotland to assess how articles on Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) had been represented. In this research, a thematic analysis was performed to explore how meanings, uses and users of ENDS were represented and whether these had changed over a period of time, from 2007 – 2012. The focus was on 12 national UK and Scottish newspapers and three online sources, with a total of 119 articles being analysed and coded for themes. This process
resulted in the identification of a total of five themes: getting around smoke free legislation, risk and uncertainty, healthier choice, celebrity use, and price. In general the coverage of ENDS was found to be balanced, with both positive and negative representations captured in the news stories. There was also a shift from an uncertainty of product to a focus on ‘getting around’ smoke free legislation.

In another example of this type of methodological approach is Rizk, Marx, Schrepfer, Zimmerman & Guenther’s (2009) paper which looks at media coverage of privacy issues within social networking in Germany. The study looked at news articles from 30 German media sources published from September 1st 2007 to August 31st 2008. Using online resources such as Google News and other search engines, 2,412 articles were gathered using key terms. After an extensive sorting process, 830 were removed on the basis that they were duplicates or they were the same article cited by separate newspapers. Additionally 259 articles did not lie within the time period. A further 208 articles were excluded as the page was invalid and 782 were excluded because they closer examination revealed that they did not match the topic. The remaining 333 articles were kept and analysed. The thematic analysis consisted of generating codes, categorizing articles, defining themes and creating a thematic map. There were a total of 17 themes with trends towards personalised advertisement and the high willingness of users to propagate personal information. The results of this study show that the redesign of privacy features coincides with increased media coverage.

As a final example of this technique, Basford (2012) examined the nature of transgressions committed at work by supervisors against subordinates. A critical incident technique was employed in which employees described the transgressions that had been committed by their
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supervisor. Qualitative responses were read, coded and put into 11 themes: performance criticisms, demeaning insults, false accusations, undue demands, unfair employment decisions, inconsiderate treatment, inequitable behaviour, inappropriate contextual selections, disregard of opinions, undersupplied resources and underprovided recognition. The results supported previous studies in the literature. All three of these research examples provide good support for using this methodological approach to examine the issue of interest here: exploring how Aboriginal people have been represented in the local print media in Western Australia.

Data

Over the fifty year period of interest from 1966 to 2015, there has only been one local print newspaper in Western Australia, The West Australian. This newspaper provides the source for all of the articles examined in this research. For sampling purposes, the time period was separated into five decades: 1966-1975, 1976-1985, 1986-1995, 1996-2005, and 2006-2015. Initially, when looking for data, 12 articles were gathered from each decade as a starting point to analyse before reaching saturation. This is because saturation cannot be reached until the data itself is analysed. The data was gathered using search terms including, but not limited to, “Native”, “Aborigine(s)”, “Aboriginal”, “Black”, “crime”, “criminal”, “violence”, “anti-social”, “drunk” and “drugs”. These articles were collected from The West Australian newspaper from 1966 – 1995 using microfilm which was accessed in The West Australian State Library. Then from 1996 to 2015, data was collected using the electronic database Factiva. The specific focus was on any mention of antisocial, criminal and social changes
that had taken place within the time period of 1966 – 2015. Letters to the editor⁴ were included to allow for opinions on what *The West Australian* was portraying to the public.

**Analytical strategy**

Thematic analysis had six steps:

1) Reading and gaining familiarity with the data

This step involved reading the data repetitively as it allowed for familiarisation of the data. During this process, simple notes were taken to ensure that any important information was not missed during this initial phase of the coding process.

2) Coding line by line

The second step is the generation of codes by reading each article line by line. In this step the articles were read line by line and any important information was highlighted a certain colour. Legends are made to ensure what each colour represents. This process was done repetitively, with different colours, until no more codes could be made. Using different colours was important as it ensured that there was clarity in the coding process.

3) Searching for themes in the codes

The third step involved searching for themes within the codes that had been identified. In this step, all the codes found were drawn together to generate themes. These themes represented similar aspects that have been observed across the data.

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⁴ Letters to the editor is a section in *The West Australian* in which the public can write a response or opinion to what they have read previously in the paper.
4) Reviewing the themes

The fourth step is to review the themes. This involved process of looking at, identifying and reviewing what each theme included, excluded, and how themes may relate to each other. To ensure that all the codes had been generated, Steps 1, 2 and 3 can be repeated to ensure that all the themes encompassed the codes that have been generated.

5) Defining and naming themes

The fifth step was defining and naming the themes. At this stage, what each theme represents was well known and the name of the theme was appropriate to what it represents. It is important during this phase to finalise a description or definition of each theme.

6) Producing the data in the report

The final step is summarising these findings for discussion within this thesis. The key was ensuring each theme was analysed in detail – moving beyond simply describing them. Within this phase, when writing up each theme, it was important to provide specific examples to illustrate key aspects of each theme and to relate the themes back to the literature and the research question. These steps are not always sequential, throughout the process some steps maybe repeated to ensure that no information was missed out.

After performing the analysis it was found that two decades, 1976 – 1985 and 1986 – 1995, required more data before saturation was reached. In contrast 1966 – 1975, 1996 – 2005 and 2006 – 2015 reached saturation within 12 articles. The total result was 63 articles selected from 1966 – 2015. Table 1 breaks down the decades and the number of articles selected for each.


Table 1 – Number of articles taken from each decade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decades - Microfilm</th>
<th>Number of articles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1966 – 1975</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976 – 1985</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986 – 1995</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996 – 2005</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 – 2015</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results

A total of 63 articles were analysed, all taken from *The West Australian* newspaper, and six major themes were identified. Each decade will be discussed in turn, and then comparisons across time will be made. However, to preview the main findings and to facilitate the readers understanding of these results, these main themes are briefly summarised in Table 2, along with a breakdown of the most common codes that were found:

Table 2 - Themes found from *The West Australian* from 1966 - 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes found</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Separation from society</td>
<td>This theme reflects articles that use negative terms such as “Native”, “Black” and “Aborigine” along with social issues with respect to Aboriginal people. The article also compares Aboriginal people to “Whites”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative representations of Aboriginal people</td>
<td>This theme was drawn from what the articles talked about with respect to Aboriginal people. This theme draws upon how articles emphasisesocial issue and criminal activity with Aboriginal people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representation of past and culture of Aboriginal people</td>
<td>This theme was drawn as the articles chose to include Aboriginal people’s culture. The articles emphasised that past issues such as <em>Terra Nullius</em> had happened and recognised that there are different language groups that make up Aboriginal people as a whole.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative representation of Aboriginal youths</td>
<td>This theme was drawn as the articles looked at Aboriginal youths with respect to social issues such as lack of school and criminal issues.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Themes found

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes found</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal peoples issues are their problem</td>
<td>This theme can be broken down into two areas, one positive and one negative. First this theme explains that Aboriginal people’s issues are their problem and only they can fix this. This is emphasised as the articles talk about elders standing up and taking responsibility for criminal activity. Second, there is a shift to the need for governments to communicate with Aboriginal people to resolve social issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government mistreatment and failure of Aboriginal people</td>
<td>This theme is drawn from the articles that criticise how the government treats incarcerated Aboriginal people and Aboriginal people within remote communities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As outlined, above, the results will be presented in two parts: The first section will explain the themes drawn from each decade, and how they were put together. Within this first section the codes that make up the themes will be further explained and examples taken from the text will be provided. This focuses on how *The West Australian* has represented Aboriginal people from 1966 to 2015. In the second section, a comparison between each decade will be made to look at the change in representation of Aboriginal people over time, from 1966 to 2015. The purpose of this approach is to explore the relationship between old-andnew-racism within the context of changing attitudes towards Australian Aboriginal people over the last 50 years.
1966 – 1975

The first theme taken from *The West Australian* from the period of 1966 – 1975 was separation from society. This theme was drawn from three main codes whereby Aboriginal people are separated from the rest of society in *The West Australian* articles. These are: (a) the terms used when speaking about Aboriginal people; (b) the topics chosen to speak about Aboriginal people; and (c) the comparisons made between Aboriginal people against non-Aboriginal people.

To summarise information previously discussed relating to the significant events in Australian history over the period of interest, some of key events within the decade between 1966 and 1975 were: (a) The 1967 referendum, which saw Aboriginal people being counted in the Census as Australians for the first time and powers were given to the Commonwealth Government to legislate for Aboriginal people; and (b) Tent embassy, which was formed in Canberra in 1972 as Aboriginal people felt like refugees in their own country.

**Separation from society**

The first theme taken from *The West Australian* from the period of 1966 – 1975 was separation from society. This theme was seen through three major areas: The terms *The West Australian* used when speaking about Aboriginal people, the topics *The West Australian* chose to speak about and the comparisons made between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people.
The terms used by *The West Australian* within the period of 1966 – 1975 varied from negative terminology to positive terminology. These terms changed with respect to the topic spoken. Negative terms\(^5\) such as “Native”, “Black” and “Aborigine” were the most common terms used throughout the decade. These terms were found not only throughout the articles themselves but also within the titles of the articles.

This first example supporting this point is provided by an article that criticises the living conditions of reserves in the South of Western Australia. The title “Aborigines as human beings” places the negative term at the start of the article. The terms “Aborigine” and “Native” are used throughout the article. For example:

...reserves were established so that Aborigines could maintain their native life (“Aborigines as human beings”, 1967).

Throughout the article Aboriginal people are primarily referred to as “Aborigines” and “Natives”. These terms were used in respect to social issue such as over-crowding, poor building repairs, drunkenness and prostitution. In contrast, positive terms were also found when spoken about with respect to Western culture. Terms such as “Aboriginal” and “Nyoongar”, which are more accepted terms within today’s society, were used in respect to church groups and groups that were established to help Aboriginal people. “Nyoongar” is a respectful term that represents a language group that makes up an area in Perth.

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\(^5\) Note: these are seen as negative terms because they are not appropriate within today’s society to say.
An example of this is:

...who with another Aboriginal, Mr. [name removed for anonymity], runs the nondenominational Nyoongars church in Claisebrook-road ("Afraid to talk, natives say", 1966).

The topics that The West Australian spoke about in response to the negative terms that were used reflected criminal activity, drug and alcohol use and general anti-social activity. For example:

...bad language by drunken natives and alleged petty thieving and soliciting by native women is claimed to be rife in a section of the main street of Guildford ("Natives’ behaviour a problem at Guildford", 1966).

There was also an emphasis on the limited education that Aboriginal people had received. For example:

The proposition by the State Government to appoint Aboriginal JPs was entirely proper. The problem was to find people with some education, no offences other than reasonably trivial ones and wide-ranging experience and knowledge... but there was no obvious pool of individuals who could be named ("Problem seen for native JPs", 1973).

These articles emphasised a lack of education and high criminal activity within Aboriginal communities. Another topic, assimilation, infers that Aboriginal people themselves were not considered to be a part of the Australian society.

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6 As explained the names of Aboriginal people have been kept anonymous for cultural reasons; also the three full stops at the start of the sentence indicate that the quote is taken from a longer sentence and did not start there.

7 The title of the article was noted as a reference because the authors name was not given.
REPRESENTATIONS OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLE IN THE WEST AUSTRALIAN

For example:

But until they are fully assimilated and while we have a Department responsible for them as a separate group they should also be counted separately (“Aboriginal question”, 1967).

This statement explains that without assimilation, Aboriginal people should not be counted within the same bounds as their non-Aboriginal counterparts. Further Aboriginal people are to be controlled by the Government. This implicates that Aboriginal people cannot look after themselves.

The portrayals that The West Australian used when looking at Aboriginal people were negative in the fact that Aboriginal people were seen as natives that caused crime and got drunk when, in contrast, The West Australian represented non-Aboriginal people, or more specifically in this instance ‘White men’, in a more positive manner. For example:

While a reporter from The West Australian was in the area on Thursday night several late model cars driven by well-dressed White men cruised along the road and stopped beside girls and women walking home from the church service (“Afraid to talk, Natives say”, 1966).

This portrayal creates a power imbalance with Aboriginal people represented as non-human, criminals that suffer from social issues. When in comparison ‘White” men are more powerful, have nice cars and dress nicely.
Summary of 1966 – 1975

The separation in society was seen through the way *The West Australian* represented Aboriginal people. Further when comparing Aboriginal people to “Whites”, the newspaper drew a clear distinction: with the focus of Aboriginal people being not educated, poor and criminals, in contrast to “Whites” as being drivers of later model cars and being well dressed. Negative terms such as “Native” and “Black” were used throughout the decade. The misrepresentation of Aboriginal people, negative terms and power imbalance creates a separation between Aboriginal people and the rest of society.

1976 – 1985

The main theme drawn from this decade was one emphasising the separation of Aboriginal people from the rest of Western Australian society. This was consistent as the codes pointed to separating Aboriginal people from the rest of society by means of terms *The West Australian* used when speaking about Aboriginal people, the topics *The West Australian* choose to speak about and the different portrayals of Aboriginal people against non-Aboriginal people.

Separation from society

From 1976 - 1985, similar to the previous decade, there was an emphasis on the negative representation of Aboriginal people, specifically to do with welfare, substance abuse, education and crime. Firstly the emphasis on misuse of welfare is seen through the use of rhetoric that highlights Aboriginal people as welfare recipients that spend their welfare on illicit substances.
For example:

...proved that they were irresponsible with their social welfare payments (“Welfare aid control plea by Colbung”, 1977).

The focus of this article was on Aboriginal people within the Perth region. This statement taken from *The West Australian* is backed up by an ‘Aboriginal leader’ and makes the suggestion that all Aboriginal men are not only on welfare, which in itself represents Aboriginal men as unemployed. Further, within the article, Aboriginal people were told that permission was granted by the government to take their money and give it to someone else. The ‘Aboriginal leader’ said:

“He has the power, for any reason, to authorise that a cheque be paid to another authority, organisation or person” (“Welfare aid control plea by Colbung”, 1977).

Stating that

“Though a right has been taken away from the man, I think we have to be cruel to be kind” (“Welfare aid control plea by Colbung”, 1977).

Another important code that was found within the sample of articles was the representation of Aboriginal people as drunks, criminals and simple individuals. For example:

“There is too much drinking going on in public” he told one man (Matthewson, 1985).

Further there was a representation of Aboriginal people as simple. For example:

...a simple building which will suit the Aborigines best (“Shed plan to house Aborigines”, 1977).

This creates an unequal representation of Aboriginal people because there are no mention of ‘White’ or non-Aboriginal people being represented in the same manner. Further, a
comparison to ‘Whites’ is given in the statement made by a Judge in an attempt to lessen the public drinking of Aboriginal people which creates an obvious separation within society between Aboriginal people and ‘Whites’. For example:

Aborigines were sometimes arrested for offences in situations where white men would not be charged and were often judged with no appreciation of their unique background and problems (“Lawyer: Aborigines’ plight hopeless”, 1980).

Finally it is important to recognise, along with the comparisons made between Aboriginal people and “Whites”, the representation of Aboriginal people as being less-than human. With an article talking about a plan to house Aboriginal people in a shed but within that same article it was said:

The shed is unfit for human habitation in its present condition (“Shed plan to house Aborigines”, 1977).

This example suggests that Aboriginal people are not seen as human beings. If Aboriginal people were represented as human beings they would not be housed in a shed that is “unfit for human habitation”.

**Summary of 1976 – 1985**

The theme drawn from this decade, separation in society, was seen as there was an emphasis in an article on the fact that Aboriginal people are not humans along with an apparent misuse of welfare payments. The quarantine of payments to be given to another person speaks of the lack of power that Aboriginal people had in comparison to the rest of the Australian society. Finally, negative terms used represented Aboriginal people as criminals and the comparison
of Aboriginal people against “Whites” committing a crime indicates that they were perceived to be separate from the society as a whole.

1986 – 1995

The decade, 1986-1995, was quite different to the previous decades that were analysed for two main reasons. First, 1986-1995 saw more than one theme emerge from the analysis and second, this decade saw a shift in themes moving from negative representations of Aboriginal people to more positive presentations of this group in The West Australian. The first theme taken from this decade, the negative representations of Aboriginal people had a specific focus on the use of violence and the social issues that Aboriginal people faced, including over representation in respect to criminal activity and the idea of welfare dependency. The second theme, recognition of past and culture of Aboriginal people, came about after the Mabo (1992) trial which started to see the introduction of land rights and native title. This theme was broken up into recognition of the past, recognition of different language groups that make up Aboriginal people, and the terms used within these articles to articulate the above.

To summarise the information previously discussed relating to the significant events in Australian history over the period of interest, some of key events within the decade between 1986 and 1995 were: (a) The Bicentenary (1988), this was the 200 year celebration of the first fleet coming to Australia in which Aboriginal people protested against. (b) The Royal commission into Aboriginal deaths in custody (1991), this was an inquiry that looked into the deaths of Aboriginal people in the custody of police and prison and how Aboriginal people were treated by police. (c) Mabo v Queensland no.2 (1992), this was a case in which the High Court overturned the legal fiction of Terra Nullius, which resulted in the passing of The
Native Title Act 1993 (Cth). (d) The Redfern address (1992), this was a speech by the Australian Prime Minister, The Honourable Paul Keating, in which he acknowledged the history of Aboriginal people, the impact of Colonisation and acknowledged the past governments failures; and (e) Native title legislation (1993), which was the introduction Native Title Act 1993. This act gave Indigenous people native title rights over land and water if it can be shown that there is continuous connection to land. This came as a result of the Mabo (1992) case which overturned the idea of Terra Nullius.

Negative representations of Aboriginal people

The first theme saw The West Australian emphasise social issues such as welfare dependency and criminal activity by Aboriginal people. For example:

...in reality, there is an element of their society which is quite prepared to live on the welfare state without offering anything in return (Letters to the editor, 1988).

This quote is taken from the Letters to the Editor section of The West Australian. The writer believed that it was hypocritical of Aboriginal people to be protesting against the Bicentenary but accepting money from the government. The rhetoric of this letter, language such as “their” in the context of the article, spoke to a representation of Aboriginal people as ‘others’ an as hypocrites. This is because they were seen to be dependent on welfare from the government and were offering nothing in return. The second aspect, criminal activity by Aboriginal people is seen through the representation by The West Australian as both Aboriginal adults and youth are represented as violent criminals. For example:

...Aboriginal boy told how he shot at the police five times (Walters, 1987).

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8 Indigenous used as it incorporates both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
The terminology within this article emphasises the violence used and the criminal acts themselves by giving vivid details of the crime. Further, within the description the offender is described as an “Aboriginal” boy, which is a race description that would likely not have been included if the article had been describing offending perpetrated by a “White” child. This article represents Aboriginal youths as criminals and stands in sharp contrast to other articles. For example, “Lawyer claims that police beat an Aboriginal boy”, which represented Aboriginal people as victims rather than perpetrators of crime. This transition was not complete, however, given that this article downplayed the police attacks on the Aboriginal youths by stating multiple times that the events were ‘alleged’ to have taken place.

For example:

...alleged that the boy had been beaten with batons (Matthewson, 1987).

Within this article there were claims made by an Aboriginal youth’s lawyer that the police had mistreated him whilst in custody. Claims/allegations were made that he was punched in the face, hit with a police baton and threatened to be sliced with a knife. Reporting these stories at all was indicative of a shift to accept that Aboriginal people could also be victims of crimes (and thus part of society and protected by its laws). However, the inclusion of the term ‘alleged’ indicates a slightly grudging acceptance of this shift from earlier attitudes.

When comparing these two articles there are a few notable differences:

- When Aboriginal people attacked police, qualifying terms such as “claims” and “alleged” were used less frequently.
- With respect to Aboriginal people, there was recognition of social issues;
- And finally, when Aboriginal people used violence, it was over emphasised
Recognition of past and culture of Aboriginal people

The second theme, recognition of past and culture of Aboriginal people, was broken up into recognition of the past, recognition of different language groups that make up Aboriginal people and the terms used within these articles to articulate the above. Recognition of past was a reoccurring code with multiple articles not only talking about what happened in the past but also recognising the wrong doing of the past. For example:

...Justices Deane and Gaudron said the doctrine of Terra Nullius was “the darkest aspect of the history of this nation”. (Manchee & Oryer, 1992).

Within this article the rhetoric was sympathetic towards Aboriginal people. The article spoke about Terra Nullius and how the idea is now “scrapped” through the High Court’s decision. Further the article spoke about how the past had dispossessed and oppressed Aboriginal people. For example:

...the notion that terra nullius which asserted that the land was desert and unoccupied and by which the dispossessioin and oppression of the indigenous people of this county was justified (Manchee & Oryer, 1992).

Other articles further spoke about the recognition of the past by acknowledging different language groups. For example:

...he said the claim by the WA Wunambul, Ngarinyin and Worora people had a good chance because it was based on the same arguments as the MABO case (Manchee & Oryer, 1992).
Summary of 1986 – 1995

The two themes that were drawn were very contrasting, which reflects that, in this decade, Australia saw many social changes such as the *Mabo* (1992) case and the introduction of Native Title legislation. The first theme, negative representations of Aboriginal people, can be seen in how *The West Australian* newspaper created the connection of Aboriginal people with welfare dependency. Further other issues such as criminal activity along with emphasising the violence used when talking about Aboriginal youths committing crimes were also used to represent Aboriginal people. The second theme, recognition of past and Aboriginal culture, can be seen in that articles acknowledged the past and the fact that Aboriginal people have different language groups.

1996 – 2005

In the decade between 1996 and 2005, a single theme was drawn from the articles within *The West Australian*. This theme, negative representation of Aboriginal youth, looked at the representations of Aboriginal people in terms of youth and their involvement in crime, substance issues, criminal activity and general anti-social behaviour. This theme also drew upon the terminology used to articulate these issues.

To summarise the information previously discussed relating to the significant events in Australian history over the period of interest, some of key events within the decade between 1996 and 2005 were: (a) The introduction of Mandatory sentencing (1996) in Western Australia, this was the idea that a person that commits the same crime three times is sent to jail for a time period that is mandatory. Mandatory sentencing laws take away judge’s discretion and force a mandatory six month sentence for crimes (Roche, 1995). The issue of
Aboriginal people and mandatory sentencing is that of the over representation of Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system (Walker & McDonald, 1995). That is, the mandatory sentencing laws, unintentionally, focuses on Aboriginal people. (b) The Bringing Them Home report (1997), this was a tabled report on the stolen generations which gave information about how many Indigenous people were taken and the effects the stolen generations had, and continue to have, on Indigenous people in society today. (c) Howard’s 10 point plan (1997), this was a 10 point plan strategy bought in by the then Prime Minister John Howard as he believed that the “pendulum had swung too far” and that Indigenous people had too many rights. Amendments such as giving Native Title Tribunals absolute authority over claims, allowing State governments the power to extinguish native title for ‘national interest’, allowing mining and pastoral leases to co-exist with Native Title, and much more; and (d) Cathy Freeman flag controversy (2000). Cathy Freeman was warned that she would risk losing her medals if she chose to fly the Aboriginal flag. This came as a result of her prior actions in which she held up an Aboriginal flag after winning a medal at the Commonwealth games.

**Negative representation of Aboriginal youths**

Within this theme there were two main codes that were drawn; Aboriginal youths representation with respect to anti-social behaviour, criminal activity and substance abuse. The rhetoric used created a sense that all Aboriginal were responsible as the language generalised Aboriginal people as a whole. Within this decade there was emphasis placed on the Aboriginal youth as committing a vast amount of crime.
For example:

Negotiator [Names removed for anonymity] said the proposals were a positive way to address concerns that [Names removed for anonymity] raised recently that aborigines were responsible for the majority of crime in Northbridge (McNamara, 1997).

This creates the idea that Aboriginal youth commit most of the crime throughout the Northbridge area, with no evidence to back up their statement (e.g., in the form of police record crime statistics or victimisation survey data). Another article states:

They [Aboriginal youths] have no respect for the [police] uniform (Betty, 1997).

This further represents Aboriginal youth as disrespectful as they are seen to not have “respect” for people who wear uniforms such as police officers. The “Elders should guide youngsters” article used rhetoric that portrayed Aboriginal youths in a negative light. Terms such as “harsh reality” and “hell-bent” along with the over emphasis on crime creates the idea that all Aboriginal youth are “violent” criminals. Further the article itself had no evidence to support these claim that Aboriginal youths are all criminals. An example is:

Aboriginal groups must face up to the harsh reality that some of their teenagers are hell-bent on bringing their people into dispute through violent crime (De Mori, 1999).

Further this article acknowledged the poor social conditions Aboriginal people faced further stating:

They are more likely to have had direct experience of the ravages of unemployment, poor health and a range of social problems than other teenagers. Sadly, many of them also are likely to have experienced the bitter hurt of racism (De Mori, 1999).
However, the article continues on to explain that this was no “excuse” for the violent crime that happens in Northbridge. The answer to the “problem” is that Aboriginal youth committing crimes is an Aboriginal issue, as suggested by De Mori’s position that:

Aboriginal elders should acknowledge publicly the seriousness of the problem and use their influence to try overcome it (De Mori, 1999).

Summary of 1996 – 2005

The theme from this decade, negative representation of Aboriginal youths, was taken from the codes that saw a misrepresentation of Aboriginal youths as committing “most” of the crime within Perth. Articles used language that emphasised the violence and crimes that Aboriginal youth committed in an attempt to convey this message to the reader even stating that the “majority” of the crime in Northbridge was committed by Aboriginal people. Whilst within this same article acknowledging that Aboriginal youths face a lot of issue within society. Finally it explains that the answer to this “problem” is for elders to stand up, acknowledge and take responsibility for what is happening.

2006 – 2015

Within the final decade being examined there were three themes taken from The West Australian newspaper. First, negative representation of Aboriginal people, in which the newspaper had shifted its focus to look at Aboriginal people negatively with an emphasis on youths and crime, Aboriginal people and crime and further representation of social issues that Aboriginal people faced. The second theme examined how the issue is an Aboriginal people’s problem and how this problem could be mended through cooperation between Aboriginal
people and the Government. The final theme, government mistreatment and failure of Aboriginal people, focused on the failure of the government in helping Aboriginal people and their mistreatment of Aboriginal people that were incarcerated. This theme looked at use of violence, lack of government care, failure by both the Commonwealth and State governments and the terms used within these articles to articulate the above.

To summarise the information previously discussed relating to the significant events in Australian history over the period of interest, some of key events within the decade between 2006 and 2015 were: (a) The Northern Territory intervention (2007), which came about as a result of the Little Children are Sacred report which found abuse and neglect in Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory. As a result the then Prime Minister John Howard abolished Community Development Employment Programs (CDEP), suspended the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth), and forced health check-ups for Aboriginal children and more; and (b) Sorry speech (2008), made by the then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, was an acknowledgement of the wrong doing of the past governments and an official sorry by the current government at the time for the actions of the past.

**Negative representation of Aboriginal people**

Within this theme there was an emphasis on stereotyping Aboriginal youths as violent criminals with Aboriginal Legal Services blaming the government for a “crippling failure of intervention” into a child’s life at the beginning of the article.
For example:

..two burglaries and a car chase in which the tiny girl, then 12, sat on two pillows and a blanket so she could see over the dashboard of the Holden commodore (Jones, 2007).

Similar stereotypes spoken about by *The West Australian* on Aboriginal youths were also found to be similar with respect to Aboriginal people generally. This creates a generalisation in which the reader gets a sense that when you speak of a group as a whole with respects to social issues; the whole group then suffers from those social issues. The article, “Troubled settlement leader urges shutdown”, talks about a town that is in chaos as Aboriginal families fight with each other constantly. For example:

..a makeshift barricade out of furniture and wheelie bins at the front of their house and armed themselves with axes, swords and cement slabs to protect themselves from attacks from another family (Gibson, 2009).

On top of this emphasis was placed on Aboriginal people as being the main source of violence within Northbridge. Terms such as ‘violent’, ‘ghetto’ and ‘aggressive’ create a sphere of horror designed to scare the reader. For example:

...businessman claims violent, drunken Aboriginals have turned the nightlife precinct into a ghetto...aggressive Aboriginal groups picking fights outside his James Street venue (Knowles, 2009).
Aboriginal people’s issues are their problem

The second theme *The West Australian* talks about is how Aboriginal people need to provide a solution to their issues. Stating that legislation in the past did not allow Aboriginal people to ‘take control’ of their lives. For example:

If the government of the time thought that the referendum result would encourage Aboriginals to take control of their lives, it too was misguided (‘Use 1967 hopes in a new resolve to improve lives of Aboriginals’, 2007).

The answer given by the paper was that Aboriginal people need to take control.

They need to come up with those solutions themselves and our responsibility as non-Aboriginal people involved in government is to provide them with encouragement and the resources (Strutt, 2009).

Government mistreatment and failure of Aboriginal people

Finally this section focuses on the Government mistreatment and failure of Aboriginal people. The focus is on the mistreatment of Aboriginal people by those that have more power in society. *The West Australian* seem to have taken a more sympathetic role towards Aboriginal people, in contrast, to the start of the decade as the previous theme that was drawn was negative stereotyping of Aboriginal people as a general group. Specifically, there are two main areas this theme looked at. Firstly, government mistreatment which was broken up into:

- Violent acts by police

  - Lack of care of Aboriginal people that were incarcerated.
The second theme is the failure of the government to help Aboriginal people. The focus of this theme was:

- Failure of the Commonwealth;
- And the failure of the State government

Firstly, Government mistreatment was found to consist of two main sections; violent acts by Government groups, and lack of caring about Aboriginal people that were incarcerated. Government use of unnecessary violence causing injuries to Aboriginal people in incarceration was found as The West Australian spoke about instances of violence throughout their articles. In one example, the start of the article stated that the Crime Corruption Commission (CCC) was looking at a video of an Aboriginal former inmate’s treatment by authorities. For example:

...broken arm in the first indication of authorities releasing the extent of his injuries (Emerson, 2011 April 13).

In another example, emphasis is placed on the seriousness of the violence.

...life-threatening injuries including a collapsed lung, dislocated shoulder, broken ribs and fractured upper arm (Emerson, 2011 April 16).

The focus within these two articles was the use of violence by people with a position in power when handling an Aboriginal man. Not only was the use of violence not needed, it was also not recorded and the prison officials claim they did not know when this person was injured. It should be noted that there seems to be an acceptance that Aboriginal people can be victims. This is seen as there term “alleged” was not used in these articles. Further there was also a lack of care from officials with one article exclusively saying that it is not their problem.
For example:

...“it’s not my role to ascertain any medical issues” (Emerson, 2011 April 16).

This official then later back-tracked on that statement as it was made clear that in fact it was not only the prison officers issue but it was a part of the policy that the officials follow to ensure that prisoners are safe. For example:

...admitted later that the Department of Corrective Services [DCS] policy on using force against prisoners required him to consult the department’s health services... (Emerson, 2011 April 16).

The second area, failure of both the Commonwealth and the State government, was seen to be due to two main ideas. Firstly, the lack of funding said to be received for Western Australian groups. For example:

...has supported limited regional family violence services for Aboriginal victims, including children (Opinion, 2012).

By adding in “including children” it is explaining the government’s failure to look after Aboriginal youth; and second, the Prime Minister’s attack on the people that live in remote areas of Western Australia. This is seen as the rhetoric used by the then Prime Minister Tony Abbott as he described:

...WA’s remote communities as making a “lifestyle choice” (Egan, 2015).

The comment about remote WA communities being a “lifestyle choice” was criticised by what The West Australian coined ‘Aboriginal leaders’, with further emphasis by these leaders for the Commonwealth government to help WA communities and not close them down.
For example:

Indigenous leader Noel Pearson labelled the statement “very disappointing and hopeless” and called on the Commonwealth to take responsibility for their policies affecting the communities’ futures (Egan, 2015).

When speaking about the State government, emphasis was placed on the lack of recognition and support given to Aboriginal women working in family violence organisations. For example:

Aboriginal people, usually women...receive little recognition and support for this work (Opinion, 2012).

The paper also looked at the role that mining negotiations has on the funding from the government. For example:

The lack of interest with the State stands in sharp contrast with the interest shown in relation to the lucrative resource mining negotiations and agreements with Aboriginal land councils (Opinion, 2012).

*The West Australian* State government’s response to the lack of funding was a shift of focus from lack of funding to the social issues, With the Premier Colin Barnett saying:

“There are 274 remote Aboriginal communities in WA and that is not sustainable and by that, I mean children aren’t attending school, young children are being abused both sexually and physically, there are no employment opportunities and I am not going to ignore that” (Egan, 2015).
Summary of 2006 – 2015

There are three main themes drawn from this decade. First, negative representation of Aboriginal people, second Aboriginal peoples issues are their problem; and third Government mistreatment and failure of Aboriginal people. The first theme, negative representation of Aboriginal people, is seen as *The West Australian* represented Aboriginal people as violent criminals, with rhetoric and emphasis on violence to back these claims up, and to represent the idea that all the criminal activity that happens in Northbridge is because of Aboriginal people. Second, is the idea that Aboriginal people need to help with these issues. The emphasis on this is that Aboriginal people know the answers and that Government needs to back the ideas of Aboriginal people, not only with funding but with encouragement.

The final theme, Government mistreatment and failure of Aboriginal people, is seen through the violent acts done to those in custody along with the lack of care given. The Commonwealth and State government failed to help Aboriginal women working in to improve social conditions. These women received little acknowledgement of what they were doing along with no funding for the programs they were running.

Comparison of decades

In this section a comparison of the themes throughout the decade will be done to emphasize the important differences in the representation of Aboriginal people over time. To place this in context for the overall focus of this research, the aim is to examine whether the transition from old to new racism that has been observed in other areas has also taken place for the representation of Aboriginal people in the print media in Western Australia over the last 50 years. Table 3 looks at the changes in themes, giving the themes drawn from each decade. These changes in representation come about through three main ideas; the terms used in the
articles, the social and criminal activities that Aboriginal people are represented as doing and the changing in Government policies, Aboriginal involvement in these policies and Elders taking responsibility.

Table 3 – Themes drawn from each decade

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<th>Decades</th>
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<td>1976 – 1985</td>
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<td>1986 – 1995</td>
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<td>1996 – 2005</td>
<td>- Negative representation of Aboriginal youths</td>
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<td>- Aboriginal peoples issue are their problem</td>
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<td>- Government mistreatment and failure of Aboriginal people</td>
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The first two decades, following a large shift in opinions of Aboriginal people after the 1967 referendum, saw Aboriginal people represented in a negative light consistent with old-fashioned racism. Between 1966 and 1985, the terms “Native”, “Blacks” and “Aborigines” were commonly used along with negative representations of Aboriginal such as criminals and substance abusers. Further, the comparisons made between Aboriginal people and “Whites”, along with comments that saw Aboriginal people as less than human paved the way for Aboriginal people to be seen as not a part of the rest of society.
In the third decade, 1986 – 1995, we saw a shift in terms. Some of the previous, old-fashioned racist terms were still used, but the majority of the time the term “Aboriginal” was the choice of *The West Australian*. Although there was a shift in terminology towards more positive terms, the representation of Aboriginal people through social issues were in the same light as the previous decades. That was until the passing of *Mabo* (1992) and native title. From this there was a sudden change in the way *The West Australian* portrayed Aboriginal people. Mainly there was an acknowledgement of the past of Aboriginal people, namely the notion of *Terra Nullius* and how that was a “dark time in Australian history”. Further there was also recognition by the paper of the different language groups that are within Aboriginal culture.

Within the fourth decade, 1996 – 2005, following events such as Cathy Freeman winning at both the Commonwealth and the Olympics there was a prominent shift in representation of Aboriginal people. The terms remained the same with the use of the term “Aboriginal” being the most used in the articles. Mainly there were portrayals of Aboriginal youth as troublemakers, substance abusers and criminals. With an emphasis on Aboriginal youth committing the majority of crime that takes place within Northbridge. There was indication here of a shift towards new racism, in terms of Aboriginal people being responsible for their own situations and needing to take charge.

The final decade, 2006 – 2015, saw the same terms and themes as the previous decade. With the introduction of who was able to fix the social problems that Aboriginal people faced and the mistreatment and failure of both the Federal and State Government when Aboriginal people. *The West Australian* took a more sympathetic role in respect to fixing the social
issues the Aboriginal people face. Although the still represented Aboriginal through these social issues the paper shifted its focus to the need of input by Aboriginal people in policies and decision that are made by Governments. Further they also looked at the “failure” and mistreatment of the State and Federal government with respect to Aboriginal people. This decade is different to previous decades as there was never a theme that specifically targets the Government failure when attempting to help Aboriginal people.
Discussion

The representation of Aboriginal people in *The West Australian* was a shift from old to new racism. The shift saw a slow decline in old-fashioned racism from first two decades with the uprising of new racism in 1980s to 1990s. In relation to the previous studies there were some common areas and very contrasting results. First old-fashioned racism is seen in *The West Australian* in the 1960 to 1980s as Aboriginal people were seen to be not a part of the Australian society. As a result of this Aboriginal people were segregated and not seen as human beings. Similar to this in USA African Americans were subjected to slavery, oppression and segregation. What can be drawn from the results is that both the USA and evidence from this paper points to old-fashioned racism in the first two decades of *The West Australian*. Over time the change to new racism can as a result of Aboriginal people not being biologically inferior, but rather, lazy and welfare dependant.

Second, the shift from old-racism to new racism in USA had occurred during the civil rights movements in the 1960s (Virtanen & Huddy, 1998). The shift of old-fashioned racism to new racism in Australia was hypothesised to have happened at the same time as the shift in the USA. The prediction was that the shift would occur after the 1967 referendum which, similarly to the US civil rights movements, paved the way for the recognition of Aboriginal people along with more Aboriginal rights in the future. What was found was that the shift in Australia had occurred in the 1980s to 1990s. With respect to social movements removing old-racism it can be suggested that events that occurred in the 1980s and 1990s, events such as the Bicentenary protests, the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody and changes within the Australian government, paved the way for the shift from old-fashioned racism to a less obvious, new racism.
Another important result of this study was that, although evidence for new racism was prominent, there were also more positive depictions of Aboriginal people that started to emerge in parallel to the shift to new racism. Three predictions can be made as to why this has happened: first, following the social changes, representing Aboriginal people within a negative light would not be seen as a social normality. Issues such as the Mabo (1992) case, native title and Rudd’s sorry speech paved the way for positive reinforcement of Aboriginal rights and issues. Second, the changing political tides that allowed for these historical changes may have influenced print media. Finally, considering the changes over time, what was socially acceptable to print 50 years ago would be considered wrong to print now.

With respect to the field of Criminology there are three theories that will be used to analyse the implications of *The West Australians* representations of Aboriginal people. These three theories, strain theory, labelling theory and differential association theory will be used to address the representations of antisocial and criminal behaviour as well as the over representation of Aboriginal people within the criminal justice system.

The first theory that is going to be analysed with respect to the research is strain theory. Strain theory is made up of two main aspects. (a) Society defines certain goals within itself that are worth obtaining: an example of this is a good social status, money and a house. (b) Society provides approved norms by which you can achieve these goals (Agnew, 1992). These social norms can include hard work and schooling. As a result Strain theorists argue two points: Firstly, not everyone is given the same opportunity to achieve society’s goals, as strain usually falls on those in the lower class as the ability to achieve is limited. Second, there is a strong emphasis on approved norms when reaching the goal, but in reality if a
person reaches the goal through non-conventional means they still receive the social status (Bernard, Snipes & Gerould, 2010). As a result, those that cannot achieve the goals through the norms of society will resort to non-conventional means. An example is stealing to achieve the goal of wealth.

Aboriginal people in Australia are not only a minority but are subject to poverty, unemployment and substance abuse issues (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012). Further to this, as the findings from this analysis demonstrate, they have also suffered racism that dates back to the settlement of Australia. With these contextual factors in mind, strain theory can make a contribution to explaining the over representation of Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system. Within the Australian context, there is a common goal of wealth and home ownership. These goals are to be achieved through getting an education, a career and working hard. With Aboriginal labour force participation rate being 55.9% and only 19% of Aboriginal youths finishing year 12 compared to 45% of non-indigenous people (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011), Aboriginal people have a lack of opportunity to achieve social goals through ways in which society accepts. As a result non-conventional ways of achieving the goal, being wealth and home ownership, are used as a result of strain. Although the media alone is not responsible for these issues, it must be considered that the prolonged racist representation of Aboriginal people in the print media has definitely exacerbated this situation. This issue is spoken about in more detail in the next paragraph.
The second Criminological theory that will be examined with respect to the findings of this research and the representation of Aboriginal people is labelling theory. Labelling theory is the assigning of deviant behaviour to a person by those who have the power to label (White, Haines & Asquith, 2012). As a result of being labelled the person may internalise the behaviour and their self-concept may change (Bernard, Snipes & Gerould, 2010). People that internalise and change their self-concept tend to identify with groups that exhibit similar behaviour as a result of being rejected from society as they do not fit in (Thompson, 2014).

This process of labelling is as follows:

- Negative labelling
- Stigmatisation
- New identity formed in response to negative labelling
- Commitment to new identity based on available roles and relationships

With respect to the current research two concepts can be examined, first is that The West Australian has the power to create labels for others. As a result of the research it is shown that print media has the power to represent minority groups in both positive and negative terms. With respect to labelling theory what can be examined from this is that The West Australian is the group that holds the power to label the actions of Aboriginal people as being ‘outside’ of the social normality. What may havestarted as an act of primary deviance, through engagement in antisocial behaviour via social, cultural or psychological reasons, has resulted in a change, to secondary deviance, and acceptance in a new concept of self as a result of labelling by The West Australian. Second, as a result of the change in the concept of
self, secondary deviation explains that the engagement in antisocial activity namely drinking, antisocial behaviour and criminal activity, came as a result of internalising what *The West Australian* has labelled Aboriginal people. After being labelled as criminal and antisocial, those that have been labelled will begin to associate with others that have been labelled the same. This association with others that share similar behaviours is explain more in the next paragraph.

With the over-representation of Aboriginal people in the justice system in mind and building on the findings from this research, the final Criminological theory that is addressed here is Sutherland’s Differential Association Theory. Differential association holds similar ground to labelling theory, building on the idea that criminal behaviours and justifications for those actions are learned by intimate groups (Matsueda, 1988). With respect to labelling theory, it can be suggested that after being labelled a secondary deviant, Aboriginal people will begin to identify with those that have also been labelled. For example, after being labelled a criminal and internalising it some Aboriginal people may begin to group with others that have similar shared experiences. As a result of this label and associating with others that have that label the group will learn criminal behaviour and rationalise their actions. As with the other theories discussed here, the media is not alone in perpetuating the context that would produce this differential association. However, given the findings presented, above, it is clear that the media does need to take some responsibility for the process that leaves Aboriginal people feeling removed from society, which can provide at least a partial explanation for the over-representation of Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system.
Limitations

With respect to the study, there are several limitations. Firstly, there was a bias in the study, as I identify as a Koori Aboriginal man. With respect to this, an attempt was made to analyse the data within an objective lens. Second, the focus of the paper was too broad and as a result only broad connections can be made to criminological theories. If the study had been more focused it may have more specific implications with respect to criminology. Third, with respect to qualitative thematic analysis, it took longer to analyse the data then what was predicted at the beginning of the research. Although the paper was still able to be produced it is suggested that more time be given for the analysis of the data. Fourth, only one media source was used. This could have been expanded to include other media outlets such as radio, TV and social media. Finally this study is specific to Aboriginal people. The study did not examine other minority groups who likely have also experienced discrimination at the hands of the mainstream Australian media over the last 50 years.

Directions for future research

There are several directions for future research when looking at the representations of Aboriginal people in media. Firstly, it would be possible to broaden the scope of the media that is analysed. The focus of this study was specifically on the print newspaper *The West Australian*. Broadening the analysis to other areas such as, magazines, TV news, TV shows, music, music videos and social media would allow for a more comprehensive analysis of the representation of Aboriginal people. This is particularly important moving forward, as these areas are all growing in popularity and will likely replace the traditional print media in the future.
A second area for future research would be to study the impact of other minorities with respect to the changing political tides over the same period that is from 1966 – 2015. This would allow for the overview of treatment of other minorities to compare to the treatment of Aboriginal people within the same period. A third area of interest would be analysing newspaper articles prior to the 1960s looking at the origins of old-fashioned racism. A fourth area of interest would be to look at the representation of Muslim people pre-9/11 and compare it to representation of Muslim people post-9/11. A final area of interest would be a comparison of representations of Aboriginal people with respect to the other states and territories. This would give an overview of the difference in representations in Australia.
Conclusion

This paper's intent was to address the representations of Aboriginal people within the scope of the State of Western Australia. After a review of literature on the representations of African Americans and Muslim people in the UK, a thematic analysis was conducted on *The West Australian* looking at the shift from old-fashioned to new racism from 1966 to 2015. The method included gathering data from both the state library and Factiva. After the data was gathered, a coding process was used on each decade to draw the major themes. These themes were then compared over time to address the shift in racism from 1966 to 2015.

There was evidence to suggest that old-fashioned racism was apparent within the first two decades of *The West Australian*. The prominent ideas of biological superiority created a separation between Aboriginal people and the rest of society, with Aboriginal people being seen as non-human in some articles. Over time, there was a shift from old to new racism. With themes looking at social issues that Aboriginal people face such as unemployment, criminal activity, antisocial behaviour, and substance abuse. There has also been some indication of a positive shift within *The West Australian* newspaper, with a specific focus on fixing social issues by cooperating with Aboriginal people. Although positive representations of Aboriginal people were found, there is still a long way to go.
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