Educational Experiences of Young Indigenous Males in Queensland: Disrupting the School to Prison Pipeline

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A thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements of the Doctor of Philosophy degree at the University of Technology Sydney, April 2019.
DECLARATION

CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINAL AUTHORITYSHIP

I, Grace O'Brien declare that this thesis, is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Technology Sydney.

This thesis is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

This research is supported by an Australian Government Research Scholarship Program.

Production Note:

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*I acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of this land, on which I walk and live each day. I pay my respects to the Elders, past, present and those emerging.*
ABSTRACT

Despite ample international literature regarding the school-to-prison pipeline, juvenile justice researchers in the Australian context have remained relatively silent about this phenomenon. While there are considerable studies investigating the criminological characteristics of juvenile detention in Australia; there is a substantial gap examining the educational exclusion of young Indigenous males from the formal education system and whether this has a direct bearing on their incarceration. In 1991 the Australian Federal Government released the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody Report. Of the 339 recommendations provided, Recommendation 62 identified that there was an alarming over-representation of Indigenous youth coming into contact with the criminal justice system. Utilising Nakata’s *Indigenous Standpoint Theory* and Gramsci’s *Theory of Hegemony*, this study challenges the status quo of privilege and power that exists within the hierarchical institutions of education and the criminal justice system. A qualitative phenomenological approach and Yarning method is employed to engage nine participants from the community to tell their stories. Focussing specifically on a set of experiences relevant to Queensland State Schools, the key research themes identify that exclusion from school and the over-representation of young Indigenous males in the juvenile justice system may be connected. The implications of this study could have a significant impact on future research or policy direction for educators and those who work within the criminal justice system.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE .........................................................................................................................i
DECLARATION .......................................................................................................ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .......................................................................................iii
ABSTRACT ...............................................................................................................v
TABLE OF CONTENTS ..........................................................................................vi
LIST OF TABLES ......................................................................................................x
LIST OF FIGURES .................................................................................................xi
ACRONYMS ............................................................................................................xiii
DEFINITION OF TERMS ......................................................................................xiv
LIST OF APPENDICES .........................................................................................xv

CHAPTER ONE .....................................................................................................1
INTRODUCTION ......................................................................................................1
  1.0 INTRODUCTION .............................................................................................1
  1.1 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM AND RATIONALE ..............................................2
  1.2 CURRENT INDICATORS – STATE SCHOOL DISCIPLINARY ABSENCE RATES OF INDIGENOUS STUDENTS IN QUEENSLAND ..........................................................................................7
  1.3 CURRENT INDICATORS – INCARCERATION RATES OF YOUNG INDIGENOUS MALES IN QUEENSLAND ..........................................................................................10
  1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY .......................................................................13
  1.5 PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS ..................................................................14
  1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN – PARTICIPANTS AND DATA COLLECTION .........................15
  1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ........................................................................17
  1.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY .......................................................................19
  1.9 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH......................................................................19

CHAPTER TWO ....................................................................................................23
“WE ASKED: HOW DO YOU WINNOW? TEACH US” (ILYATJARI, 1998) .........................23
  2.0 INTRODUCTION .............................................................................................23
  2.1 AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF INDIGENOUS EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA .........................................................................................................................26
  2.1.1 HISTORICAL EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES OF INDIGENOUS CHILDREN .........................................................................................................................26
    2.1.1.1 Pre-invasion Education ........................................................................26
    2.1.1.2 Colonisation and the First Native Institution .......................................32
    2.1.1.3 Protectionism and Segregation ............................................................35
4.3.5 Strategies to Minimize Risk for Participants .................................................. 142
4.3.6 Validity and Trustworthiness of Research .................................................... 144
4.3.7 Ethical Considerations ...................................................................................... 144
4.3.8 Benefits of Research to Indigenous Communities and Government Agencies 147
4.4 Summary ............................................................................................................... 148

CHAPTER FIVE .............................................................................................................. 150

“OUR WORDS ARE OUR WEAPONS AND THE BATTLEGROUND IS THE SYSTEM” (ADAM) 150
5.0 Introduction ............................................................................................................. 150
5.1 Participant Demographics ..................................................................................... 151
5.2 Power, Hegemony and Government Systems ...................................................... 152
5.3 Racism and the Education System ....................................................................... 156
5.4 Socio-Economic and Cultural Determinants ....................................................... 161
5.4.1 The Social and Economic Well-being of Family ............................................ 162
5.4.2 Health Issues of Indigenous Boys .................................................................. 164
5.4.3 Independence and Identity of Indigenous Boys .............................................. 166
5.5 Summary ............................................................................................................... 169

CHAPTER SIX ............................................................................................................... 170

“We’re Not Just the Pin Up Person for Sports Day” (VANN) ................................... 170
6.0 Introduction ............................................................................................................. 170
6.1 Current Educational Experiences of Young Indigenous Males ............................ 171
6.1.1 Principals, Teachers and School Administrators: Disconnected and Disinterested? 171
6.1.2 Cultural Capacity of Educators in Schools: Theory Practice Disconnection 175
6.1.3 Relevant Curriculum in Schools: Connecting Culture and Curriculum .......... 179
6.1.4 Education Priorities and School Retention of Indigenous Boys ..................... 182
6.1.5 Appropriate Learning Environments to Support Indigenous Boys ............... 186
6.2 Reasons for Suspension and Exclusions from School ....................................... 188
6.3 Behaviour and Well-Being of Indigenous Boys .................................................. 195
6.4 Summary ............................................................................................................... 199

CHAPTER SEVEN ........................................................................................................ 201

“A Breakdown in Education Is One of the Key Areas of Young People Entering Offending” (VANN) .......................................................... 201
7.0 Introduction .......................................................................................................... 201
7.1 In-School Support Services .................................................................................. 202
7.1.1 Support for Indigenous Boys at School ......................................................... 202
7.1.2 Indigenous Mentors at School ...................................................................... 206
7.2 Incarceration - Transition Back to School and Community ............................... 212
7.2.1 Incarceration ................................................................................................... 214
7.2.2 Transition Back into School ........................................................................... 216
7.2.3 Transition Back into the Community ............................................................... 218
7.3 Community Support Services ............................................................................. 220
7.4 Summary ............................................................................................................... 222

CHAPTER EIGHT ......................................................................................................... 224

Discussion: The Big Picture ....................................................................................... 224
8.0 Introduction .......................................................................................................... 224
8.1 Principle Theoretical Perspectives ....................................................................... 225
8.1.1 Educational Institutions: Power and Hegemony ........................................... 226
8.1.2 Educational Institutions: Power and Hegemonic Practices .......................... 229
8.1.3 Racism........................................................................................................................................... 234
8.2 Principal Research Questions ........................................................................................................... 236
  8.2.1 How do Indigenous community representatives employed in education, youth justice and social services understand the educational experiences of young Indigenous males?........................................ 236
  8.2.2 How do economic and social barriers affect school completion rates of young Indigenous males?.................................................................................................................................................. 242
  8.2.3 What is the relationship between Indigenous males aged 10 to 17 years who are suspended/excluded from state schooling and their over-representation in Queensland youth detention? .................................................................................................................. 248
  8.2.4 What support strategies could reduce the numbers of young Indigenous males who are suspended or excluded from state schools?........................................................................................................ 250

Chapter Nine ........................................................................................................................................... 255

Conclusion, Recommendations and Future Research ............................................................................. 255

9.0 Introduction ......................................................................................................................................... 255
9.1 Conclusion and Recommendations .................................................................................................... 255
9.3 Limitations of the Study ..................................................................................................................... 263
9.4 Future Research .................................................................................................................................. 264
9.5 Concluding Summary ......................................................................................................................... 265

Appendices .................................................................................................................................................. 320

Appendix A: UTS Ethics Approval ........................................................................................................... 320
Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet ................................................................................................ 321
Appendix C: Informed Consent Form......................................................................................................... 323
Appendix D: Community Letter of Support .............................................................................................. 324
Appendix E: Community Letter of Support .............................................................................................. 325
LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1  School Disciplinary Absences prevalence by parental occupation category 65

Table 2.2  Admissions of youth to correctional services, by characteristics of the person admitted and supervision program, nine jurisdictions, 2015/2016. 69

Table 5.1  Participant pseudonyms and professional roles 15
**LIST OF FIGURES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1.1</td>
<td>Map of Queensland, Australia, identifying the Moreton Bay Regional Area</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1.2</td>
<td>Indigenous students receiving a School Disciplinary Absence in Queensland State schools by year level - 2017</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1.3</td>
<td>Non-Indigenous students receiving a School Disciplinary Absence in Queensland State schools by year level – 2017</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1.4</td>
<td>Queensland population – Indigenous and non-Indigenous children aged 10-17 years, 2017-2018</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1.5</td>
<td>Queensland population – Indigenous and non-Indigenous children aged 10-17 years incarcerated in 2015-2016</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1.6</td>
<td>Non-Indigenous and Indigenous young people in detention in Queensland by age, 2016-2017</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure: 2.1</td>
<td>Parramatta Native Institution Admission List, 10 January 1814 to 28 December 1820</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.2</td>
<td>Young people under supervision on an average day by supervision type, states and territories, 2016–17</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.3</td>
<td>Average total time young people spent in unsentenced detention during the year, by Indigenous status, states and territories, 2016–17</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.4</td>
<td>Young Indigenous people aged 10-17 and adults under supervision on an average day by type of supervision,</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 2.5  Indigenous and non-Indigenous representation in Queensland’s juvenile detention centres, 2014-2018

Figure 2.6  Young people in detention on an average night, by Indigenous status Australia, June quarter 2013 to June quarter 2017

Figure 2.7  Cost per young person per day subject to supervision (2012-13)

Figure 3.1  Adaptation of Munns and McFadden’s Five Conditions of Resistance

Figure 3.2  Photo of my sisters, Margaret and Cecilia either side of me in Nicholson St, Glasgow (The Gorbals, circa 1961)

Figure 4.1  Indigenous research process, adapted from Rigney’s three principles of Indigenist research

Figure 8.1  Interrelated health and well-being factors associated with the exclusion of Indigenous boys from school
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics</td>
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<tr>
<td>ADHD</td>
<td>Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIHW</td>
<td>Australian Institute of Health and Welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTG</td>
<td>Closing the Gap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRC</td>
<td>Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DDYDC</td>
<td>Don Dale Youth Detention Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DET</td>
<td>Department of Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCAATSI</td>
<td>Federal Council for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advancement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HREOC</td>
<td>Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IST</td>
<td>Indigenous Standpoint Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO’s</td>
<td>Non-government organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHMRC</td>
<td>National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCIADIC</td>
<td>Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RPSCAT</td>
<td>Report of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Aboriginal Tribes 1837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDA</td>
<td>School Disciplinary Absence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YJFNAB</td>
<td>Youth Justice First Nations Action Board</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS – is used throughout this thesis to refer to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It is critical to acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are two distinct groups, ‘each practicing unique traditions, retaining social, cultural, economic and political characteristics that are distinct from those of the dominant societies in which they live’ (AIATSIS, 2018, np.) It is imperative to note that Indigenous peoples have diverse life experiences and educational opportunities dependent upon their circumstances. It is therefore important to qualify that stereotypical signifiers should be avoided when considering the findings of this research.
LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: UTS Ethics Approval

APPENDIX B: Participant Information Sheet

APPENDIX C: Informed Consent Form

APPENDIX D: Community Letter of Support – Letter One

APPENDIX E: Community Letter of Support – Letter Two