

EXPERIENCES OF SCHOOLING OF STUDENTS WITH FORMER YUGOSLAV
ETHNIC BACKGROUND IN A WESTERN AUSTRALIAN SECONDARY SCHOOL

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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.

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(Tomaž Lašič)

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Abstract

Ethnicity is an important social construct mobilised in the discourses of multicultural education. At present, little research exists on the way ethnicity impacts on the schooling experiences of students with former Yugoslav background (SFYB) in Australia.

This qualitative study looks at the daily realities of twelve SFYB at a Western Australian government secondary school. Particular attention is paid to the management of their ethnic identities to achieve their educational, social and other goals.

Data gathered from the twelve in-depth, guided interviews with SFYB is analysed through the lens of critical multiculturalism, posited as one of several notions of multiculturalism and one with a specific social justice agenda. Theories of hybridity developed by Homi Bhabha and Stuart Hall are translated into the critical multiculturalist framework and provide a further development of the analysis of the data in which hybridity is seen as both experiences and enactments.

The study findings suggest that these SFYB embody the principles of critical multiculturalism as skilful managers of contingencies of ethnic identities, aspirations and challenges they encounter at the school. The study also proposes that the notion of critical, power-conscious hybridity could be useful as a conceptual tool in the future work of critical multiculturalists.