Title
Pan-Indigenous Identity on Facebook: A Community reaction to Racial Battle Fatigue

Abstract
This paper explores the utilisation of Facebook by Indigenous Australians to understand firstly, how and why they are utilising Facebook. Secondly, whether this has developed into a Pan-Facebook community and finally, whether racial discrimination on-line is effecting Indigenous Australians representation of their identity and subsequently, their utilisation of the social media platform.

Introduction
The recent live streaming of the massacre in a New Zealand mosque has unfortunately exposed and highlighted the negative side of social media use and in particular Facebook. However, this is not the only way that racism is demonstrated and enacted on social media and in particular on Facebook. Indigenous Australian's are known to be high users of Facebook and it's not difficult to locate news and research articles exemplifying Indigenous Australian experiences with racism and white supremacy groups on Facebook. As an Indigenous Australian of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent myself I have indeed experienced this first hand. Subsequently, the aim of this research is to understand how this discrimination is affecting the Indigenous Australian community on Facebook and if this has any negative effects for usage. In order to achieve this firstly the background to Indigenous Australian utilisation of the social media platform Facebook will be discussed. Secondly, ways in which racism is experienced and directed at Indigenous Australian's on Facebook will be exemplified. Thirdly, the effects of this racism upon Indigenous Australian's health will be highlighted before discussing the results of this research. Finally, the main points will be drawn from the discussion and highlighted in the conclusion to resolve the issue has a pan-Facebook Indigenous Australian identity and community developed and how is this communities cyber-space affected by racism?

Facebook usage and reasons
Recent studies have identified that Facebook use amongst Indigenous Australians is as high as 87%, depending on age, as low as 67% and is on average 20% higher than that for non-Indigenous Australian's of the same age (Rice, Haynes, Royce & Thompson, 2016; Johnson, 2016). Additionally, there is little difference in Internet usage between remote, rural and urban communities but the reason for Internet usage is vastly different. For example, rural and remote communities require Internet connection because of their remoteness from health, education

and social services. However, urban utilisation of Internet is more targeted at social media, family connection and connection to Indigenous groups (Carlson, Farrelly, Frazer & Borthwick, 2015; Johnson, 2016; Rice, Haynes, Royce & Thompson, 2016; Barrett and Cocq, 208; Lumby, 2010).

Indigenous Australian's utilise social media platforms such as Facebook for a number of reasons but research has identified these can be divided into four main groups or areas which include – Identity, Activism, Connectivity, and Indigenous Organisations/Groups as illustrated by Image One below (Carlson 2019; Johnson 2016; Rice, Haynes, Royce and Thompson 2016; Lumby 2010).
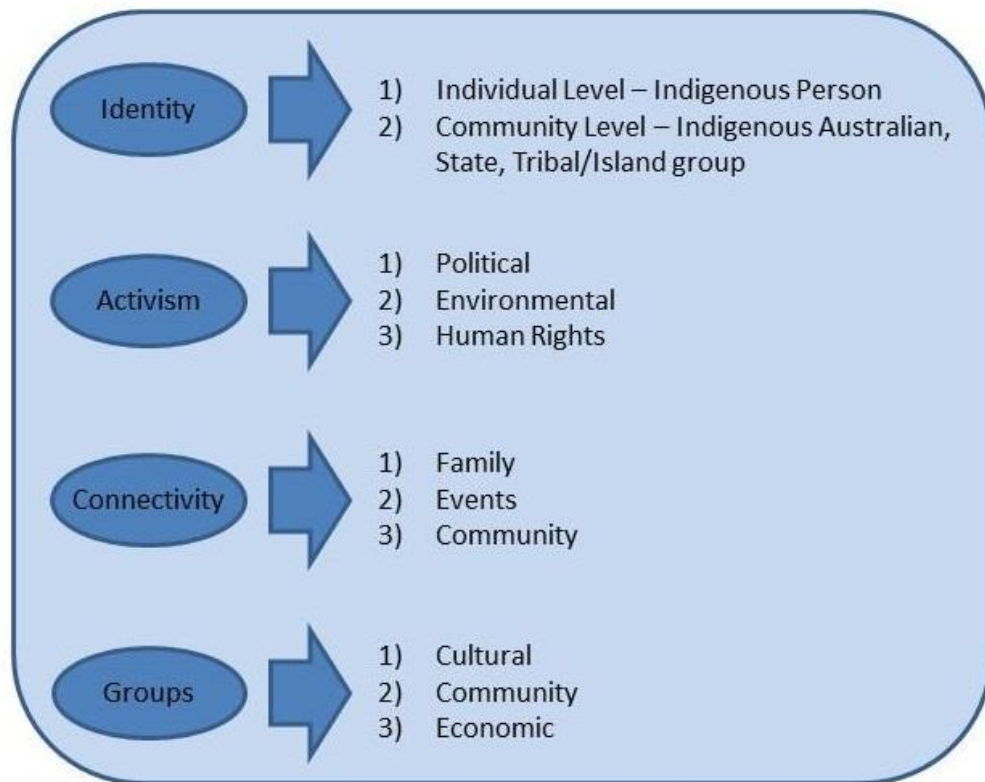
Image One: Four Main Themes and sub-themes

(Carlson 2019; Johnson 2016; Rice, Haynes, Royce and Thompson 2016; Lumby 2010)

Those Indigenous Australians who were interviewed during studies clearly stated that Identity was important issue for them on Facebook. Firstly, they openly identified on Facebook as being Indigenous Australian and proudly identified as such. Secondly, this recognition of

identity also translated into a wider Indigenous Australian identity, and hub-identity[1] of regional place or tribe (i.e. NSW, Koori or *Wiradjuri*). Finally, that there was a perceived community of Facebook users who were Indigenous Australian, and that they perceived a pan-Facebook Indigenous community or identity that "*we're all a part of*" (Lumby 2010; Johnson 2016; Rice, Haynes, Royce and Thompson 2016). Moreover, Facebook also provided Indigenous Australians with an opportunity to be vocal and active about their political, environmental and Human Rights beliefs without fear of physical deterrence or persuasion; they could speak their own mind (Carlson 2019; Johnson 2016; Rice, Haynes, Royce and Thompson 2016; Lumby 2010).

Indigenous Australian groups and pages are obviously a central focus for Indigenous Australian's however, there are multiple reasons why this is so. Firstly, Indigenous groups are seen as a way of connecting with other Indigenous Australians. Secondly, groups usually circulate around a common theme, such as a community, health, or a cultural/political issue so likeminded people with a common goal will be prevalent. Furthermore, this reinforces the shared sense of pan-Indigenous Australian community. Thirdly, Indigenous Facebook pages and groups for particular cultural, spiritual, language or identity issues; such as the "*Darug*" page, "*Aboriginal Australian Bush Food Page*" or "*Wiradjuri Language Group*". Finally, Indigenous Facebook pages for economic reasons such as Art or Artist pages, Indigenous services such as legal, education, health and counselling businesses, dance groups, sports teams, youth groups, and music artists. Particularly prevalent on Facebook are the artist pages because of the ease of globally marketing their very visual product, and music pages with youth being the predominant users (Carlson 2019; Kral 2011, Rice, Haynes, Royce and Thompson 2016; Pers Observation 2019).

Additionally, Indigenous Australians discussed the importance of Facebook as a daily form of connectivity with friends, family and the community at large often describing Facebook communication as *an intrinsic part of our daily community* and spending between 1 to 5 hours a day on-line connecting with others (Carlson 2019, p. 254). Interestingly, many also highlighted the visual aspect of Facebook i.e. the use of photos, videos, emoji's and colour as an important and attractive Indigenous friendly feature. However, this 'attraction' also has a negative impact through the use of sensationalised racist cartoons, images and memes; often brightly coloured and attractive (Matamoros-Fernandez 2006; Carlson, Jones, Harris, Quezada and Frazer 2017).

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[1] The word hub is utilized to emphasize equivalence or addition to – not sub – which would suggest something less than or below the previous identity. For example, some Indigenous Australians would consider their tribal group their primary identity but non-Indigenous people's lack of understanding renders this identity null and void.

Racism against Indigenous Australians on Facebook

Evidence of racism against Indigenous Australians on social media is widespread throughout both the media and academic papers. There are no better examples than the infamous "Aboriginal Memes Page" episode on Facebook, the "Divas Chat" incident in Tennant Creek and the Don Dale youth detention incident across Twitter, Facebook and YouTube (Carlson, Jones, Harris, Quezada & Frazer 2017; Carlson, Farrelly, Frazer & Borthwick 2015; Herborn 2013; Matamoros-Fernandez 2016). In her review Carlson (2019) found that 92% of those Indigenous Australian's questioned reported experiencing lateral violence or Racial Microaggressions on Facebook; similar statistics to those expressed by Ziersch, Gallaher, Baum and Bentley (2011). Moreover, Rice, Haynes, Royce and Thompson in their (2016) systemic review identify that the vast majority of the material reviewed exemplified racism and Cyber Bullying against Indigenous Australian's. Moreover, individual studies such as Lumby (2010) and Carlson (2019) demonstrate that Indigenous Australians experience of racism on social media is as widespread and prevalent, if not more prevalent, as in Australian society itself. Moreover, Indigenous Australian's are vulnerable to international trolls and white supremacy groups who aren't prevalent in Australian society. My own experience on social media validates this thesis on numerous occasions.

Matching the concept of a pan-Indigenous Australian identity developing on Facebook is the shared-recognition, trauma and resistance exemplified by Carlson, Jones, Harris, Quezada and Frazer (2017) in their study on Indigenous resistance on social media. They review the discussion and portrayal of the Don Dale incident across all forms of social media including Facebook. Furthermore, the authors demonstrate how shared recognition of the trauma experienced by Indigenous Australian's generates a community or group resistance or sympathy and subsequently group attack against such invasions of their Facebook space. Personally, I have experienced this on Facebook in the community fight against trolling by Indigenous academic Anthony Dillon against his own people, and in both the removal of the "Aboriginal Memes Facebook Page" incident in 2018, and the removal of the "Aboriginal Flag Facebook Page" in 2008. As Herborn (2013) relates *over 15,000 people signed a petition in 24 hours calling for the page* [Aboriginal Memes] *to be removed* (p. 17).

Health effects of racism

The negative health effects of racism on an individual are well researched and documented. Additionally, recent studies have considered this phenomenon from an Indigenous Australian perspective considering age groups and residential location i.e. rural, remote or

urban. The health effects of racism can include stress, anxiety, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, chronic pain, insomnia, stomach and dietary upset, increased shakes and sweating, rapid mood swings, aggressive outbursts, and lack of confidence or worth (Smith, Yosso and Solórzano 2006; Larson, Gilles, Howard and Coffin 2007; Priest, Paradies, Gunthorpe, Cairney and Sayers 2011; Ziersch, Gallaher, Baum and Bentley, 2011). Moreover, the traumatic mental health effects of racism and cyber bullying can often lead to significant health risk behaviours such as smoking, alcohol abuse, drug abuse, violence and suicidal tendencies which exacerbate the problem; especially when multiple risk factors are involved (Priest, Paradies, Gunthorpe, Cairney and Sayers 2011; Carson, Farrelly, Frazer and Borthwick 2015; Ziersch, Gallaher, Baum and Bentley, 2011). Furthermore, these types of behaviours inevitably lead to low socio economic status, homelessness, anti-social behaviours and inevitably conflict with the criminal justice system (Montgomery 2014; Herborn 2013; Carlson, Farrelly, Frazer and Borthwick 2015; Carlson, Jones, Harris, Quezada and Frazer 2017).

Most importantly, the accumulative effect of Racial Microaggressions and Racial Battle Fatigue is beginning to be understood. Racial Microaggressions are defined as *brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioural, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group* (Franklin 2019, p.45; Smith, Yosso and Solorzano 2006). Furthermore, these Racial Microaggressions are often layered as they are multiple attacks on one's *race, gender, class, sexuality, language, immigration status, phenotype, accent or surname* (Franklin 2019, p. 45). Moreover, the accumulated health effects of these Racial Microaggressions, especially when in an extended racial confrontation, lead to what has been defined as Racial Battle Fatigue; *the psychological, physiological, and behavioural stress responses due to the extended and cumulative impact of Racial Microaggressions* (Franklin 2019, p. 46).Psychological stresses include frustration, anger, resentment, aggression or fear and physiological stresses include headaches, back pain, high blood pressure, racing heart and sleep disturbances (Franklin 2019, pp. 46-47).

Discussion

Clearly, racism is not diminishing the use of Facebook by Indigenous Australian's if anything it could be said to be triggering a pan-Indigenous Australian Facebook response. As Carlson, Jones, Harris, Quezada and Frazer (2019) suggests this collective trauma, experienced as a group, and based on previous racial experiences, leads to shared recognition and subsequently, shared response. There is no doubt that the advent of Facebook and its

utilisation by Indigenous Australians has led to a clearly defined pan-Facebook collective community of Indigenous Australian users. Moreover, as theorist Benedict Anderson suggests this is a 'constructed' identity developed from the social constructs of those Facebook users who form the community. However, there is also little doubt that this pan-Facebook community is quite real and when organised either on or off Facebook is a significant force. Moreover, they are also a group that is vulnerable, partly by identification as Indigenous, to racial attacks from national and international users. There is also, given the review of the literature, little doubt that this is actually occurring in real life. Suicide's, cyber bullying and media attention is indeed evidence of this as Carlson, Farrelly, Frazer and Borthwick (2015) identify.

However, little research has been undertaken into neither how these racial attacks take place nor where the battle lines of conflict between the two groups are often drawn. My own personal experience, and study of this phenomenon, is that it is located in the comment streams of the posts and may often not even be related to the content of the post on which it occurs. Obviously, after a racist image or meme is posted there are inevitably negative comments from both parties but, the battle will always occur within the comment streams. It is in these streams that the blows will occur and the 'pack' defence and attack mentality will be played out between the parties. There is little doubt that these comment streams become a collective stream of Racial Microaggressions and those involved on both sides of the fence experience Racial Battle Fatigue. Moreover, this reoccurs every time the stream is read by a new visitor or re-read by a previous user and inevitably leads to more comments and subsequent Racial Microaggressions. I've personally witnessed, as in the case of the "Aboriginal Memes" page for example, these racial battles continue for months if not years. Furthermore, they may involve Racial Microaggressions from parties anywhere in the world and certainly throughout Australia. This is transferring lateral violence from one community to another and from online to reality. Given the advent of the Pan-Facebook Indigenous Australian identity it is subsequently vilifying and discriminating against the majority of a race of Indigenous Australian people; especially given the usage statistics exemplified in this paper.

From a health perspective the negative impacts of this long term trauma are significant and as research has demonstrated could well lead to depression, violence, isolation, high blood pressure, substance abuse, violence and suicide. Considering the widespread usage of Facebook and the pan-Facebook identity this would no doubt be having ill health effects for large numbers of Indigenous Australian's. Utilising the concept of Racial Microaggressions and the long term effects of Racial Battle Fatigue it is not hard to imagine the subsequent health effects for a community that is already decimated by significant health problems. Moreover, the

significant negative psychological effect of Racial Microaggressions and Racial Battle Fatigue upon a community that is already dealing with the psychological trauma from the historical effects of colonisation and systemic racism is significant. It is little wonder that cyber bullying, Racial Microaggressions and Racial Battle Fatigue is subsequently leading to suicide, substance abuse and violent, aggressive outbursts.

Conclusion

The aim of this research was to understand how racial discrimination is affecting the Indigenous Australian's community on Facebook and if this has negative effects for usage. In order to achieve this firstly the background to Indigenous Australian utilisation of the social media platform Facebook were discussed and reviewed. Secondly, ways in which racism is experienced and directed at Indigenous Australian's on Facebook was exemplified and considered. Thirdly, the effects of this racism upon Indigenous Australian's health were highlighted before discussing the results of this research. Clearly, the negative effects of racism experienced by Indigenous Australians on Facebook has severe negative impacts for Indigenous Australian health; making a vulnerable group even sicker physically and psychologically. Yet, in this negative situation it is evident that a pan-Facebook identity and subsequent generation of a pan-Facebook community has led to Indigenous Australian Facebook users fighting back for their cyber-space. Furthermore, that in this fight they have developed a community for shared trauma and understanding that resists the oppression being applied. It is through this adversity and necessity to defend that a wider community identity has subsequently developed and defended its right to be heard; true evolution of the intent of social media and the Internet; a voice for Indigenous people.

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